

When Do the Black Girls Win?

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Key Words: Black Girls Literacies, Literacy, Argumentative Writing, Diverse Children's Literature, Hero Narratives, Missing Perspectives, Identity

Abstract

“When Do the Black Girls Win” empowers students to learn about and reflect on what constitutes a narrator’s “win” in Young Adult and Children's Literature. Students will read children’s literature with BIPOC narrators who defy single stories and find their own successes in their everyday lives. In this way, BIPOC girls can see narrators who do not need to survive, achieve notoriety, or act as saviors in order to be positioned as heroes. By noticing their own relationships with these narrators, students will investigate whether narrators who serve as “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors,” who defy single narratives, who serve as authentic representations of my students are different kinds of “winners.”

Girls High students will first write an argumentative essay on what narrators are needed in order for girls like them to understand the various, and overlooked, ways in which they “win.” Then, these students will author their own heroic narratives—in multimedia and print form— to serve as “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” to the younger students in the School District of Philadelphia. By publishing their own divergent stories, my students and their audiences will contest the existing terrain by reframing the traditional tropes of BIPOC girls. They will position their journeys as academically legitimate and valuable selections of literary art worthy of scholarly exploration. Ultimately, this art will serve as an archive for the future – stories told by and for the exact communities most at risk of being forgotten. By reading, writing, and sharing stories within a community-rooted practice of healing, resistance, and historic preservation, this unit will showcase the normativity of Black girls who win.

Unit Content

After speaking with my students about the lack of African-American female voices in the curriculum, my students let me know that they are tired of reading about Black women who endured slavery and abuse. "When do the Black girls get to win"? Using the philosophies and guidance offered by the course "Diverse Children's Literature: Literary Art, Cultural Artifact, and Contested Terrain," this unit was designed to create alternative "terrain" to the existing literary tropes available to 11th-grade girls at the Girls High School of Philadelphia. Students will read children's literature that features multidimensional and culturally diverse girls and frame these stories as literary art. They will then read some of the works we covered in class to discover why and how stories

about girls *who are not* victims, famous, or saviors were not readily available to their younger sisters or their former selves. In analyzing their own multifaceted identities, they will look for themselves in stories and, if they do not find visions of themselves, will create their cultural artifacts in which girls like them exist in literary art and are made available to future generations. This course will provide girls with a space to explore models of children's literature and literary theory and then publish their own multi-genre and intersectional hero narratives for Philadelphia School District elementary students.

Context

The Girls High School of Philadelphia is a historically significant institution, was founded in 1848 as the Girls' Normal School, the second all-girls high school established in the United States. Its purpose was to "prepare teachers for the common schools of Philadelphia" (About Us). As the sister school to Central High School, it took forty-five years for the school to transition to a college preparatory school called Girls High School of Philadelphia. Throughout the past 100 years, the school's reputation and rankings have fluctuated, ranging from being the #3 ranked school in the School District of Philadelphia to its current rank of #7 (according to US News and World Report).

Girls High's ethnic makeup shifted dramatically over the years, just as the City of Philadelphia itself has. A newspaper article from 1968 reported that "The Philadelphia High School for Girls has made no progress," along with a photograph of the white students who attended Girls High in a picture with one African-American girl. The African-American girl was wearing kitchen attire while the rest were in Chemistry coats, at a piano, and in an art studio. The author mused that this is because, at Girls High, African-American girls "should" work in kitchens (Gay). According to recent alums speaking at Girls High, in the 1990s, the school was diverse in terms of culture, religion, nationality, and ethnicity and at its height in terms of academic prowess. According to US News and World Report, the school has a 95.2% minority enrollment. Students and their families identify as follows, as chosen on their intake forms: 69.1% Black, 12.0% Asian, 10.4% Latinx, 4.8% White, and 3.7% two or more races.

While the statistics from the US News and World Report might be current, in my classes, at least 30% of my students identify with multiple racial categories. Religiously, a significant number of students in my classes identify as Buddhist, Christian, Catholic, and Muslim. While there is no published data identifying the percentage of students at Girls High who are identified as using special education services, according to the statistics from my classes, 35% of my students identify as having an Individualized Education Program (IEP). For privacy and protection reasons, data concerning students who need psychological services or identify as non-binary have not been reported in any formal setting. Due to what students write about in their college essays, I could estimate that 25-40% of my students receive help for PTSD, anxiety, depression, or other psychological needs. Of these, most were acquired by students' research on social media: Students learn how to use their insurance to find help for themselves without speaking to any other adult. My students recently reported informally that they believe the number of

students needing and receiving mental health services to be much higher. Lastly, approximately 20% of my students identify as non-binary, while 10% use names that more closely align with their self-chosen identity.

The US News and World Report states that Girls High School has just under 900 students in attendance, in contrast to 1980, when enrollment reached 2,000 students. Recently, the numbers have created a situation in which teachers fear being cut, and students report feeling disheartened. The alumnae association is active and supportive: Jill Scott and Erika Alexander spoke at events during the 2024-2025 school year; successful alumni in a range of professions spoke to classes about their professions, and the association developed a program to mentor individual students. Within the school, the administration and faculty support students by utilizing resources dedicated to mental health support, trauma-informed teaching, and a team of support and push-in teachers who focus on supporting students with special needs.

Current students whose parents attended the high school were required to write entrance essays, take multiple standardized tests, and submit teacher recommendations in order to apply for the Magnet School. Currently, the School District of Philadelphia has revised its process for populating special admissions schools to create more equitable access to the city's most prestigious schools. Such an attempt has been critiqued and supported in news reports, blogs, and Instagram posts. Rather than speaking to these attempts, it is sufficient to say that the current girls who attend Girls High are incredibly resourceful and bright. Their stories are varied and complex, revealing extreme resilience. At least 75 percent of my students' STAR test scores place them at a higher level than 12th grade. Seventy-five of these students also fail to submit their essays on time or attend the first period. According to my observations, they are like most girls of this generation who are addicted to social media, are very bright, suffer mentally from anxiety and depression, and walk with an air of apathy and boredom (Social Media). This research essay is dedicated to the girls in my classroom, who deserve to be seen and heard and, more than anything, deserve to win.

Rationale for Philosophical Line of Reasoning: Girls Who Win

I woke up today, March 19th, 2025, to an NPR podcast letting me know that “In order to comply with Donald Trump’s executive orders to eradicate signs of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the military has removed at least 10 web pages dedicated to the famed Native American “Code Talker” units that used indigenous languages to transmit secret messages during WWI and WWII” (Marcus). Later, NPR explained that while some resources were reinstated, “[t]wo Defense Department officials not authorized to speak publicly told NPR that these and others were taken down through a review of thousands of stories, photos and videos meant to remove diversity, equity and inclusion material in line with Trump administration policy guidance” (Bowman). To counter that erasure, the reimagined unit will weave Gholdy Muhammad's six pursuits—Multimodal, Identity-Based, Informed by History/Collaborative, Intellectual, Critical, and Joy—inviting girls to author hero narratives that imagine the world they believe their community deserves.

Theoretical Framework

Without Mirrors, Single Stories

The potential impact of erasing stories about Black girl heroes cannot be overstated. Academic articles inspired by Bishop's work on "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors" iterate how literature can help individuals better see and define themselves, learn about other identities, and envision possibilities for their own future identities (Quashie). Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* illustrates the detrimental effects of lacking representation, as the protagonist, Pecola Breedlove, internalizes societal beauty standards, leading to her tragic desire for blue eyes. In analyzing Pecola's response to the Dick and Jane novels, we see how Pecola internalizes the beauty ideals lauded in the children's book series, "Dick and Jane," and commits a self-harming ritual to give herself blue eyes. As the panoptic reader, Pecola believes the "other" is the "self," and, in trying to walk through that sliding glass door, she self-destructs.

Students who consistently encounter literature that does not reflect their identities and lived experiences can internalize negative academic and social messages. Adichie's "Danger of a Single Story" and Grace Lin's "The Windows and Mirrors of Your Child's Bookshelf: Extended TEDx Talk" underscore how reading narratives about people unlike herself influenced her to write narratives about others rather than people like her, perpetuating the focus on literary children's heroes. They also underscore the importance of creating and reading diverse representations for authentic identity narratives in explaining this phenomenon. She, like Picola, internalized the children's stories she read—but instead of self-destructing, she created. Moreover, a curriculum that includes literature with diverse and authentic representation can affirm students' value, positively impacting their academic engagement and achievement. For African American girls, engaging with literature that reflects their experiences is crucial to the learning process and the formation of a positive identity. Children need stories that reveal their own real and potential lives, yet much of the literature surrounding my 11th-grade students does not serve as mirrors or sliding glass doors.

Narrative Psychology

Three years ago, my son experienced intense school-based anxiety, which caused him to refuse to leave the car when we arrived at elementary school. This pattern continued for weeks, leading us to consult multiple psychologists. One therapist asked my son about his favorite hero, who at the time was Captain Underpants. The psychologist encouraged him to imagine himself as Captain Underpants bravely attending school. Inspired by this suggestion, my son wrote himself into a narrative as a heroic boy who enjoyed school, learned new things, and confidently engaged with classmates. Remarkably, after crafting

this empowering narrative, his anxiety drastically diminished, and he eagerly attended school the very next day.

Witnessing this transformation underscored for me the psychological power of narrative reframing—a concept supported by Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Beck's CBT narrative research demonstrates how altering cognitive patterns through storytelling can significantly improve self-perception and reduce anxiety, ultimately leading to positive behavioral changes. Grounded in narrative psychology and intersectional theory, the unit treats storytelling as both a cognitive tool for self-reframing and a lens for analyzing how overlapping identities shape experience, enabling resilience and a growth mindset, which leads to heroic yet potentially understated achievements.

Black Girl Literacies

Philadelphia High School for Girls' majority population, as stated earlier, is that of Black women as chosen by parents during student intake. Detra Price-Dennis asks,

(b)However, what if there was a framework that centered on Black girlhood and the intersectionality of their identities and literacies from a capacity-oriented perspective? How can this framework disrupt the deficit narrative about Black girls' literacy development and inform strategies for engaging, cultivating, and centering the multiple literacies that Black girls engage in to make sense of their world (2018)?

Whitney's study examines Muhammad and Haddix's Black Girls' Literacy movement, separating it into six distinct elements that she used to craft her case study. By using this framework to organize my unit, I will center Muhammad and Haddox's work as a reference to ensure my unit maintains all elements necessary to create a BGL unit.

BGL maintains that writing and creating are always "(t)ied to identities" (Whitney 645). Such a philosophy drives this unit, as students, while crafting their children's stories, position themselves as everyday heroes within their narratives, embracing intersectional identities that also encompass neurological and psychological differences. By combining Narrative Psychology with BGL, students will craft themselves as heroes, allowing them to create and imagine their identities while writing (Muhammad 326). In addition, as part of a larger collective, students' identities, according to BGL, involve "co-construction of knowledge with the world and other Black girls (Muhammad 356).

The Black Girls Literacy movement is also both "political and critical, tied to power, misrepresentations, falsehood, and the need for social transformation" (Muhammad 326). This unit was created because my students were tired of reading about masculine toxicity and women who suffer. They recognized the misrepresentation of Black women's (and many women's) usual tropes: 1) Victim turned survivor, 2) American isolationist—if one works hard enough, can achieve fame and greatness, or 3) Savior heroes, responsible for providing every need to their homes and communities.

Disability Critical Race Studies

Girls, in general, have recently pervaded psychology newsletters with mental health struggles since the popularization of social media and, at the same time, experiencing the isolation of COVID-19. While girls are increasingly occupying the space of the neurologically or cognitively complex, the stories they read often do not feature heroes who share such identities. As an English Language Arts teacher, I noticed that there is not one piece of literature in the 11th-grade curriculum that centers on a character with ADHD, Depression, Anxiety, or any other learning/cognitive difference. However, as multidimensional intersectional individuals, my students have been diagnosed with all of these differences and more. In her case study analysis, Whitney uses Muhammad's framework within the field of Disability Critical Race Studies to call for special education teachers to celebrate the intersectionality of Black girls with differences, as well as critique why they were diagnosed in the first place. In addition, she explains that "special and general education teachers must honor students' multiple identities and provide authentic literacy experiences that connect students and to the larger social world" (Whitney 9). The unit I am creating will help English Language Arts teachers provide a space where students can write about their intersectional identities, including cognitive and neurological differences that are usually silenced. When students write stories that confront anxiety, grief, or depression while still claiming agency, they will pay homage to their own community's heroes while acting as role models for the next generation.

To provide Philadelphia School District students with models of "Girls (with differences) Who Win," my students will need to craft examples and publish their stories for their community. My unit operates under the assumption that since girls' mental health is a critical issue in Education spaces, mental health issues and struggles are one type of identity within Black girls' multiple identities and one that has not only been ignored in scholarship but also in children's writings. By asking my students to write themselves as heroes with intersectional identities that include neurological and mental struggles or differences, my work aims to broaden the scope of who is considered a normative hero.

Curricular Context

Like many large districts across the country, the School District of Philadelphia recently adopted a new, mandated Language Arts Curriculum, in which teachers are provided with daily objectives, required texts (or excerpts from texts), and writing activities. Each day's lesson plan typically consists of a conversation about the relevance of the upcoming material, a 5- to 15-page first or second read of a complex text, reading questions, annotation guides, and writing prompts. Teachers have 250 minutes of classroom instruction time per week to teach the five separate objectives and lessons, assuming the week is not interrupted by mandated testing, drills, or other extracurricular necessities. For example, a "First Read" activity might indicate that students should, within one 50-

minute class period: 1) learn how to write Cornell Notes style annotations based on a brief vocabulary-based practice, 2) independently read five pages of a legal court document while keeping "Cornell Notes" annotations on main ideas and questions 3) engage in a talk and turn 4) participate in an extensive group discussion, and then 5) complete a writing activity. If an administrator was observing this lesson during a 10-minute walk-through, they should be able to observe all parts of this lesson being taught. As administrators and teachers alike recognized the absurdity of this requirement, teachers were given more leeway to select and focus on specific parts of the day's activities while still achieving the given objective.

In determining how to maintain the integrity of "The Wars We Win" unit's literature and the School District of Philadelphia's English Language Arts curricular framework, I framed the unit first around "The Science of Reading" philosophy that guides teachers on how to teach students to read with fluency, confidence, and comprehension (Curriculum). The Science of Reading philosophy requires that students achieve a "standard of coherence:" reading that challenges students to create tasks, questions, and discussions that model comprehension, enables feedback on reading comprehension/analysis, and does this by asking students to engage in texts worth "all this effort" (McMonagle). In determining which texts are worth "all this effort," I relied on Muhammad's five-pronged (now six) framework on equity-informed reading and teaching: the explicit curriculum should be Multimodal, Identity-Based, Informed by history and collaboration, Intellectual, and Critical (Cultivating Genius). She adds "Joy" to the latest iteration of her equity framework, but this is not included in the SDP objectives (Unearthing Joy).

The 11th-grade English course begins with a unit entitled "The Wars We Wage" and is introduced with a 10-day unit designed to inform students about American Modernism. Each short reading features affluent individuals who rebel by writing in a different form ("These Wild Young People"). To begin the year by defining rebellion as something wealthy individuals do to create new literary movements and, therefore, "win" sets an exclusionary tone for students who are well aware of the ramifications of rebellion. In terms of encouraging the science of reading by helping students access literature through historical contexts, the previous year, the 10th-grade students took a course in African American History only to arrive in an 11th-grade English classroom and be presented with a unit that presents rebellion as a form of writing that excludes the African American experience without any context or justification.

In terms of analyzing the unit's ability to teach based on "The Science of Reading," the SDO unit includes "multimodal" learning opportunities, allowing students to complete vocabulary exercises on the computer and watch "Blasts" that introduce more complex concepts. However, the vocabulary words they learn are limited and do not prepare students to comprehend texts like *The Marshall Doctrine (MD)*. While this reading task is challenging, it does not encourage confidence because even if students do

work hard to understand the ten words taught, they still cannot define a majority of the words in the document. Next, even if students read aloud together, sound out words, and hear the teacher reading, they will still not achieve reading comprehension of the entire *MD* within the 50 minutes allocated to understand both its context and complete a "first read" activity. Because the unit does not introduce any historical context to students, it becomes impossible to forge a discussion that encourages intellectual or critical engagement or encourage "standards of coherence." Moreover, because students are unfamiliar with the context of *MD*, they cannot possibly appreciate its value.

At the beginning of the year, students are not positioned to learn how to read or write critically because they do not encounter any texts that serve as "mirrors," readings in which they can see themselves or immediately identify worth. As the first unit of the year, during the first weeks of class, my students are introduced to a curriculum in which "texts, reader, and contexts are inseparable from the other" (Osorio 20). By fostering disengagement and feelings of inadequacy, the curriculum sends the implicit message that students' own stories and identities are neither relevant nor "academic." What is more, these first unit's limited perspectives do little to counteract a larger systemic pattern in which girls—particularly those who identify as Black—struggle to see themselves reflected in heroic or central roles—and rightly so because those narratives are not readily available.

My intention here is not to undermine the SDP curriculum but instead to explain why I chose to create an alternative to this particular unit and build my curriculum on the core principles exhibited by the science of reading and equity-informed reading and teaching. This past year, the students could not fathom that I had no power over what I teach and how I teach it. I constantly tell them that this is the School District of Philadelphia's curriculum. It does not matter. As a new white teacher in their school, because I teach the required curriculum, I am seen as a purveyor and supporter of the legend that the literary canon, one that does not include their stories, is of the most importance in an English classroom. I am immediately identified as someone who not only does not look like them, comes from their neighborhood, or sees academic value in their experiences. I created a unit to introduce myself and other 11th-grade 11th-grade teachers to their students by first recognizing the narratives that already exist in the students' lives.

My unit serves to introduce students to the value of reading, writing, and critically engaging with literary tropes, values, and complexities. It also serves to help a teacher, especially a white teacher, present themselves as someone who does believe their stories, experiences, and histories belong in our classrooms. The unit's teaching strategies employ a framework that balances skill, intellect, identity, and criticality to ensure academic rigor while honoring lived experience. Unit Specificities

Rationale for Revised Unit Sequence

This curriculum intentionally reorders the School District of Philadelphia's (SDP) recommended sequence of writing assignments—Argumentative Narrative Literary Analysis Research—to more effectively scaffold skill development, culminating in a rigorous research project. The revised sequence supports students in a clear, logical progression:

Quarter 1: Argumentative Essay

Teaches students foundational skills in using textual evidence to support clear, persuasive claims.

Why First? Argumentative writing equips students to understand and appreciate the need for purposeful storytelling grounded in evidence.

Quarter 2: Narrative Essay

Empowers students to explore personal expression and artistic style through narrative voice.

Why Next? Engaging students as authors deepens their appreciation of intentional stylistic choices, laying the groundwork for analyzing such choices in literature.

Quarter 3: Literary Analysis Essay

Develops students' analytical skills, focusing on how authors use literary devices to convey visions of societal change.

Why Third? Having first become narrative writers, students now approach literature with heightened sensitivity to authors' stylistic decisions and thematic intentions.

Quarter 4: Research Essay

Integrates previously developed skills—using evidence (argumentative), stylistic and narrative understanding, and literary analysis—to critically examine societal structures and laws.

Why Last? This final research project synthesizes all previous skills, asking students to critically reflect on the relationship between literature, community impact, and structural influences.

Visual Summary:

1. Argumentative skills (evidence-based claims)

2. Narrative skills (personal expression, style)
3. Literary analysis skills (examining authors' devices and intentions)
4. Research skills (synthesis of analysis, argumentation, and style to address societal issues)

Outcome:

This sequence ensures students master each writing type in a meaningful order, culminating in a powerful research project that applies their critical and creative insights to broader societal contexts.

Teaching Strategies

“When Do the Black Girls Win?” 11th grade ELA Curricular Framework

The units are designed to augment the current curricula by maintaining current objectives and standards while supplementing with alternative materials aligned with the TIP unit creation within the course, “Diverse Children’s Literature: Literary Art, Cultural Artifact, and Contested Terrain.”

Duration: Quarter one includes twenty-eight distinct and developed lessons. Fourteen lessons focus on reading, annotating, analyzing, and practicing writing argumentative paragraphs. The last twelve lessons use the first fourteen to develop students’ ideas into the culminating argumentative writing assignment. Each lesson is aligned with a quarter one specific SDP objective. Quarter two includes thirty-one distinct lessons. All standards and objectives remain the same as used in the current Quarter three narrative writing unit.

Overview: This unit guides students through the process of reading, analyzing, and ultimately writing an argumentative essay as well as personal narratives in which they serve as both narrator and hero. It draws on Gholdy Muhammad’s five-pursuit framework from *Unearthing Joy*—Identity, Skills, Intellect, Criticality, and Joy—while aligning with the School District of Philadelphia’s (SDP) instructional priorities, the Common Core State Standards, and Pennsylvania Academic Standards for English Language Arts. The Office of Curriculum and Instruction supports the use of Muhammad’s philosophy in creating curricula, as stated on their website: “Our curriculum elevates the 5 Pursuits named in Dr. Muhammad’s text, Cultivating Genius. Educators teach in ways that create spaces for celebrating our differences and building self-confidence” (Curriculum).

IDENTITY: Exploring the Self through Mirror Texts

At the unit’s core is the pursuit of identity, which invites students to examine who they are and how they would like to be perceived. As Muhammad notes, “[i]dentity is a starting point for joy and purpose in education” (*Unearthing Joy* 10). Using mentor texts such as *Genesis Begins Again* by Alicia D. Williams, *Piecing Me Together* by Renée

Watson, and *Saturday* by Oge Mora, students will engage in reader-response journaling and guided annotation to recognize literary characterization techniques used to construct identity. Students complete graphic organizers based on Rudine Sims Bishop's "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors" to analyze students' relationships to the characters' identities.

Students will use graphic organizers to organize their evidence to determine how complex identities can inform themes. In support of the science of reading as a key objective for 11th-grade students, this unit helps students practice identifying main themes in readings and locating evidence to support these themes. In this way, students better learn how to "conclude meaning based on evidence" (STAR).

CRITICALITY: Questioning Singular Identities

Students will read and watch Adichie's TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story," to focus on two specific reading objectives for 11th grade. After identifying how Adichie employs narrative and argumentative structures, students will gain a deeper understanding of her argument: when human beings perceive each other as only one aspect of their complex identity, they engage in false narratives, tropes, and stereotypes that ultimately prevent them from understanding one another and communicating effectively. By analyzing Adichie's speech, students will be able to identify the different "stories" contained in each narrative they read more effectively. Suppose one narrator has multiple identity markers and does not claim anyone as primary. How does a reader, or the narrator for that matter, understand the "self"? What is the benefit of reading about and living as human beings with multiple stories?

During the 11th grade, adolescents encounter a "maturation of the prefrontal cortex," which is why they start understanding that experiences and other human beings are not all bad or all good but have nuances. When presented with singular narratives about what it means to be a girl worthy of representation, Black girls can too easily end up, in the pursuit of becoming a savior, hero, or survivor, giving up their intersectional identity in place of a single story that fits roads already paved. As teachers of adolescents, we are in a position to engage teenagers, who are primed and eager to understand ambiguity better, in analyzing how identity (as represented in literature) can be multifaceted. Such work not only strengthens their reading skills but improves students' ability to make complex cognitive decisions (even while their emotional responses are still somewhat uninhibited) (Griffin 3).

Using mentor YA texts like *The Hate U Give*, *Punching the Air*, *The Weight of Our Sky*, *Too Bright to See*, *Monday's Not Coming*, *Dear Haiti*, *Love Alain*, and *American-Born Chinese* to introduce systemic neglect, family legacies, cultural assimilation, LGBTQ pride, students will use graphic organizers to examine how characters are treated, what systems shape their experiences, whose stories dominate, and what constitutes authenticity. Muhammad writes, "Criticality is the ability to read, write,

and think to understand and disrupt oppression” (73). Students will explore questions like: Who gets to be a hero?

INTELLECT: Building Cultural Knowledge Through “Authentic” Storytelling

After exploring the importance of understanding identity as multifaceted and examining identity in children's literature, we will evaluate whether each author is creating an “authentic” narrative or story. Students will take *five 40-minute class periods* to complete a first and second read of Short's "Cultural Authenticity and Reader Responsibility in Children's and Young Adult Literature." As in the Adichie analysis, students will first investigate that article's thesis, organization, and argumentative framework, reinforcing their development as readers of nonfiction. Muhammad defines intellect as "learning about ourselves and others while gaining new knowledge in a way that affirms humanity" (66). Short's analysis of authenticity supports such interdisciplinary growth.

Students will then congregate in book circles to complete the first and second readings of texts rooted in various cultural and historical contexts, examining authenticity and broadening their understanding of heroism. Students will take *two forty-minute class periods* to use Short's checklist of cultural authenticity and participate in a presentation on the extent to which each book offers authentic representation and/or reinforces single stories (1). By asking students to investigate authenticity by examining both authorship and representation, they will also learn the reading skill of distinguishing between a narrator and an author and applying that understanding to their position.

SKILLS: Narrative Craft and Literacy Proficiency

In order to align this curriculum with the SDP objectives, students will first write an argumentative essay determining what voices they most missed when they were young, and why these voices deserve to be told. As literary critics, the girls' evaluation of stories that need to be told will position them to investigate their own identities better as they formulate their narratives. Discussions and presentations surrounding intersectionality, identity, and authenticity will inform the second writing assignment within this unit, the narrative essay. Creative writing seminars and independent writing sessions, where every student will develop a multidimensional and authentic hero's tale that incorporates anxieties, cognitive quirks, or inherited traumas as integral yet nuanced aspects of the hero's identity, while foregrounding agency, humor, and hope. In this way, students will understand how identity may be informed by, rather than defined by, differences.

Students will take *nine class lessons* to draft personal narratives—YA stories or children's stories—that reference their mental health while framing themselves as heroic guides for younger readers. I write this unit as containing lessons rather than daily lesson plans as, depending on the context, length of class, and other limitations, it will serve teachers better to understand the number of minutes each lesson might take rather than dividing lessons equally into a class period (that means different minutes to different

individuals). Peer workshops with mentor texts will emphasize narrative choices that uplift rather than pathologize struggle. Students might also explore writing in the third person to distance themselves from their memories enough to imagine their struggles and successes as not framing the foreground of their identity but rather serving as backdrops to the joy they find in everyday living adventures (Adyuk). According to Cognitive Behavioral Psychology, writing in the third person enables writers to better see themselves as agents of change rather than victims of an unjust system (Ayduk). To begin and continue writing their stories, students will also use the previously read texts as mentor texts, such as *You Should See Me in a Crown* and *Saints and Misfits*, for examples of writing dialogue, narrative, setting, plot, pacing, and characterization.

This unit privileges Black women's historical traditions of knowing the creative process. In order to further solidify the value of Black women's narratives as literarily significant, I will take *two class periods* to invite members of my students' families to work with the students to share their stories and ways of knowing and act as models of Black women who have stories to tell and are heroes in their own right. By asking parents to participate in this project, students will also see the women in their lives as having stories that are "intellectual and grounded in critical thought, discussions, and reflection about society and social problems" (Muhammad 326).

Finally, during the last *five periods* of this section, students will receive scaffolded feedback through peer conferencing and teacher mentoring. Writing workshops will incorporate sentence frames, revision models, and mentor excerpts from texts. As a recursive practice, the girls will meet frequently in writing workshops to read each other's work and respond to the work in the vein of a traditional, professional writer's workshop. Peer and teacher conferences—structured around Muhammad's pursuits—will guide revisions that sharpen the plot and clarify themes without medicalizing differences. In discussing not only their writing but also analyzing each story's ways of knowing and potential influences on younger students, the girls will create their community of storytellers and knowers.

JOY: Storytelling as Empowerment and Celebration

By relying on Muhammad's emphasis on literacy skills that are "culturally and historically situated," writing hero stories allows "students to communicate who they are" to audiences (61). When students create stories about children who do not fit the traditional tropes, they model intersectional identities and allow other African American girls to enjoy and celebrate the multiple identities that they inhabit. In providing "a space for [students'] creativity and self-expression," the girls in my class might imagine an alternative future for their younger selves, one that paves new roads on which girls can play (Toliver 4).

Therefore, the unit does not end with students turning in their stories to a teacher but publishing their units for an audience. The unit's culminating project will be the publication of their stories. Finally, the class will take seven class periods to collaborate on illustrating and hosting a public webpage that hosts audio readings, illustrations, and full texts of their finished stories. By publishing for younger Philadelphia readers, Girls High authors will utilize narrative to heal themselves, redefine the concept of the "hero," and expand the canon to include intersectional identity markers that have been less prevalent in children's literature, such as LGBTQ+ representation, mental health, and neurological differences.

Students' ultimate projects will be published for elementary school students to read, allowing children in the district to see heroes who act as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors for their journeys. The final stories will serve as celebratory models of voice, resilience, and identity for the children in their neighborhoods. Muhammad defines joy as "the aesthetic, cultural, emotional, and spiritual expressions that bring students pleasure in learning" (77). Students are empowered to see themselves as capable, creative, and important. Such work is also a form of resistance, reclaiming storytelling as a method of forming and enabling models of identity that differ from the existing tropes.

Rationale for Revised Organization and Unit Sequence

Instructional lessons are organized around topics and objectives, rather than days, in order to support block, modified block, and traditional schedules. Secondly, this curriculum intentionally reorders the School District of Philadelphia's (SDP) recommended sequence of writing assignments—Argumentative Narrative Literary Analysis Research—to more effectively scaffold skill development, culminating in a rigorous research project.

The revised sequence supports students in a clear, logical progression:

Quarter 1: Argumentative Essay

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Quarter 2: Narrative Essay

Empowers students to explore personal expression and artistic style through narrative voice.

Why Next? Engaging students as authors deepens their appreciation of intentional stylistic choices, laying the groundwork for analyzing such choices in literature.

Quarter 3: Literary Analysis Essay

Develops students' analytical skills, focusing on how authors use literary devices to convey visions of societal change.

Why Third? Having first become narrative writers, students now approach literature with heightened sensitivity to authors' stylistic decisions and thematic intentions.

Quarter 4: Research Essay

Integrates previously developed skills—using evidence (argumentative), stylistic and narrative understanding, and literary analysis—to critically examine societal structures and laws.

Why Last? This final research project synthesizes all previous skills, asking students to critically reflect on the relationship between literature, community impact, and structural influences.

Visual Summary:

1. Argumentative skills (evidence-based claims)
2. Narrative skills (personal expression, style)
3. Literary analysis skills (examining authors' devices and intentions)
4. Research skills (synthesis of analysis, argumentation, and style to address societal issues)

Outcome:

This sequence ensures students master each writing type in a meaningful order, culminating in a powerful research project that applies their critical and creative insights to broader societal contexts.

Classroom Activities

“When do the Black Girls Win?” (alt. to “The Wars We Wage”)

Teachers must have at least 10 working days to grade essays (especially if teaching multiple sections of the same class). In addition, schools often cancel classes for assemblies, STAR testing, and other such interruptions. For this reason, multiple lessons are considered optional (and in practice will not be able to be included in this unit) in order to give teachers sufficient grading time.

IDENTITY: Exploring the Self through Mirror Texts

Formative Assessment/Scaffolding: Identity Web Creation

Students will create a visual representation of the roles, influences, and community ties that the narrative will include. This graphic will establish relevance and lay the groundwork for later writing.

Week one of the semester follows the traditional SDP Unit 1. Students get acclimated to the new learning platform, StudySync, and its method of teaching and learning. The first five days of the semester will maintain fidelity to the curriculum and use the summer reading activity to do the following: 1) I Introducing ourselves by asking, how will the concepts you're learning today help you later in life? 2) Learning how to organize ideas using annotation techniques; 3) Organize words using a checklist to understand context clues to define and clarify 4) Organize reading comprehension by using whole group reads, pair reading, and silent reading strategies to deepen comprehension.

Lesson 1: Exploring Identity Through Naming Traditions

Duration: 50 Minutes

Daily Activities:

Students will read two children's stories to reflect on their own names and the cultural significance behind them. They will complete an identity organizer and share responses in small group discussions.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Close Read: Students will be able to analyze the author's use of connotative word choice to illustrate a metaphor, in a short-written response.

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will connect their personal and cultural histories to naming traditions and analyze how names can serve as entry points into their identity.

Materials/Supplies:

Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez-Neal; *Eyes That Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho; Identity organizer, Student journal

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5

Lesson 2: Understanding Cultural Tensions Through Names

Duration: 50 Minutes

Daily Activities:

Students will read *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi. They will keep reader-response journals. Students will use graphic organizers to link their own name, and that of the narrator, to their setting, culture, family, and chosen interests. Discussions will follow about belonging and identity.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Skill: Word Patterns and Relationships: After re-reading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to identify relationships and patterns amongst words in order to aid in their comprehension of the text.

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will evaluate how a given and a chosen name represents our own relationship to our family, culture, and chosen identities. By beginning the unit contemplating how a word, student's name, serves to represent a part of their identity, the class establishes an understanding about the limits involved in others naming us and ourselves determining our own name.

Materials/Supplies:

The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi, word-pattern tracker, guided discussion prompts

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4

Lesson 3: Analyzing Representation: Pre-Reading Activity

Duration: 50 minutes

Daily Activities: The teacher will begin the class giving an example of a novel that served as a mirror, window, and sliding glass door in her life. Then, she will ask the students to name the different books aloud that they've read (or the book they read for their summer reading—*Summer Reading Assignment is in the appendix*). In small groups, students will determine whether that book served as a mirror, window, or sliding glass door on a big sheet of paper and then pass the paper to the right. At the end, students will conduct a gallery walk in which they will notice how different books serve different purposes depending on the reader and interpretation. We will end the class asking students to stand if they could identify at all with the book they labeled as a window or the book they determined was a sliding glass door.

Text: Students will analyze previously read texts to secure a pre-emptive understanding of the vocabulary words to be used in the academic text, *Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors* by Rudine Sims Bishop.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Skills Lesson on Vocabulary: After reviewing the meanings of content knowledge and academic vocabulary words, students will be able to recognize and use them in a variety of contexts.

Thematic Objective:

Students will analyze which books they've encountered serve as mirrors, windows, or sliding glass doors and what this means for their identity and access.

Materials:

Guided discussion prompts, reflection journals, book analysis chart

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.4

Lesson 4-5: Recognizing Themes of Belonging and Identity, First and Second Read

Duration: 50 minutes

Text: *Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors* by Rudine Sims Bishop

Daily Activity: The teacher will model reading an academic text by reading select excerpts of the Bishop article in class. The class will begin with a handout on academic vocabulary words necessary to understand the text. Then, the teacher will explain how to use Cornell Notes as a strategy for annotating an academic text for meaning first, then critical questioning.

Second Read: Think/Pair/Share activity: Students will use a graphic organizer to identify which stories served as mirrors, windows, or glass doors. They will compare their notes with their peers and then report on their findings in a large group format using Gallery Walk.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objectives):

First Read: Students will be able to evaluate the author's use of details to better understand the text's key ideas.

Skull, Technical Language: After rereading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to delineate and evaluate the reasons and evidence provided by the author.

Second Read: After an initial reading and discussion of the excerpts from the essay, students will be able to identify and describe argumentative strategies and rhetorical terms used when writing an academic document.

Thematic Objective:

Students will analyze how the books they read throughout 9-11th grade served as Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors. Because students were prepared to read such an article and understand its importance in determining the significance of books in their lives, students will be more ready to complete a “reach” read, an academic article aimed at college level students. The first read will encourage students to feel more secure in their own ability to read difficult texts. In doing so, students will be better prepared to read the future college level reading by Short on authenticity and use both of these texts as evidence to use when writing their argumentative essay. The first paragraph of this essay will ask students to apply Bishop’s ideas to a text of their choice. Students will save notes taken during this lesson for their culminating argumentative essay.

Materials:

Academic text, Cornell Notes graphic organizer, list of vocabulary words

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Lesson 6: Defining the *Girl Who Wins*

Duration: 50-75 minutes

Text: *The Proudest Blue* by Ibtihaj Muhammad

Daily Activities: After defining the terms “intersectionality” and “symbolism,” the class will engage in a shared first read of the children’s story. In small groups, students will determine what blue represents in the story and why it is “proud.”

Each person in each group will determine whether the story and the symbol served as a mirror, window, or sliding glass door by completing a poll on Google Classroom. The class will look at the quantitative data regarding the mirror, window, or sliding glass door and I will call on a few students to answer why the story represented any one of those three things to them.

In a second read, students will identify the following in groups of three: 1) What perspective is the story being told in? (first- or third-person narrator?) 2) What words does the narrator use to describe the hijab? 3) What other identity markers (religion, gender, family relationships...) do we know about the main character? Students' groups will conjoin in a jigsaw fashion to determine whether or not the narrator sees herself as a role model or hero. Students will determine, individually, whether they, as readers, see her as a mirror, window, or sliding glass door. Finally, we will poll who sees her as a role model or hero. Finally, we will discuss how the relationship between the audience and the narrator affects our opinion of the character's "heroism."

Each person in each group will determine whether the story and the symbol served as a mirror, window, or sliding glass door by completing a poll on Google Classroom. The class will look at the quantitative data regarding the mirror, window, or sliding glass door and I will call on a few students to answer why the story represented any one of those three things to them.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Skill: Short Story Elements. After rereading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to explain how the author's choices of how to introduce and develop the characters in a short story affects other story elements.

Thematic Objective:

Students will explore how identity categories like religion and gender intersect through symbolic imagery.

Materials:

Mentor text, culture circles, symbolism guide

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Lesson 7: Building Reading Fluency with Reader Response Journals, First Read Activity

Duration: 50 minutes

Daily Activity: To build on the activity with *The Proudest Blue*, students will practice understanding what it means to "win" by charting the heroic qualities of a narrator. The teacher will read aloud the story, *Ellie Ultra* by Gina Bellisario. Using a graphic organizer, students will annotate for characterization: motivations, identity markers, dialect, living environment, thoughts, actions, and looks. After students are re-introduced

to the terms “complex narrator” and “authenticity,” they will try to define these terms on their own, in complete sentences, without teacher support.

In order to increase reading fluency, this activity will preview students to the Adichie lesson on “The Danger of a Single Story” by having students already think and discuss what it means for a narrator to have more than one story. In addition, this activity will preview students to the future lesson on authenticity, when we read an academic article that defines authenticity and creates a method for students to evaluate narrative authenticity.

Text: *Ellie Ultra* by Gina Bellisario

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Reading: After reviewing the meanings of content knowledge and academic vocabulary words, students will recognize and use them in a variety of contexts.

Thematic Objective:

Students will preview identity-based questions, critical reading questions aimed to improve fluency, and select a YA novel to explore identity, intersectionality, and cultural authenticity.

Materials:

Text, graphic organizer, sentence stems for definitions (EL adaptation)

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1

Lesson 8: Complex and Identifiable Narrators as Heroes, Second Read Activity

Duration: 50 minutes

Daily Activities: To begin, students will reflect on yesterday’s reading of *Ellie* and look over their definitions of a complex and authentic narrator. I will let students know that we will come back to these terms at a later date with further definitions and classification tools. We will then repeat lesson 6’s lesson’s exercise where students identify how this story might serve as a mirror, window, or sliding glass door. In Socratic seminar style, students will discuss whether the title of the story truly captures Ellie’s “heroism,” whether it is important to value the everyday hero as a “winner,” and whether the

students' personal relationship with the story affects their understanding of Ellie as a hero. Ultimately, students will use these characterization-based vocabulary words to write a complete sentence describing three different aspects of Ellie's heroism. EL students will use sentence starters to complete this exercise.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Skill, Word Meaning: After rereading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to use print or digital resources to clarify and validate understanding of multiple-meaning words in a passage.

Writing: After learning about common mistakes regarding sentence fragments, students will practice writing complete sentences to avoid fragments.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.2

Thematic Objective:

Students will better define the terms "heroism" and "winning" by determining the value of recognizing the everyday hero as a "winner" and whether this determination is influenced by students' personal relationship with the narrator.

Materials:

Character annotation handout (from the previous lesson)

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4.C

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1

Lesson 9: Deepening Character Analysis in Identity Narratives (Optional)

Duration:

Text: *When Aidan Became a Brother*, by Kyle Kukoff

Daily Activities: To prepare students for the day's story, the teacher will introduce the term "intersectionality" and discuss whether any one identity marker is more important than another. In think/pair/share form, students will consider the following: If we are living in a time when racism is pervasive and race is the most "visible" part of our identity, do others define us according to our "speculative" identity? For the second part

of the lesson, the teacher will read *When Aiden Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff and illustrated by Kaylani Juanita. Students will work in carefully chosen groups to answer higher order thinking questions and write down their thoughts on a chart (see appendix). Finally, students will read about each other's work in a gallery walk.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

After an initial reading and discussion of the short story, students will be able to identify and describe character traits and setting details as well as articulate the story's explicit and implicit meanings.

Thematic Objective:

Students will analyze how gender identity, family support, and a sense of belonging are constructed in children's narratives. This story prompts reflection on identity transitions.

Materials:

Mentor text, graphic organizer, character tracker, reader-response journals

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

CRITICALITY: Questioning Singular Identities

Formative Assessment: Informal short argumentative writing practice; students will complete these as the first of multiple recursive steps of their cumulative argumentative writing task.

Students will write low-stakes formative paragraphs, practicing writing small arguments about how to determine whether a narrator "wins" as a vehicle of knowledge, representation of complex identity, or example of authenticity.

Lesson 10: Exploring Rhetoric in Adichie's TED Talk, First Read

Duration: 100 minutes

Daily Activities:

Students will view Chimamanda Adichie's TED Talk *The Danger of a Single Story* with an accompanying text. Using a reading comprehension-based annotation guide, students will track Adichie's narrative structure and use of transitions to tell her story.

Students will work in small groups to apply the talk's premise to the books they already read, each group representing a different book. A guided class discussion will follow.

Ultimately, students will respond to Adichie’s key question: "What is the danger of a single story?" They will draft short written responses evaluating the complexity of identity as presented.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Author’s Purpose and Point of View: After rereading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to articulate Adichie’s purpose and point of view in “The Danger of a Single Story.”

Writing Skill – After reading and discussing a model of student writing, students will develop a draft of an argument.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will analyze Adichie’s use of narrative to argue that reducing identities to single stories fosters misunderstanding and oppression.

Materials/Supplies:

TED Talk video, annotation guide, discussion worksheet

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

Lesson 11: Synthesizing Identity in TED Talks, Second Read

Duration: 50 minutes

Daily Activities:

Students will complete a graphic organizer in response to *The Danger of a Single Story* and respond to Adichie’s key question: "What is the danger of a single story?" They will draft short written responses evaluating the complexity of identity as presented.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

After engaging in a close reading and discussion of *The Danger of a Single Story*, students will be able to write a short response that analyzes and evaluates how Adichie structures her argument and uses rhetoric and reasoning to support her point of view.

Writing skills progression note: Writing Skill – After reading and discussing a model of student writing, students will develop their drafts by improving their use of transitions.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.C, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will synthesize how Adichie demonstrates the complexity of identity through intersecting stories.

Materials/Supplies:

TED Talk, graphic organizer, short response template

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Lesson 12: Cultural Memory Shapes Characterization (*optional*)**Duration:****Daily Activities:**

Students will read *Fry Bread* and participate in a guided discussion on who the narrator is, how multiple identities shape the narrative, and whether the book broadens cultural representation. They will complete a journal reflection on who the narrator is, how multiple identities (family, culture, history) shape the narrative, and how we know which story "should be told." Students will examine how cultural memory and communal roles complicate singular representations of Native identity. Key questions will consider what narratives are currently available about students from Indigenous cultures in the students' school, on social media, or in film. Does this book seek to widen expectations? Does it do its job?

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Students will be able to evaluate the author's use of details to better understand the text's key ideas.

Writing Skill – After learning about common mistakes regarding run-on sentences, students will practice revising run-on sentences and writing complete sentences.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.2

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will examine how cultural memory and communal roles complicate singular representations of Native identity.

Materials/Supplies:

Fry Bread by Kevin Noble Maillard, journal prompt sheet, identity reflection graphic organizer

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

Lesson 13: Characters with Shifting Identities**Duration:** 50 minutes**Daily Activities:**

Students will read *My Name is Yoon* aloud to each other and track emotional responses and character shifts in graphic organizers. Students will explore the concepts of Postmodernism; especially assimilation, resistance, and shifting identity markers across various contexts. Students will determine whether they view this text as a mirror, a window, or a sliding glass door. Do students identify as sharing Yoon's feelings about having to integrate two separate cultures? We will administer surveys about the ways students identify with Yoon and discuss how students might identify with this character as a mirror, even if their family does not come from West Asia. By reading the story aloud, students practice their phonics skills and develop oral storytelling skills.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

After an initial reading about *My Name is Yoon*, students will be able to identify and describe characteristics of the postmodern literary period and evaluate whether this story reflects themes of intersectionality.

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will explore the concepts of assimilation, resistance, and shifting identity markers across various contexts.

Materials/Supplies:

My Name is Yoon by Helen Recorvits, identity webs, reflection graphic organizer

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4

Lesson 14: Setting and Storytelling in African Narratives**Duration:** 50 minutes

Daily Activities:

Students will read *I Just Want to Say Goodnight* by Rachel Isadora and reflect on how the African setting affects narrative tone and identity formation. Students will explore how the African Plains are presented in this story and how, or whether, that differs from Adichie's narrative about her life and visit to Lagos, Nigeria. Does it matter that Isadora does not give a specific country? How does not including information inform the readers' relationship with the little girl? Was this a mirror, window, or sliding glass door text to you? They will compare this narrative with Adichie's view of Nigeria and complete guided journal entries. Does it matter that Isadora is not African?

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Skill: Compare and Contrast: After re-reading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the texts by comparing and contrasting themes and topics in the texts.

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will analyze how racial and geographic settings impact cultural expectations in children's literature. Students will analyze how systems like immigration, labor, and race shape quiet moments of family identity.

Materials/Supplies:

I Just Want to Say Goodnight by Rachel Isadora, journal prompts, comparison worksheet

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9.A

Lesson 15: Evaluating the Danger of Singular Stories

Duration: 50 minutes

Daily Activities:

Using a narrative complexity graphic organizer, students revisit one student-selected previously read story and identify how characters are treated, what systems shape their lives, and how many "stories" each text allows.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

After learning about the genre of argumentative writing, students will be able to identify and describe the characteristics of argumentative essays, persuasive speeches, and judicial opinions.

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will use evidence to evaluate the multiple stories in each text and determine whether it is fair or just to allow a single story to represent a culture. Even if it is unfair, students will evaluate whether they do ascribe stories to people from different cultures due to the "Danger of a Single Story."

Materials/Supplies:

Narrative complexity graphic organizer, anchor chart, sample stories from earlier lessons

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Lesson 16: Interrogating Hero Narratives

Duration: 50 minutes

Daily Activities:

In literature circles, students will use the previous lesson's assessment to work in groups and discuss three previously read children's stories. Students will evaluate which characters are presented as fully dimensional, how each incorporates identity in their stories, and how to resist writing in tropes. The discussion will include reflections on naming, culture, and the implications of incidental vs. cultural representation (Dahlen). Students will begin brainstorming names and traits for their own potential narrators.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

After engaging in a close reading and discussion of multiple texts, students will be able to compare and contrast how the characters in two texts reflect the elements of perspective taking or defining a hero in a short, written response.

Writing Skill – After learning about subject-verb agreement in complex sentences, students will practice applying correct agreement in Socratic prep responses and brainstorming activities.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.2

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will analyze and compare portrayals of heroism and evaluate how naming, cultural background, and story structure affect character depth and audience perception.

Materials/Supplies:

Discussion prompts, Socratic seminar preparation organizer, hero reflection chart

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1

INTELLECT: Building Cultural Knowledge Through “Authentic” Storytelling

Formative Assessment: Argumentative Essay

Students will engage in student-led discussions based on their chosen YA novel to discuss narrative and characterization techniques they appreciate, types of identities portrayed, how different heroes express their successes, and how these texts might serve as models for their argumentative and narrative writing assignments. These circles will center on identity and criticality, promoting shared inquiry. Brooks and McNair affirm that such discussion practices deepen students' understanding of social realities. Students read about cultural authenticity and then write an argument for the class about their chosen novel's "authenticity," as defined by Short.

Lesson 17: First Read, Understanding Short’s Term “Cultural Authenticity”

Duration: 50 minutes

Daily Activities:

After introducing vocabulary terms, the teacher will read excerpts from Kathy Short’s academic article “*Cultural Authenticity and Reader Responsibility in Children’s and Young Adult Literature*.” Students will recall reading the Bishop and Adichie academic arguments and review their Cornell Notes on these articles. Students will practice using Cornell Notes to take annotations on meaning and argumentative shifts without, this time, the help of the teacher. First, the teacher will model note taking by sharing her notes on screen while the students read. The teacher will pause to give students time to take notes. Then, in order to ensure all students are able to keep up, ask for volunteers to share their notes as the reading proceeds. The teacher will also walk around to make sure students are actively engaged in taking notes.. The class will preview key academic vocabulary including “authenticity,” “positionality,” and “narrative voice” using robust vocabulary routines (Beck & McKeown). Students will annotate the text, highlight unfamiliar terms, and begin to identify Short’s central argument.

Materials: Academic article: “Cultural Authenticity and Reader Responsibility in Children’s and Young Adult Literature” by Kathy Short, highlighters, Cornell Notes, Graphic organizer to chart Short’s checklist to determine authenticity.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

First Read: After an initial reading and discussion of a complex informational text, students will be able to identify and summarize the author's central claim and key supporting details.

Writing Skill – After reading and discussing a model of student writing, students will develop their drafts by improving their stylistic choices.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.3

Science of Reading addendum: Introduce vocabulary like "authenticity," "positionality," and "narrative voice" using Beck & McKeown's robust vocabulary routine (student-friendly definitions, examples, non-examples, deep processing). Pre-teach cultural terms used in Short's article to build background knowledge.

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will identify Kathy Short's central claim and trace how it is supported through structure and examples. They will evaluate the role of academic writing in shaping how we read and write culturally authentic stories.

Materials/Supplies:

"Cultural Authenticity and Reader Responsibility in Children's and Young Adult Literature" by Kathy Short, Guided annotation Cornell Notes, projected/printed mentor annotations

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4

Lesson 18: Second Read, Evaluating Short's Concept of Authentic Narratives

Duration: 50 minutes

Daily Activities:

Students complete a second read of Kathy Short's "*Cultural Authenticity and Reader Responsibility*" article and work in small groups to discuss and annotate how Short defines authenticity and frames a reader's responsibility in interpreting texts. Students will complete a graphic organizer that maps the central argument and supporting evidence and begin generating questions for how this applies to their own reading.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Second Read: After rereading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to analyze how the author's ideas and claims develop across a text.

Writing skills progression note: Writing Skill – After reading and discussing a model of student writing, students will develop their drafts by revising their conclusions.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.E, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will analyze how Short defines authenticity and apply that definition to their own responsibilities as readers, focusing on how identity and positionality influence interpretation.

Materials/Supplies:

Kathy Short's article

Small group discussion guide

Graphic organizer on reader responsibility

Anchor chart on "positionality"

Sentence stems for analysis

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

Lesson 19: Close Read: Applying Short's Cultural Contexts (Guided Practice)

Duration: 50 minutes

Daily Activities:

Students completed a first read of their selected YA novel for the summer read. Students will return to this book (or use a previously read children's story for students who need teacher-led support). Students will activate prior knowledge from previous mentor texts and evaluate questions about Bishop's windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors, Adichie's single/multiple identities, and Short's checklist on authenticity. Teacher will model how to annotate a children's story using Kathy Short's cultural authenticity checklist, students will annotate the text using specific codes (e.g., C = cultural reference, A = authorial choice, Q = question raised).

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Second/Close Read: After engaging in a close reading and discussion of a literary text, students will be able to analyze how the setting, narrator, and character traits contribute to the central meaning of the text.

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will gather initial impressions and contextual observations related to cultural authenticity and narrative voice in YA literature, while beginning to identify patterns of representation that align or challenge dominant narratives.

Materials/Supplies:

Student-selected YA novels
Reader-response journals
Guided annotation bookmarks or prompts
Cultural and historical background handout

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A

Lesson 20-21: Applying Cultural Authenticity to a Close Read (Independent Practice)

Duration: 50 minutes

Lesson 20 Daily Activity:

Teacher will model how to annotate a children's story using Kathy Short's cultural authenticity checklist, students will annotate the text using specific codes (e.g., C = cultural reference, A = authorial choice, Q = question raised).

Lesson 21 Daily Activity (optional): Students will use their checklist to analyze character development, plot choices, and cultural references for authenticity.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Close Read: After rereading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to evaluate the author's use of language, structure, and perspective to deepen their understanding of the text's meaning.

Writing skills progression note: Writing Skill – After reading an excerpt of a Student Model draft and reviewing a writing checklist, students will draft a meaningful argumentative essay in response to a prompt.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A-D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will use academic tools to evaluate the authenticity of representation in their selected text, focusing on narrative reliability, voice, and cultural markers.

Materials/Supplies:

Student-selected YA novels
Kathy Short's Cultural Authenticity Checklist
Guided annotation tools (coded bookmark or margin guide)
Small-group discussion rubric

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C

Lesson 22: Use Book Circles to Check for Understanding

Duration: 100 minutes

Daily Activities:

Students meet in their book circles to share observations from their individual YA novel readings. Each student presents notes on how their text portrays identity and culture using Short's cultural authenticity criteria. Using a guided complexity matrix and Short's checklist, students will check each other's use of evidence to support their claim that their novel either achieves or does not achieve complexity. Students will also compare their own analysis to that of their peers.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Compare and Contrast: After engaging in a close reading and discussion of multiple texts, students will be able to compare and contrast how the characters in two texts reflect the elements of perspective taking or defining a hero in a short, written response.

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will collaboratively analyze multiple narratives and evaluate which stories most effectively avoid stereotypes, promote cultural authenticity, and reflect diverse lived experiences.

Materials/Supplies:

Student-selected YA novels
Cultural authenticity comparison matrix
Group discussion prompts
Authenticity rubric and rankings organizer

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

Argumentative Essay Cumulative Work

Lessons 23-28 aligns with the calendar and objectives listed within the SDP Argumentative Writing Assignment for Quarter One. Teachers may use all writing methods and assignment handouts prepared by StudySync. This section is written only to give support and focus to the already existing curriculum. *The argumentative writing assignment is listed under the Appendix section.*

Lesson 23: Gathering Evidence for Argumentative Structure: Establishing Cultural Authenticity

Duration: 50-100 minutes

Daily Activities:

Students return to their book circles to compare the cultural representation in their selected novels. In small group presentations, students argue which texts avoid the “single story” trope and which most authentically portray intersectional identities. For the second part of this lesson, students will use a comparison matrix to rank and critique their own novels on authenticity, complexity, and narrative voice. They then will work in a group to compare and contrast narrators. The session will end with each student writing a short reflection on whether it is heroic to maintain multiple identities, supported by examples from their group’s discussion.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

Argument and presentation: After learning about the genre of argumentative writing, students will be able to identify and describe the characteristics of argumentative essays, persuasive speeches, and judicial opinions.

Science of reading addendum: Use a comparison matrix that asks students to rank the texts using a few shared criteria (e.g., voice, complexity of culture, lack of stereotypes). Scaffold with modeling and shared language using a shared criterion. Scaffold with modeling and shared language.

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will defend their assessments of cultural authenticity using textual evidence and academic vocabulary, while analyzing how stories either resist or reinforce oversimplified cultural identities.

Materials/Supplies:

YA novels (student-selected)

Comparison matrix from Lesson 22

Group presentation prompts

Reflection writing handout
Authenticity rubric

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1

Lesson 24: Synthesizing Voices on Identity and Authenticity

StudySync Argumentative Prompt: Write an essay in which you argue how to achieve a successful portrayal of identity. What does it mean to “win”? What are the benefits of winning? What are the costs?

Duration: 50 minutes (adjustable)

Texts: TED Talk (Adichie), student-selected YA novel, academic article by Kathy Short

Daily Activities:

Students will formulate an argument to determine what kind of “winners” (complex, authentic, mirrors, windows, or sliding glass doors) they most wish they could have read about as children.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objectives):

After learning about genre characteristics and craft, students will plan an argumentative essay in response to a prompt.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A-D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will understand the Argumentative Writing assignment as well as methods of assessment.

Students will reflect on what it means to “win” as a narrator and which voices were missing from their childhood stories. Ultimately, they will present an argument that one specific type of voice/story was missing from their childhood and deserves to be told.

Materials/Supplies:

Assignment Handout

Rubric

TED Talk transcript (Adichie), YA novel excerpt, Short’s article

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A-D

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Lesson 25: Refining Paragraphs Using Mentor Models

Duration: 50 minutes

Daily Activities:

Students will write a thesis statement and topic sentences for clarity, authenticity, and alignment with evidence.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

After reading and discussing a model, students will develop their drafts by writing a thesis statement.

Students will develop their ideas by organizing their argumentative effectively.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A-B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5

Materials/Supplies:

Student-written thesis statements

Model argumentative paragraph excerpts

Claim-and-evidence feedback rubric

Revision protocol sheet

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A-B

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

Lesson 26: Structuring Paragraphs with Evidence and Analysis

Duration: 100 minutes

Daily Activities:

Students will use sentence stems and paragraphs to organize arguments, patterns of evidence, commentary, and coherence.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objective):

After reading and analyzing a student model and peer responses, students will write and revise their thesis and topic sentences for clarity, strength, and evidence alignment.

After reviewing mentor texts and a student model, students will revise their body paragraphs to improve coherence, elaboration, and alignment between claims and commentary.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.B-D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5

Materials/Supplies:

Sample student outlines

Student draft paragraphs

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.B-D

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5

Lesson 27: Shark Tank Presentations

Duration: 50-100 minutes

Texts: Student reflections, Short's article, TED Talk

Daily Activities:

Students will participate in an informal, small group based, presentation, like in Shark Tank. Each student will prepare a written argument supported by examples from texts that will serve as a draft of their argumentative essay. Students will answer the following questions for their group: *Why does their chosen "missing voice" need to be heard and honored as a kind of "winner"*? Students will give individual presenters fake money based on the strength of their argument.

Instructional Goals (SDP Objectives):

Writing Skill – After reading and discussing a model structure, students will continue developing drafts by focusing on clarity, organization, and alignment between claims and evidence.

presentation preparation includes refining thesis statements, citing textual evidence, and rehearsing rebuttals.

After reading and discussing a model of student writing, students prepare for writing their drafts by identifying reasons and relevant evidence from their selected texts.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A-E, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will articulate their positions using evidence and rhetorical techniques, evaluating how power and authorship intersect in discussions of identity and representation.

Materials/Supplies:

presentation prep organizer

Argument planning worksheet

Authenticity evidence bank (quotes from Adichie, Short, and novels)

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B-C

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A-E

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Lesson 28-30: Peer Review and Publish Overview

Duration: 200 minutes

Texts: Student essays, editing checklist

Daily Activities:

Students exchange argumentative drafts and provide peer feedback. Mini-lessons focus on stylistic improvements (transitions, sentence structure, stylistic clarity).

Instructional Goals (SDP Objectives):

After reading and discussing a model of student writing, students will develop their drafts by revising their introductions.

After reviewing a sentence-level revision guide and peer editing checklist, students will revise their essays for fluency, clarity, and stylistic precision. Students will continue to edit and publish the final draft of their argumentative essay.

Writing skills progression note: Writing Skill – Students will use a revision guide to revise their argumentative essay for clarity, development, organization, style, diction, and sentence fluency.

Writing Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1-3

Science of Reading addendum: Scaffold peer review with targeted questions.

Unit Thematic Objective:

Students will revise their writing for clarity, cohesion, and organization.

Materials/Supplies:

Peer review rubric

Editing checklist with stylistic focus

Revision sentence structure mini-guide

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1-3

Select Lesson Plans (Lessons 28-30):

Lessons 28-30 occur after students already developed their argument, collected evidence, and presented their argument during a presentation. This presentation preparation also served as the first part of the draft process for writing their argumentative essay. The following occurs after students cut and paste their presentation materials into a separate document.

Lesson 28: Annotating Mentor Texts and Revising Introduction

Duration: 75 minutes

Focus: Student Model Review + Peer Review Setup

Objectives

- Analyze a model argumentative essay using peer review categories.
- Practice giving and explaining feedback using sentence stems.
- Understand how to annotate for peer feedback according to rubric
- Prepare for partner-based peer review with clarity on expectations.
- Apply techniques learned to revise introductory paragraph and thesis statement.

Materials

- Peer Review Checklist
- Student Model Essay (full version)
- Partially Annotated Model Essay (handout)

- presentation information cut and pasted into a new argumentative essay document.
- Highlighters and sticky notes

Pacing Guide

0–5 min: Introduction

Explain today's goals: evaluating strong writing and preparing to give effective peer feedback.

Think-Pair-Share Model Analysis

5-10 min: Distribute one previously collected student essay.

10-20 min: Teacher models how to annotate the introduction paragraph: thesis, voice, use of mentor text.

20-25 min: Students independently read and annotate Paragraph 2 using checklist focus area: Textual Evidence and Literary Concepts.

25-30 min: Set expectations for respectful tone and constructive language.

30-40 min: Students turn to a partner and exchange introductions to practice annotating.

40-45 min: Students compare annotations

45-50: 5 minute break

50-60 min: Whole class shares examples of strong evidence and identifies why the writing works.

60-75 min: Students revise thesis and introduction based on suggestions.

Additional revision work for homework

Assessment

Formative: Annotated model paragraphs, student share-out during TPS

Scaffolding & Accommodations

- Distribute partially annotated model to students needing visual scaffolds.
- Use color-coded highlights to distinguish rubric categories.
- Provided sentence stems from peer review checklist.
- EL students may annotate in their first language and translate terms with bilingual support.
- Allow IEP students to use checklists with reduced categories (e.g., 3 vs. 6 focus areas).
- Think-Pair-Share helps all students articulate ideas before sharing aloud.

Peer Review Checklist (abridged for desks):

Tape this handout to student desks, explaining common peer review codes:

T = Needs a stronger Transition

TE = Add or clarify Textual Evidence

CL = Clarify concept or explanation

N = Natural voice could be improved
MLA = MLA formatting needs checking
G = Grammar correction needed

Peer Review Checklist

Teacher – Subject – Storytelling & Success Argumentative Essay

Writer's Name: _____

Reviewer's Name: _____

Reviewers will earn 10 points for completely reviewing their peers' work. This means making at least 2 comments for each sub-topic, on the essay. You should write a total of 12 comments on your peers' essays. When your peers turn in their rough draft, you will write your name on the draft as the "peer reviewer."

ARGUMENT & THESIS (20 pts)

The thesis clearly identifies a specific type of missing voice or story from childhood texts.

The essay explains why this story matters using the framework of mirror/window/sliding glass door.

The thesis connects the idea of a "successful" story to complex identity and/or authenticity.

Strength: _____

Suggestion: _____ (Place the word "Thesis" where you need more clarity.)

TEXTUAL EVIDENCE (15 pts)

The essay includes one direct citation.

The evidence is relevant and smoothly integrated into the paragraph.

MLA in-text citations are correctly formatted.

Effective use of text: _____

Improve by: _____ (Place a TE where you need more evidence or the evidence is unclear)

LITERARY CONCEPTS (20 pts)

The essay clearly explains mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors.

It addresses Adichie's idea of the "single story" and its dangers.

It includes Short's ideas on authenticity of voice and why it matters.

Well-explained concept: _____

Needs clarification: _____ (Place a CL where you need to see a clarification)

ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE (15 pts)

Each paragraph uses topic sentences and concluding sentences to build logically from the last with clear transitions.

Each paragraph focuses on one part of the argument as in the suggested structure or uses another coherent format.

Strong transition or concluding sentence _____

Paragraph needing revision: _____ (Place a T where you need to see a transition)

VOICE & STYLE (10 pts)

The tone is appropriate and academic but shows personal investment (as in the Adichie argument).

Sentences are varied and the writing is engaging.

The student's unique voice is present throughout the essay.

Great sentence or stylistic moment: _____

Could sound more natural/clear here: _____ (Place a N where student should review voice)

CONVENTIONS & MLA FORMAT (10 pts)

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are generally correct.

MLA format is used consistently: heading, double-spacing, in-text citation.

Formatting done well: _____

Revise formatting or grammar here: (place an MLA or G where student needs to review MLA or grammar) _____

Lesson 29: Peer Review and Revision for Evidence and Understanding

Duration: 75 minutes

Focus: Peer Review Focus – Textual Support & Literary Concepts

Objectives

- Students will evaluate each other's use of textual evidence and literary concepts.
- Students will practice identifying and suggesting improvements for evidence integration and literary analysis.
- Students will use rubric categories and annotations to provide clear feedback.

Materials

- Peer Review Checklist (textual support & literary concepts only)
- Rubric
- Sentence stems for evidence and analysis feedback
- Highlighters
- Student essay drafts

Pacing Guide

0–10 min: Review peer review focus areas: textual support & literary concepts

10–30 min: Peer Review (focus only on two checklist sections)

- Annotate mentor text references and explanations
- Use margin codes (TE = textual evidence, CL = clarify concept)

30–40 min: Whole-class debrief: Which part was easier—evidence or literary concept

feedback?

40–75 min: Writers revise for evidence and literary concepts.

Additional revision work for homework

Assessment

Formative: Peer checklist annotations, written revision goals.

Scaffolding & Accommodations

- Provided sentence stems for integrating evidence with signal phrases from Purdue Owl (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/quoting_paraphrasing_and_summarizing/signal_and_lead_in_phrases.html#:~:text=Doe%20acknowledged%20that%20.%20.%20.,follows%20the%20quote%20or%20paraphrase.) “This quote supports your idea because...”, “Try explaining this more by...”
- For students with IEPs that require a more simplified version: 1) chunk the checklist to only show two relevant categories 2) allow students to verbally explain their annotations to the teacher or a peer 3) Offer mentor text quotes (if needed).

Sentence Starters & Stems for Style and Argument Development

Use these to vary how your sentences begin and develop ideas.

To introduce your argument or thesis:

A voice I never encountered in childhood stories was one that...

This type of story matters because it resists the idea of...

To define ‘success’ in storytelling, we must consider who gets to speak and why...

To introduce Adichie or mentor text evidence:

As Adichie argues in “The Danger of a Single Story,” ‘...’ This illustrates that...

This idea aligns with Adichie’s warning that...

Adichie’s concept of a ‘single story’ applies here because...

To transition between ideas:

This perspective expands on...

In contrast to simplified narratives...

Building on the idea of authenticity...

To analyze the narrator’s voice or identity:

The narrator’s voice is effective because it...

Rather than conforming to a single narrative, this story...

This voice challenges assumptions about...

To reflect on the impact of the story:

This kind of representation helps readers...

By including this perspective, the story becomes a...

A voice like this could have changed how I saw...

Lesson 30: Editing for Sentence Fluency and Final Publication

Duration: 75 minutes

Focus: Sentence Structure, Style, and Fluency Revisions

Objectives

- Students will revise their essays to improve sentence structure and clarity.
- Students will apply stylistic strategies from the Sentence Variety and Style Guide.
- Students will reflect on how revisions affect clarity, tone, and engagement.

Materials

- Student draft with peer feedback
- Sentence Variety and Style Guide
- Highlighters and revision checklist
- Rubric

Pacing Guide

0–5 min: Launch revision goals – focus on sentence variety, clarity, and tone

5–15 min: Review Sentence Variety and Style Guide together – highlight examples

15–25 min: Peer Review

25–55 min: Independent revision time – apply at least 3 sentence-level changes; Teacher conferences with students to support stylistic revisions

55–75 min: Self-assessment and final editing using rubric and checklist

Final revision work for homework

Formative Assessment: Teacher observation, evidence of sentence-level revision, and exit ticket Post Revision Reflection and Checklist via Google Classroom under “Classwork” then “Question”

Checklist that mirrors the Sentence Variety & Style guide:

I used a mix of long and short sentences.

I began sentences in different ways.

I revised vague words to be more precise.

I added at least 2 strong transitions.

I revised one sentence to improve tone or emphasis.

Scaffolding & Accommodations

- Provide modeled examples of combining short sentences or revising passive voice.
- Offer sentence stems or templates for ELL learners to experiment with stylistic devices.
- Use graphic organizers to support students in identifying repetitive structure.
- Allow students with IEPs to revise 1–2 focus paragraphs with teacher support instead of the full draft.

Mini-Guide on Sentence Variety and Style: Common Sentence Issues and How to Improve Them:

Purpose: Help you revise your writing to make it clearer, more engaging, and more sophisticated. A strong argument uses sentence variety, precise word choice, and transitions to show how your ideas connect and why they matter.

Repetitive sentence structure (e.g., 'I think,' 'I believe'):

Start with phrases that connect ideas or ground them in evidence. Example: 'I think this story matters.' 'T his story matters because it complicates the idea of identity as a single narrative.'

Sentences are too short or basic:

Combine related ideas using appositives, conjunctions, or semicolons. Example: 'T he narrator is honest. H er voice is powerful.' 'T he narrator's voice—honest and unapologetic—gives power to her story.'

Wordy or vague phrasing:

Choose precise language; cut filler. Example: 'T he author talks about important things in her story.' 'Adichie addresses how stereotypes flatten the complexity of real lives.'

Transitions feel mechanical:

Use purposeful transitions to show contrast, causality, or development. Example: 'O n the other hand, this narrator is different.' 'U nlike stories that reduce characters to one trait, this narrator reveals emotional and cultural depth.'

Flat tone or lack of emphasis:

Use modifiers, repetition for effect, or rhetorical questions. Example: 'This story is interesting.' 'Why does this story matter? Because it resists the silence that often surrounds voices like hers.'

SKILLS: Narrative Craft and Literacy Proficiency

Rather than beginning Quarter 3 with *The Namesake* and then writing the narrative essay, students will end Quarter 1 by transitioning, Lesson 1- 4, from the argumentative essay in which they advocated for the telling of a specific story to the narrative essay, where they tell their story. Quarter 2 begins at Lesson 5, by writing a narrative essay using Lahari and other supplemental texts as models. This section gives a general overview of daily foci, materials, and SDP alignment. It is meant to be used as a supplement to the already existing narrative essay assignment and writing objectives listed in Quarter 3.

Lesson 1

Activity: Students submit final reflections of their argumentative essay and prepare for the narrative writing section. **Materials:** Argumentative Essay. **Objective:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of authenticity and prepare to incorporate it into their own storytelling. **Science of Reading:** Use a thinking map (like a double bubble or flow chart) to help students track how their ideas of authenticity evolved. Prompt with questions like: "How did your understanding of who gets to tell a story change over this unit?" **SDP alignment:** Students will review and annotate the narrative essay prompt, brainstorming any initial ideas.

Lesson 2

Activity: Mini-lesson on different plot structures using a previously read children's book (linear, circular, episodic). Students analyze examples from previously read mentor YA texts. **Objective:** Students will identify and compare multiple narrative structures.

Formative Assessments, Mini-Lessons on Narrative Craft

Short, skills-based lessons will target specific elements of narrative writing—dialogue, sensory detail, writing as a third-person narrator, and pacing—using the mentor texts as models. These lessons will prepare students to apply techniques to their storytelling.

Lesson 3

Activity: Identity webs revisited and used to draft personal potential character traits and conflicts. **Materials:** Identity web organizer, student journals **Objective:** Students will use previously gathered analysis from mentor texts to develop character blueprints for their own heroic narratives, informed by their multifaceted identities. **SDP Objective alignment:** After reading and discussing a model of student writing, students will develop their drafts by organizing their narratives effectively.

Lesson 4

Activity: Mini-lesson on writing effective dialogue. Students practice with sentence frames. *Materials:* Mentor excerpts from YA texts, dialogue worksheet. *Objective:* Students will analyze and produce effective dialogue that reveals character and advances the plot.

Formative Assessment, Guided Annotation, and Close Reading:

Students will annotate children's and YA literature texts as writers, paying specific attention to storytelling techniques: plot line, climax, and how intersectional identities are represented.

Quarter 2:

Lesson 5

Activity: Mini-lesson on using sensory detail and showing vs. telling. Students will draft a paragraph focused on imagery in one setting. *Materials:* Mentor text excerpt, *Let's Do Everything and Nothing*, Julia Kuo. and descriptive writing handout. *Objective:* Students will revise personal narratives to include vivid, specific imagery.

Lesson 6

Activity: Mini-lesson on writing from the third-person point of view. Students rewrite a scene from their own life in the third person. *Materials:* Mentor excerpts using third-person voice. *Objective:* Students will understand how shifting narrative perspectives can increase reflection and distance.

Lesson 7

Activity: Students begin writing their hero story using the chosen narrative structure and identity themes. *Materials:* Student laptops, writing journals, identity webs, and planning materials. *Objective:* Students will begin drafting an authentic personal narrative.

Lesson 8

Activity: Students revise plot outlines and continue drafting. *Materials:* Drafting template, graphic organizers. *Objective:* Students will craft a narrative that builds tension, incorporates conflict, and demonstrates resolution.

Lesson 9

Activity: Students conference with the teacher to refine story elements.

Materials: Conference forms, draft copies *Objective:* Students will receive feedback to strengthen character development and theme.

Lesson 10

Activity: Independent writing with peer support. *Materials:* Peer partner checklist, student drafts *Objective:* Students will independently apply feedback and continue building cohesive narratives.

Lesson 11

Activity: Mini-lesson on pacing and internal monologue. Apply to scene revisions. *Materials:* Mentor excerpts, revision handout. *Objective:* Students will analyze pacing and emotion to improve internal conflict development.

Lesson 12

Activity: Family Histories Workshop - Students engage with parents or guardians to gather family stories and incorporate oral traditions. *Materials:* Interview worksheets *Objective:* Students will incorporate family narratives and community history into their story planning.

Lesson 13

Activity: Workshop Day 1: Students read a peer's draft aloud to a group. Group offers what they appreciate. *Materials:* Student drafts and feedback forms. *Objective:* Students will offer and receive strengths-based responses to peers' work.

Lesson 14

Activity: Workshop Day 2 - Students continue peer critiques by offering questions and clarifying confusion. *Materials:* Workshop protocol handout. *Objective:* Students will provide deeper feedback and identify areas for clarification or elaboration.

Lesson 15

Activity: Workshop Day 3: The final group provides suggestions for improvement. *Materials:* Workshop feedback form *Objective:* Students will use peer insight to begin revising their drafts.

Lesson 16

Activity: Author Response Day: Authors re-read feedback and ask questions of their groups. *Materials:* Feedback forms and student drafts. *Objective:* Students will reflect on peer feedback and determine revision strategies.

Lesson 17

Activity: Revision Day: Students revise and prepare to finalize stories. *Materials:* Student laptops or journals. *Objective:* Students will complete substantial revisions based on structured peer and teacher feedback.

JOY: Storytelling as Empowerment and Celebration (Lessons 18 –26)

Peer Conferencing and Revisions

As a "writing as a recursive task" exercise, students will participate in writing workshops, responding to individual stories with constructive and positive feedback. Questions and concerns before the author is allowed to respond. Mirroring professional writers' workshops, such an activity will promote students as writers who aim to publish their work.

Lesson 18

Activity: Students finalize drafts of their children's stories and conduct self-reflections on growth as writers. *Materials:* Final draft templates, self-assessment rubric. *Objective:* Students will complete their narratives and reflect on how their stories contribute to the joy and healing of the community.

Lesson 19

Activity: Introduction to the publication process. Students select layout formats and draft "about the author" sections. *Materials:* Digital publishing templates, author bio worksheet. *Objective:* Students will begin planning for publication and learn how to present themselves as authors.

Lesson 20

Activity: Students collaborate with visual art students to brainstorm and draft story illustrations. *Materials:* Story drafts, visual design planning sheets. *Objective:* Students will explore how illustration enhances storytelling and works collaboratively across disciplines.

Lesson 21

Activity: Students review drafts and illustrations and begin formatting for the class webpage. *Materials:* Digital publishing platform, peer design feedback form. *Objective:* Students will revise their stories and visuals to prepare for digital publication.

Lesson 22

Activity: Web design and audio recordings: Students record themselves reading their stories aloud. *Materials:* Recording equipment, web page templates. *Objective:* Students will use oral storytelling skills and media tools to expand audience access.

Lesson 23

Activity: Students finalize audio recordings, captions, and webpage materials.

Materials: Multimedia publishing tools. *Objective:* Students will complete all elements for a fully accessible multimedia version of their story.

Lesson 24

Activity: Website launch day. Students publish their final stories, complete with illustrations and audio.

Materials: Final drafts, audio, illustrations. *Objective:* Students will publish their work publicly and celebrate the diverse voices within their community.

Final Draft Submission – Students will submit a polished version of their third-person personal hero essay after rounds of revision. The final product will be evaluated using a School District of Philadelphia Office of Curriculum and Instruction rubric to ensure compatibility with district objectives.

Lesson 25

Activity: Classroom celebration and story-sharing event. *Materials:* Student books, audio station setup, snacks. *Objective:* Students will celebrate peer achievements and share their narratives with classmates and invited guests.

Lesson 26

Activity: Optional field trip to read published stories to younger students at local elementary schools. *Materials:* Student books, permission slips, and reading guides. *Objective:* Students will connect with younger audiences and see the impact of their work in a real-world context.

Summative Multimedia Storytelling Project: Students will contribute to the final production of a web page that includes their narratives, as well as illustrations, TikTok videos, install features, and other visual and social-media-based representations to encourage the girls to communicate with younger students in a method that they believe would best hold their interest.

Unit 3: *A Raisin in the Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry and the Literary Analysis essay

Unit 4: Novel Unit *Born a Crime*, Trevor Noah and the Research Essay

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Appendix

Common Core ELA Standards Alignment for Unit Activities

Reading Standards (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI/RL.11-12)

RI.11-12.1 Students cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of TED Talks and academic articles.

RI.11-12.2 Students determine central ideas of nonfiction texts like "Cultural Authenticity" and analyze their development.

RI.11-12.3 Students analyze the development of ideas and connections across informational texts.

RI.11-12.4 Students determine the meaning of academic and domain-specific vocabulary using context and reference materials.

RI.11-12.5 Students analyze how the author's ideas and claims develop across a text.

RI.11-12.6 Students analyze how an author's point of view and use of rhetoric shape meaning in texts such as Adichie's TED Talk.

RI.11-12.7 Students integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information in diverse media.

RI.11-12.8 Students evaluate reasoning and evidence used to support arguments.

RI.11-12.9 Students analyze how foundational U.S. and global documents address similar themes.

RL.11-12.1 Students cite textual evidence from literary texts to support inferences about identity, theme, and narrative techniques.

RL.11-12.2 Students determine themes in children's and YA literature and analyze how those themes develop through characterization and plot.

RL.11-12.3 Students analyze how complex characters evolve, interact, and drive narrative structure, applying that understanding to their own story craft.

RL.11-12.4 Students determine the meaning of figurative and connotative language and assess its contribution to tone, theme, and character.

RL.11-12.5 Students examine how authors structure stories for pacing, tension, and thematic coherence—models used in students’ own writing.

RL.11-12.6 Students distinguish between narrator and author and evaluate how narrative voice, perspective, and bias shape the reader’s experience.

RL.11-12.7 Students compare how themes or characters are portrayed across genres, texts, and cultural perspectives.

RL.11-12.10 Students read and comprehend complex grade-level literary texts, including children’s and YA literature, independently and proficiently.

Writing Standards – Argumentative & Informational (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12)

W.11-12.1 (A–E) Students write arguments that support claims with valid reasoning, textual evidence, and a clear organizational structure.

W.11-12.2 Students write informative and explanatory texts examining complex ideas clearly and accurately.

W.11-12.4 Students produce clear, coherent writing appropriate to task, audience, and purpose.

W.11-12.5 Students strengthen writing through planning, revising, editing, rewriting, and peer feedback.

W.11-12.6 Students use digital tools to publish writing and collaborate with peers, incorporating visuals and audio where appropriate.

W.11-12.7 Students conduct short and sustained research projects to explore topics and answer meaningful questions.

W.11-12.8 Students gather, evaluate, and integrate information from diverse authoritative sources.

W.11-12.9 (A) Students draw evidence from literary and informational texts to support reflection, analysis, and research.

W.11-12.10 Students write routinely for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences over short and extended time frames.

Writing Standards – Narrative (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12)

W.11-12.3 Students write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences using effective technique, well-chosen detail, and structured sequences.

W.11-12.3.A Students engage the reader with a compelling situation, introduce a narrator and/or characters, and establish point of view.

W.11-12.3.B Students use narrative techniques such as pacing, dialogue, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines to shape meaning.

W.11-12.3.C Students sequence events coherently, using structural choices to build toward meaning or resolution.

W.11-12.3.D Students use precise, vivid language, sensory details, and stylistic elements to convey setting, emotion, and character.

W.11-12.3.E Students provide a meaningful conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrative’s development and themes.

Speaking and Listening Standards (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12)

SL.11-12.1 (A–D) Students participate in collaborative discussions, building on others’ ideas, posing questions, and integrating feedback.

SL.11-12.2 Students evaluate diverse formats and media to deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

SL.11-12.3 Students analyze a speaker’s perspective, reasoning, and rhetoric to assess credibility and impact.

SL.11-12.4 Students present information with clarity, organization, and style tailored to purpose and audience.

SL.11-12.5 Students incorporate digital media to enhance oral presentations and storytelling.

SL.11-12.6 Students adjust speaking style for various tasks and contexts, demonstrating command of formal English when appropriate.

Language Standards (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12)

L.11-12.1 (A–B) Students demonstrate command of the conventions of standard grammar and usage in writing and speaking.

L.11-12.2 Students apply rules of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling in written communication.

L.11-12.3 Students improve style and clarity through knowledge of language functions.

L.11-12.4 (A–C) Students determine word meanings and usage through context clues, reference tools, and word structure.

L.11-12.5 (A–B) Students interpret figurative language, analyze word relationships, and distinguish word nuances.

L.11-12.6 Students acquire and use academic and domain-specific vocabulary in reading, writing, and speaking.

Pennsylvania Core Standards Alignment for Unit Activities

Reading Standards (PA CC.1.2 and CC.1.3)

CC.1.2.11–12.A: Determine and analyze the relationship between textual evidence and central ideas in nonfiction texts.

CC.1.2.11–12.B: Cite strong textual evidence, evaluate how it supports the author's claims, and identify gaps.

CC.1.2.11–12.C: Analyze the impact of the author's choices on the structure and meaning of a text.

CC.1.2.11–12.D: Evaluate how an author uses rhetoric to advance a point of view or purpose.

CC.1.2.11–12.E: Analyze how foundational US documents address similar themes and concepts.

CC.1.2.11–12.F: Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone.

CC.1.2.11–12.G: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information.

CC.1.3.11–12.A: Determine and analyze themes and their development in literature.

Writing Standards (PA CC.1.4)

CC.1.4.11–12.A: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas clearly.

CC.1.4.11–12.B: Write narratives that develop real or imagined experiences with practical technique.

CC.1.4.11–12.F: Conduct short and sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem.

CC.1.4.11–12.G: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative sources.

CC.1.4.11–12.M: Write with a sharp, distinct focus identifying the topic, task, and audience.

CC.1.4.11–12.N: Use proper conventions and style appropriate to task and audience.

CC.1.4.11–12.Q: Write with clarity and coherence by organizing ideas effectively.

CC.1.4.11–12.T: Develop and strengthen writing through planning, revising, editing, and rewriting.

Speaking & Listening Standards (PA CC.1.5)

CC.1.5.11–12.A: Initiate and participate effectively in collaborative discussions.

CC.1.5.11–12.B: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence.

CC.1.5.11–12.C: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats.

CC.1.5.11–12.D: Present information clearly, concisely, and logically for specific purposes.

CC.1.5.11–12.E: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks.

CC.1.5.11–12.F: Make strategic use of digital media in presentations.

Language Standards (PA embedded within writing and grammar instruction)

CC.1.4.11–12.R: Demonstrate a command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics.

CC.1.2.11–12.F: Determine meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

CC.1.4.11–12.S: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis and research.

CC.1.4.11–12.V: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform or explain a topic.

Quarter 1 Scope and Sequence

Term One includes 44 potential instructional days. With interruptions (must deduct 8 separate instructional days for mandated testing, school-wide assemblies, and other calendar interruptions) we have 38 instructional days. Lessons in italics could be included in this unit, depending on whether it is custom for students to have homework, do not take class time to make up work for days they miss. In order to give teachers time to grade essays, the lessons end ten days before the end of the marking period. The last ten days of the marking period continue with work toward a narrative essay.

IDENTITY: Exploring the Self through Mirror Texts

Lesson	Time	Topic	SDP-Aligned Objective	Thematic Objective	Materials
1	50 min	Exploring Identity Through Naming Traditions	Close Read: Students will be able to analyze the author's use of connotative word choice to illustrate a metaphor, in a short, written response.	Connect personal/cultural histories to naming traditions.	<i>Alma and How She Got Her Name</i> by Juana Martinez-Neal; <i>Eyes That Kiss in the Corners</i> by Joanna Ho; Identity organizer;

2	50 min	Locating Cultural Tensions Through Names	Skill: Word Patterns and Relationships: After re-reading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to identify relationships and patterns amongst words in order to aid in their comprehension of the text.	Evaluate how given/chosen names reflect identity and belonging.	<i>The Name Jar</i> by Yangsook Choi; word-pattern tracker; discussion prompts
3	50 min	Analyzing Literary Access and Representation: Pre-Reading Activity	Skills Lesson on Vocabulary: After reviewing the meanings of content knowledge and academic vocabulary words, students will be able to recognize and use them in a variety of contexts.	Analyze books as mirrors, windows, or sliding glass doors.	Guided discussion prompts; reflection journals; book analysis chart
4-5	50-75	<i>Recognizing Themes of Belonging and Identity</i>	<i>First Read: Students will be able to evaluate the author's use of details to better understand the text's key ideas.</i> <i>Technical Language: After rereading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to delineate and evaluate the reasons and evidence provided by the author.</i>	<i>Analyze books through Bishop's framework and prepare for argumentative writing.</i>	<i>Academic text; Cornell Notes; vocabulary list</i>

6	50 min	Defining the Girl Who Wins	Skill: Short Story Elements: After rereading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to explain how the author's choices of how to introduce and develop the characters in a short story affects other story elements.	Explore intersections of religion and gender through symbolism.	<i>The Proudest Blue</i> by Ibtihaj Muhammad; symbolism guide
7	50 min	Building Reading Fluency with Reader Response Journals	Reading: After reviewing the meanings of content knowledge and academic vocabulary words, students will recognize and use them in a variety of contexts.	Preview identity and authenticity through a YA character.	<i>Ellie Ultra</i> by Gina Bellisario; graphic organizer; sentence stems
8	50 min	Complex and Identifiable Narrators as Heroes	Skill: Word Meaning: After rereading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to use print or digital resources to clarify and validate understanding of multiple-meaning words in a passage. Writing: After learning about common mistakes regarding sentence fragments, students will practice writing complete sentences to avoid fragments.	Define heroism through narrator relationships and personal lens. Write a full sentence about heroism.	Character annotation print resource handout; sentence starters

9		<i>Deepening Character Analysis in Identity Narratives</i>	<i>After an initial reading and discussion of the short story, students will be able to identify and describe character traits and setting details as well as articulate the story's explicit and implicit meanings.</i>	<i>Analyze gender identity, family support, and belonging.</i>	<i>When Aidan Became a Brother by Kyle Lukoff; graphic organizer; journals</i>
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CRITICALITY: Questioning Singular Identities

		Topic	SDP-Aligned Objective	Thematic Objective	Materials
10	100 min	Exploring Rhetoric in Adichie's TED Talk	Author's Purpose and Point of View: After rereading and discussing a model of close reading, students will be able to articulate Adichie's purpose and point of view in 'The Danger of a Single Story.' Writing Skill: After reading and discussing a model of student writing, students will develop a draft of an argument.	Evaluate complexity of identity and narrative structure.	TED Talk; annotation guide; discussion worksheet

11	50 min	Synthesizing Identity in TED Talks	After engaging in a close reading and discussion of 'The Danger of a Single Story,' students will be able to write a short response that analyzes and evaluates how Adichie structures her argument and uses rhetoric and reasoning to support her point of view. Writing Skill: After reading and discussing a model of student writing, students will develop their drafts by improving their use of transitions.	Synthesize how intersecting stories shape identity.	TED Talk; graphic organizer; response template
12		<i>Cultural Memory Shapes Character</i>	<i>Students will be able to evaluate the author's use of details to better understand the text's key ideas.</i>	<i>Students will examine how cultural memory and communal roles complicate singular representations of Native identity.</i>	<i>Journal Reflection, Graphic Organizer Key Questions, Fry Bread by Kevin Noble Maillard</i>
13	50 min	Characters with Shifting Identities in Postmodern Literature	First Read: Identify literary period traits; evaluate themes of identity and integration in storytelling; Oral	Explore identity shifts through cultural blending in story settings.	My Name is Yoon by Helen Recorvits; identity webs; reflection

			reading to improve phonics skills.		graphic organizer
14	50 min	Interrogating Setting and Storytelling in African Narratives	Analyze how setting, narration, and traits support text meaning.	Analyze the difference between the Adichie setting and Isadora as well as the effect on characterization.	<i>I Just Want to Say Goodnight</i> by Rachel Isadora; journal prompts; comparison worksheet
15	50 min	Evaluating the Danger of Singular Stories	Identify characteristics of argumentative writing.	Evaluate whether texts reinforce or resist limiting portrayals.	Narrative complexity graphic organizer; anchor chart; lesson excerpts
16	50 min	Interrogating Hero Narratives Through Socratic Seminar	Compare and contrast portrayal of characters in short written response.	Analyze how names and narrative choices influence character roles.	Discussion prompts; Socratic prep organizer; reflection chart

INTELLECT: Building Cultural Knowledge Through “Authentic” Storytelling

	Time	Topic	SDP-Aligned Objective	Thematic Objective	Materials
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17	50 min	First Read: Understanding Cultural Authenticity	Identify and summarize the author's central claim and supporting details.	Assess how writing shapes understanding of meaningful representation.	“Articulating a Culturally Responsive Vision” by Kathy G. Short; Cornell Notes; vocabulary guide
18	50 min	Second Read: Evaluating Short’s Authentic Narratives.	Analyze development of ideas across informational text.	Evaluate influence of personal viewpoint on text interpretation.	Short’s article; discussion guide; reader responsibility organizer
19	50 min	Close Read: Applying Short’s Cultural Context (Guided Practice).	Compare and contrast themes and topics in Bishop, Adichie, and Short	Compare initial impressions using previous frameworks and background.	YA novels; reader journals; annotation prompts
20	50 min	Presentation Prep: Applying Cultural Authenticity to Close Read (Independent Practice)	Compare and contrast perspectives across texts through authenticity ratings.	Determine which narratives most effectively reflect complexity.	YA novels; complexity checklist; discussion prompts
21		<i>Analyze character, plot, cultural references</i>	<i>Students use evidence to support claims.</i>	<i>Defend claims about narrative effectiveness using evidence.</i>	<i>YA novels; complexity tools; presentation reflection organizer</i>
22	100	Presentation Prep: Use Book Circles Check for Understanding	Students check each other’s use of evidence to support claims	Peer Reflection on Use of Short’s Analysis	Short’s checklist, notes on YA novel, self-check

<i>Argumentative Writing Cumulative Work</i>					
23	50 - 100	Gathering Evidence for Argumentative Structure: Establishing Authenticity Across Narratives	Students w.b.a.t. Identify and describe characteristics of argumentative essays, speeches, and opinions.	Students will defend their arguments using textual evidence and academic vocabulary	YA Novels, Short's checklist, academic vocabulary handout
24	50 min	Synthesizing Voices in the Argument Essay	Plan argument writing. Understand writing prompt. (Present assignment as listed in appendix)	Reflect on what it means to "win" and achieve "success" in storytelling.	Argumentative Essay Prompt
25	50 min	Refining Thesis Statements and Organization Using Mentor Models	Write thesis and topic sentences for clarity and cohesion.	Refine arguments to align evidence with central claims.	Mentor sentence stems

26	50 min	Structuring Ideas with Evidence and Analysis for presentation.	Write body paragraphs with logic and commentary.	Strengthen connection between text interpretation and purpose. Use internal citations for evidence.	Paragraph stems; sample drafts; feedback worksheet
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27	50 - 100 min	Shark Tank presentations	Students present arguments using supported reasoning in pairs and in front of a small group. Group uses rubric to assess presentation strength.	Vocally present and defend key narratives using supported reasoning.	Argument prep sheet; argument planner; resource bank
28	50 min.	Revising Introductions and Style Using Mentor Texts	After reading and discussing a model of student writing, students will develop their drafts by revising their introductions.	Students will revise their argumentative essay introductions for clarity, stylistic tone, and alignment with their thesis.	Sentence structure/style guide; final peer review checklist; revision checklist; publishing template or rubric
29	75 min.	Revising Body Paragraphs for Evidence and Literary Understanding	After seeing a student model and checklist, students will revise their drafts to strengthen textual support and integrate literary concepts.	Students will revise body paragraphs to ensure textual evidence is well-chosen, properly cited, and connected to literary concepts such as voice, symbolism, or authenticity.	Annotated body paragraph model; quote integration mini-guide; evidence-selection graphic organizer; peer reviewer feedback form
30	75 min.	Editing for Sentence Fluency and Final Publication	After reviewing a sentence-level revision guide and peer editing checklist, students will revise their essays for fluency, clarity,	Students will refine their final drafts by addressing sentence fragments, run-ons, and weak transitions to	Sentence structure/style guide; final peer review checklist; revision checklist; publishing

			and stylistic precision.	prepare essays for publication.	template or rubric
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English Summer Reading Assignment: (Grades 11–12)

Hello,

In the age of social media, some people have lost their love for the art of reading. This assignment is designed to rekindle that relationship by allowing you to choose a book that speaks to you, and to respond to it in creative and personal ways. Instead of writing an essay, you'll complete a hands-on, engaging project to show your understanding and write a one-paragraph explanation. *Be prepared to use your summer reading to craft your argumentative essay in the second half of the first quarter.*

INSTRUCTIONS:

Choose ONE book from the approved independent reading list (not previously taught in 8th–10th/11th grade) and complete **ONE** project below.

Independent Reading List

Choose one title. Some might be available online in full text; others can be checked out at the Free Library of Philadelphia

Young Adult (YA)

- *American Born Chinese* — Gene Luen Yang
- *An Ember in the Ashes* — Sabaa Tahir
- *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* — Benjamin Alire Sáenz
- *The Book Thief* — Markus Zusak
- *Children of Blood and Bone* — Tomi Adeyemi
- *City of Bones* — Cassandra Clare
- *A Court of Thorns and Roses* — Sarah J. Maas
- *Grown* — Tiffany D. Jackson

- *The Hate U Give* — Angie Thomas
- *Legendborn* — Tracy Deonn
- *Six of Crows* — Leigh Bardugo
- *The Sun Is Also a Star* — Nicola Yoon
- *You Should See Me in a Crown* — Leah Johnson

Graphic Novels

- *American Born Chinese* — Gene Luen Yang
- *Heartstopper* — Alice Oseman
- *Persepolis* — Marjane Satrapi
- *Persephone* — Loïc Locatelli-Kournwsky

Memoirs

- *Becoming* — Michelle Obama
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* — Maya Angelou
- *Lovely One* — Ketanji Brown Jackson

Novels

- *Everything I Never Told You* — Celeste Ng
- *Homegoing* — Yaa Gyasi
- *The House in the Cerulean Sea* — T. J. Klune
- *Kindred* — Octavia Butler
- *Mexican Gothic* — Silvia Moreno-Garcia
- *Pachinko* — Min Jin Lee
- *The Vanishing Half* — Brit Bennett
- *In the Time of the Butterflies* — Julia Alvarez
- *The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina* — Zoraida Córdova
- *When the Moon Was Ours* — Anna-Marie McLemore

After you finish reading, complete the following ...

1. One-Paragraph Writing Requirement

Respond to **ONE** of the following in a single five-sentence paragraph.

In your paragraph, be sure to include 1) a topic sentence explaining what you enjoyed about your chosen book, 2) a specific quote with the page number (or, for the second choice, the first line of the novel). 3) Explain why you think that sentence was important to the chapter. 4) Explain how that sentence is essential to the book as a whole. 5) Explain why you think the quote is meaningful.

1. (H) Name one of the main character's internal struggles (for example, the character feels connected to her school because she loves her teachers and learning, but also feels unhappy because she thinks the school's rules seem racist). An external struggle would be that the character experiences racism from a specific person and wants to befriend that person. How did it influence one of the choices they made?

OR

2. Why is the first line of the novel important to the overall story?

Project Options — Choose ONE

Use your creativity to represent your understanding of the book visually. Be neat, thoughtful, and intentional in your design. Each project must demonstrate a strong connection to your book and show effort.

Character Collage or Mood Board

Design a visual representation of your main character's journey, mood, or inner life at the beginning of the story, at the halfway point of the story, the climax of the story (not necessarily at the ½ mark), and at the conclusion. Use images, words, colors, and symbols to represent these four stages. On the back, include a short explanation for each element (2 sentences each). Canva or another design tool is encouraged! Include at least six images, colors, or symbols and a 3–5 sentence explanation for each. Canva or digital collage tools are encouraged.

Curated Playlist

Create a 5-song playlist that reflects your character's growth or the novel's emotional arc. For each song, include:

1. Title/artist

2. A quote from the book that connects to the mood or lyrics (include page #)
3. A quote from each song that demonstrates why you chose that song.
4. A 2–3 sentence explanation of the connection between the song and the book.

Setting Map & Symbolic Places

Design a detailed map of one setting in the book. Include at least five visual references. Label each visual symbol with:

1. A short description (1–2 sentences)
2. A quote from the book (with page number)
3. What do you think that symbol represents to the narrator or a character in the novel?

Theme-Based Graphic Organizer

Create a visual organizer (like a mind map or concept web) that shows how a central theme develops throughout the novel. Include at least five plot points on your website. Include at least three quotes (with page numbers) and short explanations as to how they represent the change in plot.

Photo Journal Project

Create a journal of 5 images (photographs, drawings, or clippings) that capture key emotional or symbolic moments from the book. Write a 2–3 sentence caption for each, explaining its meaning or connection to the character’s journey.

Gather or create five images that represent emotional or thematic moments in your book. These could be personal photos, magazine clippings, or illustrations. For each:

- Add a caption (2–3 sentences) explaining the moment it represents
- Include a quote from the book with a page number

Rubric (40 points)

Criteria	4 – Exemplary	3 – Proficient	2 – Developing	1 – Beginning
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Written Paragraph	Insightful, strong quote, deep	Clear, text-based	Basic, weak connection	Off-topic/incomplete
Textual Evidence	Specific quotes w/ page #	≥1 quote w/ page #	Vague reference, no pages	No evidence
Creative Project	Detailed and Original	Less Detailed <i>or</i> Original	Less Original and Detailed	Lacks effort
Explanation & Reasoning	Deep connections, clear logic	Logical, relevant	Needs clarity	No clear explanation

Argumentative Writing Prompt (Lesson 24)

Philadelphia School District Prompt:

Write an essay in which you argue what success really means. What does it mean to 'win'? What are the benefits of winning? What are the costs?

In this assignment, you will respond to the SDP prompt by exploring the concept of 'winning' through the lens of storytelling. When you were a child, what kind of heroes did you read about? Did you identify with this hero? If not, what was “missing” from this heroic tale that would have made this story more authentic to you? What does a successful story look like to you? What does it mean for a narrator to “win”? How does this kind of “winning” benefit the reader? In what ways does the narrator pay a “cost” for “winning”?

Modified Writing Prompt:

In this assignment, you will respond to the SDP prompt by exploring the concept of 'winning' through the lens of storytelling. When you were a child, what kind of heroes did you read about? Did you identify with this hero? If not, what was “missing” from this heroic tale that would have made this story more authentic to you? What does a successful story look like to you? What does it mean for a narrator to “win”? How does this kind of “winning” benefit the reader? In what ways does the narrator pay a “cost” for “winning”?

Write an argumentative essay in which you identify a specific type of voice or story that was missing from the books you read growing up. Was it a story that offered a mirror into your own life? A window into someone else's? A sliding glass door that let you imagine new possibilities? You must argue why this kind of story matters (achieves “success”)

and why it should be told, using evidence and examples from our unit texts and your personal experiences. When determining the ways in which the narrator “wins,” consider the complexity of the narrator’s identity (Adichie), the authenticity of their voice (Short), and the emotional and cultural impact of their story. You should use MLA format and include at least one internal citation from one of our mentor texts.

Suggested Essay Structure:

- Paragraph 1: Introduce the type of story/voice that was missing and why hearing it would make the story more successful to you (what success means to you).
- Paragraph 2: Explain how this voice could function as a mirror/window/sliding glass door (How might this story achieve success)?
- Paragraph 3: Discuss how this story could avoid a single story and reflect a complex identity (how might this kind of narrator redefine what it means to win?)
- Paragraph 4: Explain whether the narrator would be authentic and whether this authenticity matters (if you redefine winning by creating a more authentic narrator, what are the benefits?)
- Paragraph 5: Ultimately, what could be the benefits and costs to creating a story that represents a voice that has been missing.

Remember to use MLA formatting, including in-text citations for any mentor texts you reference.

Assessment Rubric (100 Points Total)

Presented in Lesson 9: Deepening Character Analysis in Identity Narratives

Category	Expectations	Points
Argument & Thesis	Clearly presents a specific argument about a missing story type and why it matters. Thesis addresses mirror/window/door framework and identity complexity and authenticity.	20
Use of Textual Evidence	Cites at least one mentor text and integrates it into the argument using MLA format. Evidence is relevant and supports claims.	15

Understanding of Literary Concepts	Demonstrates full understanding of mirror/window/sliding door concepts, single stories (Adichie), and authenticity (Short).	20
Organization & Structure	Follows suggested structure or another clear, effective structure with smooth transitions and logical progression of ideas.	15
Voice & Style	Uses an engaging voice, varied sentence structure, and appropriate tone. Reflects a student's individual perspective.	10
Conventions	Demonstrates control of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and MLA formatting.	10
Workshop Participation	Participated in drafting, peer review, and revision, including MLA workshop and citation formatting activity.	10

Post-Revision Checklist and Reflection (Lesson 30)

A half-sheet with 3 reflective prompts or Google Classroom - Classwork - Question

Which revision made the biggest difference in your essay's clarity or impact?

How did your peer's feedback help you?

What part of your writing are you still unsure about?

Final Essay Submission Checklist on Google Classroom - Classwork - Questions

My thesis clearly defines the missing voice and why it matters.

I used and cited at least one mentor text using MLA format.

I explained how my example challenges a single story.

I revised at least 3 sentences for clarity or variety.

My final draft is in MLA format, with heading and spacing correct.

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