

# Unit 1: Fiction (Weeks 1-9)

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

## **Unit 1: Fiction**

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### **Unit Rationale**

Studying this unit will help students meet the following objectives: make connections from themes expressed in the selections to their own lives and the world around them, identify common forms of fiction, understand different elements of fiction, including plot, character, setting, point of view, and theme, and understand variations of literary forms and author's use of language to develop forms.

### **Essential Questions**

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- How can I cite textual-evidence to prove my ideas in writing and outloud during classroom discussions?
- How can I determine a theme of the provided text through the inferences that I make?
- How can I find the central idea of a text?

### **Pre-Assessments**

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Students will complete the Scholastic Reading Inventory as a pre-assessment. This will give teachers reading levels for grouping and story selections. Teachers can also use the summer reading assignment as a pre-assessment to gauge student's ability to write about reading. The summer reading is a RACE response.

### **Instructional Plan**

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See lessons below.

Resources:

Windows & Mirrors Grade 8 textbook

Drums, Girls, Dangerous Pie, Jordan Sonnenblick

Lord of the Flies, William Golding

CommonLit short stories and informational articles

ALL LESSONS CAN TAKE SEVERAL DAYS

Additional lessons and resources can be found [here](#).

## **Lesson 1: Introduction to Fiction**

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

WALT what we read comes in many genres.

WALT fiction text is categorized by many components.

WALT analyze fiction texts.

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

I can...differentiate different types of fiction.

I can...identify the components that make a story fiction.

I can...analyze a story based on its fiction components.

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

- Direct instruction
- Annotation
- Whole Class Discussion
- Virtual Discussion
- Supplemental Video Instruction

### **Formative Assessments**

- Google form
- Exit Ticket
- Class Discussion
- Observation

## **Instructional Materials and Resources**

- Top 10 story list
- Compare/contrast elements of those stories
- Jigsaw Elements of Fiction

## **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

ELA.RL.IT.8.3

Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

## **Lesson 2: Understanding Plot**

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

WALT use reading skills such as compare and contrast.

WALT define plot elements.

WALT identify plot elements in a story.

WALT context clues to identify challenging vocabulary.

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

I can...compare and contrast elements of plot.

I can...identify the conflict and resolution within a story's plot.

I can...apply context clues to understand challenging vocabulary.

## **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

- Direct instruction
- Gradual release
- Annotation
- Whole class discussion
- Peer work

## **Formative Assessments**

- Google form
- Exit Ticket
- Class Discussion
- Observation
- Short written responses to text

## Instructional Materials and Resources

- Charles, Shirley Jackson
- [Plot Diagram](#)
- Discussion questions
- Role-playing

## Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.L.VL.8.3.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.
ELA.RL.IT.8.3	Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
ELA.RL.TS.8.4	Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.

## Lesson 3: Characters

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

WALT make inferences.

WALT draw conclusions.

WALT differentiate a dynamic vs static character.

WALT analyze a character's traits.

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

I can...connect prior knowledge with clues from the text to make inferences about what a character might say or do.

I can...make plausible inferences about character relationships.

I can...identify a dynamic character and explain this label in relation to a specific story.

I can...identify a static character and explain this label in relation to a specific story.

I can...analyze a character and their traits.

## Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Direct instruction
- Gradual release
- Annotation
- Whole class discussion

- Peer work

## Formative Assessments

- Exit Ticket
- Class Discussion
- Observation
- Short written responses to text

## Instructional Materials and Resources

- [Character Analysis](#)
- Character Autopsy
- [Inferencing Activities](#)
- Drums, Girls, Dangerous Pie (Chapters 1-10)
- The Treasure of Lemon Brown, Walter Dean Myers
- Supplemental videos

## Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.RL.CR.8.1	Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
ELA.RL.PP.8.5	Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).

## Lesson 4: Theme

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

WALT identify the theme of a story.

WALT theme topics are big ideas.

WALT theme statements are universal truths.

WALT compare themes across several texts.

WALT find evidence to support theme statements.

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

I can...identify multiple theme topics across a text.

I can...create a theme statement based off a theme topic.

I can...compare themes between stories.

I can...provide evidence that supports the theme.

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

- Direct instruction
- Gradual release
- Annotation
- Whole class discussion
- Peer work

### **Formative Assessments**

- Exit Ticket
- Class Discussion
- Observation
- Short written responses to text

### **Instructional Materials and Resources**

- [Theme activities](#)
- [Pixar Shorts](#)
- Drums, Girls, Dangerous Pie (ch 11-21)
- [RACE responses](#)
- Born Worker, Gary Soto

### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

ELA.RL.CI.8.2	Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
ELA.RL.MF.8.6	Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums, including the representation/s or various perspectives of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.
ELA.W.AW.8.1.A	Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
ELA.W.AW.8.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

## **Lesson 5: Vocabulary**

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

WALT analyze word choice in a text.

WALT use context clues to identify challenging words.

WALT identify roots of words to help with understanding meaning.

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

I can...identify clues in context to help me define an unknown word.

I can...describe an author's choice of words

I can...identify roots and affixes of words to help define them.

## **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

- Direct instruction
- Gradual release
- Whole class discussion
- Vocab Jams

## **Formative Assessments**

- Exit Ticket
- Class Discussion
- Observation
- Vocab Quizzes

## **Instructional Materials and Resources**

- Vocab.com
- Texts used throughout the unit
- Word analysis activities

## **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

ELA.L.VL.8.3.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.
ELA.L.VL.8.3.B	Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
ELA.L.VL.8.3.C	Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).

## **Modifications and/or Accommodations**

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### **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**

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See Crosswalks.

The novel and short story variety allows for discussions about same cancer, grief, maturity, race, homelessness, and immigration.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1uf0fWDvpqWFOAb51rOq7mN5xq-xu-M5Yp2FbEVZ9Kt8/edit?usp=sharing>

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

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ELA.L.VL.8.3.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.
ELA.L.VL.8.3.B	Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
ELA.L.VL.8.3.C	Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
ELA.RL.CR.8.1	Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
ELA.RL.CI.8.2	Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
ELA.RL.IT.8.3	Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
ELA.RL.TS.8.4	Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.
ELA.RL.MF.8.6	Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums, including the representation/s or various perspectives of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.
ELA.W.AW.8.1.A	Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
ELA.W.AW.8.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

ELA.SL.PE.8.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
ELA.SL.PE.8.1.C	Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
ELA.SL.PE.8.1.D	Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

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

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TECH.9.4.8.CI.4	Explore the role of creativity and innovation in career pathways and industries.  An essential aspect of problem solving is being able to self-reflect on why possible solutions for solving problems were or were not successful.
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## **Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking**

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CS.6-8.8.2.8.ITH.1	Explain how the development and use of technology influences economic, political, social, and cultural issues.
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## **Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSL for ELA, Social Studies, Science and/or Math**

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The reading skills taught throughout this unit will provide knowledge, practice, and support in all content areas where reading is required. Fiction offers a message about people, nature, or the world and helps our students explore their beliefs and values. These types of stories will help our students understand human problems and relationships.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bNUBwwW9BLgTLqjfVVAJiet6rbmQ3THg-sXDz2rEnXk/edit?usp=sharing>

ELA.W.AW.8.1	Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
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## **21st Century Life and Career**

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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.CRP7.1	Career-ready individuals are discerning in accepting and using new information to make decisions, change practices or inform strategies. They use reliable research process to search for new information. They evaluate the validity of sources when considering the use and adoption of external information or practices in their workplace situation.

## **SEL Competencies and Standards**

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SEL.PK-12.2.3

Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one's goals