

4th Reading Workshop Unit 5: Historical Fiction (Weeks 30-32)

Content Area: **Template**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Full Year**
Length: **9 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit 5: Historical Fiction

Unit Rationale

Although you know that this is a unit on reading skills--specifically on developing ideas about characters, determining themes, inferring within a text, comparing and contrasting texts, synthesizing across texts, and talking and writing about reading--for your kids, this is a unit on historical fiction. And that, in and of itself, will get their blood pumping.

When reading historical fiction, the novels themselves are inherently complex. The characters inevitably live in places in which our students have not lived, in times they have not known. The reader must figure out the nature of the setting, the ways people live, and not just who the characters are but also the relationships the characters have to historical tensions. So, the reading work will be appropriately intense.

The reading is especially important, too, because the stories are often ones that tell of a young person struggling toward social justice. Whether it is a young girl struggling to assert her independence against the backdrop of the Dust Bowl or two boys struggling to cross the color line during a civil rights movement they don't yet understand, the stories illuminate themes of cruelty and courage, power and resistance. You'll see your children realize during this unit that reading is, really, about learning how to live.

Because the work of this unit is demanding, we begin right from the start to channel readers to work within same-book clubs. And because historical fiction requires readers to come to learn about a time and place in history--because background knowledge enriches the reading exponentially--we suggest each club adopt a time period and read several historical fiction novels, as well as nonfiction related to that time period. This requires some careful work provisioning your classroom, and there are compromises you can and cannot make if you have limited books, so please be sure to read the Getting Ready section at the end of this orientation.

There are three bends within this unit. The first bend equips students with the skills they need to handle increasingly complex texts in general. When kids were younger, they needed to be able to read a part of the text while still keeping in mind the pages that came before it (aware of how the current page related to the earlier material), while simultaneously predicting pages to come. Keeping all the parts of the unfolding storyline in mind while reading was the really big challenge. As your students approach the end of fourth grade and the start of fifth, their books will become increasingly complex, and they'll be asked to juggle more balls (only really, it's more timelines!). For example, while the timeline of a story--say, *Number the Stars*, the demonstration text for this unit--is unfolding, readers need to be aware that the historical timeline of the

Holocaust is also unfolding, and that those two timelines intersect. Then, too, new characters enter the drama, and sometimes there is a second story around one of them. Children learn there is a sister, now dead, and her boyfriend, off stage most of the time, but carrying on his own subplot.

In Bend I, then, you'll help readers to synthesize the evolving settings with the plotlines and subplots of whatever texts they are reading. You'll also teach them how to construct a sense of the setting not just as a physical place, but as an emotional place as well, and in doing so, to read with increased attention to the mood in the text.

Bend II of this unit shines a light on interpretation, helping students to engage in this ambitious intellectual work. This bend embarks upon the heady intellectual work of interpretation, building on that which you began in Unit 1, *Interpreting Characters: The Heart of the Story*. As the stories your children are reading become more complicated, one of the most important things you'll teach is that their novels are not just about what is happening--the books are not just about the plots. Their novels are about ideas, and as readers, it is their job to draft and revise their sense of those ideas. Your goal is not that your students learn to articulate the ideas you already have about a book, nor that they somehow stumble upon a theme which seems to you to be "right." Your goal, instead, is for your readers to learn to draft and revise and elaborate upon possible interpretations of a text as they read and as they discuss books with each other. You won't tell students "the theme" of a book, or send them off to seek evidence for an idea they did not develop themselves. All of this work with your students will happen first within one text they are reading, then across texts, and then finally between texts and their lives.

Bend III of the unit brings in nonfiction texts and invites readers to think between those texts and the stories they are reading. Students learn to stuff historical documents into the pages of their historical fiction novels, and to read between those novels and the relevant nonfiction texts. They also learn to think about how the information they are learning enlarges their understanding of the characters, their struggles, their perspectives, their insights, and their knowledge of history. In this bend, students will call on their strategies for reading nonfiction, striving to both glean knowledge and apply that knowledge to other texts. There's a strong cross-text emphasis at the end of the unit, with children being asked to think across fiction and nonfiction, across story and history, and across the books they have read now and in the past, and their own life.

From "An Orientation to Unit," pages vi-xvi, in *Historical Fiction Clubs*.

SEL Competencies

SEL.PK-12.1	Self-Awareness
SEL.PK-12.1.1	Recognize one's feelings and thoughts
SEL.PK-12.1.2	Recognize the impact of one's feelings and thoughts on one's own behavior
SEL.PK-12.1.3	Recognize one's personal traits, strengths, and limitations
SEL.PK-12.1.4	Recognize the importance of self-confidence in handling daily tasks and challenges

SEL.PK-12.2	Self-Management
SEL.PK-12.2.1	Understand and practice strategies for managing one’s own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
SEL.PK-12.2.2	Recognize the skills needed to establish and achieve personal and educational goals
SEL.PK-12.2.3	Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one’s goals
SEL.PK-12.3	Social Awareness
SEL.PK-12.3.1	Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others
SEL.PK-12.3.2	Demonstrate awareness of the differences among individuals, groups, and others’ cultural backgrounds
SEL.PK-12.3.3	Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ
SEL.PK-12.3.4	Demonstrate an awareness of the expectations for social interactions in a variety of settings
SEL.PK-12.4	Responsible Decision-Making
SEL.PK-12.4.1	Develop, implement and model effective problem-solving, and critical thinking skills
SEL.PK-12.4.2	Identify the consequences associated with one’s actions in order to make constructive choices
SEL.PK-12.4.3	Evaluate personal, ethical, safety, and civic impact of decisions
SEL.PK-12.5.1	Establish and maintain healthy relationships
SEL.PK-12.5.2	Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
SEL.PK-12.5.3	Identify ways to resist inappropriate social pressure
SEL.PK-12.5.4	Demonstrate the ability to prevent and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways
SEL.PK-12.5.5	Identify who, when, where, or how to seek help for oneself or others when needed

Essential Questions

How do readers tackle complex texts?

How do readers interpret complex texts?

What is the intersection of historical fiction and history?

21st Century Life and Career

CRP.K-12.CRP1	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP.K-12.CRP1.1	Career-ready individuals understand the obligations and responsibilities of being a member of a community, and they demonstrate this understanding every day through their interactions with others. They are conscientious of the impacts of their decisions on others and the environment around them. They think about the near-term and long-term consequences of their actions and seek to act in ways that contribute to the betterment of their teams, families, community and workplace. They are reliable and consistent in going beyond the minimum expectation and in participating in activities that serve the greater good.

CRP.K-12.CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP5	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP.K-12.CRP5.1	Career-ready individuals understand the interrelated nature of their actions and regularly make decisions that positively impact and/or mitigate negative impact on other people, organization, and the environment. They are aware of and utilize new technologies, understandings, procedures, materials, and regulations affecting the nature of their work as it relates to the impact on the social condition, the environment and the profitability of the organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP.K-12.CRP6.1	Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP11	Use technology to enhance productivity.
CRP.K-12.CRP11.1	Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.
CRP.K-12.CRP12	Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.
CRP.K-12.CRP12.1	Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal. They apply an awareness of cultural difference to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction. They find ways to increase the engagement and contribution of all team members. They plan and facilitate effective team meetings.

Pre-Assessments

[Units of Study Pre-Assessment](#)

[Sample Student Responses](#)

[Rubric](#)

Fountas and Pinnell Benchmarks and Guided Reading

Instructional Plan

[Historical Fiction Book Clubs LUCY](#)

[Elementary Balanced Literacy Drive](#)

Tackling Complicated Texts

WALTS

We are learning to tackle texts with complicated plots.

We are learning to think across timelines.

We are learning to notice how their roles shape characters' perspectives.

I Can Statements

I can read historical fiction books.

I can track historical events and character's lives when I read historical fiction.

I can consider the characters' feelings and their world and how they impact decisions.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Talk Between and Across

Provide background knowledge

Direct Instruction

Gradual release

Video instruction

Whole class reading

Independent reading

Group work

Video Analysis

Questioning

Cooperative Learning

Formative Assessments

Entrance/Exit slips

Reading checks/quizzes

Student conferences

Class discussions

Observation

Turn and talks

Active reading logs/journals

Open Ended Question

Instructional Materials and Resources

Heinemann Resources

Jeniffer Servallo Texts and Resources

Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading

Scholastic Resources

BrainPop

Elementary Balanced Literacy Drive

Building Interpretations

WALTS

We are learning to build interpretations from texts with complicated themes.

We are learning to determine significance.

We are learning to determine theme.

I Can Statements

I can determine which parts of a story are important and ponder them.

I can identify themes and their impact on the story.

I can read closely to build interpretations.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

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Using Nonfiction To Understand Fiction

WALTS

We are learning to read historical nonfiction texts to support our understanding of historical fiction texts.

We are learning about history from historical narratives.

We are learning that history and stories must be looked at from different perspectives.

We are learning to notice who has the power in a story.

I Can Statements

I can learn about the history of a time period from reading historical fiction.

I can consider different perspectives when reading historical fiction.

I can identify who has power, the shifts of power, and the form of power when I read.

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Modifications and/or Accommodations

Suggested Modifications (ELL, Sp. Ed, Gifted, At-risk of Failure)

English Language Learners

Native language support: The teacher provides auditory or written content to students in their native language.

Adjusted Speech: The teacher changes speech patterns to increase student comprehension. This could include facing the students, paraphrasing, clearly indicating the most important ideas, and speaking more slowly.

Visuals: The teacher uses graphics, pictures, visuals, and manipulatives. This helps ELL students better understand and comprehend the subjects at hand.

Front-Loading Vocabulary: The teacher front loads vocabulary. This means providing students with a list of important vocabulary words they will need to know for a book, lesson, etc. prior to the lesson being taught. Including pictures to go with the vocabulary words is also very beneficial for the students.

Special Education Students

Chunking: The teacher presents information in a way that makes it easy for students to understand and remember. Chunking is based on the presumption that our working memory is easily overloaded by excessive detail. The best way to deliver information is to organize it into meaningful units. Because students with special needs get overloaded easily, chunking is an effective strategy to use with them.

Checking for Understanding: It is important to constantly check for understanding, especially for students who have accommodations. Teachers want to make sure students understand the concepts being covered in a way that makes sense to them.

Extra time: The teacher provides students with special needs extra time to complete work or answer questions. It is important to give students enough time to process their thoughts.

Oral Reading: The teacher will read work orally to students. Class work such as tests and literature

circles may need to be read aloud to the student.

Timers: The teacher will use timers as an instructional tool. The use of timers is beneficial for students who have trouble completing tasks. Timers can be helpful so the student is aware of how much time they have to complete an assignment.

Students with 504 Plans

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Gifted & Talented Strategies

Extensions/Enrichments: Teachers will provide gifted and talented students with extension/enrichment projects. Students will be challenged to further their understanding, to apply acquired knowledge, and/or to produce something in reference to acquired knowledge.

Modify/Change Activities: Teachers will monitor and modify activities to accommodate those students who need to be challenged further. Additional reading, problem-solving, writing, or project work is necessary for those students who are ready to move on at a rate more accelerated than their peers. In this way, G & T students are provided the same opportunity for support as special needs students.

Students at Risk of School Failure

Directions or Instructions: Make sure directions and/or instructions are given in limited numbers. Give directions/instructions verbally and in simple written format. Ask students to repeat the instructions or directions to ensure understanding occurs. Check back with the student to ensure he/she hasn't forgotten.

Peer Support: Peers can help build confidence in other students by assisting in peer learning. Many teachers use the 'ask 3 before me' approach. This is fine, however, a student at risk may have to have a specific student or two to ask. Set this up for the student so he/she knows who to ask for clarification before going to you.

Alternate or Modified Assignments: Always ask yourself, "How can I modify this assignment to ensure the students at risk are able to complete it?" Sometimes you'll simplify the task, reduce the length of the assignment or allow for a different mode of delivery. For instance, many students may hand something in, the at-risk student may jot notes and give you the information verbally. Or, it just may be that you will need to assign an alternate assignment.

Increase One to One Time: When other students are working, always touch base with your students at risk and find out if they're on track or needing some additional support. A few minutes here and there will go a long way to intervene as the need presents itself.

Contracts: It helps to have a working contract between you and your students at risk. This helps prioritize the tasks that need to be done and ensure completion happens. Each day write down what needs to be completed, as the tasks are done, provide a checkmark or happy face. The goal of using contracts is to eventually have the student come to you for completion sign-offs.

Hands On: As much as possible, think in concrete terms and provide hands-on tasks. This means a child doing math may require a calculator or counters. The child may need to tape record comprehension activities instead of writing them. A child may have to listen to a story being read instead of reading it him/herself.

Tests/Assessments: Tests can be done orally if need be. Break tests down in smaller increments by having a portion of the test in the morning, another portion after lunch and the final part the next day.

Seating: Seat students near a helping peer or with quick access to the teacher. Those with hearing or sight issues need to be close to the instruction which often means near the front.

Integration of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Climate Change; Informational and Media Literacy

See Crosswalks

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.L	Language
ELA.L.RF	Foundational Skills: Reading Language Phonics and Word Recognition
ELA.L.RF.4.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding words; use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context. Fluency
ELA.L.RF.4.4	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

ELA.L.RF.4.4.A	Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
ELA.L.RF.4.4.B	Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.
ELA.L.RF.4.4.C	Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
ELA.R	Reading
ELA.RL.CR.4.1	Refer to details and examples as textual evidence when explaining what a literary text says explicitly and make relevant connections when drawing inferences from the text.
ELA.RI.CR.4.1	Refer to details and examples as textual evidence when explaining what an informational text says explicitly and make relevant connections when drawing inferences from the text.
ELA.RL.CI.4.2	Summarize a literary text and interpret the author’s theme citing key details from the text.
ELA.RL.IT.4.3	Describe the impact of individuals and events throughout the course of a text, using an in-depth analysis of the character, setting, or event that draws on textual evidence.
ELA.RI.IT.4.3	Describe the impact of individuals and events throughout the course of a text, explaining events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on evidence in the text.
ELA.RI.TS.4.4	Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
ELA.RL.PP.4.5	Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.
ELA.RI.PP.4.5	Compare and contrast multiple accounts of the same event or topic; noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.
ELA.RL.MF.4.6	Make connections between specific descriptions and directions in a text and a visual or oral representation of the text.
ELA.RL.CT.4.8	Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes, topics and patterns of events in literary texts from authors of different cultures.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.A	Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.B	Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
ELA.SL.PE.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.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Integration of Career Readiness. Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.9.4.5.CI	Creativity and Innovation
TECH.9.4.5.CI.1	Use appropriate communication technologies to collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives about a local and/or global climate change issue and deliberate about possible solutions (e.g., W.4.6, 3.MD.B.3,7.1.NM.IPERS.6).
TECH.9.4.5.CI.2	Investigate a persistent local or global issue, such as climate change, and collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives to improve upon current actions designed to address the issue (e.g., 6.3.5.CivicsPD.3, W.5.7).
TECH.9.4.5.CI.3	Participate in a brainstorming session with individuals with diverse perspectives to expand

	one's thinking about a topic of curiosity (e.g., 8.2.5.ED.2, 1.5.5.CR1a).
TECH.9.4.5.CT	Critical Thinking and Problem-solving
TECH.9.4.5.CT.1	Identify and gather relevant data that will aid in the problem-solving process (e.g., 2.1.5.EH.4, 4-ESS3-1, 6.3.5.CivicsPD.2).
TECH.9.4.5.GCA	Global and Cultural Awareness
TECH.9.4.5.IML	Information and Media Literacy
	Collaboration with individuals with diverse perspectives can result in new ways of thinking and/or innovative solutions.
	Curiosity and a willingness to try new ideas (intellectual risk-taking) contributes to the development of creativity and innovation skills.
	Collaborating digitally as a team can often develop a better artifact than an individual working alone.
	Different digital tools have different purposes.
	Intellectual property rights exist to protect the original works of individuals. It is allowable to use other people's ideas in one's own work provided that proper credit is given to the original source.

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking New Section

CS.3-5.IC	Impacts of Computing
CS.3-5.ITH	Interaction of Technology and Humans
	Data can be organized, displayed, and presented to highlight relationships.

Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSL for ELA, Social Studies, Science and/or Math

ELA.L.RF.4.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding words; use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.
	History, Culture, and Perspectives: Understanding Perspectives
SOC.6.1.5.HistoryUP.1	Describe the reasons various groups, voluntarily and involuntarily, immigrated to New Jersey and America, and cite evidence from multiple perspectives to describe the challenges they encountered.
	Effective conflict resolution is possible when evidence, diverse perspectives, and intended/unintended consequences are considered.