LHS English 9 Unit 3

Content Area: **ELA**
Course(s):
Time Period: **MP2**
Length:
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Theme: The Renaissance: A Historical Case Study

Benchmark Text Focus: Informational

Anchor Text: Informational Research on Elizabethan England and Italy and Test Prep

Writing Genre Focus: Research Essay Writing

Targeted ELA Standards

Add the appropriate **NJSLS ELA** standards with which this unit aligns. This is done by clicking "actions" and then "add standards".

L.SS.9–10.1	Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
L.SS.9–10.1.A	Use parallel structure.
L.SS.9–10.1.B	Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.
L.SS.9–10.1.C	Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
L.SS.9–10.1.D	Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.
L.SS.9–10.1.E	Recognize spelling conventions.
L.KL.9–10.2	Apply knowledge of language to make effective choices for meaning, or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading, writing, speaking or listening.
L.KL.9–10.2.A	Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.
L.KL.9–10.2.B	Vary word choice and sentence structure to demonstrate an understanding of the influence of language.
L.KL.9–10.2.C	Demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word

	or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
L.VL.9–10.3	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
L.VL.9–10.3.A	Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
L.VL.9–10.3.B	Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy).
L.VL.9–10.3.C	Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
L.VL.9–10.3.D	Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.
L.VL.9–10.3.E	Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
L.VI.9–10.4	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings, including connotative meanings.
L.VI.9–10.4.A	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
L.VI.9–10.4.B	Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
L.VI.9–10.4.C	Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone; how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
RL.CR.9–10.1	Cite a range of thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to strongly support analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
RI.CR.9–10.1	Cite a range and thorough textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections, to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as interpretations of the text.
RL.CI.9–10.2	Determine one or more themes of a literary text and analyze how it is developed and refined over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
RI.CI.9–10.2	Determine one or more central ideas of an informational text and analyze how it is developed and refined over the course of a text, including how it emerges and is shaped by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.IT.9–10.3	Analyze how an author unfolds and develops ideas throughout a text, including how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
RI.IT.9–10.3	Analyze how an author unfolds ideas throughout the text, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
RI.TS.9–10.4	Analyze in detail the author's choices concerning the structure of ideas or claims of a text, and how they are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
RI.PP.9–10.5	Determine an author's purpose in a text (including cultural experience and knowledge reflected in text originating outside the United States) and analyze how an author uses rhetorical devices to advance that purpose.
RI.MF.9–10.6	Analyze, integrate, and evaluate multiple interpretations (e.g., charts, graphs, diagrams, videos) of a single text or text/s presented in different formats (visually, quantitatively) as

	well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
RI.AA.9–10.7	Describe and evaluate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and reasoning.
RI.CT.9–10.8	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) seminal and informational text of historical and scientific significance, including how they relate in terms of themes and significant concepts.
W.IW.9–10.2	Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes) to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
W.IW.9–10.2.A	Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aid in comprehension.
W.IW.9–10.2.B	Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
W.IW.9–10.2.C	Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
W.IW.9–10.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
W.IW.9–10.2.E	Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
W.IW.9–10.2.F	Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
W.WP.9–10.4	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach; sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out feedback and reflecting on personal writing progress; consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
W.WR.9–10.5	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
W.SE.9–10.6	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation (MLA or APA Style Manuals).
W.RW.9–10.7	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
SL.PE.9–10.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
SL.PE.9–10.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
SL.PE.9–10.1.B	Collaborate with peers to set rules for discussions (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views); develop clear goals and assessment

	criteria (e.g., student developed rubric) and assign individual roles as needed.
SL.PE.9–10.1.C	Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
SL.PE.9–10.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to various perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and justify own views. Make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
SL.II.9–10.2	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.
SL.ES.9–10.3	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any false reasoning or distorted evidence.
SL.PI.9–10.4	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
SL.UM.9–10.5	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
SL.AS.9–10.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English.

Rationale

The theme *"Exploring Real-World Issues Through Research"* invites students to develop critical academic skills while investigating how historical and cultural contexts influence human behavior, societal structures, and enduring global issues. By researching Elizabethan England and Renaissance Italy—two rich historical periods shaped by power dynamics, social hierarchies, and cultural evolution—students gain a deeper understanding of the complexities that shape societies across time and space.

Grounding this work in **informational texts** allows students to develop analytical reading skills necessary for navigating nonfiction sources. Students learn to extract central ideas, evaluate credibility, and synthesize perspectives across multiple texts. These skills are essential not only for academic achievement but also for becoming informed citizens capable of evaluating real-world problems with nuance and accuracy.

The writing component of this unit emphasizes the **research essay** as a key genre for academic and civic discourse. Students learn to develop focused research questions, construct evidence-based arguments, and write in a formal, objective tone. In doing so, they practice the kind of thinking and communication valued in higher education and the workplace.

Moreover, comparing the structures and issues of Elizabethan England and Italy provides students with opportunities to examine universal themes—such as power, gender, identity, and justice—through a historical lens in preparation for the next unit on *Romeo and Juliet*. This not only deepens their content knowledge but also strengthens their ability to connect past and present, building empathy, perspective, and critical awareness.

Ultimately, this unit empowers students to see research as a meaningful tool for understanding the world around them. They don't just study history—they use it to analyze real-world issues, ask better questions, and develop their voices as thoughtful, informed writers and thinkers.

Enduring Understandings

Content Specific	Skills Specific
▪ **Historical and Cultural Relevance:** Students will understand that exploring Elizabethan England and historical Italy reveals how politics, religion, family roles, and class structure influenced daily life and decision-making. Additionally, students will explore how individuals' lives in Elizabethan England and Renaissance Italy were shaped by systems like monarchy, patriarchy, and religion—and how similar systems still shape lives today. ▪ **Conveying Universal Human Experiences:** Students will understand that by researching historical societies, we can draw connections to contemporary issues such as gender roles, power struggles, economic disparity, or justice systems. Additionally, they can identify recurring human challenges as well as culturally unique responses to those challenges. ▪ **Informed Research Writing Creation:** Students will understand that effective research involves critically reading multiple sources to develop an informed and nuanced perspective on a topic. Additionally, students will understand that research-based writing allows them to build arguments, inform audiences, and demonstrate connections between historical and modern concerns. ▪ **Enhanced Critical Thinking and Empathy:** Students will understand that studying the lives of people from the past fosters a more thoughtful, reflective approach to analyzing today's social and ethical issues.	▪ **Clear Inquiry and Focused Questions:** Students will understand that strong research starts with a compelling, focused question that guides investigation and purpose. ▪ **Identifying Central Ideas and Author Intent:** Students will understand how to extract main ideas and supporting details from informational texts and evaluate how those ideas contribute to understanding a topic or issue. ▪ **Evaluating Sources:** Students will understand how to assess a source's credibility, relevance, and bias in order to build a trustworthy foundation for their research. ▪ **Synthesizing Information from Multiple Sources:** Students will understand how to combine information from various texts and perspectives to develop a comprehensive, nuanced view of a topic. ▪ **Utilizing Strong Organization, Structure, and Clarity:** Students will understand that effective research essays are structured with a clear thesis, coherent paragraphs, logical transitions, and well-integrated evidence. ▪ **Using Tone, Language, and Voice to Convey Information Effectively:** Students will understand that informative research writing should maintain formality and clarity while avoiding bias or overly emotional language. ▪ **Proper Citation and Source Integration:** Students will understand the importance of

	paraphrasing, quoting, and citing sources correctly to acknowledge authorship and strengthen their own arguments. ▪ **The Research Writing Process:** Students will understand that research writing improves through revision and reflection, which help clarify ideas, strengthen arguments, and refine language.

Essential Questions

Content Specific	Skills Specific
▪ How did the political, religious, and cultural structures of Elizabethan England and Renaissance Italy influence people's lives? ▪ In what ways do historical societies reflect the same social issues we face today? ▪ How did gender, class, and power influence people's roles and choices in Elizabethan England and Italy—and how do those influences persist today? ▪ What similarities and differences can we find between Elizabethan England and Italy in how they addressed common human challenges? ▪ How can we use informational sources to understand and explain a real-world issue from multiple angles? ▪ How does learning about people from the past help us understand people and problems in the present? ▪ How can we write research essays that connect historical context to modern-day concerns in clear, meaningful ways?	▪ What makes a research question meaningful and manageable? ▪ How can our questions guide the direction and depth of our research? ▪ How can we identify the central ideas in a text and explain how the author supports them? ▪ Why is it important to understand an author's purpose when analyzing informational texts? ▪ How can we tell if a source is credible, relevant, and unbiased? ▪ Why does the quality of our sources matter when writing a research paper? ▪ How do we combine information from different sources to build a strong, informed perspective? ▪ What strategies help us organize and connect information from various texts? ▪ What structure and strategies help writers clearly communicate research findings? ▪ How does organization affect how readers understand a research essay? ▪ What tone and language should we use when

	writing about real-world issues? ▪ How do we maintain objectivity and clarity in our writing? ▪ How do we correctly incorporate and credit sources in a research essay? ▪ Why is citation important for academic honesty and credibility? ▪ How does revision help improve the clarity, logic, and impact of our writing? ▪ What strategies make our research writing stronger during the editing process?

Key Resources

- Background Research Paper and Project
- Librarian Led Instruction on Research
- Informative Research Texts on Elizabethan England and Italy
- Authoritative sites on topics

Lesson Ideas for Target Standards

Additional instructional resources:

- Comprehension microskills
- Tier I instructional practices
- Engagement toolkit
- 2026-2027 Writing Rubrics
- Tier 1: Ways to Increase Support for Struggling Readers

Lexia Aspire & PowerUp Resources:

- Word Recognition - phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency
- Language Comprehension - vocabulary, morphology, academic language, syntax
- Writing & reading comprehension - background knowledge, inference, main idea, making predictions, visualization, expository, narrative, argumentative, figurative language, sensory language, transition words, dialogue, counterclaims, editing
- Lexia PowerUp Graphic Organizers

Supplementary Resources

- Research Paper Instructions and Activities
- Informational texts from district-approved resources
- Additional district-approved secondary ELA instructional resource list
- Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts

Ways to integrate fictional text in this unit:

- Use a fictional text as a hook or paired text - For example, begin the unit with a short story, novel excerpt, or narrative poem that introduces a theme or topic that students will later explore through research.
- Researching real-world issues in fiction - For example, choose a fictional text that touches on social, historical, or ethical issues, and have students research the real-world counterpart.

Informational texts from district-approved resources.

Additional district-approved secondary ELA instructional resource list

Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts

Skills, Content, Activity, Assessment

Month	Weeks	Standards	Suggested Learning Targets	Mini-Lessons Skills	S C
Feb	2	RI.CI.9–10.2	SWBAT define the Renaissance as a	Reading Mini-lessons:	

		RI.TS.9–10.4 L.VL.9–10.3 SL.PE.9–10.1 W.WR.9–10.7	historical period and identify its defining characteristics (humanism, patronage, revival of classical learning). SWBAT identify the characteristics of a research essay and analyze the research essay rubric. SWBAT build foundational vocabulary for the unit (Renaissance, humanism, patronage, Reformation).	• Introduction: Introduce unit theme "The Renaissance: A Historical Case Study." • Possible Do Now: "What do you already know about the Renaissance? Where and when do you think it happened?" • Introduce foundational vocabulary: Renaissance, humanism, patronage, Reformation. L.VL.9-10.3 • Read an overview informational text on the Renaissance as a historical period. RI.TS.9-10.4 Instructional Focus Points: • The Renaissance marked a revival of interest in classical Greek and Roman learning, art, and philosophy. • Patronage — wealthy families and institutions funding artists and scholars — shaped what art and ideas were produced. Writing Mini-lessons: • Characteristics of a research essay. • Review the research essay rubric.	Static Writi Read
	3-4	RI.CI.9–10.2 RI.IT.9–10.3	SWBAT identify the key features of Renaissance humanism in Italy, including patronage by	**AI Lesson: Research without Fabrication**	

		L.VL.9–10.3 W.WR.9–10.7	the Medici family. SWBAT formulate a focused research question to guide inquiry. SWBAT take organized research notes from an informational text.	Reading Mini-lessons: • Read an informational text on the Italian Renaissance and Medici patronage. • Vocabulary L.VL.9-10.3 • Humanism: an intellectual movement emphasizing the study of classical texts and human potential. • Patron: a person or institution that financially supports an artist or scholar. • Guild: an association of craftsmen or merchants in a particular trade. Instructional Focus: • How did Medici patronage shape artistic and intellectual life in Florence? RI.IT.9-10.3 Writing Mini-lessons: • Formulating a focused, researchable question. • Taking organized notes: paraphrasing vs. direct quotation.	Static Writi Read
		RI.CI.9–10.2 RI.PP.9–10.5 L.VL.9–10.3 W.WR.9–10.7	SWBAT identify the key features of Elizabethan England, including the reign of Elizabeth I and the structure of Elizabethan society. SWBAT distinguish between primary and	Reading Mini-lessons: • Read an informational text on Elizabethan England and the reign of Elizabeth I. • Vocabulary L.VL.9-10.3 • Monarchy, courtier, succession, Protestant Reformation.	Static

			secondary sources. SWBAT evaluate the credibility of a historical source.	Instructional Focus: • How does the author's purpose shape the way Elizabeth I's reign is presented in this text? RI.PP.9-10.5 Writing Mini-lessons: • Distinguishing primary sources from secondary sources. • Evaluating source credibility (author expertise, publication, bias).	Writi Read
March	1-2	RI.CR.9–10.1 RI.CI.9–10.2 L.VI.9–10.4 W.WR.9–10.7	SWBAT analyze excerpts from Machiavelli's The Prince to understand Renaissance political thought. SWBAT develop a focused, research-driven thesis statement.	Reading Mini-lessons: • Read excerpts from Machiavelli's The Prince. Instructional Focus: • How does Machiavelli's advice to rulers reflect Renaissance ideas about power and human nature? RI.CR.9-10.1 Writing Mini-lessons: • Developing a focused, research-driven thesis statement.	Static Writi Read
		RI.CI.9–10.2	SWBAT analyze how Renaissance art reflects	Reading Mini-lessons:	

		RI.MF.9–10.6 L.VL.9–10.3 W.WR.9–10.7	humanist values and patronage relationships. SWBAT synthesize information from multiple sources on a single research topic.	• Read an informational text on Renaissance art (e.g., da Vinci, Michelangelo) and patronage. Instructional Focus: • How does a work of Renaissance art reflect humanist values or the interests of its patron? RI.MF.9-10.6 Writing Mini-lessons: • Synthesizing information from multiple sources into a single, cohesive point.	Static Writi Read
	3-4	RI.CI.9–10.2 RI.CT.9–10.8 L.VI.9–10.4 W.WR.9–10.7	SWBAT analyze how the Renaissance scientific revolution (Copernicus, Galileo) challenged existing beliefs. SWBAT paraphrase source material accurately while avoiding plagiarism.	Reading Mini-lessons: • Read an informational text on the Renaissance scientific revolution. Instructional Focus: • How did new scientific ideas challenge the authority of the Church during the Renaissance? RI.CT.9-10.8 Writing Mini-lessons: • Paraphrasing effectively; avoiding plagiarism.	Static Outli

		RI.CI.9–10.2 RI.TS.9–10.4 W.WR.9–10.7	SWBAT analyze how trade and exploration connected Renaissance Italy and Elizabethan England to a broader world. SWBAT organize a research essay using a clear, logical structure.	Reading Mini-lessons: • Read an informational text on Renaissance-era trade and exploration. Instructional Focus: • How did trade routes and exploration shape economic and cultural exchange during this period? RI.TS.9-10.4 Writing Mini-lessons: • Organizing a research essay: introduction, body paragraphs by subtopic, conclusion. • Outlining a research essay before drafting.	Static
April	1-2	W.WR.9–10.7 W.WR.9–10.8 SL.PE.9–10.1	SWBAT draft a research essay integrating evidence from multiple sources. SWBAT correctly use in-text citations and compile a Works Cited page in MLA format. SWBAT engage in peer review to strengthen their research essay.	Writing Mini-lessons: • Drafting body paragraphs; integrating quotations and paraphrases smoothly. • In-text citation format (MLA). • Building a Works Cited page.	
		RI.CR.9–10.1 RI.CI.9–10.2 RI.IT.9–10.3 RI.TS.9-10.4	SWBAT demonstrate their knowledge of informational text by taking a benchmark assessment.	• Reading benchmark MP 3 • Writing benchmark MP 3 • End of MP/Year reflection	

		RI.PP.9–10.5 RI.MF.9–10.6 RI.CT.9-10.8 L.VL.9–10.3 L.VI.9–10.4 W.WR.9–10.7	SWBAT demonstrate their knowledge of writing a research essay. SWBAT reflect on their learning in reading and writing throughout marking period 3.		

Honors Addendum

Rationale for Honors Extension

Honors students are capable of moving beyond summarizing informational sources about the Renaissance toward genuine historiographical inquiry — engaging with primary source documents, comparing competing historical interpretations, and constructing original research arguments grounded in independently located and evaluated evidence. This addendum raises the ceiling of the unit by:

- Introducing primary source documents from Elizabethan England and Renaissance Italy
- Requiring engagement with competing historical interpretations and historiographical debate
- Increasing the research independence, source complexity, and argumentative sophistication of the culminating essay
- Building in structured academic discourse around causation, interpretation, and historical evidence
- Raising expectations for precision, original synthesis, and citation rigor across all student output

Supplementary Texts

Primary Source Documents

- **Excerpts from Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*** — a primary source articulating Renaissance ideals of virtue, education, and social conduct in Italy, useful for grounding students in period values rather than secondary description of them
- **Niccolò Machiavelli, excerpts from *The Prince*** — a foundational primary text on Renaissance political thought, offering rich material for analyzing how Renaissance ideas about power and governance departed from medieval models
- **Queen Elizabeth I's speeches** (e.g., the Tilbury Speech and the Golden Speech) — primary rhetorical documents that allow direct analysis of Elizabethan political language and self-presentation
- **Excerpts from period letters, court records, or trade documents** (e.g., via digitized archives such as British History Online or the Folger Shakespeare Library) — gives students practice reading and

contextualizing genuine archival material rather than only curated modern summaries

Comparative and Cross-Disciplinary Texts

- **Selected excerpts on Renaissance art and patronage** (e.g., primary or period-adjacent commentary on Medici patronage in Florence) — supports interdisciplinary connections between political/economic history and artistic production
- **Excerpts on the Renaissance scientific revolution** (e.g., primary or secondary material on Copernicus, Galileo) — allows students to examine the Renaissance as an intellectual, not only artistic or political, transformation
- **A comparative secondary source on the Northern Renaissance** (e.g., developments in Elizabethan England relative to the Italian Renaissance) — reinforces the unit's comparative framing between England and Italy with more nuanced, less generalized material

Historiographical and Theoretical Texts

- **Jacob Burckhardt, excerpts from *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*** — the foundational (and now much-debated) 19th-century historical interpretation that first popularized "The Renaissance" as a distinct historical period; excellent for historiographical debate
- **A scholarly source presenting historiographical critique of Burckhardt's periodization** (e.g., historians who argue the "Renaissance" as a sharp break from the Middle Ages is an oversimplification) — gives students genuine competing interpretations to evaluate rather than a single settled narrative
- **A brief secondary source on historical method** (e.g., on the use and evaluation of primary vs. secondary sources, or on historiographical bias) — supports more rigorous, self-aware research practice

Increased Rigor in Instruction

- **Socratic seminars or structured historiographical debates** on contested questions (e.g., whether the "Renaissance" represents a genuine historical rupture from the medieval period or a historian's retrospective construction)
- **Primary source analysis workshops**: students practice close reading, contextualizing, and corroborating primary documents (e.g., cross-referencing a claim in Castiglione against an independent primary or scholarly source)
- **Independent comparative research component**: students select a specific domain (art, politics, science, religion, or trade) and independently research how that domain developed differently in England versus Italy during the period, going beyond the shared class texts
- **Citation and source-evaluation rigor**: formal instruction in evaluating source credibility, distinguishing primary from secondary sources, and using a consistent academic citation format (e.g., MLA or Chicago) with greater precision than the standard-level unit requires

More Rigorous Culminating Product

Honors students complete an elevated version of the research essay with the following additional expectations:

- **Historiographical framing**: the essay must explicitly engage with at least one historiographical debate or competing interpretation (e.g., Burckhardt's thesis and its critics) rather than presenting a single, uncontested historical narrative

- **Primary source requirement**: students must incorporate direct evidence from at least one primary source document (a period letter, speech, treatise excerpt, or comparable artifact), analyzed and contextualized rather than merely quoted
- **Independent research scope**: students are required to locate, evaluate, and incorporate at least two credible sources not provided in class, including at least one scholarly or academic source, demonstrating independent research and source-evaluation skill
- **Comparative argument structure**: the essay's central argument must go beyond describing parallel developments in England and Italy to make a genuine comparative claim — e.g., arguing for a specific causal relationship, meaningful divergence, or point of influence between the two regions
- **Elevated rigor in citation and structure**: grading criteria for honors submissions should expect consistent, correctly formatted citations, a clearly articulated research question driving the essay, and more sophisticated organization of complex comparative and historiographical material than the standard-level rubric requires

Additional Enduring Understanding (Honors)

History as Interpretation, Not Just Record: Students will understand that historical periods such as "the Renaissance" are not simply objective facts to be reported, but are interpretive constructions shaped by the historians who define and periodize them — and that engaging with competing historical interpretations, rather than accepting a single narrative as settled, produces a more rigorous and intellectually honest understanding of the past.

Additional Essential Questions (Honors)

1. To what extent was "the Renaissance" a genuine historical rupture from the medieval period, and to what extent is it a retrospective construction imposed by later historians?
2. How do primary source documents (speeches, treatises, letters) complicate or confirm the narratives presented in secondary historical accounts of the Renaissance?
3. What can a comparative study of Renaissance developments in England and Italy reveal about the causes and mechanisms of major cultural and intellectual change?
4. How does evaluating the credibility, bias, and context of a historical source change the way we use that source as evidence in a research argument?

Suggested Assessment Adjustments

- Rubrics should weight **historiographical engagement and independent research** more heavily than in the standard unit, with explicit criteria for primary-source analysis and source credibility evaluation
- Socratic seminar/debate participation and the independent comparative research component should be assessed as formal components of the unit grade
- Consider a **higher word-count expectation**, a required **annotated bibliography**, and a **research proposal or thesis check-in** prior to drafting, given the added research scope and argumentative demands of the honors essay

Spiraling for Mastery

Content or Skill for this Unit	Spiral Focus from Previous Unit
▪ **Reading Informational Texts** • *Content Focus:* o Understanding how real-world issues are presented in historical and cultural contexts. o Engaging with informational texts that explore issues such as public health, education, class, gender, and governance in Elizabethan England and Renaissance Italy. • *Skills Developed:* o Making inferences and drawing conclusions o Determining central ideas and themes o Analyzing the development of ideas across a text o Comparing how different texts address similar issues ▪ **Research Skills** • *Content Focus:* o Investigating a real-world issue rooted in the historical context of the anchor texts. o Locating and evaluating modern and historical sources on related issues • *Skills Developed:* o Developing focused, open-ended research questions o Conducting keyword-based	▪ **Identifying Themes and Central Ideas:** Students learned to identify themes, archetypes, and central ideas in myths and poems. Students will use this knowledge to determine central ideas in informational texts. ▪ **Making Inferences:** Students made inferences based on textual details in mythology and poetry. Students will continue to make inferences and look for context clues based on historical and cultural context in nonfiction texts. ▪ **Close Reading Strategies:** Students defined and practiced annotation along with finding text evidence in myths and poems. Students will expand and reinforce these skills, shifting from a literary to an informational purpose. ▪ **Citing Evidence:** Students cited evidence to support interpretations of mythological and poetic themes and character traits. Students will continue to cite textual evidence to support analysis of historical topics. ▪ **Grounding Ideas with Textual Evidence:** Students learned to find evidence within myths and poems to support their interpretations and analysis. Students will emphasize the habit of grounding ideas in textual evidence, now applied to informational rather than literary texts. ▪ **Writing Structure and Organization:** Students planned and wrote a well-structured

searches ○ Evaluating credibility and relevance of sources (e.g., using CRAAP test) ○ Synthesizing information from multiple sources ○ Avoiding plagiarism and correctly citing sources (MLA) ▪ **Writing: Research Essay** • *Content Focus:* ○ Writing a multi-paragraph research-based essay on a real-world issue ○ Connecting past and present perspectives using evidence • *Skills Developed:* ○ Crafting a clear thesis statement ○ Organizing ideas logically with clear transitions ○ Integrating paraphrased and quoted evidence from multiple sources ○ Using formal tone, style, and conventions appropriate to academic writing ○ Revising and editing for clarity, coherence, and correctness (W.WP.9-10.4) ▪ **Speaking and Listening: Academic Discussions and Presentations** • *Content Focus:* ○ Sharing and presenting research findings ○ Engaging in peer discussions to explore multiple	informative/explanatory essay — with a clear main idea, body paragraphs organized by subtopic, and logical transitions — to explain mythological and poetic elements. Students will now structure a research essay (introduction, thesis, body paragraphs, conclusion), using logical transitions to link claims and evidence in the same way they previously linked explanation to evidence. ▪ **Voice and Style:** Students developed a clear, objective explanatory voice appropriate to explaining mythological and poetic concepts, defining unfamiliar terms for the reader and using precise, formal language rather than persuasion or narrative technique. Students will build on this explanatory foundation to develop an academic research voice, maintaining clarity, tone, and purposeful word choice — using formal, academic tone and precise vocabulary, and adjusting tone for audience and purpose in research writing and presentations. ▪ **Classroom Discussions:** Students explained mythological and poetic themes orally and participated in discussions comparing different poetic treatments of the same myth. Students will build on these oral communication foundations — now with a shift toward academic discussion and research-based presentation. They will present research findings formally and participate in structured discussions about historical and current real-world issues.

perspectives on real-world issues

- *Skills Developed:*
    - Participating in structured academic discussions using evidence (SL.PE.9-10.1)
    - Synthesizing spoken and written information (SL.II.9-10.2)
    - Evaluating speaker's reasoning and evidence (SL.ES.9-10.3)
    - Adapting speech to audience and purpose (SL.AS.9-10.6)
    - Creating and using visual or digital aids to enhance presentations

- **Critical Thinking and Real-World Connections**
    - *Content Focus:*
        - Drawing connections between historical issues and contemporary challenges
        - Engaging with interdisciplinary content (e.g., history, politics, health, ethics)
    - *Skills Developed:*
        - Comparing and contrasting past and present societal structures
        - Evaluating the impact of real-world issues across time and geography
        - Applying academic research to modern global or local issues

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key 21st Century Skills

9.4.12.CI.1	Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas (e.g., 1.1.12prof.CR3a).
9.2.12.CAP.2	Develop college and career readiness skills by participating in opportunities such as structured learning experiences, apprenticeships, and dual enrollment programs.
9.2.12.CAP.3	Investigate how continuing education contributes to one's career and personal growth.
9.4.12.CI.3	Investigate new challenges and opportunities for personal growth, advancement, and transition (e.g., 2.1.12.PGD.1).
9.4.12.CT	Critical Thinking and Problem-solving
9.4.12.CT.1	Identify problem-solving strategies used in the development of an innovative product or practice (e.g., 1.1.12acc.C1b, 2.2.12.PF.3).
9.4.12.CT.2	Explain the potential benefits of collaborating to enhance critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., 1.3E.12profCR3.a).
9.4.12.CT.4	Participate in online strategy and planning sessions for course-based, school-based, or other project and determine the strategies that contribute to effective outcomes.
9.4.12.DC	Digital Citizenship
9.2.12.CAP.13	Analyze how the economic, social, and political conditions of a time period can affect the labor market.
9.4.12.DC.6	Select information to post online that positively impacts personal image and future college and career opportunities.
9.4.12.DC.7	Evaluate the influence of digital communities on the nature, content and responsibilities of careers, and other aspects of society (e.g., 6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a).
9.4.12.GCA	Global and Cultural Awareness
9.4.12.GCA.1	Collaborate with individuals to analyze a variety of potential solutions to climate change effects and determine why some solutions (e.g., political. economic, cultural) may work better than others (e.g., SL.11-12.1., HS-ETS1-1, HS-ETS1-2, HS-ETS1-4, 6.3.12.GeoGI.1, 7.1.IH.IPERS.6, 7.1.IL.IPERS.7, 8.2.12.ETW.3).

Interdisciplinary Connections

How does this unit connect to standards in other disciplines? Add the appropriate **NJ SLS** here, keeping grade bands in mind. This is done by clicking "actions" and then "add standards".

1.4.12adv.Cr1	Generating and conceptualizing ideas.
2	Reason abstractly and quantitatively
1.4.12adv.Cr1a	Synthesize knowledge from a variety of theatrical conventions and technologies to create the visual composition of devised or scripted theatre work.
1.4.12adv.Cr1c	Integrate dramaturgical analysis with personal experiences to create a character that is believable and authentic.
1.4.12adv.Cr2	Organizing and developing ideas.
5	Use appropriate tools strategically
6	Attend to precision

1.4.12adv.Cr2a	Collaborate as a creative team to make informative and analytical choices for devised or scripted theatre work.
1.4.12adv.Cr2b	Collaborate as a creative team to make original artistic choices in devised or scripted theatre work.
1.4.12adv.Cr3	Refining and completing products.
1.4.12adv.Cr3a	Explore physical, vocal and psychological characteristics to create a multidimensional character that is believable and authentic in devised or scripted theatre work.
1.4.12adv.Cr3b	Transform devised or scripted theatre work using the rehearsal process to re-imagine style, genre, form, and theatrical conventions.
1.2.2.Pr4b	Practice combining varied academic, arts and media content to form media artworks.
1.2.2.Pr5c	Discover, experiment with and demonstrate creative skills for media artworks.
A.SSE.B.3	Choose and produce an equivalent form of an expression to reveal and explain properties of the quantity represented by the expression.
A.SSE.B.4	Derive and/or explain the formula for the sum of a finite geometric series (when the common ratio is not 1), and use the formula to solve problems.
LS2.A	Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems
HS-LS2-2	Use mathematical representations to support and revise explanations based on evidence about factors affecting biodiversity and populations in ecosystems of different scales.
HS-LS3	Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits
HS-LS3-3	Apply concepts of statistics and probability to explain the variation and distribution of expressed traits in a population.
HS-LS4	Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity
HS-LS4-1	Communicate scientific information that common ancestry and biological evolution are supported by multiple lines of empirical evidence.
HS-LS4-2	Construct an explanation based on evidence that the process of evolution primarily results from four factors: (1) the potential for a species to increase in number, (2) the heritable genetic variation of individuals in a species due to mutation and sexual reproduction, (3) competition for limited resources, and (4) the proliferation of those organisms that are better able to survive and reproduce in the environment.
6.2.12.CivicsPI.6.a	Use historic case studies or a current event to assess the effectiveness of multinational organizations in attempting to solve global issues.
6.2.12.CivicsHR.6.a	Evaluate the effectiveness of responses by governments and international organizations to tensions resulting from ethnic, territorial, religious, and/or nationalist differences.
6.2.12.CivicsHR.6.b	Make an evidence-based argument on the tensions between national sovereignty and global priorities regarding economic development and environmental sustainability and its impact on human rights.
6.2.12.EconGE.6.a	Evaluate efforts of governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations to address economic imbalances, social inequalities, climate change, health and/or illiteracy.
HS-LS4-4	Construct an explanation based on evidence for how natural selection leads to adaptation of populations.
6.3.12.HistoryCA.12	Analyze a current foreign policy issue by considering current and historical perspectives, examining strategies, and presenting possible actions.
HS-LS4-6	Create or revise a simulation to test a solution to mitigate adverse impacts of human activity on biodiversity.
HS-ESS3	Earth and Human Activity
HS-ESS3-1	Construct an explanation based on evidence for how the availability of natural resources, occurrence of natural hazards, and climate change have influenced human activity.

HS-ESS3-6	Use a computational representation to illustrate the relationships among Earth systems and how those relationships are being modified due to human activity (i.e., climate change).