

Unit 2: Reading Literature & Writing Informational/Explanatory Pieces (Weeks 7-14)

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

Unit 2: Reading Literature & Writing Informational/Explanatory Pieces

This unit focuses on analysis through argument and informative/explanatory writing. Depending on the needs and purposes of districts statewide, students will analyze literature, informational texts or media to strengthen critical thinking and media literacy skills needed for college and career readiness. To inform the product, students will discuss their questions/findings. By the end of the year, students should be reading texts at grade-level.

Essential Questions

1. What makes a work of literature timeless?
2. How does literature reflect the values, desires, and fears of society?
3. What role does - and should - government play in society?
4. How can we learn more about the world around us by reading works of literature?

Pre-Assessments

Students will begin the unit by writing a brief informative piece explaining a topic/issue they learned more about while reading their memoirs from the previous unit. Their response will require them to find one-two articles that supplement their understanding of the topic/issue and use those, along with evidence from their book, to support their response. This will serve as an assessment of their current skills in regards to writing informational/explanatory pieces; the results of this assessment will be used to inform my instruction.

Instructional Plan

Excellent Resources for Unit:

[Sarah's Brown's 1984 Unit](#)

[CommonLit's Thematic Unit](#)

[New York Times' 1984 Unit](#)

[Talks with Teachers' 1984 Unit](#)

[Sparknotes' 1984 Unit](#)

[\(My personal 1984 Notes\)](#)

Writing Prompts

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

WALT base our analysis of a text on relevant textual evidence.

WALT analyze texts on a literal, surface level as well as on a more subtle, inferential level.

Student Success Criteria ... "I can statements"

I can locate and use relevant textual evidence

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Daily Journal Responses to prompts relevant to themes and issues in 1984

Formative Assessments

Journal Responses: Occasionally, I will collect journal responses to assess students' personal reaction to the novel.

Instructional Materials and Resources

Journals

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Annotation

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

WALT a theme is a message that a work of literature communicates about society, human nature, or the

human experience.

WALT every work of literature has at least one theme.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can use annotation skills to discover the central idea of a text

I can use annotation skills to take notes on the text

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Individual Reading & Annotation of articles relevant to themes and issues in 1984

-George Orwell’s “Politics and the English Language”

-William Lutz’s “No One Died in Tiananmen Square”

Formative Assessments

Chapter Quizzes: Students will be assessed on the content, characters, and important themes of each chapter; the results of these assessments will inform my instruction.

Instructional Materials and Resources

Articles:

George Orwell’s “Politics and the English Language”

William Lutz’s “No One Died in Tiananmen Square”

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Theme Connections

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

WALT central ideas are often easier to determine than themes because they are generally based on explicit textual evidence rather than inferences.

WALT write summaries to convey what happened in a text, not what the text means; therefore, summaries are usually easier to write than themes or central ideas.

WALT include various story elements, such as the setting, order, and characters in our analysis of a text.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can participate in academic conversations

I can write a summary that highlights main ideas

I can analyze elements of a story

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Whole-Class watching, reading, and discussion of short stories, plays, articles, plus watching of clips, relevant to themes and issues in 1984

-The Handmaid’s Tale

-Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

-Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince

-Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery”

-Bertolt Brecht’s “The Spy”

[-1984 Trailer](#)

[-1984 Two Minutes Hate](#)

-Comparisons to Nazism, Fascism, Totalitarianism, etc.

-Kurt Vonnegut’s “Harrison Bergeron”

-W.H. Auden’s “The Unknown Citizen”

-David Bowie’s “1984” and “Big Brother”

-Eurythmics’ “For the Love of Big Brother”

-North Korea: A Day in the Life

Formative Assessments

Socratic Circles: Students will be assessed on their preparation for, participation in, and contribution to discussions.

Instructional Materials and Resources

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Anticipation Guide

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

WALT include various story elements, such as the setting, order, and characters in our analysis of a text.

WALT use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can analyze elements of a narrative

I can use context clues to figure out the meaning of unknown words

Instructional Strategies and Activities

1984 Anticipation Guide Activity

Formative Assessments

Anticipation Guide

Instructional Materials and Resources

Text: 1984

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Current Events

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

WALT every work of nonfiction should have at least one clear central idea.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can identify the central idea of a nonfiction text

I can find textual evidence to support the central idea

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Newspeak Translation Activity

News Article Rewrite Activity

Formative Assessments

Class discussion and check ins

Instructional Materials and Resources

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Essay Writing

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

WALT write in a formal and objective tone in our informative/ explanatory responses, i.e., avoid using first person pronouns, slang, etc.

WALT conclude our responses by reiterating the central idea of our responses and underscoring the significance of our topic.

WALT write with clarity so as to be taken seriously as writers and convince our audience of our ideas.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can organize my ideas into the structure of an essay

I can use an academic tone while writing

I can create a thesis statement that is arguable and concise

I can use supporting details to back up my central idea

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Multi-Text Essay Outline

Peer-Editing

One-on-one Conferences

Multi-Text Essay Final Draft

Formative Assessments

Final Draft

Instructional Materials and Resources

Graphic Organizer

Outline

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

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.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.RL.CR.11–12.1	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to strongly support a comprehensive analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as interpretations of the text; this may include determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
ELA.RL.CI.11–12.2	Determine two or more themes of a literary text and analyze how they are developed and refined over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account or analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
ELA.RL.IT.11–12.3	Analyze the impact of the author’s choices as they develop ideas throughout the text regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
ELA.RL.TS.11–12.4	Evaluate the author’s choices concerning the structure and the effectiveness of specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) and how they contribute to its overall structure and meaning, as well as its aesthetic impact.
ELA.RL.PP.11–12.5	Evaluate perspectives/lenses from two or more texts on related topics and justify the more cogent viewpoint (e.g., different accounts of the same event or issue, use of different media or formats).
ELA.RI.PP.11–12.5	Analyze an author’s purpose in a text distinguishing what is directly stated in a text or through rhetoric, analyzing how style and content convey information and advance a point of view.
ELA.W.AW.11–12.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
ELA.W.NW.11–12.3.C	Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
ELA.SL.PE.11–12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.9.4.12.CI.2	Identify career pathways that highlight personal talents, skills, and abilities (e.g., 1.4.12prof.CR2b, 2.2.12.LF.8).
TECH.9.4.12.CI.3	Investigate new challenges and opportunities for personal growth, advancement, and transition (e.g., 2.1.12.PGD.1).
TECH.9.4.12.IML.9	Analyze the decisions creators make to reveal explicit and implicit messages within information and media (e.g., 1.5.12acc.C2a, 7.1.IL.IPRET.4).

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking

CS.K-12.2.a	Cultivate working relationships with individuals possessing diverse perspectives, skills, and personalities.
CS.K-12.2.b	Create team norms, expectations, and equitable workloads to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
CS.K-12.2.c	Solicit and incorporate feedback from, and provide constructive feedback to, team members and other stakeholders.

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

SOC.6.1.12.HistoryCA.2.a

Research multiple perspectives to explain the struggle to create an American identity.

21st Century Life and Career

CRP.K-12.CRP1	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP.K-12.CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP.K-12.CRP3	Attend to personal health and financial well-being.
CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP.K-12.CRP5	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP.K-12.CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP.K-12.CRP7	Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
CRP.K-12.CRP8	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
CRP.K-12.CRP9	Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
CRP.K-12.CRP11	Use technology to enhance productivity.
CRP.K-12.CRP12	Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

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

See Crosswalks

SEL Competencies

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-12.4.1	Develop, implement and model effective problem-solving, and critical thinking skills