

# Unit 9: Critical Review (Optional Unit)

Content Area: **Language Arts Literacy**  
Course(s): **English 9 Honors**  
Time Period: **September**  
Length: **7 Blocks**  
Status: **Published**

## Course Description

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Credits: 5

Prerequisite: Placement

Grade: 9

This course is designed for the student who has developed an exceptional proficiency in critical reading and thinking as well as advanced writing skills. Students are challenged with numerous fictional literary readings from several genres and related non-fiction. In addition, students complete many writing assignments and extensive outside readings. Students explore the modes of writing on a more sophisticated level; journal writing will address students' creative talents while other assignments will be analytical in nature. Students use MLA and The BIG6 information literacy model to conduct problem-based research projects.

## Unit Description

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### Stage 1-- Desired Results

#### Unit Purpose:

*"There is a place for analysis of literature in our classrooms...But we think there is more."* - Allison Marchetti & Rebekah O'Dell, *Beyond Literary Analysis*

In Honors English 9, students will write critical review essays-- analytical arguments evaluating a topic of their choice through ranking, strengths/weakness, or "to the extent that \_\_\_\_." Inspired by Machetti & O'Dell's *Beyond Literary Analysis*, the purpose of this unit is to apply the NJSLS Writing Argument skills while also considering the purpose of critical reviews to write with authority, passion, and with an audience in mind. Students will engage in the writing process by gathering ideas from personal sources, reading mentor critical reviews, collecting and implementing craft moves from professional authors, writing independently, and revising both independently and with peers. Students will self-select topics. Throughout the unit, students will demonstrate application of standards through individual conferences and drafting. By the end of the unit, students will demonstrate application of the standards through a final critical review.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** English Language Arts Grades 9 and 10

**Explicit:**

W.9-10.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

A. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

B. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims avoiding common logical fallacies, propaganda devices, and using sound reasoning, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

C. Use transitions (e.g. words, phrases, clauses) to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

D. Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g. formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

E. Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented.

W.9-10.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.9-10.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, share, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

W.9-10.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.9-10.8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard

format for citation (MLA or APA Style Manuals).

W.9-10.9. Draw evidence from literary or nonfiction informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Apply grades 9–10 Reading standards to nonfiction informational e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).

L.9-10.3. Apply knowledge of language to make effective choices for meaning, or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading, writing, speaking or listening.

Vary word choice and sentence structure to demonstrate an understanding of the influence of language.

### **Implicit:**

W.9-10.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

L.9-10.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.9-10.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

### **Understandings:**

#### **Students will understand that...**

The argument writing mode is employed authentically through reviews of various topics.

Argument writing is nuanced and authors can take various styles, structures, and tones to convey their stance.

Argument writers gather information upon which to make claims/counterclaims.

Argument writers have a clear purpose and write for an intended audience.

Argument writers must establish their own credibility, becoming an expert on the topic at hand.

#### **Students will know...**

How to write a critical review.

How to evaluate a professional author's craft moves for inspiration.

How to consider purpose and audience when writing, with considerations to credibility, style, and tone.

How to generate original ideas and parameters for an argument.

How to give credit to sources through hyperlinking.

### **Essential Questions:**

To what extent is a writer's personal passions useful in conveying an argument?

To what extent should an intended audience be considered when writing about a topic of passion?

What style, structure, and tone does an authentic argument writer employ?

How can writers analyze other topics in addition to literature?

How does a writer establish and convey credibility?

#### **Students will be able to...**

Write a critical review according to the norms of the convention in the argument mode.

Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose.

Support claims and counterclaims with strong and thorough reasoning and evidence from text and informational sources, giving proper credit to those sources.

Employ expert use of grammar, mechanics, spelling, and usage.

**Academic Vocabulary** - Anticipate the audience, argument, biases, claim, clarify the relationship between claims and reasons, concluding statement or section, establish the significance of the claim, evidence, style, norms and conventions of the discipline, organization, reasons/reasoning, substantive topics or texts, syntax

## **Stage 2 -- Assessment Evidence**

### **Formative Assessments:**

Quizzes (2 “Minor” Assessments)-  
Demonstration of explicitly-taught skills through formal drafts

### **Summative Assessments:**

Critical Review Argument Essay

Writing On-Demand Skills Assessment

Writer’s Process (5 “Homework” grades) -  
Gathering and evaluating mentor texts, individual conferences, independent and peer revision.

## **Stage 3 -- Learning Plan**

### **Learning Activities:**

Introduce the standards, essential questions, assessment evidence and corresponding rubrics, and calendar of lessons to students.

Establish each student’s topics of passion through a relatable hook (story, survey, posing question, etc.) or through individual conferences.

Select and evaluate mentor texts to read like a writer.

Read Aloud from mentor texts.

Execute standards based mini-lessons to develop skills and strategies.

Identify and employ the tenets of argument/analytical writing.

Engage in protected time for independent writing.

Engage in small-group writing-skills-based instruction.

Engage in the writing process.

Collaborate with assigned writing partners.

Experience activities with writing partners where critical writing moves are discussed.

Confer individually with teacher and peers.

Demonstrate understanding through various assessments.

### **Writing Process:**

Mentor Text Immersion & Study

Gathering Information

Content & Ideas

Craft & Style Techniques

Structure

Grammar, Usage, Mechanics

Independent Revision

Peer Feedback

Independent Revision

### **Mini-Lessons**

Finding your purpose and audience

Setting the parameters for the argument

Establishing credibility - style & tone

Convincing the audience - ethos and pathos

Argument organization

Writing powerful conclusions with the audience in mind

Small group work in powerful punctuation

### **Resources**

### **Works of Study:**

Various critical review mentor texts selected by both teachers and students from online magazines:

**To write about**

**To write about MUSIC, To write about**

**To write about**

<b>MOVIES/ TV, check out...</b>	<b>check out...</b>	<b>SPORTS, check out...</b>	<b>VIDEO GAMES, check out...</b>
A.V. Club	Classicfm.com	Huffpost Sports	Gameological
Vulture	Vulture	Harvard Collective	IGN
NPR	The Ringer	Grantland Archives	Gamespot
Pop Culture Happy Hour	Switched on Pop	The Ringer	Polygon
The Atlantic	Song Exploder	FiveThirtyEight	Cane and Rinse
The New Yorker	Pitchfork	The New Yorker: Sporting Scene	
<b>To write about BOOKS, check out...</b>	Rolling Stone	<b>To write about TECHNOLOGY, check out...</b>	<b>To write about FASHION and ART, check out...</b>
The Atlantic	<b>To write about POLITICS or the ECONOMY, check out...</b>	Techcrunch.com	
L.A. Review of Books		Thenextweb.com	
NPR Books		Wired.com	The New York Times
The Guardian	Your preferred news source.	Tech2.com	Fashion Show Review
LitHub Daily		Gizmodo.com	Vogue
Slate Audio Book Club		Mashable.com	
		Theverge.com	

## Resources

*Beyond Literary Analysis* by Allison Marchetti and Rebekah O'Dell

## SAT Connection

Reading Rhetoric, The Official SAT Study Guide, p. 81

The SAT Essay, The Official SAT Study Guide, p. 173-221

Command of Evidence, The Official SAT Study Guide, p. 55

Words in Context, The Official SAT Study Guide, p. 61

Reading Information, The Official SAT Study Guide, p. 73

Reading Synthesis, The Official SAT Study Guide, p. 87

Writing & Language, The Official SAT Study Guide, p. 135-154

### **Vocabulary:**

\*Students self-select vocabulary words, consulting flash fiction mentor texts and personal vocabulary entries in Reader's Notebook.

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS**

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### **Accommodations and Modifications:**

**Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,**

**Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students**

Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:

- Use of visual and multisensory formats
- Use of assisted technology
- Use of prompts
- Modification of content and student products
- Testing accommodations
- Authentic assessments
- Small group/One to one
- Additional time

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

#### Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students:

- Adjusting the pace of lessons
- Curriculum compacting
- Inquiry-based instruction
- Independent study
- Higher-order thinking skills
- Interest-based content
- Student-driven instruction
- Real-world problems and scenarios
- Problem-based learning
- Interest-based research
- Authentic problem-solving

#### Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners:

- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts

- Personal vocabulary
- Text-to-speech
- Simplified instructions
- Visual learning, including graphic organizers
- Use of cognates to increase comprehension
- Teacher modeling
- Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills
- Scaffolding
- Word walls
- Sentence frames
- Think-pair-share
- Cooperative learning groups

#### Strategies and Practices that Support At-Risk Students:

- Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments
- Guided reading
- Introduce key vocabulary before the lesson
- Work in a small group
- The lesson taught again using a differentiated approach
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use visuals / Anchor Charts
- Leveled texts according to ability
- Choice Boards
- Literature circles
- Project-based learning
- Graphic organizers

- Choice books
- Mini-Workshops to reteach or extend
- Jigsaw
- Goal-setting with students
- Use of a reading buddy
- Exploration based on interest

#### Strategies and Practices that Support Students with 504 Plans:

- Follow all the 504 plan modifications
- Text-to-speech/audio-recorded selections
- Amplification system as needed
- Leveled texts according to ability
- Fine motor skill stations embedded in rotation as needed
- Modified or constrained spelling word lists
- Provide anchor charts with high-frequency words and phonemic patterns

## Standards

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LA.W.9-10.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
LA.W.9-10.1.A	Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
LA.W.9-10.1.B	Develop claim(s) and counterclaims avoiding common logical fallacies, propaganda devices, and using sound reasoning, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
LA.W.9-10.1.C	Use transitions (e.g., words, phrases, clauses) to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
LA.W.9-10.1.D	Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
LA.W.9-10.1.E	Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented.
LA.W.9-10.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are

appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

LA.W.9-10.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LA.W.9-10.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, share, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
LA.W.9-10.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
LA.W.9-10.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation (MLA or APA Style Manuals).
LA.W.9-10.9	Draw evidence from literary or nonfiction informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.W.9-10.9.B	Apply grades 9–10 Reading standards to nonfiction informational (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).
LA.W.9-10.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
LA.L.9-10.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

## Anchor Standards

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LA.K-12.NJSLSA.R1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.R2	Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.R3	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.R4	Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.R5	Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.R6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.R7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.R8	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

LA.K-12.NJSLSA.R9	Analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.R10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently with scaffolding as needed.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.W1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.W2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.W3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.W4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.W5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.W6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.W7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.W8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.W9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.K-12.NJSLSA.W10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## Interdisciplinary Standards

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LA.RH.9-10.7	Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text, to analyze information presented via different mediums.
LA.RH.9-10.8	Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.
LA.RST.9-10.2	Determine the central ideas, themes, or conclusions of a text; trace the text's explanation or depiction of a complex process, phenomenon, or concept; provide an accurate summary of the text.
LA.RST.9-10.4	Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific or technical context relevant to grades 9-10 texts and topics.
LA.RST.9-10.8	Determine if the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claim or a recommendation for solving a scientific or technical problem.
LA.WHST.9-10.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant sufficient textual and non-textual evidence.
LA.WHST.9-10.1.A	Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

LA.WHST.9-10.1.B	Develop claim(s) and counterclaims using sound reasoning, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
LA.WHST.9-10.1.C	Use transitions (e.g., words, phrases, clauses) to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
LA.WHST.9-10.1.D	Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
LA.WHST.9-10.1.E	Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented.
LA.WHST.9-10.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LA.WHST.9-10.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LA.WHST.9-10.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, share, and update writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
LA.WHST.9-10.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
LA.WHST.9-10.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
LA.WHST.9-10.9	Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.WHST.9-10.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## **Holocaust & Amistad Connections**

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SOC.6.3.12.D.1	Analyze the impact of current governmental practices and laws affecting national security and/or individual civil rights/privacy.
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## **Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills (CLKS):**

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9.4.12.CI.1: Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas

9.4.12.CT.2: Explain the potential benefits of collaborating to enhance critical thinking and problem solving

9.4.12.CT.4: Participate in online strategy and planning sessions for course-based, school-based, or other projects and determine the strategies that contribute to effective outcomes.

9.4.12.IML.2: Evaluate digital sources for timeliness, accuracy, perspective, credibility of the source, and relevance of information, in media, data, or other resources.

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

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8.1.8.E.1 - Effectively use a variety of search tools and filters in professional public databases to find information to solve a real world problem.

8.1.8.D.4 - Assess the credibility and accuracy of digital content

**LGBTQ & Persons With Disabilities**

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Student selected topics.