

# The Natural

Content Area: **English Language Arts**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **1 marking period**  
Length: **Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit Overview

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In this unit, students will experience a guided reading of *The Natural* by Bernard Malamud (1951). Students will participate in individual and group activities designed to foster comprehension and encourage analysis. In addition to the novel's plot, students will engage in discussion of the mythological elements of the narrative and the relationship of the novel to the hero's journey. Students will also participate in a guided viewing of the 1984 film adaptation and discussion of the choices the filmmakers made in adapting the story. The unit will culminate with a presentation by each student on a real life athlete and how their story relates to the hero's journey as reflected in both the novel and the film.

## Transfer

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Students will be able to independently use their learning to...

- recognize tropes in archetypes in books and films they consume.
- read novels from a distant time period and put them in to context.
- articulate their ideas on an intellectual topic in speech and writing.
- utilize technology to effectively communicate in a collaborative setting.
- utilize technology to research a topic and build a presentation.
- effectively deliver an oral presentation to a group of peers.

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For more information, read the following article by Grant Wiggins.

[http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae\\_bigideas/article.lasso?artid=60](http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae_bigideas/article.lasso?artid=60)

## **Meaning**

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### **Understandings**

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Students will understand that...

- many stories exist as part of a larger literary tradition.
- baseball is the American sport most tied to myth and history.
- a film adaptation of a novel can both faithfully reproduce some scenes while also reinterpreting major themes at the same time.
- society still has a need to elevate and tear down sports heroes and the traits and behavior we expect of sports heroes often reflects the values of our time.

### **Essential Questions**

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Students will keep considering...

- What is mythology, and what is the role of myth in sports?
- What makes an athlete a hero, and what can cause a hero to fail or fall?
- What purpose to archetypes serve in literature, and how can they be helpful or problematic?
- What are the criteria of a successful film adaptation of a novel?
- What qualities in an athlete do I (the student) admire and disdain in an athlete/hero?

## **Application of Knowledge and Skill**

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## **Students will know...**

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Students will know...

- the role that mythology and the heroic cycle play in literature and, specifically, The Natural.
- that plot of The Natural is both based on allusions to baseball history but also employs archetypes and myth.
- that the Roy Hobbs of the novel represents a failed hero, while the Roy Hobbs of the film represents a successful mythic and sports hero.
- the background and factors contributing to their opinion and the public view of the athlete they choose to research.

## **Students will be skilled at...**

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Students will be skilled at...

- independent reading and comprehension.
- collaborating on interpretation and analysis activities.
- verbal and written articulation of their own opinions.
- researching and presenting on a well selected topic.

## **Academic Vocabulary**

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Mythology

Arthurian Legend

The Hero's Journey

Symbol

Archetypes

femme fatale

Allusion

Third Person narrator

Ruthian figure  
Black Sox scandal  
cinematography  
lighting  
golden hour  
musical score  
nostalgia

**Target 2**

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**SWBAT** analyze character and setting development.

Key Ideas and Details  
Craft and Structure

**Target 1**

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**SWBAT** participate in structured, collaborative discussions on the literary elements of *The Natural*.

	Comprehension and Collaboration
TECH.8.1.12.A.3	Collaborate in online courses, learning communities, social networks or virtual worlds to discuss a resolution to a problem or issue.
TECH.8.1.12.A.CS1	Understand and use technology systems.

**Learning Goal 3**

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Students will supplement their reading and understanding of the novel by reading and viewing supplemental works.

**Target 1**

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**SWBAT** to read non-fiction opinion articles and establish connections to *The Natural* and mythology.

## **Target 2**

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**SWBAT** view the film version of the novel and write a film review on the film with a specific focus on the film's faithfulness to the novel.

## **Summative Assessment**

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The Athlete as Hero Project: Students will research the life and career of an athlete in order to build and deliver a presentation which will conclude with an evaluation for whether the subject qualifies as a hero.

	Research to Build and Present Knowledge
LA.SL.11-12.2	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, qualitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.
LA.SL.11-12.4	Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LA.SL.11-12.5	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
LA.SL.11-12.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
LA.L.11-12.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.11-12.SL.11-12.2	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

## **Formative Assessment and Performance Opportunities**

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Formative assessments will include brief written reactions to readings, message board responses, organized group discussion activities, and individual study question responses.

## **Accommodations/Modifications**

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Struggling readers may be supplied with an audio option, a study guide summary, and a vocabulary list.

**Unit Resources**

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- The Natural (film, 1984)
- The Natural (novel, 1952)

**21st Century Life and Careers**

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CAEP.9.2.12.C.7	Examine the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities for both employers and employees in the global workplace.
CAEP.9.2.12.C.9	Analyze the correlation between personal and financial behavior and employability.

**Interdisciplinary Connections**

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SOC.9-12.1.1	Chronological Thinking
SOC.9-12.1.4.2	Demonstrate effective presentation skills by presenting information in a clear, concise, and well-organized manner taking into consider appropriate use of language for task and audience.