Unit 4 Reading: Investigating Social Issues in Text Set Clubs

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 2**
Length: **4 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This unit of study focuses on the discussion of social issues, analyzing the way characters respond to these conflicts and deciphering the author's message. Students will uncover the following: power relationships among characters, identifying critical scenes, and theme.

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. In this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers.

Revision date: July 2023

Standards

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.

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.

LA.RL.6.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
LA.RL.6.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
LA.RL.6.5	Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

LA.RL.6.6	Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
LA.RL.6.9	Compare, contrast and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
LA.SL.6.1.B	Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
LA.SL.6.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
LA.SL.6.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

Essential Questions

- How do characters' conflicts help us to connect to text? How do these connections help students to identify with others in their lives?
- How does discussing author's crafts not only improve our understanding of text, but also lead us to become more sophisticated writers?
- How does the practice of close reading help us to better understand text?
- How does understanding perspective and point of view create a richer and meaningful reading experience?
- What strategies can we employ to be alert to social issues? How do we identify issues that are not directly stated and seem hidden from readers?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- applying skills learned to research relevant to readers' lives.
- deciphering author's messages about social issues.
- determining central ideas in texts.
- determining theme in the text.
- how to research relevant social issues.
- how to synthesize the lessons learned.
- identifying critical scenes.
- identifying first person point of view and its impact on the text.
- practicing close reading skills.
- uncovering power relationships among characters.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

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.

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by benchmark assessments. Follow up diagnostic assessments may be used to target skill remediation. Student proficiency allows for additional or alternative assessment based on demonstration or absence of skill.

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 Assessments

- Responses to Essential Questions
- One-to-one reading conferences and accompanying conferring notes
- Peer conferences/Partner Reading Time
- Large and Small-Group Discussion
- Whole group mini-lessons (model reading strategies)
- Accountable Talk
- Turn and talks
- Reading Responses on Post-its/Stop and Jots
- Reading Responses in Journals/Notebooks
- Interactive Read Aloud Reading responses, written and oral (Thinkaloud and Close Reading)
- Exit tickets or Do Nows
- Engagement Observations
- Reading Logs and Reading Surveys
- Envision and prediction post-it notes/Board
- Monitor Stamina, Volume, and Fluency through rubrics
- Read increasingly complex text by monitoring student self-selection of leveled text
- Small Group Strategy Reading group work
- Knowledge of domain-specific vocabulary
- Grade-Level Engagement Rubric for Verbal and Non-Verbal Participation

Summative Assessments including Alternative Assessments:

- Reading Notebooks using grade-level text questions
- Running Records
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: Reading learning progressions
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: rubrics with student samples
- Vocabulary/Word Study Assessments
- Performance- and project-based learning
- Personalized, student-designed assessments

Benchmark Assessments

- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, grades 3-8, Levels L-Z, Heinemann

- Complete Comprehension, Independent Reading Assessment, fiction, Jennifer Serravallo, Heinemann
- iReady Screener and Diagnostic Assessment
- Benchmark Grade-Level Reading and Writing Assessments aligned with New Jersey Student Learning Standards
- New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA)

Learning Plan

The Middle School Language Arts/Literacy program encompasses reading literature and informational text, speaking and listening and enhancing language skills (spelling, grammar, and vocabulary). The understandings and skills of each strand of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards are not isolated, but integrated, interactive, and embedded in all subject areas across the curriculum. Teachers may engage in two whole-class, closely-studied community readings per year, not to exceed four weeks each.

Reading instruction is literature-based and follows a balanced literacy approach through a number of strategies and techniques in Reading Workshop. These include read-alouds/alongs, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, small group strategy instruction, one-to-one conferencing, and partnership or book club discussions. Reading Workshop provides students with the necessary tools to communicate orally, read and comprehend print, and write with clarity and purpose for a variety of audiences. Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the reader. Students will select from authentic literature at their independent and instructional reading levels.

Lessons should follow the mini-lesson format:

- Teaching point(s) for each lesson
- Connection: Connects new learning to previous learning/lessons
- Teach/Modeling: Uses ‘think alouds’ when modeling what you expect students to do
- Guided Practice/Active Engagement: Guides students through practice of the teaching point
- Link to Independent Practice: Helps writers understand the purpose for the writing they are about to do and the skills/craft they will be practicing/applying independently as good writers
- Independent Writing/Student Conferences: Provides time for students to do independent writing while teacher confers with individual students, works with small groups, or writing clubs*.
- Closure/Sharing: Pull students back together and recognize the work they have done relating to the teaching point. (See end of section for closure ideas.)

Please refer to the Middle School ELA, Grade 6 Folder for specific lessons and materials for Word Study.

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 focuses on the discussion of social issues, analyzing the way characters respond to these conflicts, and deciphering the author's message. Students will uncover power relationships among characters. Students will identify critical scenes. Students will uncover theme.

For this particular unit, teachers should...

- Prepare materials for discussion, writing, and synthesis
- Select mentor texts for modeling
- Establish book club norms and expectations
- Prepare for conferences with students
- Prepare materials for review of signposts
- Create formative and summative assessments

- Whole class novels may include: The Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Patterson The Cay by Theodore Taylor Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh by Robert C. O'Brien The Devil's Arithmetic by Jane Yolen The View from Saturday by E.L. Konigsburg
- Academic terms may include the following: analyze, point of view, perspective, synthesize, critical, reflection, motivation, traits, characteristics, metacognitive, inference, visualize, envision, determine, compare/contrast.
- Additional Text Sets: Al Capone Does My Shirts by Gennifer Choldenko Granny Torelli Makes Soup- by Sharon Creech Loser by Jerry Spinelli Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli
- Do think alouds – where thinking about the text is modeled for the students- examples- page 9, page 10, page 17 and 18 - unit 3 TC curriculum Model how to jot using boxes and bullets or other strategies Whole class conversations about books and articles about how to find the big ideas and synthesize a lot of information Show how authors use different literary devices Model listening and talking behaviors in large group and small group conversations about texts.
- During Shared Reading expose students to the following: •Think deeply about the characters as they deal with the problems • Synthesize information into big ideas and supporting details • Take notes on the central ideas and supporting details using boxes and bullets – • Organize ideas by what is most important • Use text features to aid in comprehension • Use the details the author gives to infer ideas that are not directly stated
- Guided reading groups (as needed)
- Interactive read-alouds (think alouds and close reading)
- Literary elements may include the following: theme, character, plot, setting, problem/solution/resolution, secondary characters, protagonist/antagonist, external/internal conflict, point of view (first person, third person), narrator, scene, central idea, genre, drama, narrative, stanza
- Mentor/Anchor Texts ideas: "Inside Out" , by Francisco Jimenez "Raymond's Run" by Toni Cade Bambara "Addie on the Inside" by James Howe "The Family Under the Bridge" by Natalie Savage Carlson "The Cicuit" by Francisco Jimenez
- Poetry terms may include the following: white space, lines, stanza, rhyme scheme, lyrics, meter, end rhyme, slant/imperfect rhyme.

- Reference: Teachers College Reading and Writing Project- Social Issues Book List
- Short stories- "Thank You Ma'am" by Langston Hughes, "Everything Will Be Okay" by James Howe, The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate, "Freak the Geek" by John Green, "Your Move" by Eve Bunting and "The Necklace" by Guy Maupassant
- Teacher observations
- Text sets- may include- Rules- by Cynthia Lord, Counting by Sevens, by Holly Sloan, The Misfits by James Howe, Wonder by RJ Palacio, Crash by Jerry Spinelli
- Various nonfiction articles and novels: such as selections from Scope Magazine, Junior Scholastic, Newsela.com, Readworks.org, Goodreads.com and other nonfiction books
- Vocabulary strategies such as using context clues; identifying prefixes, roots, suffixes; analyzing syntax including grammatical structures and parts of speech, creating word walls, to name a few.
- Vocabulary Words will be culled from mentor texts and independent reading.
- Whole group mini-lessons (model reading strategies)

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.

Please reference the materials in this Middle School ELA, grade 6 folder under "reading."

- anchor charts- (see pg 17- unit 3- TC curriculum)
- For a Better World: Reading and Writing for Social Action, Randy and Katherine Bomer
- Girls, Social Class and Literacy, Stephanie Jones
- leveled text sets (recommended to keep groups between 3-6 students)
- magazines - Junior Scholastic, Time for Kids, Scholastic- Scope, New Moon
- post its
- Reading for their Life, Alfred Tatum
- reading journals
- research sites- Readworks.com, Newsela, teenhealthandwellness.com
- sentence starters- (see pg 9- unit 3- TC curriculum)
- short stories
- Social Issues Book Clubs: Reading for Empathy and Advocacy, Audra Kirshbaum Robb, Emily Strang-Campbell (Heinemann)
- vocabulary journals

- www.readingandwritingproject.com

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.

The structure of reading workshop is designed to differentiate and address specific goals and learning for each reader:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- The teacher will assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- Students will select from authentic literature at their independent and instructional reading levels.
- Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the reader.

Possible accommodations during reading workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts, word walls.
- Have a designated reader for difficult content
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student
- Create packet of suggested ways to "Talk and Share About Books" to allow for independence.
- Take additional time to compete a task or project
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Questioning techniques – QAR (Question-Answer Relationships) Right There, Think and Search, Author and You, On My Own – (50 Instruction Routines to Develop Content Literacy – Pearson Publishing 2011) Inclusion Strategy Book
- Mark text with a highlighter
- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide a distinct steps in a process; elminate unnecessary steps, as needed.
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines
- Use digital ebooks, technology, audio and video version of printed text
- Differentiate roles in discussion groups
- Access speech to text function on computer

Possible modifications to content during reading workshop include, but are not limited to:

- The teacher will refer to the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum: A Tool for Assessment, Planning and Teaching to target speciifc strategies to teach students below benchmark levels.
- Adhere to all modifications and accomodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plans.

Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the reader.