UNIT 1: CHARACTERS WHO CHANGE AND GROW

Multi-genre

Students kick off the year reading several high-quality short stories from writers including Toni Cade Bambara, Marta Salinas, and Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve. Through the stories, students track character development. Explicit writing lessons introduce essential skills for evidence-based writing in middle school.

UNIT 2: FAILURE AND SUCCESS

Multi-genre

In this inspirational unit, students read high-interest texts with relatable teenage characters that reveal failure's important role in the journey towards success. Writing lessons build on the basics of evidence-based writing, pushing students to write more sophisticated explanations and clear introduction and conclusion paragraphs. Teachers can use the robust set of supplementary texts to build background knowledge about resilience and strength.

UNIT 3: THE WATSONS GO TO BIRMINGHAM

Novel

The Watsons Go to Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis is an award-winning book about a family that visits Birmingham in 1963, witnessing the terrible tragedy at the 16th Street Baptist Church. The unit includes robust chapter questions and activities, and embedded informational texts to build student background knowledge and make historical connections. Vocabulary, discussion, and grammar is included in this unit and all others.
UNIT 4: OUR CHANGING OCEANS

Research
In this research unit, students learn about three types of changes that are happening in our oceans: plastic pollution, overfishing, and sea level rise. Students read informational texts, engage with multimedia, and conduct partner research. Direct instruction lessons support students in outlining a letter, writing to a specific audience, and using citations properly. The unit culminates in students writing a letter to a legislator explaining one of the problems facing our oceans and what should be done about it.

UNIT 5: EMBRACING OUR DIFFERENCES

Multi-genre
This multi-genre unit features high-interest short stories and poetry by authors like Amy Tan, David Lopera, Ishmael Beah, Julio Noboa, and Francisco Jimenez. Instruction focuses on how point of view in each of the texts develops the theme. This is a dynamic unit that includes partner work and a robust set of supplemental texts that can be used flexibly to encourage choice.

UNIT 6: INTRO TO ARGUMENT WRITING

Research-based Argument
Coming Soon
GRADE 7

UNIT 1: IN OR OUT: OUR STRUGGLE TO BELONG

Multi-genre
The seventh grade curriculum kicks off with a short story unit featuring high quality texts from authors including Toni Cade Bambara and Gish Jen that help explain the human need to belong to a group. Students build essential background knowledge about the psychology behind identity and the need to belong by reading informational texts and conducting partner research.

UNIT 2: ADOLESCENCE

Multi-genre
This unit is a favorite with students; it features hilarious stories, poignant poems, and informational texts about the pitfalls of adolescence from authors like Adam Bagdasarian and Gary Soto. As students read, they track theme development and write cross-textual analyses.

UNIT 3: THE GIVER

Novel
The Giver by Lois Lowry offers a great introduction to dystopian fiction. This unit includes a robust set of chapter-by-chapter activities and questions focusing on many literary devices and skills, including theme, setting, and complex character development and interactions. The unit culminates in a full-length essay and includes embedded nonfiction and short fiction. Vocabulary, discussion, and grammar exercises are included in this unit and all others.
GRADE 7

UNIT 4: SOCIAL MEDIA: RISKS AND REWARDS
Research
In this high-interest and timely research unit, students build knowledge about the costs and benefits of engaging in social media by reading informational texts, engaging with multimedia, and doing partner research. Direct instruction lessons focus on essential research skills like notetaking, summarizing, and outlining. The unit culminates in a full-length argumentative research paper. The unit is designed to prepare students for conducting more sophisticated and independent research.

UNIT 5: NEW PERSPECTIVES
Multi-genre
This unit features an array of high-interest short stories, informational texts, and poetry by Meg Medina, Jacqueline Woodson, Naomi Shihab Nye, and more. In all of the texts, students are invited to think about the perspectives of the author and characters. Direct instruction lessons focus on helping students write more sophisticated analyses of literary texts.

UNIT 6: WRITING STRONGER ARGUMENTS
Research-based Argument
Coming Soon
UNIT 1: BAD BEHAVIOR

*Multi-genre*

The eighth grade curriculum kicks off with a short story unit in which characters have to make critical moral decisions. They track the development of internal conflict and suspense. Students build essential background knowledge about moral decision-making by reading informational texts, and participating in lively classroom discussions.

UNIT 2: COURAGEOUS CHOICES

*Multi-genre*

In this multi-genre unit, students read stories, poems, and informational texts by authors including Walter Dean Myers and Langston Hughes. They analyze multimedia and discuss the unit’s essential question: *What motivates us to be courageous? When is courage worth the risk?* Direct instruction focuses on helping students compose more sophisticated evidence-based responses about texts that share a theme.

UNIT 3: BROWN GIRL DREAMING

*Novel*

*Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson is an award-winning novel told in verse. It follows the childhood of the author and her experience growing up in South Carolina and New York. Skills focus on how setting, figurative language, and author’s structural choices develop the theme. This unit includes a robust set of chapter questions and writing activities, embedded nonfiction, discussion, and grammar exercises.
UNIT 4: CONTACT SPORTS: WORTH THE RISK?

Research
In this high-interest research unit, students build knowledge about contact sports such as football, soccer, and wrestling, and their inherent benefits and risks to players. Students analyze information from both sides of the debate to determine whether playing contact sports is worth the risks. They work both independently and collaboratively in partners to practice note taking, gathering evidence, and synthesizing information to answer the research question. The unit is scaffolded and intended to prepare and motivate students to conduct more independent, sophisticated research. It culminates in an argumentative research paper.

UNIT 5: ALIEN ENCOUNTERS

Multi-genre
This engaging unit includes short stories, informational texts, and poetry featuring aliens from outer space. These sci-fi texts force students to consider the earth and the plight of human beings in a different light. As students read, they grapple with the unit’s essential question: What does literature about aliens tell us about human nature? Direct instruction focuses on analysis of dramatic irony, humor, and suspense.

UNIT 6: CRAFTING AN ARGUMENT

Research-based Argument
Coming Soon
UNIT 1: FOLLOWING THE CROWD

Multi-genre

The ninth grade curriculum kicks off with an essential question that is very relevant to a new 9th grader: How does being in a group affect how we behave? The unit features high-quality texts by Shirley Jackson, Ray Bradbury, and more. Students build knowledge about the psychology behind crowd behavior through partner research and informational texts. Direct instruction reinforces writing skills that are essential for success in high school. Vocabulary, discussion, and grammar are included in this unit and all others.

UNIT 2: PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Multi-genre

In Unit 2, students read multiple texts from different genres about human effects on the environment. Students write to analyze the shared purpose across diverse texts. They build background knowledge about the impact of human actions on our environment through embedded texts and a robust set of supplementary texts. Skill instruction focuses on helping students make sophisticated cross-textual connections.

UNIT 3: ANIMAL FARM

Novel

Animal Farm by George Orwell is an allegorical novella in which a group of farm animals rebel against their human farmer, hoping to create a society that is free and equal. Instead, the animals create a totalitarian society. This novel unit includes robust chapter questions and embedded texts about propaganda, Napoleon, and more. Writing lessons focus on helping students write effective counterclaims and emphasizing parts of a quote. Discussion, vocabulary, and collaborative partner work is included.
UNIT 4: THE SCIENCE OF BRANDING: WHY WE BUY

Research

In this high-interest and timely research unit, students build knowledge about the ways in which iconic companies like Nike, Apple, and Marlboro use advertising techniques to influence consumer behavior. Students read informational texts and analyze advertisements to work toward a final research prompt in which they choose their favorite brand and conduct outside research about the techniques that brand uses to influence buying patterns. This unit is a favorite among students!

UNIT 5: PARENTS & CHILDREN

Multi-genre

This unit is anchored around the complicated relationships between parents and their children. It includes excerpts from Amy Tan’s award-winning book, The Joy Luck Club, as well as poems from notable poets such as Khalil Gibran and Robert Hayden. The unit deals with the common joys and struggles that parents and children experience as children come of age. Direct instruction focuses on perspective, theme, and character development to help students conduct a sophisticated cross-textual analysis.

UNIT 6: ARGUMENT WRITING 2.0

Research-based Argument

Coming Soon
UNIT 1: COMING OF AGE

Multi-genre
The tenth grade curriculum kicks off with a short story unit featuring stories in which teenage protagonists face important, life-altering realizations. Direct writing instruction is designed to help students compose more sophisticated thesis statements and use more advanced transitions to connect parts of their analysis. Discussion, vocabulary, supplemental texts, and grammar are included in this unit and all others.

UNIT 2: SCIENCE FICTION & SOCIAL COMMENTARY

Multi-genre
This high-interest unit features an array of science fiction poetry and short fiction from authors like Ray Bradbury, Anita Roy, Margaret Atwood, E. Lily Yu, and others. As students read these works, they consider the broader social commentary each author is making. The unit includes informational texts to build background knowledge about the genre of science fiction and the themes in each of the texts.

UNIT 3: THINGS FALL APART

Novel
In this unit, students will read Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart, the tragic story of Okonkwo, an Igbo man navigating his own society's expectations of a "strong man," when his life and culture are destroyed by British colonizers. Through discussion and writing, students grapple with the unit's essential question: What does it mean to be "civilized"? This unit includes robust chapter questions, writing exercises, and vocabulary. Embedded nonfiction—"The Scramble for Africa" and more—is included to build essential background knowledge about the historical references and themes in the book.
UNIT 4: THE FASHION INDUSTRY: PAST & PRESENT

Research

In this high-interest and timely research unit, students build knowledge about the fashion industry through an exploration of the history of one of the first textile mills: The Lowell Mill in Massachusetts. Students read and analyze first person accounts and other primary source documents to draw conclusions about the realities of mill life. While they read, they gather evidence to answer a research question. They work in partners, analyze political cartoons, and read contemporary articles about today’s fashion industry and the effects of fast fashion. This engaging and unique unit prepares students to conduct their own independent research about the practices of a clothing brand of their choice.

UNIT 5: WAR: STORIES OF MEMORIES AND LOSS

Multi-genre

This unit features short stories, informational texts, and poetry that deal with the complex nature of war and its effects by Tim O’Brien, Wallace Stevens, Walt Whitman, and more. It offers a wonderful introduction to war literature. The unit includes robust discussion, writing prompts, supplemental texts, and direct instruction designed to help students write sophisticated textual analysis. Informational texts help build essential background knowledge on important topics like the Vietnam War. Discussion, vocabulary, grammar, and partner work is included.

UNIT 6: THE ART OF ARGUMENT

Research-based Argument

Coming Soon