

## **What does it mean to be a Migrant?: Using mentor texts to understand migration**

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### **Abstract**

*This unit is designed for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade English/Language Arts class. The purpose of this unit is to have students explore migration and immigration and their connections to it through the poetry and prose of women writers of color. Students will then use these texts as mentors to help them develop their own narrative and poetic styles, writing their own fiction or nonfiction narrative vignettes or poems. Students will think critically about the themes of home, migration, travel, and belonging through reading, discussion, and writing.*

### **Unit Content**

This unit is designed for students in 7th grade English/Language Arts (ELA) classrooms in a diverse Philadelphia public K-8 school. There are three classes, with each class cycling into this ELA room for 90 minutes daily.

### **Problem Statement**

This is my thirteenth year teaching seventh grade ELA at Greenberg Elementary School. Greenberg's ethnic make-up for the 2018-19 year was 48% White, 27% Asian, 11% Black/African American, 8% Hispanic/Latinx, 5% Multi Racial/Other. There are dozens of languages spoken at Greenberg. The most spoken languages other than English at Greenberg, from greatest to least, are Malayalam, Uzbek, Russian, Mandarin, Arabic, and Ukrainian (School District of Philadelphia, 2018).

Middle school students often have difficulty finding inspiration for narrative fiction, narrative nonfiction, and poetry. They also have trouble seeing themselves as writers and seeing a purpose for creative writing other than an assignment for a grade. I use mentor texts to help inspire writing. I also encourage students to write what they know and explore issues that they are grappling with, such as big events going on in our world today, as ideas for their writing.

When I read the course description of the Spring 2022 TIP course Taking up the Mantle: African American Women Writers After Morrison, I knew I wanted to use this course to improve my use of mentor texts for narrative writing. Dr. Beavers wrote in the course description that after reading Toni Morrison's work, the course would move on, "to consider African American women's writing in the 21st Century. We will work across literary genres: poetry, drama, fiction, and cinema in order to ruminate on how or if these writers are responding to Morrison's influence." We would be studying how influential authors had used the mentor texts of Toni Morrison to express what they wanted to say to the world. This is exactly what I want my students to do with mentor texts.

What I did not understand at first was though many of the authors we have read in this course were in some way influenced, directly or indirectly, by Morrison's literary legacy, they may not have seen any of Morrison's work as mentor texts in the way I automatically assumed. In fact, Dr. Beavers shared with me that some of these authors might see Morrison's work as a "tremendous burden and obstacle to navigate around" (personal communication). Many of the writers we have read in this class have very different writing styles than Toni Morrison. Even though Toni Morrison is the writer many people think of when someone says African American female writers, newer African American female writers may not have ever gained any inspiration from Morrison, or even particularly enjoy Morrison's work. This however, did not stop me from finding African American women's writing that would be great mentor texts for my students' creative writing.

### ***Rational***

As we read and discussed some of Toni Morrison's writing for the first few weeks of the course, I really enjoyed and was challenged by the texts and discussions. However, I still could not see how I could bring such complex pieces to seventh graders. My *Aha* moment came when we discussed a passage in the beginning of *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* that paints the picture of the main character arriving in Philadelphia as part of the Great Migration. Author Ayana Mathis both expertly paints the scene and helps us feel Hattie's emotions of shock and satisfaction to see how different Philadelphia is from Jim Crow Georgia.

I originally thought this would be an interesting piece to read and discuss with my seventh graders from the standpoint of readers. The first novel we read in my class is *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, which centers family, resistance, and resiliency in Jim Crow

Mississippi. I thought of how my students could bring what they learned from *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* to their interpretation of the passage in *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie*, which would in turn expand their understanding of the time period.

However, during our discussion of this passage in our TIP class I realized my students had a lot more to bring to the discussion. In the TIP class, we talked about how common this migrant story was, and how it related to the extremely common immigrant story. One of my peers talked about how she was able to relate to the text. She thought about whenever she was in a new city or country, and how she evaluated what customs she could relate to, and what seemed completely different. I wondered what experiences my students have with this phenomenon. Approximately one third of my students are immigrants to the United States. Another third of my students are the children of immigrants, and many of them travel back to their home countries occasionally to see family. The last third, who are considered “traditional” White Americans and “traditional” African Americans, have stories of how their families ended up in Philadelphia and visit family in other parts of the country. I thought about how my students could relate this passage to their own experiences, and then how this passage could be a mentor text for both nonfiction and fiction narrative about migration.

We can also discuss different reasons for migration, and explore the different vocabulary associated with certain migrants from certain places. For example “refugee”, “illegal alien”, and even the word “migrant” versus “immigrant” have different connotations. There are students whose parents come from two different countries. There are even interesting stories behind children from migrants from different parts of the same country (I am one of those children). We can look at one of the other mentor texts in this unit, *Brown Girl Dreaming* (discussed in greater detail below) at the challenges these unions can create. There will be much to discuss and explore when comparing my students’ families’ experience to these texts.

An important discussion point that I want my class to think about when reading the excerpt from *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie*, and comparing it to other migrant experiences, is Hattie’s declaration that she will never go back. Hattie is automatically pleased with this new place, which is different from migrants arriving from new countries who experience negative emotions when they encounter a new and unfamiliar language and culture and want to go home. Dr. Beaver’s posed some great questions that I hope to pose to my students. They are, “ We call it “homesickness,” but is that the best way to get at what migrants are feeling? Could it be that it is more a combination of missing the point

of origin while being determined to make a life in the destination?”(personal communication).

The second mentor text this unit will look at are excerpts from *Brown Girl Dreaming*. It is a memoir in poems and also tells the story of migration. Jacqueline Woodson’s mother was part of the Great Migration to Ohio, but as a child, Jacqueline moved back to South Carolina and then to New York City. This could be a mentor text for poetry about migration and making a home in a new, “foriegn” place. It will add to this discussion about the new environment being exciting verses/strange and embracing homesickness. In *Brown Girl Dreaming*, Jacqueline’s father feels very much as Hattie did, never wanting to leave Toledo or ever step foot back in the south. However, her mother is deeply homesick, and moves back to South Carolina with her children. However, home is not what it once was, as most of her friends and family have also migrated. Jacqueline’s mother moves to Brooklyn to be with sibilings and later sends for her children. Jacqueline and her sibilings are sent back to South Carolina in the summers to stay with their grandparents. She expresses feelings longing for both places and both families (mother and grandparents). At the same time she feels the constraints of both places and otherness, stuck in the middle, not quite belonging in either place. These are feelings I think many of my immigrant students can relate to.

While discussing this feeling of transition that migrants face with the TIP, of not feeling of the new place yet or of the old place anymore, Dr. Beavers brought up liminality or “the space betweenness” (Beavers, personal communication). Liminality was a term most forwarded by anthropologist Victor Turner. It names the disorientation or ambiguity a person experiences in the middle of a rite of passage when they no longer hold their pre-ritual status or identity, but do not yet have the status or identity they will hold when the rite of passage is complete. This idea of liminality has been used in scholarship of other contexts in which people feel stuck in the middle, without a place or identity, such as stateless refugees, undocumented immigrants, and bisexual, intersex, and transgender people (“Liminality”, 2022). From a cursory search, I did not find scholarship linking liminality to the migrant experience in general, to me the connections are clear. Since most of my students are migrants, or the children or grandchildren of migrants, and have experiences similar to those experienced by the characters in the text, migration can be seen as a rite of passage for them. I think many of my students would understand and want to explore the concept of liminality in reading, discussion, and writing, even if the term and dictionary definition may not be developmentally appropriate for most seventh graders.

The poems in *Brown Girl Dreaming* that I think would fit best in this unit are as follows:  
*Each winter* - This poem is about Jacqueline's mom leaving Ohio every winter with her children to visit her family in the south. Jacqueline's father doesn't come because Ohio is home for the dad, but not for the mom (p. 27-28).

*Journey* - Jacqueline's father further explains why he will not go visit the south with the rest of the family saying, "You can keep your South Carolina" (p. 29).

*Home* - Jacqueline paints great imagery of her grandmother's house in the south, showing us where she feels she belongs (p. 32).

*The cousins* - Jacqueline's mom reunites and reminisces with her cousins, showing us a glimpse of what she missed from home (p. 33).

*Leaving Columbus* - Jacqueline, her mom, her sister, and brother leave Ohio for good to live with their grandparents. Her mother is leaving her father. (p. 40-41)

*Ohio behind us* - Living back in South Carolina, Jacqueline's mom realizes the south is not the same now so many have left for the north. She decides she needs to find a new place, maybe NYC (p.46-47).

*The leavers* - This poem has imagery of young people leaving the South in the Great Migration (p.93).

*The beginning of leaving* - Jacqueline's mom leaves first for NYC, promising to come back soon to bring her children with her (p. 94).

*New playmates* - Jacqueline's mom sends home descriptions of NYC in a letter and a doll for Jacqueline (p. 125).

*The letter* - Jacqueline's mom sends home a letter saying that she is coming to bring kids to NYC (p.132-133).

*New York City* - This poem contains imagery of New York City and Jacqueline's impressions as she arrives (p. 143).

*Halfway home # 2* - Jacqueline doesn't feel like she belongs in NYC because of her Southern way of speaking and mannerisms (p. 183).

*Home again to hall street* - Jacqueline visits her grandparents over the summer and feels at home (p.191-192).

*Mrs. Hughes's house* - Jacqueline doesn't feel like she belongs in the South because of her Northern way of speaking and mannerisms (p. 193-194).

*The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros is a short, semi-autobiographical book, of vignettes or flash fiction about a girl growing up in a neighborhood in Chicago where white families are moving out and Latino families are moving in. Immigration and migration are a subtext of the entire book, but it is brought to the forefront in the vignette *No Speak English* (p. 76-78). In it the narrator, young Ezparanza, describes Mamacita, the

mother of the man across the street. He worked two jobs to bring his mother to Chicago. Yet, she will not leave the house or learn English. She cries for home, which is not this house in Chicago, no matter how the son tries to make it like her old home. I think many of my students will relate to this story, having family members they can compare to the mother and son. This all brings up the difficulties of learning a new language to be able to maneuver, adapt, and fit in in a new home. There are psychological and sociological implications to learning or not learning a language. Questions to discuss with my students are: In learning the language, what are you gaining? What are you giving up? How does it change your identity? How does it change how you relate to your family, friends, neighbors, peers? This is something I have seen from a distance and my immigrant students learn English, but not something I have any first hand experience with. I also think many students will like Cisneros's eloquent, yet straightforward writing style and the genre of flash fiction. I think they will experiment with using this genre and/or style to express their thoughts and experiences with migration.

It has become clear that this unit will be as much a reading and critical analysis unit as a writing unit. There will even be vocabulary study there. However, my end goal is to have the students write poetry about migration, using excerpts of *Brown Girl Dreaming* as mentor texts, and flash fiction about migration, using excerpts from *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* and possibly *The House on Mango Street* as mentor texts.

## **Background**

To prepare for this unit I have done more research into using mentor texts in writing. According to *Mentor Texts: Teaching Writing Through Children's Literature, K-6*, mentor texts become coaches and partners to bring joy to writing students. They are models to, "help students envision the kinds of writer they can become" (Cappelli & Dorfman, 2017, p. 6). Young writers can imitate mentor texts while continuing to find new ways in which to grow. Mentor texts must be high quality texts because they, "ignite the writer's imagination and determination to create high-quality text that mirrors the mentor text in many ways" (Cappelli & Dorfman, 2017, p. 7). For teachers of writing, mentor texts help us move from developing individual pieces of writing, to developing the whole writer.

The first crucial step is, of course, choosing the mentor text. The first criterion is for the teacher to connect with text and love it. Next is to find examples of the author's craft that you want to highlight. Then think about how the book serves your students' needs and connects with your curriculum. Key questions Dorfman and Cappelli suggest asking yourself are, "Is this a book your students could relate to and/or read alone or with a partner?", "Does it provide examples of the kinds of writing you want for your students?" and "Can it be revisited often for multiple lessons across traits of writing?" (Dorfman &

Cappelli, 2017, p. 8). You should have a good balance of genres in your mentor texts and choose texts with cultural diversity and high engagement. When it comes down to it though, choosing mentor texts is always a personal decision.

### **Major Unit Objectives**

- Students will be able to comprehend and discuss poetry and flash fiction about migration in order to interpret the text, connections, and draw conclusions.
- Students will be able to reflect on words, including their denotative and connotative meanings, in order to interpret and find deeper meaning in them.
- Students will be able to analyze poetry and flash fiction mentor texts in order to write poems and flash fiction expressing their experiences with migration.

### ***Unit Outline***

Day One: This introduction to the unit will focus on terms for migrants and migration as I discussed in my Rational section. We will go through the reflection on a word process for several of these (described in the Teaching Strategies section below). Then we will conclude by looking at the dictionary definitions of the words, discussing their connotations, making connections between words, and drawing conclusions.

Day Two: We will do a shared reading, close reading and discussion of the excerpt of *The Twelve Tribes of Haddie* where Haddie arrives at 30th Street Station in Philadelphia (p. 7-9).

Day Three: We will do a shared reading, close reading and discussion of two or three poems from *Brown Girl Dreaming*. I will pick which poems of the ones I listed above based on what themes come out most during the class's discussion of immigration terms and the *The Twelve Tribes of Haddie*.

Day Four: We will do a shared reading, close reading and discussion of *No Speak English* (p. 76-78) of *The House on Mango Street*.

Day Five: We will use the poems we read in *Brown Girl Dreaming* as mentor texts, rereading them from the eyes of writers. Then students will brainstorm and write a poem about migration.

Day Six: We will use the excerpts we read in *The Twelve Tribes of Haddie* and *The House on Mango Street* as mentor texts, rereading them from the eyes of writers. Then students will brainstorm to write fiction or personal narrative vignettes about migration.

Day Seven: Students will complete their rough draft of their fiction or personal narrative vignettes about migration.

Day Eight: Students will pick their favorite of the two pieces they wrote (the poem or the vignette to publish. They will go through a peer feedback process in small groups to get revising advice.

Day Nine: Students will revise their writing based on the peer feedback they received the day before.

Day ten: Students will proofread their work and write their final published copy.

Day eleven: Students will turn in their final poem or vignette and the class will have a celebration of writing.

### **Teaching Strategies**

**Mentor Texts:** Mentor texts are texts for writing students to reread, study, find inspiration from, and sometimes imitate. They help students take risks to try new techniques and learn how to do something they may not yet be able to do on their own.

**Close Reading:** Close reading is a deep dive into a text, involving at least three readings of the same text. The first reading is for enjoyment and to get the main idea of the text. The second reading is for deeper meaning. In this reading, we pause often to discuss and annotate the text. We look at structure, word choice, and figurative language, and determine how these affect meaning in the text. This involves annotating the text. The third reading is with a specific purpose, usually analysis, comparison, or reflection. This is often done in pairs and with the aid of a graphic organizer to help students focus their thoughts on the specific purpose and record their learnings and realizations.

**Journal Entries:** Students respond to a daily journal prompt during the first ten minutes of class. The prompt is often a question to access prior knowledge about the topic of the upcoming lesson and a question to get students to reflect on the ongoing unit. I often use the journal entry as thinking of a think-pair-share (described below). I collect, read, and respond to students' journals once a week.

**Celebration of Writing:** This is an idea I took from Lucy Calkins' Writer's Workshop. The point is for students to feel a sense of accomplishment in a finished piece of writing, to feel that they are writers who just published a piece, not just students who completed an assignment. A quick search will give you many different ways teachers conduct their Celebration of Writings. Since many middle schoolers are shy about reading their work out loud to the entire class, I usually have students share their work in small groups of their choosing. Students fill out compliment cards for each other and I give out small treats. Later, I use a book binding machine to make a book out of the classes' work.



**Mini-lessons:** A mini-lesson is a short lesson that introduces a concept, teaches an isolated skill, extends previous learning, or introduces strategies. The students will then use what they learn in their mini-lesson, tasks, and proceeding class periods.

**Shared Reading:** Shared reading is when the teacher reads a text aloud while the students read along silently. This models reading fluency for students. This is a particularly important first step in shared reading, because in heterogeneous classrooms, the texts will almost always be above some students' independent reading levels. Teachers need to ensure that all students are able to access the content.

**Annotating:** Annotating is the act of marking up a text as you read to bring attention to certain elements in order to help the reader create meaning from the text. These elements could be structure, word choice, and figurative language. Students may also mark down their own thoughts and questions, including connections, inferences, and confusions.

**Think-aloud:** A think-aloud is when a teacher is explicitly verbalizing their thought process to students as they perform a task as a form of modeling for students.

**Discussion:** Different types of discussion models used include whole group discussion, turn and talk, and think/write-pair-share. **Turn and talk** is when a teacher poses an open-ended question for students to discuss with an assigned partner sitting close to them.

**Think/write-pair-share** is when students think or write independently about a question or topic. Then students engage in discussion with a partner about the question or topic. Finally, students can volunteer to share out in a whole class discussion.

**Graphic organizers:** This unit uses several teacher-made graphic organizers to scaffold students' learning and achieve the content objective. Graphic organizers are papers given out to students to write on that already have visuals to show relationships between facts, terms, and ideas.

**Cooperative Learning:** Cooperative learning is a form of scaffolding where students work in groups on specific tasks. Each member has the responsibility to learn and accomplish individually while also having the responsibility of group success. Cooperative learning aids students in practicing communication skills, problem solving, and critical thinking.

**Group Reflection and Self Assessment:** These are valuable learning tools for both the students and the teacher that should be done during and at the end of the unit. During the unit, I dedicate some of the class's daily journal entry topics to answering reflective questions about what they are reading, thinking, and learning. This helps both me and the

students have a clearer picture of their progress and needs. At the end of a unit, I give students a teacher-made “Group Reflection/Self Assessment” report to rate and explain their achievement, effort, organization, and teamwork. I use this as a small part of their grade.

**Modeling Writing:** Modeled writing is a scaffold that helps students move toward writing independently using targeted skills. The students watch and listen while the teacher creates a written piece in front of them, sharing her thinking and decision-making process aloud.

**Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Gradual Release):** Gradual Release is a style of teaching in which activity moves slowly from being completely teacher centered to completely student centered as students become more confident and competent at the task. The lesson usually starts with the teacher modeling a task. Then the teacher models, but gets help from the class as a whole. Then, the students do the task in groups, with the teacher circulating to help those who are struggling. Finally, the students complete the task independently.

**Reflection on a word:** Reflection on a word brings forth the vast and layered meaning of a word, phrase or concept through the input of all students/participants. Participants sit in a circle. The leader of the discussion announces the word and gives participants a few minutes for silent writing. “Each participant writes down the words, images, phrases the word calls to mind” (Strieb, 2012, p. 62). Participants take turns sharing what they wrote. Then the chair pulls together the main themes brought up in everyone’s reflections.

Exit Ticket: An exit ticket is a formative assessment tool given at the end of a lesson. It can be given daily or weekly and is used by teachers to assess how well students understood what they learned in class.

## **Classroom Activities**

**Lesson 1:** Migration Vocabulary: What does it mean to be a Migrant?

**Time:** 60-90 Minutes

**Materials:**

1. A document camera
2. An overhead projector

3. Student journals
4. Vocabulary Mind Web (Appendix A)
5. Exit tickets (can be scrap paper)

**Objective:**

Students will be able to critically discuss the terminology surrounding migration in collaborative discussions in order to build on each others ideas and express their own clearly.

**Standards:**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- Diversity 6 - DI.6-8.6 - I interact with people who are similar to and different from me, and I show respect to all people.
- Diversity 8 - DI.6-8.8 - I am curious and want to know more about other people's histories and lived experiences, and I ask questions respectfully and listen carefully and non-judgmentally

**Procedure:**

Introduction/Accessing background knowledge:

Have this journal entry on the board when students come in:

*Read these definitions carefully.*

migrant (noun.): one that migrates: such as

a: a person who moves regularly in order to find work especially in harvesting crops

b: an animal that shifts from on habitat to another

immigrant (noun.): one that immigrates: such as

**a:** a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence

**b:** a plant or animal that becomes established in an area where it was previously unknown

refugee (noun): one that flees

especially: a person who flees to a foreign country to escape danger or persecution

illegal immigrant (noun): a foreign person who is living in a country without having official permission to live there.

*In your journal, write down these words:*

1. migrant
2. immigrant
3. refugee
4. illegal immigrant

*Under each word/phrase, list all the words, phrases, sentences, and images that come to mind when you think of that word/phrase. Write everything you can think. Try to come up with a long list.*

Reflection of a word:

Have students get into a circle with their journals. Go around the circle and have students share what they wrote down for speculative fiction. They can share none, some, or all of what they wrote, even if it was already said. Model first. Take notes. Go around a second time to see if the people who passed want to go now and if anyone thought of anything new. Summarize the sharing for the class, pulling together the main themes brought up in everyone's reflections. Repeat this process with the other words.

Mini-lesson:

Pass out Vocabulary Mind Web (Appendix B).

Have students write-pair-share. Students put one of the four terms in the middle of the mind map and fill it out with the words they are thinking of. Then they share with

their partners. Finally, have a whole discussion. Take notes on the board of links between terms students made on the board.

Return to the dictionary definitions of the term. Ask students, “How do you understand these words now?”

Put up these definitions:

denotation (noun): a direct specific meaning

connotation (noun): the suggestion of a meaning by a word apart from the thing it explicitly names or describes

Go over these definitions and explain that denotation is often thought of as the dictionary definition. Connotation is often thought of as the feeling one gets associated with a word such as a positive connotation versus a negative connotation.

Go back to the four terms and their definitions. Ask students what they think the connotations of the four terms are, positive, negative, or neutral. Take notes on what they said and ask them again at the end of lesson four.

Preview the rest of the unit for the class. Ask the class why they think I started with this lesson on these terms.

Formative Assessment:

Exit Ticket: In your own words, what is immigration and migration?

### **Lesson 3:** Whole Class Close Reading of Poems from *Brown Girl Dreaming*

**Time:** 90 Minutes

**Materials:**

1. A document camera
2. An overhead projector
3. Student journals
4. Student copies of chosen poems

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to comprehend and discuss poetry about cities in order to interpret the poetry and discuss migration through poetry.
- Students will be able to reflect on words and images in order to interpret and find deeper meaning in them.

**Standards:**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.4](#) - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.5](#) - Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.10](#) - 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.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.5](#) - Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

**Procedure:**

Introduction/Accessing background knowledge:

Have this journal entry on the board when students come in:

*Reflect on the excerpt we read yesterday from *The Twelves Tribes of Haddie*.*

*Specifically, what imagery do you remember from it? What connections did you make to the reading?*

Students write-pair-share journal entries.

Review the definition of imagery.

Lesson:

Read the first poem as shared reading.

Have students reflect and summarize the story through turn and talk.

Have students do a think-pair-share of thoughts about and connections with the poem,

Write theme and keys terms students share on the board

Project the poem using the document camera and projector. Tell students that now we are going to do our second reading and we are going to annotate. Remind students that when we annotate we have a conversation with the text and we write down on the text what we think, wonder, and discover as we read.

Read the text aloud, stopping often to do think-alouds and make annotations. Instruct students to copy your annotations on their papers. Model using context clues to figure out vocabulary. Model looking up vocabulary and writing down synonyms when context

clues are not enough. Write down connections and questions students have as annotations as you read through the poem with the class.

Repeat the process of shared and close reading/annotating with one or two more poems, gradually releasing responsibility of annotating to the students.

Conclusion/Formative Assessment:

Have students answer this prompt in their journal:

*Describe and explain a connection you had to one of the poems.*

Students-Write-Pair share ending journal entry.

**Lesson 5:** Poem brainstorming/writing

**Time:** 90 Minutes

**Materials:**

1. A document camera
2. An overhead projector
3. Student journals
4. Student copies of chosen poems
5. Vocabulary Mind Web

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to use mentor texts in order to write poems about migration and integration.
- Students will be able to brainstorm using words and images in order to use them to understand and make sense of their thoughts and experiences with migration.

**Standards:**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4](#) -Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

(Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.5](#) - 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, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

## Procedure:

Introduction/Accessing background knowledge:

Have this journal entry on the board when students come in:

*Think back on the poems we have read about moving, migration, travel, new places, new homes, leaving family behind, going back to visit family, homesickness, not belonging, learning languages. What is a story you want to tell about any of these topics (true, fictional, or somewhere in between)?*

Students write-pair-share journal entries.

Review the definition of imagery.

## Lesson:

1. Have students take out their *Brown Girl Dreaming* poems?
2. Think-Pair-Share: How does Jacqueline Woodson paint a scene in these poems?
3. Think-Pair-Share: How does Jacqueline Woodson tell a story in each poem?  
What's the story in each poem?
4. Have students reread their vocabulary mind webs from the first lesson. (They can do this independently, in pairs, or in small groups.) They should be discussing and writing down their answers to the question: What scenes and stories come out of discussions and readings about migration?
5. Hand out and discuss Neighborhood Imagery Poem Graphic Organizer.
6. Modeled writing - The teacher tells a story you are thinking of about migration and then model drafting is as a poem. Come up with a list with the students of what makes a poem different from prose as you go and write it on the board:
  - a. Stanzas instead of lines
  - b. Do not need grammatically correct sentences
  - c. Should have imagery and figurative language
  - d. Can have rhyming, a set pattern, and alliteration
  - e. Should have rhythm
  - f. Can have repetition for emphasis
  - g. Leaves room for guessing and interpretation
7. The teacher reads their completed modeled draft out loud to the students.
8. Students share ideas for their poems with their partner.
9. Review the "What makes a poem different from prose" list with students.
10. Students draft their poems independently.



Conclusion/Formative Assessment:

Have students share their prewriting with their writing partners and have a few volunteers to share with the class.

Pair-Share: What do these poems communicate about you and your thoughts and learning about migration and immigration?

### Resources

Cappelli, R., Dorfman, L. R., Hoyt, L. (2017). *Mentor Texts: Teaching Writing Through Children's Literature, K-6*. United States: Stenhouse Publishers.

*This is a book about using mentor texts in writing curriculum that I used as a reference to refresh my knowledge and develop a plan of how I would use these texts as mentor texts in my unit.*

Cisneros, S. (2004). *The House on Mango Street*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC

*I may use one or two short experts from this book for discussion about migration and as mentor texts for flash fiction about migration.*

Griffin. (2011). Who Set You Flowin?: The African-American Migration Narrative. In "Who set you flowin'?" : the African-American migration narrative / (pp. 1–244).

Oxford University Press,. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195088960.001.0001>

*This was a text suggested by Professor Beavers about migration that I may use for this unit.*

Liminality. (2022, 23 May). In Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liminality>.

*This article gave me and an overview of liminality and a starting point for research about liminality as related to my unit.*

Mathis, A., & Ojo, A. (2012). *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie*. New York: Random House.

*I will use one or two short experts from this book for discussion about migration and as mentor texts for flash fiction about migration.*

(2022). Merriam-Webster. Merriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>

*I used this online dictionaries for definitions I used in my lessons.*

School District of Philadelphia (2018) Students by Primary Home Language [Table]. Retrieved

from <https://dashboards.philasd.org/extensions/philadelphia/index.html#/enrollment>  
*This chart gave me information on the ethnic makeup of my school for context.*

Taylor, M. D. (2020). *All the Days Past. All the Days Yet to Come*. New York: Viking.

*This is the most recent book and the last book chronologically that Taylor has written about the Logan family. In the beginning of this book, the main character and her siblings take part in the great migration as young adults. Stacey, the main character's brother, has a very similar attitude as Hattie in *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie*. However, Cassie, the main character, moves all around the country, and is disappointed to realize she experiences racism everywhere. She eventually returns to Mississippi to work in the civil rights movement. Depending on where the discussions about migration take us, we may read excerpts from this book as part of this unit.*

Taylor, M. D. (1976). *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. New York: Viking.

*This is the first book we read in my 7th grade class as shared reading. This book is a historical fiction novel based on the author's family stories. It gives students background knowledge about the Jim Crow south that characters are fleeing in at least two of the texts we will be reading in this unit.*

Woodson, J. (2019). *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Penguin.

*I will use multiple poems from this book for discussion about migration and as mentor texts for writing poetry about migration.*

Yeziarska, A. (2003). *Bread givers : a novel*. 3rd ed. New York: Persea Books.

*This was a text suggested by Professor Beavers about migration that I may use for this unit.*

## **Appendix**

A description of how your unit implements the academic standards; and additional materials you wish to provide, such as handouts, evaluation rubrics, etc.

### **Appendix A: Standards**

Common Core Standards for English Language Arts

Reading Literature

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3 - Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.5 - Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.10](#) - 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.

#### Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

#### Writing

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.A - Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.D - Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

#### Learning for Justice (Formerly Teaching Tolerance) Social Justice Standards

- Diversity 6 - DI.6-8.6 - I interact with people who are similar to and different from me, and I show respect to all people.
- Diversity 8 - DI.6-8.8 - I am curious and want to know more about other people's histories and lived experiences, and I ask questions respectfully and listen carefully and non-judgmentally

## **Appendix B: Teacher Created Materials**

# Vocabulary Mind Map

