Unit 2: Literary Essay (Weeks 10-18)

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

Unit 2: Literary Essay

Unit Rationale

Over the course of the unit, we will establish basic student understanding of essay structure by way of a "boot camp." We will then focus on how to develop and articulate claims about literature, how to plan for an essay, and how to explain evidence clearly. The progression of literary essays will include a character analysis essay, a thematic analysis, and a compare-contrast piece. Ultimately, students should finish the unit equipped with knowledge about how to plan out their essays, determine the appropriate structure for them, and revise them for clarity and consistency.

Essential Questions

- How does a writer's structural decisions affect the reader's understanding?

- How can writers effectively plan their essays before writing?

- How can writers build arguments that are clear and convincing?

- How do writers find and choose the best sources of evidence to support their claims?

Pre-Assessments

Pre-assessment: Baseline Essay Writing Task - Students will be asked to complete an on-demand essay writing task that will allow the teacher to make adapt instruction to the specific strengths and weaknesses of students in the class.

Instructional Plan

See lessons below.

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 for full access

Resource: Windows & Mirrors Grade 6 Textbook

ALL LESSONS CAN TAKE SEVERAL DAYS

Lesson 1: Literary Essay Analysis

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to … (WALT)

WALT make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly

WALT make relevant connections to support analysis of inferences drawn from the text

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

WALT provide a summary distinct from personal opinions or judgments

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...identify components of a literary essay.

I can...analyze a story to identify theme.

I can...make relevant connections.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Free writing time

Formative Assessments

- Flash writes

- Class discussions

- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Essay Writing "Boot Camp" sessions

  o [Boot Camp presentation](#)

- "Boxes and Bullets" essay structure

  o [Boxes/Bullets organizer](#)

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

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.
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.SL.ES.6.3	Deconstruct a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Lesson 2: Arguments & Claims

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to … (WALT)

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

WALT write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

WALT support a claim(s) with clear reasoning and relevant evidence in argumentative writing

WALT use credible sources to demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text in argumentative writing

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...identify a claim in a text.

I can...support a claim with reasons and evidence.

I can...use credible sources.

I can...create a claim and argue my point.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

- Free writing time

- Explicit grammar instruction

- Whole class reading

- Independent reading

- Jigsaw

- Group work

Formative Assessments

- Short written responses

- Multi-text assignments

- Exit slips

- Creative writing prompts

- Student conferences/check ins

- Flash writes

- Class discussions

- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Growing big ideas from details about characters

    o Raymond's Run [PDF](#))

    o [Lesson slides](#)

- Writing to discover what a character really wants

    o [Lesson slides](#)

- Crafting claims

    o [Lesson slides](#)

- Conveying evidence through summarizing, storytelling, and quoting

    o [Lesson slides](#)

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.W.AW.6.1.A	Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
ELA.W.AW.6.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence, that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
ELA.W.RW.6.7	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Lesson 3: Essay Writing Techniques

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to … (WALT)

WALT introduce claims in argumentative writing

WALT use words, phrases, and clauses in argumentative writing

WALT clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence in argumentative writing

WALT writers must establish and maintain a formal style in argumentative writing

WALT establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form in argumentative writing

WALT provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...apply an essay structure around a literary claim.

I can...apply essay techniques to develop my literary claim.

I can...maintain an appropriate style for my audience.

I can...introduce my claim in a clear introduction.

I can...conclude my essay restating my claim and reasonings.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

- Free writing time

- Explicit grammar instruction

- Whole class reading

- Independent reading

- Jigsaw

- Group work

Formative Assessments

- Short written responses

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- Exit slips

- Creative writing prompts

- Student conferences/check ins

- Flash writes

- Class discussions

- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Looking for themes in the trouble of a text

  - [Lesson slides](#)

  - [Structuring thematic essays](#)

    - [Thematic essay organizer](#)

  - Drafting using all that you know

    - Lesson slides

  - First impressions and closing remarks

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.L.KL.6.2.C	Vary sentence patterns for meaning (syntax), reader/listener interest, and style/voice.
ELA.L.KL.6.2.D	Maintain consistency in style and tone.
ELA.W.AW.6.1.A	Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
ELA.W.AW.6.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence, that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

ELA.W.AW.6.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to link and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons and evidence.
ELA.W.AW.6.1.D	Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
ELA.W.AW.6.1.E	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.
ELA.W.RW.6.7	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Lesson 4: Compare & Contrast

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to … (WALT)

WALT compare, contrast, and reflect on texts in different forms or genres and how they approach similar themes and topics

WALT draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research

WALT draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research by applying non-fiction reading standards to writing

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...make connections between texts, themes, and topics.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

- Free writing time

- Explicit grammar instruction

- Whole class reading

- Independent reading

- Jigsaw

- Group work

Formative Assessments

- Short written responses

- Multi-text assignments

- Exit slips

- Creative writing prompts

- Student conferences/check ins

- Flash writes

- Class discussions

- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Building the muscles to compare and contrast

  o [Lesson slides](#)

  o [Compare/contrast stations](#)

  o [Mentor compare/contrast text 1](#)

  o [Mentor compare/contrast text 2](#)

  o [Compare/contrast sentence starters](#)

- Comparing and contrasting themes across texts

  o [Thematic essay samples](#)

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.RI.CT.6.8	Compare and contrast informational texts in different forms, by different authors, or from different genres (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person, historical novels and primary source documents, infographics and scientific journals) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
ELA.W.SE.6.6	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

Lesson 5: Revisions

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to … (WALT)

WALT writers strengthen their writing by revising

WALT writers utilize the help of their peers and adults to improve their writing

WALT demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking

WALT recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents)

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...revise my writing to improve the quality.

I can...accept feedback from my peers and apply it to my revisions.

I can...revise for grammar and spelling.

I can identify and properly avoid vague pronouns.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

Formative Assessments

- Student conferences/check ins

- Flash writes

- Class discussions

- Observation

- Exit Tickets

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Revising essays to be sure you analyze as well as cite text evidence

- Applying what you've learned in the past to revision work

- Identifying run-ons and sentence

- Online grammar instruction programs

  o No Red Ink

  o Khan Academy

  o Grammar101

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.L.SS.6.1.D	Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).
ELA.L.SS.6.1.F	Recognize spelling conventions.
ELA.W.WP.6.4	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning; flexibly making editing and revision choices; sustaining effort to fit composition needs and purposes; and attempting to address purpose and audience.
ELA.W.SE.6.6	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

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

This unit allows for great discussion on a variety of informational texts. This can include DEI, climate change, and informational and media literacy.

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

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.L.SS.6.1.D	Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).
ELA.L.SS.6.1.F	Recognize spelling conventions.
ELA.L.KL.6.2.C	Vary sentence patterns for meaning (syntax), reader/listener interest, and style/voice.
ELA.L.KL.6.2.D	Maintain consistency in style and tone.
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.
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.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.RI.CT.6.8	Compare and contrast informational texts in different forms, by different authors, or from different genres (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person, historical novels and primary source documents, infographics and scientific journals) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
ELA.W.AW.6.1.A	Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
ELA.W.AW.6.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence, that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
ELA.W.AW.6.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to link and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons and evidence.
ELA.W.AW.6.1.D	Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
ELA.W.AW.6.1.E	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.
ELA.W.WP.6.4	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning; flexibly making editing and revision choices; sustaining effort to fit composition needs and purposes; and attempting to address purpose and audience.
ELA.W.SE.6.6	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.
ELA.W.RW.6.7	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
ELA.SL.ES.6.3	Deconstruct a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.9.4.8.IML.15	Explain ways that individuals may experience the same media message differently.

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking

CS.6-8.8.1.8.AP.6	Refine a solution that meets users' needs by incorporating feedback from team members

and users.

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

The ability to write fluently and clearly is a necessity in all academic subject areas. Students will be able to respond to literature taught in other subject areas, noting authors' craft decisions and seeking to emulate in their writing the narrative techniques they come across in literature.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bNUBwwW9BLgTLqfjfVAJiet6rbmQ3THg-sXDz2rEnXk/edit?gid=0#gid=0

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.
ELA.RI.CI.6.2	Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

21st Century Life and Career

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.

SEL Competencies and Standards

SEL.PK-12.3.1	Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others