

# Unit 4: Reading Fiction (Weeks 28-36)

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

## Unit 4: Reading Fiction

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### Unit Rationale

A primary focus of this unit is learning how to comprehend and analyze points of view and arguments. In addition, students will continue to practice analyzing and interpreting literature and demonstrate their understanding through argumentative responses.

### Essential Questions

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1. How can conflict help you better understand the feelings and viewpoints of characters?
2. How can people change as a result of their surroundings? Is all conflict bad?
3. How do readers understand and construct meaning from a text?
4. What are literary devices and how can they be used to entice the reader?

### Pre-Assessments

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Teachers will analyze the 3rd Common Lit benchmark assessment.

Teachers can also review student narrative writing pieces.

### Instructional Plan

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Throughout this unit, students will be exposed to several fiction short stories as well as one fiction novel. Students will learn about character development, theme, internal/external conflict, genre study, compare/contrast, and word choice.

Possible Texts:

- Storm in the Barn, Matt Phelan
- The Giver, Lois Lowry
- Will in Scarlet, Matthew Cody
- The Egypt Game, Zilpha Keatley Snyder
- The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, C.S. Lewis
- The Secret of NIMH, Robert C. O'Brien
- various short stories
- Windows & Mirrors Grade 6 Textbook

\*There are specific materials for each of these novels within the [6th grade teacher's drive](#)\* If you cannot access this link please email Sarah Whitman at [swhitman@collsk12.org](mailto:swhitman@collsk12.org) for full access.

ALL LESSONS CAN TAKE SEVERAL DAYS

## **Skill Set 1: Theme**

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### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to/that ... (WALT)**

WALT theme or central idea is conveyed through particular details in a text

WALT determine a theme or central idea of a text

### **Student Success Criteria ... "I can statements"**

I can...describe how theme is portrayed throughout a text.

I can...identify the theme of a text.

I can...connect particular details in a text to identify the theme.

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release
- Video
- Whole class reading
- Independent reading

### **Formative Assessments**

- Entrance/Exit slips
- Reading checks/quizzes
- Student conferences
- Class discussions
- Observation
- Skills quizzes

### **Instructional Materials and Resources**

- [Theme Activity](#)
- Pixar shorts

### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

ELA.RL.CR.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
ELA.RL.CI.6.2	Determine the theme of a literary text (e.g., stories, plays or poetry) and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

## **Skill Set 2: Characterization & Development**

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### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution

WALT analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza contributes to the development of theme

WALT analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza contributes to the development of setting

WALT analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza contributes to the development of plot

### **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”**

I can...identify characteristics about a character.

I can...analyze a character's actions based on their characteristics.

I can...infer how a character will act, respond, or change.

I can...make connections to real people and other characters.

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

- Provide background knowledge
- Direct Instruction
- Gradual release
- Video
- Whole class reading
- Independent reading

### **Formative Assessments**

- Entrance/Exit slips
- Reading checks/quizzes
- Student conferences
- Class discussions
- Observation

### **Instructional Materials and Resources**

- Character illustrations
- Plot Diagram
- Character Autopsies
- Role Playing

### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

ELA.RL.IT.6.3

Describe how a particular text's structure unfolds in a series of episodes and use textual evidence to describe how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

ELA.RL.TS.6.4

Analyze how a particular piece (e.g., sentence, chapter, scene, stanza, or section) fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas, theme, setting, or plot.

## **Skill Set 3: Compare & Contrast**

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### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT there is a difference between what readers “see” and “hear” when reading a story, drama, or poem and between what they perceive when listening to its audio, video, or live version

WALT compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text

WALT different forms of genres approach similar themes and topics in similar and different ways

### **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”**

I can...compare different genres of text.

I can compare elements of a story to a movie or film.

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

- Provide background knowledge
- Direct Instruction
- Gradual release
- Video
- Independent Reading

### **Formative Assessments**

- Entrance/Exit slips
- Reading checks/quizzes
- Student conferences
- Class discussions
- Observation
- Active Reading logs

### **Instructional Materials and Resources**

- Role-playing

- 2-part questioning
- Compare and contrast

## Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.RL.MF.6.6

Compare and contrast information or texts to develop a coherent understanding of a theme, topic, or issue when reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text.

ELA.RL.CT.6.8

Compare and contrast literary texts in different forms, by different authors, or from different genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and primary source documents, scientific journals and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

## **Skill Set 4: Vocabulary & Word Choice**

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### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT words have connotative meanings

WALT specific word choice in a text has an impact on meaning and tone

WALT determine the meaning of words and phrases as used in a text

WALT analyze the impact of word choice on meaning and tone

### **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements**

I can...use context clues to learn the meaning of unknown words.

I can...apply knowledge from new vocabulary into my everyday writing.

I can...explain why an author uses certain word choice

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

- Direct Instruction
- Gradual release
- Vocabulary Instruction

### **Formative Assessments**

- Vocab jams
- Vocab Quizzes

- Observations

### **Instructional Materials and Resources**

- Vocab.com
- Interactive notebook

### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

ELA.L.VL.6.3.B	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
ELA.L.VI.6.4.C	Analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
ELA.L.VI.6.4.D	Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., stingy, scrimping, economical, un wasteful, thrifty).

### **Skill Set 5: Writing About Reading**

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#### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT arguments and claims are supported by clear reasoning and relevant evidence

WALT use credible sources to demonstrate an understanding of a topic

WALT writers use different voice and style according to task, purpose, and audience

WALT organize writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

#### **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”**

I can...write about what I've read.

I can...write a RACE response.

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

- Direct Instruction
- Gradual release

### **Formative Assessments**

- RACE assignments
- Multi-Text assignment
- Student conferences

- Class discussions
- Observation

### **Instructional Materials and Resources**

- Students will complete short writing assignments on character, plot, theme, and conflict
- Race Responses

### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

ELA.W.AW.6.1	Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, math, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
ELA.SL.PE.6.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### **Modifications and/or Accommodations**

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

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#### **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**

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See crosswalks.

Students will have the ability to learn and discuss religious bias, racism, mental health, etc throughout this unit.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1uf0fWDvpqWFOAb51rOq7mN5xq-xu-M5Yp2FbEVZ9Kt8/edit?gid=0#gid=0>

## **New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area**

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ELA.L.VL.6.3.C	Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., audience, auditory, audible).
ELA.L.VI.6.4.C	Analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
ELA.L.VI.6.4.D	Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., stingy, scrimping, economical, unwasteful, thrifty).
ELA.RL.CR.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
ELA.RI.CR.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what an informational text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
ELA.RL.IT.6.3	Describe how a particular text's structure unfolds in a series of episodes and use textual evidence to describe how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
ELA.RL.TS.6.4	Analyze how a particular piece (e.g., sentence, chapter, scene, stanza, or section) fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas, theme, setting, or plot.
ELA.RL.MF.6.6	Compare and contrast information or texts to develop a coherent understanding of a theme, topic, or issue when reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text.
ELA.RL.CT.6.8	Compare and contrast literary texts in different forms, by different authors, or from different genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and primary source documents, scientific journals and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
ELA.W.AW.6.1	Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, math, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
ELA.SL.PE.6.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

## **Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills**

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TECH.9.4.8.CI.3	Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas (e.g., 2.1.8.SSH, 6.1.8.CivicsPD.2).
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## **Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking**

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CS.6-8.8.2.8.ITH.2	Compare how technologies have influenced society over time.
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## **Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSLs for ELA, Social Studies, Science and/or Math**

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The reading and writing skills taught throughout this unit will provide knowledge, practice, and support in all content areas where reading and writing are required.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bNUBwwW9BLgTLqjfVVAJiet6rbmQ3THg->

Sometimes parts of different solutions can be combined to create a solution that is better than any of its predecessors.

## **21st Century Life and Career**

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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.

## **SEL Competencies and Standards**

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SEL.PK-12.3.1

Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others