

Chasing Cinderella: Following One Story Around the World

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Abstract

Chasing Cinderella was created for use in primary classrooms in the city of Philadelphia, specifically for second grade students. This unit utilizes variations of the classic fairytale “Cinderella.” Students will become “Culture Detectives” and come up with a collective definition of the term “culture” and analyze why it is important to understand how other people live. They will use the familiar version of Cinderella as a starting point and analyze different versions of the story from places including India, Egypt, West Africa, Vietnam and China. Using a story that the students already know will allow them to focus less on story structure and more on the different elements of culture in the stories. Students will culminate their learning with a project on a culture from one of the stories they have read.

Content Objectives

What makes us who we are? This is a question that drives a multitude of professions: history, anthropology, geography, biology, physics, chemistry, philosophy, religion and so many more. It is the question that we are asking when we research our family tree through genealogy, when we sit on our grandmother’s knees as children and beg to hear, one more time, the story of when our parent was a child, or when we pick our

college major. It is a question we answer many times throughout our lives, with an ever expanding and changing answer.

Ask five different people what makes them who they are and you will get five different answers. But one thing that unites all of us is the stories that have traveled throughout history, first orally and then written down: fairytales, folktales, myths and legends. This past semester during the seminar *Storytelling Traditions of South Asia and the Middle East*, we explored a variety of ancient stories from India, Persia, and China to name a few places. For many of us in the seminar, this was our first exposure to stories from these cultures. What surprised me most about so many of these stories was not just the windows they provided into the prevailing beliefs and traditions of these cultures but also their similarities to so many of the fairytales that we grow up hearing.

According to Tatar (2010), fairytales throughout history have similar themes: characters experiencing a difficulty that they need to overcome in order to achieve their greatest desire. Stories of children being abandoned by a loving adult are almost universal to every culture, like Hansel and Gretel. Stories about young children who disobey their parents and end up in grave danger, like Little Red Riding Hood and The Little Mermaid are also pervasive throughout the continents. Many may wonder about the relevance of these ancient stories in our technology driven world. But in an increasingly globalized society where people have difficulty overcoming their differences, fairytales are even more vital than in previous generations.

One of our biggest challenges as twenty first century teachers is preparing our students for a world that does not yet exist (Larson and Miller, 2012). At the rate that technology is changing how we live, many jobs that our students will be competing for do not yet exist. One thing is for sure though: our students will be living in a globalized world, where they will interact with people of different cultures every day. Even as young children, our students are exposed to a diverse community full of different cultures and experiences. Yet often, we do not bring this diversity into our classroom environments in a real and authentic way.

As an urban district with a diverse population, one of the biggest challenges for teachers in our schools is finding high quality diverse literature. According to Tschida, Ryan and Ticknor (2014), students need windows, mirrors and sliding glass doors in literature. “Windows” are characters that allow them to see other people as the hero of the story, while “mirrors” provide children with main characters who have similar culture to their own. “Sliding glass doors” are narratives that allow the reader to step into the character’s life. As educators, we need to focus on who is telling the story and what cultural lens the story is being told through.

The vast majority of curriculums available in the United States are told through a white, western/European lens. Even many stories in children’s literature that do feature other cultures and persons of color are told through a European/Western lens – where the culture is “othered” (Botelho and Rudman, 2009). This can lead readers to unintentional misconceptions about other cultures and a conflated view of the importance of Western

cultures. While these messages are usually subtle, they can have a lasting impact on all of our students, but especially our students from non-western/European backgrounds.

With a focus on high stakes testing, many schools have shifted their literacy goals from literary fiction to informational nonfiction. While in the job market nonfiction comprehension is a crucial skill for students to possess, there is ample evidence that suggest strong literacy skills are rooted in an understanding of fictional stories. According to Miller and Pennycuff (2008),

Social studies education is paramount for a globalized world as it allows children to develop a strong understanding of their own cultures as well as learning about others. As a country, our current curriculums focus on readings skills, writing and math. A strong focus on high stakes testing in twenty first century public schools has led to a decrease in time spent on social studies (Boyle-Baise et. al., 2012). However, social studies provide children not only with high order thinking skills, but teach concepts necessary for children to develop an understanding of the world they are living in.

With all of this in mind, I created a literacy unit that focuses on global studies and recognizing connections between cultures will not only help them succeed in the classroom, but in the world. While there are a myriad of cultures in the world that could be explored, my unit will focus on cultures that represent our students but are largely absent from our current curriculum. The majority of our students in Philadelphia are of African descent. However, students are not taught about African-American history

outside of the Civil Rights Movement, Jim Crow, and Slavery and rarely is it taught outside of Black History Month in February (Dorsey, 2007). This history of Africa and African cultures are also neglected from most curriculums, especially in elementary school.

In the city of Philadelphia, approximately 35% of our students are white/Caucasian, yet our ELA and Social Studies curriculums largely focus on European history and values. According to Statistical Atlas, 43% of Philadelphia students are identified as Black or African-American. Additionally, 7% of our students identify as Asian and another 12.5% as Hispanic. When 62.5% of our students are not adequately reflected in our curriculum, we as educators need to do better.

This unit will use a story every child knows, “Cinderella,” to help children develop a deeper understanding of other cultures. This unit will last approximately 15 teaching days. The first two weeks will have students exploring different versions of Cinderella from around the world, such as Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe, The Rough Faced Girl by Rafe Martine, Anklet for a Princess by Lila Mehta, and The Pumpkin Child. During these two weeks, students will compare and contrast the stories looking for elements that exhibit cultural significance. The last week of this unit, students will engage in a cumulative project. They will work in small groups to independently research the country where one of the stories takes place and create their own versions of characters in the story by making bottle dolls.

Teaching Strategies

At the very beginning of the unit, the teacher will tell the students that for the next few weeks, we are going to be looking for Cinderella around the world and using these stories to explore other cultures. The teacher will help the students come up with a definition of culture using an anchor chart with the word culture boldly written in the center. The students will come up with words or phrases that they associate with culture. The teacher can scaffold or think aloud as needed by providing examples such as “my mom always makes a big pot of tomato sauce on Sundays like her grandma did, so I think food is a part of culture.” When the students have come up with a good amount of associations, they will work together to come up with a definition of culture and write about why they think it is important to learn about other cultures.

The teacher will use a KWL chart to assess students’ schema regarding other cultures. Students will make a list of things that they know about other cultures, and specifically what other places they would like to learn about. The teacher will prompt as needed, “I know that Muslim families celebrate Ramadan. I’m going to add that to the K section of the chart because it’s schema. I wonder why they celebrate Ramadan? I’m going to put that on the Wonder section of the chart.” In order to help students develop their thoughts, they will complete their own KWL chart before adding ideas to the class one.

Students will then create the basic story of Cinderella together. The teacher will create this as document on the board, for the students to reference, typing what the students say. Later, they will go back and reread the story they have put together and make any edits that are necessary with help from the teacher. This story will serve as the basis for their comparisons of other versions of the story. Have students fill out the “before” section of that “What Makes Cinderella?” organizer and share out their thoughts. Important elements may include a fairy godmother, evil stepmother, pumpkins, etc.

Once the students have created their basic Cinderella story, they will begin diving into other versions of the story. There are over 25 versions of Cinderella published in the United States, so there is flexibility about which stories a teacher decides to use. When I created this unit, I selected versions of the story that are easily accessible for free through the Free Library of Philadelphia, YouTube and Epic! Reading or for purchase. However, when planning to teach your students you can absolutely choose other versions of the story. Since this unit is focused on exploring the cultures of our students, I would highly recommend choosing a mix of Cinderella stories that reflect your students’ various heritages and ones that reflect cultures unfamiliar to them that aren’t otherwise present in our social studies or reading curriculums.

The first story students will use to track Cinderella is Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters, which takes place in Africa. Students will make a list while the teacher is reading of things that are different about this version of the story than the one that they

created yesterday. When done reading, the students will work with the teacher to create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the two. The teacher will then do a close read of the story and students will listen for clues that tell the reader this story is set in Africa, such as the crops that Neiasha grows in her garden and the clothes that the characters are wearing in the pictures. The students will use this method of comparing, contrasting and listening for cultural elements in the story for the stories that they listen to and read this week.

After reading three to four versions of Cinderella, the students will make a list of what elements make a Cinderella story. Is a stepsister important? What do other versions of the story use instead of a glass slipper? Is there anything that is exactly the same in all of the stories? Students will make a list in small groups of the things they think are important in a Cinderella story, and then think-pair-share with members of another group.

Once students have traveled around the world looking at Cinderella stories, they will then dive deep into a small group project based learning experience. For this project, students will explore one of the countries they have “visited” through their Cinderella stories. For example, one group of students may dive deep into Indonesia after reading The Gift of the Crocodile. During this week, the group will complete a graphic organizer about Indonesia using research materials from Epic Reading, a kid friendly search engine such as Kiddle and National Geographic Kids. Then, students will use their graphic organizers to create a project about their country. Groups will have three different options for their presentation, allowing them to demonstrate their learning in an authentic and

meaningful way. One option will be creating a plastic bottle doll dressed in the traditional clothing of the country they researched and writing a letter to the character in their Cinderella story describing what they learned. Another option will be to create a diorama of the country they have researched. The last option will be creating a power point and presenting a group oral report to the class. While the students are researching, the teacher will meet with each group to discuss the accuracy of the information in their graphic organizer and which project they would like to complete. Students will be assessed on the accuracy and creativity of their project using a rubric. They will be given a checklist for when they are completing their projects containing the items they are being assessed on. They will also complete a self-evaluation reflecting on how they worked with their group, what they learned and what they did well and what they could have done better.

Classroom Activities

Lesson 1 – What is Culture? (Approx. teaching time: 2 days)

Objectives: SWBAT define the word culture IOT demonstrate understanding of the complexity of Earth’s cultural mosaics.

Standards: NSS-G.K-12.4, CC.1.3.2.J, and CC.1.5.2.A

Materials needed: Chart paper OR white board, 1 copy of culture worksheet per student

Lesson Structure:

Engage: The teacher should gather students in a group meeting area. She or he will tell the students that for the next few weeks, they are going to be culture detectives and look at different versions of the same story to help them understand what culture is. This week, they are going to spend time building their schema about cultures to help them be better detectives next week.

Explore: The teacher will show the students the anchor chart or board with the word culture written on it. Students will call out words or phrases that they associate with the word culture. The teacher will scaffold and model as needed.

Explain: Students will turn and talk to a partner about how they would explain the word “culture” to someone else. Each partner will have two minutes to talk. When each partner has had two minutes to talk, they will share out what their partner said. While the students are talking, the teacher will walk around and listen to the students’ thoughts, asking partners with insightful answers to be ready to share out and asking students clarifying questions.

Elaborate: Once students have had a chance to share their thoughts, the class will work together to come up with a definition of the word “culture.” At this time, the teacher should distribute the students’ culture notebooks with the first page ready to be pasted in. The teacher will have the students write the definition they came up with for culture in their notebooks.

Evaluate: The teacher will tell the students that they have done a great job defining culture, and that's the first thing they needed to do as detectives. Now, they need to figure out why this is an important thing to do. Students will answer the second question on their worksheet page, why is it important to study other cultures? While the students are writing, the teacher will walk around the room, asking students probing questions to help them think a little deeper.

Evaluation tool: The teacher will note important observations throughout the lesson. The teacher will check the first prompt on the worksheet for accuracy and the second prompt for understanding of the significance of the word "culture."

Lesson 2 – What do you know about culture? (Approx. teaching time: 1 day)

Objectives: SWBAT use schema about other cultures to formulate ideas IOT ask and answer questions about a known topic.

Standards: NSS-G.K-12.2, NSS-G.K-12.4, CC.1.3.2.J, and CC.1.5.2.A

Materials needed: KWL chart, copy of KWL chart for students

Lesson Structure:

Engage: The teacher will have students stay at their seats and tell them that they have done a great job defining culture and thinking about other cultures. Now, they need to

figure out what schema they already have about other cultures, so they are going to do some thinking work in their notebooks.

Explore: The teacher will give an example of what she knows about someone else's culture. "Did you know that my family is from Italy? On Christmas Eve, we have a tradition of eating seafood for dinner. It's called the Feast of the Seven Fishes, or *Festa dei sette Pesci*. It's really important to my family. That is something I can put under the K part of my chart. Do you know where St. Patrick's Day originated? Ireland! We wear green on St. Patrick's Day."

Explain: Students will glue the KWL chart into their notebooks and fill in the K section. The teacher will emphasize that they do not need to write about their own culture, and they should avoid using stereotypes about a specific group. Students will share out what they know about different cultures first at their table and then with the group. The teacher will write several on the KWL chart, focusing on those that are schema for multiple students.

Elaborate: The students will then move in to the W part of their KWL chart. The teacher will model this for the students. "I really know a lot about Italian people because that's a part of my culture. But do you know what I really wonder? I would really like to know why women in India wear saris. They are really pretty, but they look differently than the clothes that we wear!" The students will then complete the W section of their graphic organizer

Evaluate: Students will meet as a group at the end of the lesson and share out what they would like to learn about other cultures. The teacher will write some of these on the class anchor chart. The teacher will tell that students that they will come back to the L section throughout the next few weeks, filling in what they have learned along the way.

Evaluation tool: The teacher will check the students' graphic organizers for things that make sense. The teacher will use the W section of the chart to plan which versions of Cinderella the class will read.

Lesson 3 – The basics of Cinderella (Approx. teaching time: 1 day)

Objectives: SWBAT describe the basic structure of the fairytale “Cinderella” IOT demonstrate understanding of the structure of a story including setting, characters, and major plot points.

Standards: CC.1.3.2.E, CC.1.3.2.A, CC.1.3.2.H

Materials needed: Smart board with computer OR computer with projector, OR chart paper, Cinderella worksheet to be glued into notebooks.

Lesson Structure:

Engage: The teacher will have the students come to a group meeting place and tell them that now that they have built some schema around other cultures, it's time to do the last

part of their background work before they become culture detectives. Today, they are going to put together the story of Cinderella.

Explore: Students will talk to partners about the important elements of Cinderella: characters, setting, plot points. If students are unfamiliar with Cinderella, the teacher can show the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgVB9NXAPoA>. This video can be used in place of the turn and talk if students are unfamiliar with the story of Cinderella. Or, if a copy of the original story is available, the teacher should read it to the class.

Explain: The teacher will tell the students that now that they have all reviewed the story, they are going to work together to come up with the important elements of the story. If a projector or smart board is available, the teacher should open a word document. If this technology is not available it can be written. (Having a digital document makes editing easier, but it can be done on a piece of chart paper.) The students should start with characters and setting, then move into plot. The teacher should remind the students to use transition words as they share ideas.

Elaborate: The teacher will go back and read the information the students have compiled and have them talk about any edits they think are needed. When the students think their story has all the needed information, the teacher will then ask them what makes this story different from other fairytales? How do they KNOW it is Cinderella? The teacher should

model this for the students (I think the evil step-sisters and the fairy godmother are really important, but what about the Prince's ball?)

Evaluate: Students will glue the Cinderella page into their notebooks and write about what they think the important elements of a Cinderella story are. The teacher should display what they came up with in the classroom so that students can refer back to it as they are exploring other versions of the story.

Evaluation tool: The teacher will observe which students are participating throughout the lesson and who is not actively engaging. The teacher will also use the graphic organizer to assess student understanding of the important elements of a story.

Lessons 4-9 – Exploring Cinderella (Approx. teaching time: 6 days)

Objectives: SWBAT compare international versions of the story Cinderella to the traditional “Cinderella” story IOT compare and contrast different versions of the same story. SWBAT identify elements of other cultures in a story IOT demonstrate understanding of how a culture is defined by traditions, values and region.

Standards: CC.1.3.2.E, CC.1.3.2.A, CC.1.3.2.H, NSS-G.K-12.2, NSS-G.K-12.4

Materials needed: Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe, 4 other international versions of Cinderella, the comparing stories and culture detectives worksheets to be pasted into student notebooks (one of each per student per story).

Lesson Structure:

Engage: The teacher will tell the students that Cinderella is a special story because almost every region of the world has its own version of the story. Today we are going to read a well-known one called Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe.

Explore: The teacher will tell the students that today they are listening for things that are the same and different in this version of the story, reminding them of the vocabulary words “compare and contrast.” The teacher will read the story to the students, stopping and thinking aloud at several points. “Hmm, there isn't a step sister here in this story, but there is a mean sister.” “I wonder if the old lady is the fairy godmother?” etc.

Explain: After reading, the students will glue their Venn diagram into their notebooks. The teacher will explain how a Venn diagram is used and why it is an important tool to have. The teacher should have a large one on the board so that the diagram can be filled out together for this first story.

Elaborate: The teacher will tell the students that this time they are going to do a close read of the story to dig a little deeper into the story's setting, because culture is a part of that. The students will glue the culture detective page into their notebooks. The teacher

should have the students in a whole group area where they can easily see the story. Today, they will work together to be culture detectives but as they get more practice they will do this part themselves. The text says the story takes place in Africa, and now students will look for picture and text clues that support that statement. The teacher should think aloud while reading. “The clothes that they are wearing look different than the clothes that we wear, so that is one clue.”

Evaluate: Students should answer the questions at the bottom of the page. Where does this story take place? What parts of the setting show culture? Answers can be shared out.

Evaluation tool: The teacher will also use the graphic organizer to assess student understanding of the important elements of a story. During the final lesson, students should go back to their “Cinderella” page and write about how their thoughts have changed about what makes a story “Cinderella.”

Repetition: This lesson should be repeated with 4 other versions of Cinderella. A Venn diagram does not need to be completed for ALL versions, but the stories should be compared and contrasted as a whole or small group. Students should complete the culture page for every lesson, as understanding other cultures is the primary objective of the unit.

Lesson 10 – Cultural Explorations (Approx. teaching time: 5 days)

Objectives: SWBAT use a variety of tools to research a topic IOT locate key facts or information in a text efficiently. SWBAT create a project based off of information collected IOT participate in shared research projects.

Standards: CC.1.3.2.E, CC.1.4.2.C, CC.1.4.2.F, CC.1.4.2.T, CC.1.4.2.U, CC.1.4.2.V, CC.1.5.2.F CC.1.2.2.G, NSS-C.K-4.4, NSS-G.K-12.2, NSS-G.K-12.4

Materials needed: 1 research graphic organizer per student, 1 student rubric for each student, chrome books or iPads, encyclopedias and other second grade level informational texts about countries the students are studying, plastic bottles, shoe boxes, construction paper and other materials needed for a project based assessment. Samples of each project (recommended but not required) to model for students.

Lesson Structure:

Engage: The teacher will tell the students what a great job they have done being culture detectives, and now they are being promoted from detective to professor. Their job this week will be to research one of the countries that “Cinderella” took place in. They will work in small groups to complete their projects. Before they develop their projects, they need to complete their research.

Explore: The teacher will put the students into groups, or allow students to pick their groups depending on teacher preference. The teacher will go over each section of the graphic organizer. The teacher should model how to use Kiddle (a kid friendly search

engine), how to find books on Epic Reading, and how to find information in texts. Students should be given time to explore these research tools prior to filling in their graphic organizer. Throughout the project, the teacher should (with permission) take video of groups who are working well together and demonstrating good teamwork skills to show to the class in order to model group work skills. (Video should be immediately deleted after being viewed by the class.)

Explain: Students will begin doing their research by filling in their graphic organizer. While students are researching, the teacher will meet with small groups to assess their needs and scaffold the assignment as needed. The teacher should also assess each graphic organizer for accuracy and have students edit information that is incorrect.

Elaborate: Once most or all groups have completed their graphic organizer and they have been checked for accuracy, the teacher should explain to students what the project portion of the assignment looks like. It is helpful to have samples to show the students, but not necessary. The teacher should go over the project thoroughly – all components of the graphic organizer should be found in the project, groups need to complete 1 project together and everyone needs to participate in completing the project. Students will work together to complete their project.

Evaluate: On the very last day of the unit, students will complete their self-evaluation. The teacher should remind them that they need to be honest about their work. The students will present their projects to their classmates, by explaining their dioramas,

dolls, reading their letters and giving their oral reports. Students who are listening to the presentations can ask questions to the group to learn more information. The teacher will also ask questions to clarify student knowledge.

Evaluation tool: The teacher will use a rubric to assess the students' projects.

Assessment will be based off of creativity, accuracy and overall knowledge. The students will also self assess using a rubric containing smiley faces.

Resources

Annotated Bibliography:

Epic! Reading <https://www.getepic.com>

I would highly recommend creating an account on Epic! Reading (<http://www.getepic.com>). Creating an account is free and students you have in your class can also access stories for free using a unique log in code. This is a great tool for teaching students how to research.

Cinderella stories on Epic. <https://www.getepic.com/app/user-collection/3041139>

I put together a public collection of various international Cinderella stories on Epic Reading for stories the teacher would like to utilize versions of Cinderella that they are unable to find paper copies of.

Graphic organizers and worksheets:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1c4QDtUsLKMwktf9ZDR32QvTgaN0IKBhxe>

All graphic organizers and worksheets needed to complete this unit are contained in the link above. Worksheets are ©Phyllis Zimmer, 2019 and may not be reproduced for profit. All clipart and fonts are copyrighted and may not be removed from the document.

The following is a list of international Cinderella titles along with their ISBN numbers, and link to YouTube reading of video when possible. It is recommended that the teacher use paper or e-books to allow time for think alouds and text analysis, but teachers may use YouTube if they feel it is necessary. All of these titles are currently in print and available for purchase:

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe (ISBN-13: 978-0140559460)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXPV35dah8I>

Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China by Ai-Ling Louie (ISBN-13: 978-0698113886) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SboVXL6gx9g>

The Rough Faced Girl by Rafe Martin (ISBN-13: 978-0698116269)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0UE9GvPqwE>

The Egyptian Cinderella by Shirley Climo (ISBN-13: 978-064432795)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSVflc4l8Lk>

The Golden Sandal: A Middle Eastern Cinderella Story by Rebecca Hickox (ISBN-13: 978-08234151137) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsFIF8CSuvw>

The Gift of the Crocodile by Judy Sierra (ISBN-13: 978-0689821882)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c11VonW8gw0>

The Persian Cinderella by Shirley Climo (ISBN-13: 978-0064438538)

Chinye: A West African Folktale by Obe Onyefulu (ISBN-13: 978-0140557602)

Tam and Cam: The Ancient Vietnamese Cinderella Story by Minh Quoc (ISBN-13: 978-0970165442)

Anklet for a Princess: A Cinderella Story from India by Lila Mehta (ISBN-13: 978-1885008466)

“Culture. Culture. Culture.” by LaNesha Tabb and Naomi O’Brien:

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Culture-Culture-Culture-3157440>

This is not required for completion of the unit, but I would highly recommend having students explore their own culture prior to teaching this unit. This will allow students to come into this unit with a strong foundation and help them achieve content objectives.

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Appendix

Project based learning is an important element of this curriculum unit. Often times, teachers avoid project based learning because it is viewed as time consuming and involved while not always addressing standards. However, project based learning allows teachers to address multiple standards at the same time and use multiple intelligences, creativity and hands-on application of skills learned to demonstrate learning and achieve student learning outcomes.

While reading the various versions of Cinderella, students will engage in comparing and contrasting, using pictures to analyze the text, exploring story structure and how the author chooses words to convey meaning in a story. These basic literary skills will give students a foundation to build higher-level skills on later. The standards used are as follows:

CC.1.2.2.G Explain how graphic representations contribute to and clarify a text.

CC.1.3.2.A Recount stories and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

CC.1.3.2.C Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

CC.1.3.2.E Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

CC.1.3.2.F Describe how words and phrases supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

CC.1.3.2.G Use information from illustrations and words, in print or digital text, to demonstrate understanding of characters, setting, or plot.

CC.1.3.2.H Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story by different authors or from different culture

CC.1.3.2.J Acquire and use grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases.

The fiction component of this unit will allow students to develop a deep understanding of culture, story structure and text analysis. When students begin researching the country their story takes place in, they will use many nonfiction English Language Arts Standards. Research projects and using digital tools are specifically addressed standards in the Pennsylvania Common Core. The standards used while students are researching are:

CC.1.2.2.E Use various text features and search tools to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.

CC.1.4.2.U With guidance and support, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing including in collaboration with peers.

CC.1.4.2.V Participate in individual or shared research and writing projects

CC.1.5.2.A Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

Students will have choices about the projects they complete in order to allow them ownership of the project. Different standards will be incorporated depending on the project that the students choose. Students who write a letter or create an oral report will use more writing standards than those who create a diorama. All students will use speaking and listening skills when they present their projects to the class. The following are some of the standards students will use while completing their projects:

CC.1.4.2.B Identify and introduce the topic.

CC.1.4.2.C Develop the topic with facts and/or definitions

CC.1.4.2.F Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

CC.1.4.2.T With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

CC.1.5.2.F Add drawings or other visual displays to presentations when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

While this curriculum unit uses many English Language Arts standards, the core of this unit focuses on social studies and humanities skills. Students will answer open ended questions, forcing them to use higher level thinking skills and go beyond the concept of “right and wrong.” As discussed in the content objectives, as strong humanities education is vital for students in the 21st century. The state of Pennsylvania does not have any specific standards for elementary social studies, but there are several national standards that address cultural appreciation and understanding in social studies.

NSS-C.K-4.4 Other nations and world affairs

- Students should understand how the United States interacts with other countries and its place in a global society

NSS-G.K-12.2 Places and Regions

- Students should understand how culture and experience influence people’s perceptions of places and regions.

NSS-G.K-12.4 Human Systems

- Students should understand the process, patterns and functions of human migration
- Students should understand the characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth’s cultural mosaics.