Social Commentary: How Can We Impact the World Around Us?

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **9-10**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Focus: "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives." - Jackie Robinson

This unit explores and analyzes the importance of social commentaries with the idea of implementing or promoting change by informing the general populace about a given problem and appealing to people's sense of justice. Students will use a variety of texts to understand authors' writing craft and purpose. The students will actively engage in both large and small collaborative discussions and dialogues that enhance critical thinking and analysis of textual works. Through an in-depth study of lectures, images, essays, poetry and prose, the students will explore the understanding of impact of an individual on society. Students will also reflect on people, places, or events that changed their lives. Students will understand that reading and writing fiction and nonfiction selections builds and maintains relationships, facilitates innovation, builds effective partnerships, creates empathy, and develops leadership.

This unit is designed to be part of a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including physical and social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship. During this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers. When completing this course, students can make informed choices and pursue electives that further their study and contribute toward the formation of career interest.

Revision: July 2023

Standards

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

In accordance with New Jersey's Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional materials that highlight and promote diversity, including: economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, and disabilities.

This unit also reflects the goals of the Department of Education and the Amistad Commission including the

infusion of the history of Africans and African-Americans into the curriculum in order to provide an accurate, complete, and inclusive history regarding the importance of African-Americans to the growth and development of American society in a global context.

The identified standards reflect a developmental progression across grades/ levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness and global citizenship. The standards that follow are relevant to this course in addition to the associated content-based standards listed below.

LA.RI.11-12.1	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
LA.RI.11-12.2	Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.3	Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).
LA.RI.11-12.5	Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
LA.RI.11-12.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.7	Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
LA.RI.11-12.8	Describe and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. and global texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., The Federalist, presidential addresses).
LA.RI.11-12.9	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes and rhetorical features, including primary source documents relevant to U.S. and/or global history.
LA.W.11-12.1.A	Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
LA.W.11-12.1.B	Develop claim(s) and counterclaims avoiding common logical fallacies and using sound reasoning and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
LA.W.11-12.1.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.11-12.1.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.11-12.1.E	Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
LA.W.11-12.3.A	Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
LA.W.11-12.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
LA.W.11-12.3.C	Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
LA.W.11-12.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
LA.W.11-12.3.E	Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
LA.W.11-12.4	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.11-12.5	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.11-12.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, share, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
LA.W.11-12.7	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.11-12.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. (MLA or APA Style Manuals).
LA.W.11-12.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.SL.11-12.2	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, qualitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.
LA.SL.11-12.3	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
LA.SL.11-12.4	Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LA.SL.11-12.5	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
LA.SL.11-12.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

LA.L.11-12.1.A	Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
LA.L.11-12.2.A	Observe hyphenation conventions.
LA.L.11-12.2.B	Spell correctly.
LA.L.11-12.3.A	Vary syntax for effect, apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts.
LA.L.11-12.4.A	Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
LA.L.11-12.4.B	Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., conceive, conception, conceivable).
LA.L.11-12.4.C	Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
LA.L.11-12.4.D	Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
LA.L.11-12.5.A	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
LA.L.11-12.5.B	Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
LA.11-12.SL.11-12.2	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Essential Questions

- How do common themes in literature reflect societal concerns?
- How do societal and life events influence writers and the development of literature?
- How does an author manipulate form, technique, and rhetorical/literary devices to impact social change?
- How does satire as a genre reveal cultural beliefs and concerns?
- How does the medium of a work alter the audience reaction?
- How is an author's life reflected in his/her work?
- How may an analysis of literary techniques, rhetorical devices, and the author's life experiences reveal and/or clarify thematic ideas?
- In what way does writing serves as a form of inquiry for its author?
- What techniques may a writer use to effectively establish voice and tone?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- A variety of satirical devices including hyperbole, understantement, parody, irony, sarcasm, euphemism, and invective
- Adding tone to their writing
- How concessions and counterarguments enhance a speech or essay
- How to apply appeals to emotion, ethos, logos, an pathos in writing

- How to create an original thesis or claim
- How to determine an author's tone through the close analysis of an author's diction and syntax
- How to determine the credibility of an author
- How to establish an authors' tone and purpose
- How to identify quality sources through research
- How to identify societal issues that authors choose to question via their written texts
- How to justify ideas using statistics, expert testimony, and facts
- How to use mentor texts as models for their own writing
- Incorporating satire as a persuasive technique
- Writing an organized and developed response

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark assessment screeners, administered three times per year. Follow up diagnostic assessments are used to target skill remediation. Student proficiency allows for additional or alternative assessment based on demonstration or absence of skill.

Students demonstrate differentiated proficiency through both formative and summative assessments in the classroom. Based on individual student readiness and performance, assessments can be implemented as formative and/or summative.

The performance tasks listed below are examples of the types of assessments teachers may use in the classroom and the data collected by the district to track student progress.

Formative:

- Teacher Observations
- Accountable Talk, Socratic Seminars/Fish Bowls
- Analysis of multimodal text sets
- Analysis of critical commentary, literary criticism
- Writers Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites), emphasizing author's craft
- Close reading analysis of text using evidence as substantiation
- Conferences: Individual and small group, accompanying conference notes
- Reflective exercises and assessments
- Oral Reading and Interpretation
- Peer and self-evaluations of learning
- Entrance and Exit Tickets
- Open-Ended Responses in Journal
- Source assessment / research tasks

Summative, including Alternative Assessments:

- Social commentary graphic novels
- Social commentary satire pieces
- On-demand Writing Assessments, timed and untimed
- Researched Presentations
- Performance Assessments
- Project-based Learning
- Problem-based Learning
- Personalized Learning
- Visual Literacy Prompts
- Digital Portfolios
- Online Discussion Forums

Benchmark:

- Benchmark reading and writing assessments, scored using rubrics, district-created and standards-aligned; based on NJSLA, reported twice per year
- Engage in text set analysis using visual literacy and close reading analysis strategies to compose a claim and use evidence as support
- Grade-level Standards-based Rubrics
- Midterm and Final exams
- Common Lit Reading Benchmark, three times per year
- NJGPA
- SAT
- PSAT
- IXL

Learning Plan

Instructional time for reading will be divided into thirds; one third of the time will be dedicated to whole class text instruction; one third will include literature circles; one third, independent reading. The intent is for student-readers to have clear modelling through whole-class instruction. These strategies are practiced through literature circles in a group setting of peers and through independent practice monitored through teacher conferencing with students. An emphasis will be based on the transfer of skills instruction, teaching the reader, not merely the content of the text. The text complexity and rigor of reading will be appropriate for grade 11; materials selection for whole-class and literature circles will be from the book list approved by the Board of Education. Classrooms will house rich and diverse independent reading libraries of both contemporary and canonical works.

The reading of text during the eleventh grade targets not only comprehension, but also analysis. Students will read both long-and short-form, exceprted and full-length, print and electronic, fiction and nonfiction texts. Study will include the analysis of visual texts including film clips, art, infographic, maps, charts, graphs, cartoons, graphic novel. Technique and terminology specific to a genre of reading is examined. Research tasks are embedded throughout the year and a minimum of one task is completed during each unit.

Vocabulary instruction will be chosen from the reading material.

Students write in all modes of rhetoric including narration/description, argument/persuasion, and exposition. Various forms of writing including digital writing are emphasized as well. Grammar instruction is embedded in writing instruction through mini-lessons, holding students accountable for skills taught and practiced; modelling is done through mentor texts, both published and student-crafted. Teachers focus on process in addition to product with an emphasis on synthesizing texts with nuanced understanding; teacher-created multi-modal text sets will be used as materials. High-and low-stakes, timed and untimed pieces are all important.

Students will be taught how to speak and listen in addition to being assessed on these skills. Lessons will include identifying effective speaking and listening strategies, analyzing various techniques for enhancing voice and movement, modeling various effective speakers and listeners strategies, and create opportunities to develop vocal effectiveness and presentation skills.

Students may complete analytical analysis, persuasive writing, synthesis essays, database research, and journal writing. Students will participate in individual, partner and group activies including Literature Circles, Socratic Discussions, Jigsaw Methods, and other Cooperative Learning activities.

Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

This unit of study will focus on "Social Commentary: How Can We Impact the World Around Us" and is centered on the quotation by Jackie Robinson: ""A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives." This unit is designed to allow students to learn about the development of social justice through high-interest mediums, including satire and graphic novels. Satire during this unit may include excerpts from Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal", *The Onion*, and *McSweeney's*, as well as pop culture clips from shows such as *The Simpsons*, *Ted Lasso*, *South Park*, *Brooklyn 99*, and *The Office*. Graphic novels that may be used during this unit include graphic memoirs such as *March* and *Fist Stick Knife Gun* as well as graphic history such as *Run For It, Nat Turner,* and *The Silence of Our Friends*. These texts will serve as mentors in guiding students towards creating similar pieces of satire and/or graphic novels about a social justice topic that they are personally interested and invested in.

Teachers may develop additional lessons using these various subthemes: "Human Condition," "Self-Deception," "Integrity verses Corruption," "Politics and Theater Collide," "Promoting Change," "Free Speech and Censorship."

For this particular unit, teachers should . . .

- Collect a series of high-interest satire pieces for discussion and analysis
- Select common reading and literature circle texts
- Identify potential social justice topics students will want to explore
- Plan a summative assessment that allows students to use satire / graphic novels or other high-interest mediums to explore social justice topics

Potential lesson plans/activities may include:

- Students may analyze a theme/ societal issue by examining poems and short stories of different historical periods
- Students may compare directorial liberties in movies and plays and identify the social commentary of the director
- Students may create a graphic novel about a social justice topic of their choosing
- Students may track the use of graphic novel techniques across a text to identify how an author uses images to make social commentary
- Students may write a narrative piece identifying how they have had an impact on the world around them/in their community
- Students may perform a research task in which they identify how actors around the world engage in social commentary
- Students may assess the quality of sources through a research task in which they use strategies to identify high-quality sources
- Students may learn how to write argumentative pieces that include a call-to-action for a movement about which they feel passionate
- Students may give a persuasive speech in class advocating for their peers to take up a cause
- Students may keep a journal over the course of the unit in which they track their reactions to a theme or motif relating to a text's social commentary
- Students may craft their own satirical pieces modeled after Swfit's *A Modest Proposal* in order to learn the effectiveness of satire in social commentary
- Students may create their own graphic novels that serve as an introduction and call-to-action for a social justice topic of their choosing

Materials

The materials used in this course integrate a variety of leveled instructional, enrichment, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Teachers must refer to the district-approved Core Book List while selecting whole-class or small-group leveled resources.

Potential Instructional Materials

Common Reading:

Fictional Text (Novel, Short Story, Poetry)

Graphic Novel: *March* (Books 1-3) by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell

Graphic Novel: *Run For It* by by Marcelo D'Salete
Graphic Novel: Fist Stick Knife Gun by Geoffrey Canada

Graphic Novel: The Silence of Our Friends by by Mark Long , Jim Demonakos, and Nate Powell

Graphic Novel: Nat Turner by Kyle Baker

Fiction: Utopia, Thomas More's

Selections from *McSweeney's*

NonFiction Text (Short, Long)

The Plea for Eight Hours, Terence Powderly

A Modest Proposal, Jonathan Swift

Fear of Change, Henry Ford

Selections from *The New York Times*
Selections from *The Atlantic Monthly*
Selections from *The Economist*
Selections from *Time Magazine*
Selections from *PBS Newshour*
Selections from *The New Yorker*

Visual Text (Art, Photography, Infographic, Film)

Podcast: Revisionist History Podcast Episode 10: The Satire Paradox

Film: Gulliver's Travels, Voyage to Lilliput

Visuals: Artist and political activist, works by Banksy

Photography: works by James Nachtwey

Film: 13th

Film: Last Day of Freedom

Film: I am Not Your Negro

Film: Waiting for Superman

Television: South Park Episode "You Have 0 Friends"

Television: Clips from shows such as The Office, Ted Lasso, Parks and Recreation, The Simpsons

Speaking and Listening

Excerpts from Monologists, including political, religious, and/or comedians

Segments from Discussion Shows on Network and Cable Television, Netfix and/or Podcasts

Speech: Why I Love a Country That Once Betrayed Me, George Takei

Speech: To Those Who Keep Slaves, and Approve the Practice, Richard Allen

TedTalk: Capitalism Will Eat Democracy — Unless We Speak Up, Yanis Varoufakis

Independent/Small Group Reading:

The Silence of Our Friends: The Civil Rights Struggle Was Never Black and White by Mark Long and Jim Demonakos

Muhammad Ali by Amazing Ameziane

Fist Stick Knife Gun: A Personal History of Violence by Geoffrey Canada

Run for It: Stories of Slaves Who Fought For Their Freedom by MArcelo D'Salete

Research:

Cranford High School Media Center Databases:

- JStor
- Ebsco Host
- Facts on File
- Follet Fiction Ebooks
- Gale Reference Ebooks
- New York Times
- Salem History Database
- Salem Literature
- Goodreads
- History Channel
- MLA Format online: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/08/

- Purdue Owl:https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/

Cranford Public Library Online Resources: http://cranford.com/library/

Additional Resources:

- Ad Fontes media bias chart
- Media Bias / Fact Check website
- Chromebooks/laptops
- Google Classroom or other LMS
- SORA
- Swank Streaming
- Digital Theatre+
- Writing Portfolios
- Writer's Notebook/Journal
- Google Suite
- Voice memo application
- Audible
- Padlet
- Jamboard
- Common LIt
- Newsela
- Socrative.com
- Poll everywhere
- Remind.com
- Soundcloud
- Netflix
- YouTube

Teacher Resources

- *Shakespeare Set Free: Sourcebook for Classroom Teachers*, Folger Shakespeare Library
- *Readicide*, Kelly Gallagher
- *A Novel Approach*, Kate Roberts
- *When Kids Can't Read*, Kylene Beers
- *Beyond Literary Analysis,* Allison Marchetti & Rebekah O'Dell
- *Writing with Mentors*, Allison Marchetti & Rebekah O'Dell
- *Argument in the Real World*, Kristen Hawley Turner and Troy Hicks
- *Writing Instruction that Works: Proven Methods for Middle and High School Classrooms*, Arthur Applebee and Judith Langer
- *Teaching Adolescent Writers*, Kelly Gallagher
- *Write Like This,* Kelly Gallagher
- *Book Love*, Penny Kittle
- *The Journey is Everything*, Katherine Bomer
- *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Thomas C. Foster
- *The Digital Writing Workshop*, Troy Hicks

- *Crafting Original Writing*, Troy Hicks
- *Fearless Writing: Multigenre to Motivate and Inspire*, Tom Romano
- *Understanding Comics, Scott McCloud*
- *Making Comics*, Scott McCloud
- *The Art of Styling Sentences*, Ann Longknife and K.D. Sullivan
- *The Well-Crafted Sentence*, Nora Bacon

Strategies for Accommodation and Modification

Content specific accommodations and modifications as well as Career Ready Practices are listed here for all students, including: Special Education, English Language Learners, At Risk of School Failure, Gifted and Talented, Students with 504.

Possible accommodations include:

- Access speech-to-text function on computer
- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts
- Allow students to set individual goals for writing/reading
- Offer graphic organizaers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques
- Offer oral assessments
- Supply study guide questions and access to class notes
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student
- Take additional time to compete a task or project
- Scaffold by chunking material and texts
- Individualize reading choices based on ability and level
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Small group and one on one assessment
- Mark text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it
- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Modify the length and quantity of assignments to fit individual
- Differentiate roles in discussion groups
- Use digital technology, eBooks,, audio version of printed text
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide distinct steps in a process; elminate unnecessary steps, as needed
- Use art, music, and film to convey alternate interpretation of literature and assessment
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines

Adhere to all modifications and accommodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plan