

# Unit 5 Historical Fiction & Writing About Reading

Content Area: **English Language Arts**  
Course(s): **Language Arts 4**  
Time Period: **February**  
Length: **4 Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit Summary

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In this unit, students will work in book clubs to read complex, historical fiction texts with deep comprehension. This cross-curricular unit will help students understand important time periods in American History that influence America today. The study of historical fiction as a genre is important because it exposes readers to complex, rich texts that explore both worlds of nonfiction and narrative. Students will set goals together and independently run their clubs; drawing upon their toolbox of strategies acquired all year long to explore character, grow theories, ask questions and fuel deep conversation. Students will not just discuss their books but use those conversations to write about reading and gather evidence to support their opinions and ideas. Students will explore the nonfiction facts, events and concepts of their novels and to support their understanding of the time period, students will research the time period to develop a timeline of important events during the era. The students will also incorporate technology by creating an end of unit presentation.

## Standards

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| LA.4.W.4.1.A | Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related idea the writer’s purpose.                         |
| LA.L.4.1     | Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.  |
| LA.L.4.1.A   | Use relative pronouns (who, whose, whom, which, that) and relative adverbs (where, when, why).  |
| LA.L.4.1.B   | Form and use the progressive (e.g., I was walking; I am walking; I will be walking) verb tenses.  |
| LA.L.4.1.C   | Use modal auxiliaries (e.g., can, may, must) to convey various conditions.  |
| LA.L.4.1.D   | Order adjectives within sentences according to conventional patterns (e.g., a small red bag rather than a red small bag).                                       |
| LA.L.4.1.E   | Form and use prepositional phrases.   |
| LA.L.4.1.F   | Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.   |
| LA.L.4.1.G   | Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., to, too, two; there, their).   |
| LA.L.4.2     | Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.  |
| LA.L.4.2.A   | Use correct capitalization.   |
| LA.L.4.2.B   | Use commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text.  |
| LA.L.4.2.C   | Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.   |
| LA.L.4.2.D   | Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.   |
| LA.W.4.1     | Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.   |
| LA.W.4.1.A   | Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose. |
| LA.W.4.1.B   | Provide reasons that are supported by facts from texts and/or other sources.  |
| LA.W.4.1.C   | Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in   |

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|                | addition).   |
| LA.W.4.1.D     | Provide a conclusion related to the opinion presented.   |
| LA.W.4.4       | Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)   |
| LA.W.4.5       | With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.  |
| LA.W.4.6       | With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting. |
| LA.W.4.7       | Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.  |
| LA.W.4.9       | Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.  |
| LA.W.4.9.A     | Apply grade 4 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions].”).  |
| LA.W.4.9.B     | Apply grade 4 Reading standards to informational texts (e.g., “Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text”).   |
| LA.W.4.10      | Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.                            |
| LA.RI.4.3      | Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.   |
| LA.RI.4.9      | Integrate and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.   |
| LA.RI.4.10     | By the end of year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above, with scaffolding as needed.   |
| LA.RL.4.1      | Refer to details and examples in a text and make relevant connections when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.   |
| LA.RL.4.3      | Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).   |
| LA.RL.4.4      | Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in literature.  |
| LA.SL.4.1.A    | Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.   |
| LA.SL.4.1.C    | Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.  |
| LA.SL.4.1.D    | Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.   |
| LA.SL.4.2      | Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, and orally).   |
| TECH.8.1.5.A   | Technology Operations and Concepts: Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems and operations.   |
| TECH.8.1.5.A.1 | Select and use the appropriate digital tools and resources to accomplish a variety of tasks including solving problems.  |

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| TECH.8.1.5.A.2   | Format a document using a word processing application to enhance text and include graphics, symbols and/or pictures.       |
| TECH.8.1.5.A.CS1 | Understand and use technology systems  |
| TECH.8.1.5.A.CS2 | Select and use applications effectively and productively.  |
| TECH.8.1.5.B.CS2 | Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.  |
| TECH.8.1.5.C.CS1 | Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others by employing a variety of digital environments and media |
| TECH.8.1.5.D.1   | Understand the need for and use of copyrights.   |
| TECH.8.1.5.D.2   | Analyze the resource citations in online materials for proper use.   |
| TECH.8.1.5.D.CS1 | Advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.                                      |
| TECH.8.1.5.E.CS1 | Plan strategies to guide inquiry.  |
| TECH.8.1.5.E.CS2 | Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.        |

## Student Learning Objectives

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Reading:

Students will learn to:

- increase reading stamina.
- Identify the 'story grammar' of stories (character, setting, goal, problem/solution).
- use non-fiction texts, movie clips and Social Studies texts to help them to understand historical fiction novels/
- identify the vocabulary necessary to label the main fixtures common to most historical fiction.
- identify events that are significant in this time period.
- determine the mood of a historical fiction novel.

Writing:

Students will learn to:

- increase writing stamina.
- determine the mood of a historical fiction novel.
- compare and contrast the historical fiction era to modern day.
- understand the events of the era by developing a timeline.
- write a literary analysis.

## Essential Questions

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Essential Questions for Reading:

- What norms create a successful book club?
- How do readers use empathy to understand why a character says, does, or behaves a certain way?
- How does the time period of a story seem different from how we live today?
- How do we know that when reading historical fiction, the "things" in the story will be very different from the "things" we have in our lives today?
- What events are significant in this time period?
- How do the obstacles of the time period affect the characters' responses/actions?
- How can we reread important moments in a text to actively think about how the story is teaching lessons about human strength or social justice?

- How can the questions we ask in book clubs help us understand:
  - why history unfolds the way it does?
  - how individual stories bear witness to suffering and courage?
  - what lessons we can take from characters' experiences?

Essential Questions for Writers:

- How do the writer's words affect the reader?
- How do writers compare and contrast historical fiction to modern era?
- How do writers convey their understanding of historical fiction novels through writing?
- How do writers reflect on characters actions in historical fiction novels?
- Why do writers research events in history?
- How do writers share their understanding of historical events through fiction?

## Enduring Understandings

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Reading:

Students understand that...

- establishing and following participation routines helps make successful book clubs.
- historical fiction novels do not merely reference another time period; they also introduce readers to large, complicated themes.
- historical events have recurred in human history and continue to be relevant today.

Writing:

Students understand that...

- events of the era affect the characters' motivations and actions.
- events of the era affect mood and setting.
- characters faced circumstances of the era that caused suffering and courage.
- writing about historical events enhances understanding of the events of the era.

## Application

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Reading:

Students will be able to independently use their learning to:

- read more than one historical fiction book about a particular time period or era.
- use strategies of envisioning, inferring, and synthesizing to deeply comprehend historical fiction.
- piece together information from the story to make an inference and try to figure out the big idea.

Writing:

Students will be able to independently use their learning to...

- develop a timeline of the historical fiction era using nonfiction resources to develop an understanding of the events in the era.
- compare and contrast the historical fiction era to modern day by using a venn diagram or other visual means to identify similarities and differences.
- create a But / Why? entry on one of the characters in their historical fiction novel.
- develop a problem→ solution graphic organizer based on one problem in their historical fiction novel.

- create a well constructed response to “How is the time period affecting the problem or the solution?” following the conventions of good writing.
- create a “talk and action” window into a character’s personality from a historical fiction novel.
- determine the mood of the historical fiction novel following this format: The mood of this scene is \_\_\_\_\_, the author’s words \_\_\_\_\_ made me feel \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. The author wanted the reader to feel this way because \_\_\_\_\_.
- create a well constructed response to “ How is the character suffering and being courageous” following the conventions of good writing.

## Skills

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Reading:

Students will be skilled at ...

- discussing with their book club about what a historical fiction books might “really be about”
- asking questions in their book clubs about:
  - why history unfolds the way it does
  - how individual stories bear witness to suffering and courage.
  - what lessons we can take from characters’ experiences.

Writing:

Students will be skilled at ...

- writing about historical fiction.
- understanding the era and events that affected the era.
- writing literary analysis.