Unit 3 Reading: Sci-Fi, Fantasy, and Dystopia

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **4-5 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will explore ideas and concepts related to science fiction, fantasy, and dystopian genres by reading and becoming familiar with complex worlds. Students will identify and analyze common elements of dystopia, sci-fi, and fantasy by reading across these genres. They will also immerse themselves in the study and analysis of archetypes, plot structures such as the hero's journey, and commonly explored themes as they play out in sci-fi, fantasy, and dystopian stories.

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.

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Pacing Guide

Please refer tothis Language Arts Reading and Writing Workshop Pacing Guide for grade 8 Advanced.

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.

Information Literacy

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.

LA.RL.8.1	Cite the textual evidence and make relevant connections that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
LA.RL.8.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
LA.RL.8.3	Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
LA.RL.8.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
LA.RL.8.5	Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
LA.RL.8.6	Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
LA.RL.8.7	Evaluate the choices made by the directors or actors by analyzing the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script.
LA.RL.8.9	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.
LA.RL.8.10	By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above, scaffolding as needed.
	There are tradeoffs between allowing information to be public and keeping information private and secure.
9.4.8.GCA.2	Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.
9.4.8.IML.2	Identify specific examples of distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of information.
9.4.8.IML.9	Distinguish between ethical and unethical uses of information and media (e.g., 1.5.8.CR3b, 8.2.8.EC.2).
9.4.8.IML.10	Examine the consequences of the uses of media (e.g., RI.8.7).
9.4.8.IML.11	Predict the personal and community impact of online and social media activities.
9.4.8.IML.14	Analyze the role of media in delivering cultural, political, and other societal messages.

LA.L.8.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.8.4.A	Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
LA.L.8.4.B	Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
LA.L.8.4.C	Consult 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 or its part of speech.
LA.L.8.4.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.8.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
LA.L.8.5.A	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
LA.L.8.5.B	Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
LA.L.8.5.C	Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
LA.L.8.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Essential Questions

- How can paying attention to detail, narrative structure, and archetypes help readers to understand fantasy/sci-fi/dystopia stories and our own worlds more deeply?
- How can reading be strengthened by compounding understandings from the current text with the themes from all the texts that came before it?
- How can seeing the same patterns in real life and world events help me make sense of them as well?
- How can strategies from reading other genres help readers make sense of imaginary, often complicated worlds?
- How can themes, and the details which support each one, be traced across a single text and across multiple texts?
- How does noticing some traditional literary techniques, themes and archetypes help strengthen understanding of the stories?
- In what ways does understanding these worlds offer insights or critiques of our own world?

Enduring Understandings

- Noticing some traditional literary techniques, themes and archetypes help strengthen understanding of stories.
- Paying attention to detail, narrative structure, and archetypal characters can help readers not only to understand fantasy/sci-fi/dystopian worlds, but also their our own world.
- Reading be strengthened by compounding understandings from the current text with the themes from all the texts that came before it.
- Reading from many different genres can help readers make sense of complicated, imaginary worlds.

- Seeing the same patterns in books as in real life and world events help make sense of them.
- Themes, and the details which support each one, can be traced across a single text and across multiple texts.
- Understanding complex, imaginary worlds affects underlying ideas offers insights and critiques of our own world.

Students Will Know

- Character archetypes and plot structures commonly used in these genres
- That setting plays a large role in sci-fi, fantasy, and dystopia stories.
- The common elements of the dystopian, science fiction, and fantasy genres and ways in which these are distinct and overlapping
- The concept of "the willing suspension of disbelief" and its role in these genres
- The meaning of allegory
- The steps of the hero's journey and its place in a larger literary tradition
- Themes often explored in these genres

Students Will Be Skilled At

- Analyzing author's purpose
- Analyzing the structure of fantasy/sci-fi/dystopian stories
- Comparing and contrasting texts
- Determining the main idea or the author's "warning" (when stated either explicitly or implicitly)
- Identifying and analyzing symbols within stories
- Identifying and analyzing various character and story archetypes

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.

In addition to the "possible assessments" provided in the Learning Plan section, teachers may consider the performance tasks listed below:

Formative Assessments

- Responses to Essential Questions
- Viewing students' Biblionasium accounts
- Self-Assessment (Reading Inventory)
- Model "Ways to Write About Reading"
- Teacher-generated "writing about reading" options
- 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
- Quick-Writes about Reading
- 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
- Text and Video analysis
- 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
- Book Talk (written script and oral presentation)
- Timeline containing "impactful texts"
- 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
- Presentations
- Performance- and project-based learning
- Personalized, student-designed assessments
- LIteracy Centers

Benchmark Asessments

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

Standards and 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.)

This class establishes a "staircase" of increasing complexity in what students must be able to read so that all students are ready for the demands of high school-level reading. Additionally this unit requires the progressive development of reading comprehension so that students advancing are able to gain more from whatever they read. Students will read a diverse array of classic and contemporary literature and gain a greater appreciation of the various literary genres through a careful study of plot, character, setting, point of view, and theme. Genres may include but not limited to the following; novels, short stories, print and electronic articles, picture books, songs/lyrics, media clips, drama, poetry, folk tales, and fables.

Throughout this class, students will read challenging informational texts in a range of subjects. Informational text can be seen as a type of nonfiction. Informational text conveys facts about the natural or social world; crafted by an expert in the field to an audience of lay people; includes specialized features such as headings and technical jargon. Students are expected to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspective while acquiring needed skills and strategies.

Please refer to the Middle School ELA, Grade 8 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.

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.

Instructional Materials

For Use with Students During Learning Plan

- "All Summer in a Day" by Ray Bradbury
- "Tough Alice" by Jane Yolen
- Chapter 1 of The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins
- Chapter 1 of Divergent by Veronica Roth
- Interstellar Cinderella by Deborah Underwood
- The Giver by Lois Lowry
- Twelve Impossible Things before Breakfast by Jane Yolen
- After: Nineteen Stories of Apocalypse and Dystopia
- Guys Read: Other Worlds
- Trailers or clips from Harry Potter, Divergent, Narnia, Lord of the Rings, The Princess Bride, and/or others
- Video: "What Makes a Hero" by Matthew Winkler: https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-makes-a-hero-

matthew-winkler
- "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut
- "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson
- Terrible Things (picture book) by Eve Bunting
- Article (excerpted): "The Power of Cautionary Questions..." by Neil Gaiman https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/05/31/neil-gaiman-the-view-from-the-cheap-seats-bradbury/
- Video: "What 'Orwellian' Really Means" by Noah Tavlin https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-orwellian-really-means-noah-tavlin
- Video: "How Fictiona Can Change Reality" by Jessica Wise https://ed.ted.com/lessons/jessica-wise-how-fiction-can-change-reality#review
- https://www.humbleisd.net/cms/lib/TX01001414/Centricity/Domain/3492/Archetypes%20-%20Notes%20Handout.pdf
- Higher level text selections made available for book clubs (possibly to include The
- 5th Wave, The Hobbit, Eragon

Teacher Resources

- Appendix of Literary Centers from TCRWP unit

Suggested Strategies for Accommodations and Modifications

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 format (verbal or written) that is easier for the student
- Take additional time to compete a task or project

- Take frequent breaks
- Modify the length and quantity of assignments to fit individual student's abilities and needs.
- Supply study guide questions, graphic organizers, and access to class notes.
- Individualize reading choices based on ability (reading level), readiness, and choice through extensive classroom library
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide discreet 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

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.