

# 01\_Powerful Life Stories

Content Area: **ELA**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Full Year**  
Length: **8 weeks (40 Days)**  
Status: **Published**

## **OBJECTIVES, ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS, ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS**

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Essential Question: What do we learn by reflecting on both our own and others' life experiences?

Students will understand that:

- Themes of novels are used to teach the reader lessons about life.
- An author's life experiences inspire their writing.
- Literary devices are used to enrich the author's purpose for writing a story while also bringing the story and its characters alive to the reader.
- A knowledge of the elements of fiction is necessary in order to deepen understanding and appreciate any work of fiction be it humorous, sad, fanciful, suspenseful, or other.
- Real life inspires authors to base their work on personal experiences.
- Good writing requires a process.
- Using context clues to determine vocabulary is important to understanding the plot of a story

## **General Overview, Course Description or Course Philosophy**

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The New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts / Literacy lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the skills and understandings students are expected to demonstrate have wide applicability outside the classroom or workplace. Students who meet the Standards readily undertake the close, attentive reading that is at the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature. They habitually perform the critical reading necessary to pick carefully through the staggering amount of information available today in print and digitally. They actively seek wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with high-quality literary and informational texts that build knowledge, enlarge experience, and broaden worldviews. They reflexively demonstrate the cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic. In short, students who meet the Standards develop the skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are the foundation for any creative and purposeful expression in language.

## **CONTENT AREA STANDARDS**

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RL.6.1. Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.6.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RL.6.3. Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

RL.6.9. Compare, contrast and reflect on (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

RL.6.10. By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above, scaffolding as needed.

W.6.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

A. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.

B. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.

D. Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form. E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

C. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.

D. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events. E. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

W.6.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.6.5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.6.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.

SL.6.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

A. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

B. Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

C. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

D. Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

L.6.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

A. Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).

B. Use intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).

C. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.

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

E. Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.

L.6.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. A. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements. B. Spell correctly.

LA.L.6.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.W.6.10	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.
LA.RL.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
LA.RL.6.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
LA.RL.6.3	Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
LA.RL.6.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
LA.RL.6.5	Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
LA.RL.6.6	Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
LA.RL.6.7	Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.
LA.RL.6.8	(Not applicable to literature)
LA.RL.6.9	Compare, contrast and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
LA.RL.6.10	By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above, scaffolding as needed.
LA.SL.6.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.SL.6.1.B	Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
LA.SL.6.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
MU.K-12.1.3C.12nov.Cn11	Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding.
MU.K-12.1.3C.12nov.Cn11a	Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

VA.K-2.1.5.2.Cn11	Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding.
SOC.6.3	Active Citizenship in the 21st Century

## **RELATED STANDARDS (Technology, 21st Century Life & Careers, ELA Companion Standards are Required)**

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SOC.6.2.8.CivicsHR.3.a	Compare and contrast the rights and responsibilities of free men, women, slaves, and foreigners in the political, economic, and social structures of classical civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.HistoryCC.3.a	Determine the extent to which religion, economic issues, and conflict shaped the values and decisions of the classical civilizations.
SOC.6.3.8.CivicsHR.1	Construct an argument as to the source of human rights and how they are best protected.
SOC.6.3.8.CivicsPI.3	Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to examine the role of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a local or global issue and share this information with a governmental or nongovernmental organization as a way to gain support for addressing the issue.
SOC.6.3.8.CivicsPI.4	Investigate the roles of political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives and share this information with individuals who might benefit from this information.
TECH.9.4.8.CI	Creativity and Innovation
TECH.9.4.8.DC	Digital Citizenship

## **STUDENT LEARNING TARGETS**

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Refer to the 'Declarative Knowledge' and 'Procedural Knowledge' sections.

### **Declarative Knowledge**

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Students will understand that:

- Authors use a variety of techniques in developing characters.
- Plot is essential to develop an interesting and readable story
- Themes of short stories are used to teach lessons to the readers.
- Literary devices are used to enrich the author's purpose for writing a story.
- Connecting an author's life to the story makes for deeper understanding.
- Writing involves a process.

### **Procedural Knowledge**

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Students will be able to:

- support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- provide an objective summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
- determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings.
- determine a theme or central idea of the text and how it is conveyed through particular details.
- describe how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
- describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes.
- cite textual evidence from the text.
- by the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.
- analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
- explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- interpret information presented in diverse media and formats and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
- 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.
- pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
- come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material.
- follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

## **RESOURCES (Instructional, Supplemental, Intervention Materials)**

Resources utilized but not limited to:

Core:

**Short Stories** (i.e. Wake Up, Maddalena” Scope, Nadia the Willful, Tuesday of the Other June, The Circuit, Raymond’s Run, The Worst, Home)-Core Texts

**Author Study**-Gary Paulsen

**Poetry** (i.e. “Yesses and Noees” Shel Silverstein/ Commonlit. The Rose That Grew from Concrete by Tupac Shakur

"Night," Elie Wiesel

Supplemental:

Scope Magazine

[Common Lit](#)

[IXL](#)

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS**

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Visual and Performing Arts:

- Students will research and study songs and pieces of artwork inspired by personal experiences of the artist and songwriter. This will lead into the unit as students explore real-life events that inspired the pieces of fiction in the unit.

Technology/Multimedia

- Audio/visual media analysis
- Google
- Media Literacy
- Educational tech applications

Social Studies

- Current Events
- Ethics
- Holocaust Studies - "Night" Elie Wiesel - discuss how the author's personal experience impacted their writing
- Social Justice
- Social relationships among people

## **EVIDENCE OF LEARNING**

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Refer to the 'Formative Assessments' and 'Summative Assessments' sections.

## **Alternate Assessments**

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- Oral Presentations
- Modified Rubrics
- One on one conferencing with the teacher

## **Summative Assessments**

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Literary essays, projects, presentations, notebook assessment

## **Formative Assessments**

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Close Reading, Shared Reading, Independent reading, Discussions, Author Study, Reflections writing, Questioning, Conferencing, Response/reflection writing

## **ACCOMMODATIONS & MODIFICATIONS FOR SUBGROUPS**

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See link to Accommodations & Modifications document in course folder.