



INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

Unit Overview

Grade 6: English/Language Arts

Unit 2: Investigations and Revelations

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Using This Resource




The Unit Overview provides all the standards and learning targets that should be taught over the course of the unit. It is designed to be used in conjunction with the Unit-at-a-Glance. Teachers should refer to the Overview to locate specific standards and their corresponding learning targets when designing lesson plans and assessments. *While Text Suggestions are provided throughout the unit, they are intended as suggestions only. We recognize that elements of these texts are controversial; however, we intentionally left them in this unit for their educational value and the teaching moments they present. Individual teachers should use their discretion when selecting texts to meet their students' needs. The additional resources included in the Overview promote the most effective research-based teaching practices and should be considered when planning and assessing students.

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Unit Overview

This unit addresses the power of knowledge conveyed through informational text. Students develop the skills of the master detective, scientist, diagnostician and researcher — in other words, the professional expert — as they delve beyond superficial information to probe, question and discern relevant facts and clues. They build structures for organizing information, and combine creative with critical analysis to access and use knowledge and skills essential to their fields. They learn to find and evaluate multiple sources of information, and they analyze and synthesize findings to get to the bottom of understanding and learning about a particular topic.

Similarly, students learn the difference between narrative and informational text. They are taught skills that help them interpret and write informational text as a means to deeper learning. Students are taught to do much more than read or write to accumulate information. They are taught the skills needed to analyze texts critically, so they can discern and apply ideas and concepts to find deeper meaning. They do this by learning to use and incorporate the metacognitive skills and habits they learned to use with reciprocal teaching. Students learn to find the main idea and/or author's purpose for writing and to appreciate what decisions authors make in choosing language, perspective, text features and organizational structure for writing.

Most important, students learn to appreciate and commit to continue investigations about topics they find intriguing. They are motivated to explore what is known and what remains to be understood about their topics so that the questions they pose are focused and penetrating. They learn how to apply these approaches to their own writing so that they share what they have learned with others.

While the unit centers on a specific text, the instructional methods and resources can be tailored to fit any text, with the understanding that a text never functions in isolation. It is a product shaped by a writer who is influenced by culture, society and politics. This first unit is also rich in standards and should provide a strong foundation for upcoming units, as all standards for Grade 6 are addressed.

Emphasis on the following 21st-century skills continues during this unit: critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration, social responsibility, communicating, digital literacy, creativity and leadership.

Essential Questions:

(Below is a comprehensive list of questions that guide students during the research process. These questions are suggestions that may be modified to fit the needs of the class.)

- What approaches can students use to find the main idea and make inferences to read informational text closely?
- How can students use text features (title, table of contents, headings, graphs, charts, tables, glossary, illustrations, photographs) to help them gather key details?
- How does a reader recognize purpose in reading and writing?

- How can readers identify how rich language, text features and text structures are used to find deeper meaning in text?
- What is a research question, and why is it important to our process?
- Where do I find reliable and valid information for my research paper?
- How do I know whether the information that I have researched is reliable and valid?
- How is information organized?
- How and why do I let my reader know where my information came from?
- How does a writer determine when to use a direct quote, paraphrase information or summarize evidence?
- How does purpose help writers clearly articulate their ideas?
- How can research notes guide writers in developing a thesis or claim statement?
- Why is information organized in different ways?
- How does author's purpose help determine organizational pattern?
- What makes clear and effective writing?
- How does the writing process refine skills, increase confidence and shape insight?
- What is the difference between revising and editing?
- How do grammar and the conventions of language influence spoken and written communication?
- How can delivering a presentation teach us about others and ourselves?
- How does writing develop reflective abilities and metacognition?

Standards and Learning Targets

Reading Literature (RL)

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
RL.1	Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate comprehension of a text with after-reading strategies by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explaining the main ideas ▶ Identifying what is directly stated in the text ▶ Drawing inferences ▶ Drawing conclusions ▶ Verifying or adjusting predictions ▶ Making new predictions ▶ Paraphrasing and summarizing ▶ Making connections between the text and oneself ● Determine and state evidence that confirms the important ideas and messages of a literary text. ● Identify evidence to suggest logically what might be true about characters, setting, plot, etc. ● Distinguish between connotations and denotations of words for understanding. ● Participate actively and appropriately in discussions about literary texts. ● Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. ● Use appropriate general academic or domain-specific words when discussing or writing about literature.
RL.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use significant details of characterization and/or plot development, and repeated words, ideas and/or symbols, as clues to theme. ● Connect conclusions about characters, plot and/or symbols to determine theme. ● Present details to accentuate support of main ideas or themes. ● Distinguish between subjective and objective summaries. ● Paraphrase significant events or details from a text. ● Review key ideas expressed through paraphrasing.

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State or compose a summary that includes events from the beginning, middle and end of a text. ● Use a variety of transition words to convey sequence. ● Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. ● Use appropriate general academic or domain-specific words when discussing or writing about literature.
RL.3	Describe how the plot of a particular story or drama unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply the basic elements of plot structure in a description of a story's plot. ● Apply the basic elements of plot structure and drama structure in a description of a drama's plot. ● Apply the elements of characterization in a description of character development. ● Use a variety of transition words to convey sequence. ● Use precise words and descriptive details to convey events. ● Give a conclusion that follows from events. ● Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. ● Use appropriate general academic or domain-specific words correctly when writing about or discussing literature.
RL.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use evidence from a literary text to support analysis of word choice. ● Examine the author's word choice as an indicator of tone. ● Use the author's word choice as an indicator of tone. ● Use context as a clue to the meaning of words and phrases. ● Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., audience, auditory, audible). (CCSS L.4.b) ● Verify an inferred meaning of a word or phrase in a dictionary. (See CCSS L.4.d) ● Demonstrate an understanding of figurative language and connotation.

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
RL.5	Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting or plot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an understanding of the structure of novels, dramas and poetry. • Determine how the particular parts of a novel, drama or poem relate to each other to form a complete structure. • Connect knowledge (details) of literary structures and literary elements to determine how they work together to form or advance the plot, setting or theme of a literary text. • Determine how a theme is relayed through particular details in a literary text. • Describe how a literary text develops in a series of episodes. • Use knowledge of narrative techniques as a means to comprehend events in literary texts. • Use evidence from literary texts to support analysis of text structure.
RL.6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text. Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply knowledge of the different types of point of view to a text. • Determine the narrator/speaker by combining knowledge of point of view and person in personal pronouns.

Reading Informational Text (RI)

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
RI.1	Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply appropriate before-reading strategies in a text, e.g., previewing the text, setting a purpose for reading, making predictions about the text and drawing connections between prior knowledge or experience and the text. • Monitor comprehension with appropriate during-reading strategies e.g., rereading, paraphrasing, summarizing, connecting related ideas within a text, verifying or modifying predictions, visualizing and connecting text ideas with prior knowledge or experience. • Demonstrate comprehension of a text with after-reading strategies by:

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explaining the main ideas ▶ Identifying what is directly stated in the text ▶ Drawing inferences ▶ Drawing conclusions ▶ Verifying or adjusting predictions ▶ Making new predictions ▶ paraphrasing and summarizing ▶ Making connections between the text and oneself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use relationships between words for understanding. ● Participate actively and appropriately in discussions about informational texts. ● Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. ● Use appropriate general academic or domain-specific words when discussing or writing about informational texts.
RI.2	Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use significant pieces of information as clues to main ideas. ● Synthesize main ideas to determine a central idea. ● Distinguish between subjective and objective summaries. ● Paraphrase significant information from an informational text. ● Review key ideas expressed through paraphrasing.
RI.3	Analyze in detail how a key individual, event or idea is introduced, illustrated and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify important people, events or ideas in an informational text. ● Determine the variety of ways that a person, event or idea may be described or explained to a reader. ● Examine the specific ways an important person, event or idea in the text is presented to a reader. ● Apply knowledge of organizational patterns by identification of strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast and cause/effect.
RI.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative and technical meanings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use evidence from an informational text to determine the meaning of a word or phrase. ● Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
RI.5	Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine the general organizational pattern of a grade-appropriate informational text, e.g., transition words and phrases indicating chronological order, cause/effect, problem/solution, etc. ● Identify the author’s purpose for a grade-appropriate informational text. ● Examine how parts of the text support the identified purpose of the text. ● Use evidence from informational texts to support analysis of text structure. ● Use grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words when explaining the role of portions of the text.
RI.6	Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text, and explain how it is conveyed in the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine the difference between author’s point of view and author’s purpose. ● Determine author’s point of view through attention to word choice, punctuation and emphasis on ideas. ● Determine author’s purpose through attention to formal text features and key ideas.
RI.7	Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compare and contrast information received through different formats. ● Organize information from different formats to develop a logical understanding of a topic or issue. ● Support ideas with relevant evidence. ● Use information presented in diverse media and formats.
RI.8	Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate knowledge of the organizational pattern of an argument. ● Identify claims in the text. ● Identify supported claims versus unsupported claims in the text. ● Assess the value of the argument based upon supported claims. ● Use knowledge of words, phrases and clauses to clarify the relationship between claims and support. ● Delineate an argument and specific claims, showing the difference between claims that are supported and those that are not.

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
RI.9	Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate knowledge of primary and secondary sources. ● Explain the likenesses and differences between the main ideas or information from one author versus another. ● Support ideas with relevant evidence. ● Present findings using pertinent evidence.

Writing (W)

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
W.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claims from alternative or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adapt the prewriting stage of the writing process to an argument, including developing one or more claims and effectively ordering reasons that support the claim(s). ▶ Gather information to support claims. ▶ Compose a draft of an introduction that presents a claim or claims clearly. ● Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Show knowledge of a topic or text by selecting appropriate evidence to support a claim or claims. (CCSS W.7) ▶ Locate and evaluate sources for reliability to select evidence. ▶ Compose a draft of the body with attention to organization, varying sentence patterns, and recognition of inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person. ● Use words, phrases and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Combine ideas with the appropriate word or words that explain the connections between claims and reasons. ▶ Apply academic vocabulary to express relationships precisely.

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
W.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization and analysis of relevant content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combine ideas with the appropriate word or words that explain the connections between claims and reasons.
W.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details and well-structured event sequences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply knowledge of plot development and its effect on shifts in characterization.
W.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See W.1, W.2 and W.7 of CCSS for specific application.
W.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See W.1, W.2 and W.7 of CCSS for specific application.
W.6	Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use technology to enhance learning and collaboration. Use technology to locate, evaluate and organize information. Use keyboard and mouse effectively and efficiently.
W.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define a problem, formulate questions, and refine a problem and/or question. Find data and information within a variety of digital and print sources.

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
	appropriate.	
W.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate and evaluate resources. • Develop search term vocabulary and searching strategies. • Take purposeful notes by direct quoting, paraphrasing or drawing conclusions. • Evaluate and analyze the quality, accuracy and sufficiency of notes. • Use appropriate bibliographic information for sources.
W.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in response to grade-level print, nonprint and digital literary or informational text(s).
W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust the writing process as necessary for different grade-appropriate writing tasks, purposes and audiences. • Set and adjust personal goals, and conference regularly with adults and peers to identify and address writing deficiencies.

Speaking and Listening (SL)

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
SL.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussion (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on Grade 6 topics, texts and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own ideas clearly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the behaviors of an effective student by completing and reflecting on assigned reading. • Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • Take purposeful notes in preparation for discussion, using highlighting, outlines, journals and other techniques as appropriate. • Identify the main ideas under discussion, and apply higher-order questions that yield a deeper analysis of those ideas. • Conduct focused research as necessary to prepare for discussions.

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access prior knowledge to extend the topic under discussion.
SL.2	Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally), and explain how it contributes to a topic, text or issue under study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of the features and formats of diverse media. ● Determine both the explicit and the implicit ideas found in nonprint texts, including digital texts. ● Summarize, compare, draw conclusions about and synthesize significant ideas found in print and nonprint texts, including digital media.
SL.3	Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply critical listening strategies to determine the speaker's argument and claims. ● Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. ● Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text, and explain how it is conveyed in the text. ● Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not. ● Align specific claims to their supporting reasons to identify gaps in support.
SL.4	Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume and clear pronunciation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adopt the behaviors of effective speakers as appropriate to task, purpose and audience. ● Apply an organizational pattern that most effectively emphasizes the main ideas or themes of the presentation. ● Include support (e.g., descriptions, facts, details) that most effectively emphasizes main ideas or themes of the presentation. ● Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
SL.5	Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Select or create multimedia and visual displays that enhance presentations and/or clarify ideas. ● Follow fair use policies when incorporating multimedia components from other sources.

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
SL.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate control of spoken language by adjusting speech to varying contexts and tasks.

Language (L)

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
L.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of the relationship between the use and form of personal pronouns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Subjective pronouns as subjects and predicate nominatives. ▶ Objective pronouns as objects of prepositions and direct and indirect objects. ▶ Possessive pronouns as adjectives. ● Analyze professional, peer and student's own writing for correct use of pronoun case. ● Demonstrate command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. ● Spell correctly. ● Apply an understanding of the difference in purpose and function between a reflexive and an intensive pronoun. ● Analyze the effect of intensive pronouns on meaning or tone in professional, peer and student's own writing. Demonstrate command of standard English by using intensive pronouns correctly, e.g., himself vs. hisself, themselves vs. theirselves. ● Use precise language to inform or explain. ● Develop and strengthen writing by editing for clarity. ● Analyze the effect of pronouns and their antecedents on meaning in professional, peer and student's own writing. ● Apply skills from L.1 to analyze the effect on meaning in professional writing, the writing of peers and student's own writing.
L.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of the choices and functions among punctuation to set off nonrestrictive elements.

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
	punctuation and spelling when writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze professional, peer and student’s own writing to determine the effect of punctuation upon meaning. ● Strengthen writing by editing for correct punctuation to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements. ● Spell correctly grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words. ● Use print and digital resources and internalized knowledge to support correct spelling. ● Identify capitalization rules for dialogue. ● Demonstrate correct placement of commas and quotation marks in dialogue. ● Analyze writing models for the correct use of punctuation in dialogue. ● Modify spelling of base words as needed when adding inflectional endings and suffixes. ● Analyze writing models for correct spelling of high frequency words.
L.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading or listening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of audience and the purpose of speech or writing and student’s effect upon its meaning. ● Apply understanding of various sentence patterns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reordering words. ▶ Adjusting length of sentences. ▶ Adding words, phrases/clauses. ● Analyze professional, peer and student’s own writing or speech to determine the effect various sentence patterns have upon meaning, interest and style. ● Strengthen writing by revising sentence patterns for interest and style. ● Apply an understanding of audience, purpose and format to determine style and tone. ● Establish and maintain a formal style. ● Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks. ● Use precise word choice to establish and maintain tone.
L.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of the various types of context clues to determine word or phrase meaning.

Code	Standard	Learning Targets
	and phrases based on Grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of inference and drawing conclusions to determine word or phrase meaning. ● Apply an understanding of basic word parts as clues to word meaning. ● Apply an understanding of root word families to determine the meaning of a word. ● Strengthen writing by using reference materials both print and digital to refine word choices. ● Apply an understanding of the skills in L.4.a, L.4.b and L.4.c to verify word meaning.
L.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply knowledge of figurative language, including personification, to a critical reading of a text. ● Use sensory language to convey experiences and events. ● Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text including figurative language. ● Analyze professional, peer and student's own writing to determine how figurative language contributes to meaning. ● Apply an understanding of connections between words, including cause/effect, part/whole and item/category, to a critical reading of a text. ● Analyze professional, peer and student's own writing to determine how word relationships contribute to meaning. ● Apply an understanding of connotation to judge word choice. ● Use precise words to convey experiences and events. ● Analyze professional, peer and student's own writing to determine how word choice contributes to meaning.
L.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; garner vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply skills identified in CCSS L.4 and L.5 to increase vocabulary and differentiate between word choices in order to improve writing and speaking.

Unit Assessments and Rubrics

Pre-Assessments and Formative Assessments

(Note: Depending upon the instructional purpose, any one of these may be used as a pre-, formative or summative assessment. Below are only suggested uses as reflected in the unit.)

- Analysis of conceptual terms framing the weeks
- Address weaknesses carried over from Unit 1 in the planning process
- Continue with ice breakers introduced in Unit 1
- Assess background information related to ideas (main idea/details, research question, direct quote/paraphrase/summarize, etc.)
- Adjust instructional methods as appropriate
- Pretest on clauses
- Small-group discussions
- Self-monitoring during the writing process (editing and revising)

Summative Assessments

- KWL Charts
- Graphic organizers (organizational patterns)
- Round Robin
- Summarizing strategy (“Get the Gist”)
- Write Around

Vocabulary

High-frequency “Tier 2” words and academic vocabulary should be taught explicitly, as students need to understand and apply these words across all content areas in various situations. For more information on how to teach vocabulary while using standards, visit the following websites:

- www.edutopia.org/blog/teaching-ccss-critical-vocabulary-marilee-sprenger
- www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept09/vol67/num01/Six-Steps-to-Better-Vocabulary-Instruction.aspx
- achievethecore.org/aligned/including-tier-2-vocabulary-instruction-in-curricular-materials/
- Argument
- Argumentative claim statement
- Audience

- Author’s purpose
- Claim
- Counterclaim
- Credibility
- Direct quote
- Editing
- Expository thesis statement
- Evidence
- Impromptu speech
- Main Idea
- Organizational pattern (specific examples)
- Paraphrase
- Plagiarism
- Research question
- Revision
- Summarize
- Text features (specific examples)

Text Suggestions

The following texts have been chosen for their Lexile levels, interest levels and ease for planning to multiple standards. To find an up-to-date list of vetted texts — which clearly center diversity, equity and inclusion — visit our list of [Culturally Responsive Text Suggestions](#).

See *Appendix A: Text Complexity Considerations* for information on how to select complex text. Some Lexile (L) levels and Guided Reading Levels (GR) are listed below for reference.

Theme-Related

A Wolf at the Door and Other Retold Fairy Tales by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling (790L)

Aesop’s Fables: “The Lion and the Mouse” and “The Hare With Many Friends”

Artemis Fowl: The Graphic Novel by Eoin Colfer (GN460L)

Dr. Rabbit by Eric B. Hare

Elijah of Buxton by Christopher Paul Curtis (980L)

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

Flipped by Wendelin Van Draanan (720L)

“Funeral” by Ralph Fletcher

Harlem Summer by Walter Dean Myers (860L)

If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period by Gennifer Choldenko

Interpretation of Aristotle’s Essays on Friendship from *Nicomachean Ethics*: Book VIII

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key by Jack Gantos
Nothing But the Truth by Avi
Schooled by Gordon Korman (680L)
Tangerine by Edward Bloor
The Door in the Wall by Marguerite de Angeli
The Extraordinary Mark Twain (According to Susy) by Barbara Kerley (AD1090L)
The Misfits by James Howe
The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
The Titanic by Deborah Kent
Ungifted by Gordon Korman
Voices in the Park by Anthony Browne (children’s book that demonstrates point of view) (560L)
When Zachary Beaver Came to Town by Kimberly Willis Holt

Teacher Resources: Educator Websites

(Websites change frequently. Check sites ahead of time for content and accuracy. Some website information has been saved as a pdf file or on slides. They are noted on the handout for opening lessons, lesson seeds or model lessons. YouTube videos are often accompanied by a student handout modeled after the materials on the segment.)

- CommonLit readings (pre-assessments) — www.commonlit.org/en/text-sets
- Research basics — www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3S1chdLhhw
- CDC site to assist with note cards — www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/facts.htm
- Topic sentence — www.k12reader.com/subject/composition/topic-sentences/

Lesson Sequence — Unit Progression

The Unit Progression gives weekly examples of how to teach to the unit-specific learning targets over the course of nine weeks. Teachers should adjust the pace as needed for their individual classes.

Week-by-Week

This unit builds on argument studied in Unit 1. Although a formal research process wasn’t introduced earlier, students were still required to conduct research to support a side while discovering weaknesses in the opponent’s side. Woven throughout Unit 2 are components of the research process, which include self-selection of a topic, general research around the topic, development of a research question, focused research using the research question as a guide, source analysis and note-taking, developing an expository thesis or argumentative claim, choosing an organizational pattern, writing a rough draft, composing a final copy and presenting findings.

Weeks 1 and 2 reinforce the importance of examining text features (with an emphasis on expository texts) and analyzing author’s purpose. Learning how to scan a text quickly using text features brings efficiency to the process by allowing students to weed out sources. Examining

author's purpose introduces students to perspective. Students will become aware of an organization's "slant," for example, or a company's desire to make money. This new knowledge teaches students how to be critical of persuasive techniques used to take advantage of a reader or viewer.

Week 3 begins with the basics of research. With the advancements in technology, students can immediately become overwhelmed with resources. Designing a research question can help narrow down a topic. This step will eventually connect students to appropriate sources to help them design a thesis or claim statement.

During Weeks 4 and 5, flexibility is crucial. Students will be gathering information related to their research question. Learning how to be critical readers assists them in filtering through pages of sources, choosing only the most valid ones. Examining bibliographic information found in their background materials gathered in Week 2 will also be recommended, as it's an efficient method in retrieving supporting materials. Once sources are selected, training students in note-taking allows them to determine how to best capture their ideas — using a direct quote, paraphrasing or summarizing — while being cognizant of the importance of using a style manual to cite sources to avoid plagiarism.

Week 6 also requires flexibility on the part of the teacher, as students will determine (based on their research) whether to write an expository thesis or argumentative claim statement. Analyzing audience may be addressed, if necessary, as students must acknowledge whom this information benefits. With an argumentative piece, for example, there's the assumption that the issue has momentum and support. An informational piece, on the other hand, may provide in-depth background on a lesser-known topic.

The thesis or claim statement should naturally connect to a specific organizational pattern, which is taught in Week 7. While these patterns are most likely familiar to students, this unit allows for autonomy in selecting a pattern that may need to be adjusted to fit their research. For example, an argumentative piece may also fall under the problem-solution organizational pattern. Therefore, students will have to integrate counterclaims into that pattern in order to show support for a suggested solution.

Provide time for students to draft their papers during Week 8. Students should follow a checklist and remain cognizant of any language skills recently learned. How, for example, can phrases and clauses add sophistication to their writing style? While the goal is a written work, oral presentations are introduced in the final week as students are given training in how to share the main points of their research with their peers. The written work, however, should hold more weight. Attempt to reinforce the discourse skills learned during the Socratic Seminar as a way to bolster students' confidence during this next stage in oral presentation.

Appendix A: Text Complexity Considerations

When selecting books, text complexity matters. According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative, three factors should be considered when the teacher is choosing texts: 1) Qualitative Measures, 2) Quantitative Measures, and 3) Reader and Task Considerations. For more information on these measures, see the following website: www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/standard-10-range-quality-complexity/measuring-text-complexity-three-factors/.

As a result of research conducted in 2013 on text complexity, updated information was added to Appendix A of the CCSS to reflect the new expectations required of students in order to meet College and Career Readiness (CCR) by high school graduation. The table below shows the six different measures found reliable for measuring text complexity and their corresponding grade levels.

Common Core Band	ATOS (Accelerated Reader)	Degrees of Reading Power®	Flesch-Kincaid	The Lexile Framework®	Reading Maturity	Text Evaluator
2nd-3rd	2.75 – 5.14	42 – 54	1.98 – 5.34	420 – 820	3.53 – 6.13	100 – 590
4th-5th	4.97 – 7.03	52 – 60	4.51 – 7.73	740 – 1010	5.42 – 7.92	405 – 720
6th-8th	7.00 – 9.98	57 – 67	6.51 – 10.34	925 – 1185	7.04 – 9.57	550 – 940
9th-10th	9.67 – 12.01	62 – 72	8.32 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	750 – 1125
11th-CCR	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.20	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	890 – 1360

Table 1: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges From Multiple Measures, taken from www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Appendix-A-New-Research-on-Text-Complexity-revised.pdf, which can be found on the website www.corestandards.org/other-resources/.

Appendix B: Instructional Strategies for Diverse Learners

When choosing instructional strategies, teachers should consider the multiple learning styles, backgrounds and abilities of all students. Research shows that to promote ELA/literacy skills, teachers should incorporate a mix of whole-group, peer-paired and independent activities into instructional procedures. Below is a list of research-based strategies recommended to promote literacy skills in the five essential areas of reading (comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, phonics and phonemic awareness).

Comprehension Strategies

- KWL Charts, Venn Diagrams, T-charts, etc.
- Interactive Read-Alouds, Think-Alouds, etc.
- Story Boards, Sketch to Stretch, etc.
- Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) (e.g., www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsud7AQWva8)
- Focus Questions

Comprehension Strategies with Cooperative Learning (Collaboration)

- Guided Reading, Literature Circles, Book Talks, etc.
- Readers Theater, Role Play, Reciprocal Reading, etc.
- Shared/Buddy/Paired Reading
- Think-Pair-Share, Turn-and-Talk, etc.
- Jigsaw (e.g., www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov18/vol76/num03/Let's-Get-Jigsaw-Right.aspx)
- Socratic Seminar (grade 2: www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBfH_fhAme0; for older students: www.youtube.com/watch?v=69Qv3l0nuNg)
- Fishbowl
- Four Corners (e.g., www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2XmJQ9FL5A)
- Gallery Walk (e.g., www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNT3PZP2obU)

Vocabulary Strategies

- Word Walls
- Word Analysis, Word Sorts (e.g., Making Words), Word Games (e.g., UpWords, BINGO)
- Word Ladders
- Concept Mapping (great for ELL students/differentiation), Concept Circles, Frayer Model, etc.

- Alpha Boxes (e.g., www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBGB7CiN0bQ)
- List-Group-Label (e.g., www.youtube.com/watch?v=K731qicwYcY)
- Non-Linguistic Strategies (visuals)
- Analogies, Connect-Two, etc.

Fluency Strategies

- Daily Read-Alouds, Think-Alouds, etc.
- Record Self/Listen to Self
- Listen to Stories Using Technology
- Repeated Readings
- Choral Reading

Phonemic Awareness/Phonics Strategies

- Making Words
- Word Ladders
- Centers/Literacy Stations
- Guided Reading
- Interactive Writing

