



INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

Unit Overview

Grade 7: English/Language Arts

Unit 1: Forging Identity

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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

“It’s like everyone tells a story about themselves inside their own head. Always. All the time. That story makes you what you are. We build ourselves out of that story.”

— Patrick Rothfuss, *The Name of the Wind*

“When I discover who I am, I’ll be free.”

— Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

The unifying theme for the first unit of Grade 7 is **Forging Identity**. Although students have previously studied self, character and point of view, this unit is constructed to stretch students’ self-awareness and critical thinking, focusing on the elements of one’s identity that are not given but *forged* — brought into being by an expenditure of effort. This effort is expected throughout the study of identity both while examining course texts and while exploring oneself. This unit of study repeatedly calls upon the framework for 21st-century learning, asking students to hone their learning and innovation skills through critical thinking about themselves and the characters they encounter (both fictional and historical) and through collaboration with peers in a variety of tasks designed to enhance flexibility, adaptability, initiative, social skills and responsibility. This framework, which reflects the Common Core Standards and the Maryland Learning Targets, outlines a unit of study that is rich in rigor and creativity and caters to diverse learners.

A main focus of the unit emphasizes reading standards for literature and informational texts and asking students to conduct close readings to determine the meaning of words and phrases, specifically targeting the distinction between denotative and connotative meaning and figurative language. Students will be challenged to use textual evidence to support analysis of explicit and inferred notions about the characters in the works studied. For this particular unit, selected vignettes have been chosen from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros because of their thematic subjects and rich language. While this text is often used for slightly older students due to some of its adult-themed content, the vignettes mentioned in this unit are age appropriate. For students, familiarizing themselves with characters will also lead to a writing task that reexamines a work from an alternate point of view. Examining the budding identities of the characters studied and dialoguing and writing about how an author reveals character in the text will reinforce the theme on which this unit is based, and also will allow students to internalize and reflect on how their own character develops.

Turning inward on the path to forging identity also presents exceptional opportunities for young speakers and writers. At the start of the unit, students will present Name Speeches, providing facts and inferences about their given names and sharing these conclusions with their classmates. They will also participate in inquiry-based discussions with one another about course texts. Articulating these findings in a coherent manner will develop speaking and listening skills pertinent to the Common Core. Moreover, in addition to textual analysis, students will be able to write a personal narrative that examines a defining moment in their life, focusing on descriptive details and demonstrating command of proper conventions.

Over the course of the unit, students will consider how they become who they are, how to best express their true selves, how it feels to walk in another’s place and, most important, how to grasp from texts and experiences the ability to forge one’s very own identity.

Essential Questions

- How can understanding the purpose of a text help us recognize the identity of others?
- In what ways does an author use thoughts, actions and experiences to determine identity?
- How can language (choice and effect) communicate our unique point of view?
- In what ways does use of precise language enhance writing?
- How can we develop an identity that brings us comfort and pride?

Standards and Learning Targets

Reading Literature (RL)

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|------|---|---|
| RL.1 | Cite several pieces of 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">• Select and apply appropriate before-reading strategies interacting with 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.• Select and apply during-reading strategies to monitor comprehension, 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:<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.• Identify multiple pieces of 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. |

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|-------------|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 | Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine and discuss the basic elements of plot structure and characterization. ● Make connections between or among elements of plot or drama structure and characters to determine their effect upon each other. ● Use precise words and descriptive details to convey events. ● Use evidence from a literary text to support analysis. ● Present claims emphasizing the most important points, supported by pertinent descriptions and details. ● 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 rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine the author's purpose in using sound elements of words. ● Use context as a clue to the meaning of words and phrases. ● Demonstrate an understanding of figurative language and connotation. |
| RL.6 | Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply knowledge of point of view and characterization to determine multiple narrators. ● Explain how multiple narrators/speakers are alike and different. ● Examine the conflicting views of multiple narrators/speakers to develop a broad view of the action, characters or ideas in a literary text. ● Analyze inferences drawn from a literary text. ● Use dialogue to develop characters. |

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|------|----------|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use vocabulary knowledge when considering words and phrases important to comprehension. |

Reading Informational Text (RI)

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|-------------|--|--|
| RI.4 | Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use evidence from an informational text to determine the effect of word choice on meaning and tone of the text. Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. Determine the meaning of figures of speech in context. Determine the suggested meaning of connotations of words that address the same technical meaning. Examine word choice as an aid to comprehension and a clue to tone. Gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension. |
| RI.5 | Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and 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. Identify the most important sections of the text. Examine how the identified important sections of the text add to the growth of ideas in the text. |
| RI.6 | Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the author's purpose (format, text features, key ideas) and point of view (word choice, punctuation, emphasis on ideas). Determine the difference between an author's position and any opposing positions. Examine the organization of the text to determine how the author's position is compared or contrasted to other positions. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships between claims and reasons. |

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|-------------|--|---|
| RI.7 | Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium’s portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the likenesses and differences of a text versus an audio or visual version of the same text. ● Draw conclusions about the positive and negative aspects of a text, audio or visual version of the same text. ● Determine how sound and sight affect the perception of words. ● Support ideas with relevant evidence. |

Writing (W)

| 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"> ● See W.2.a, W.2.b, W.2.d, W.2.e, W.2.f below. |
| W.2.a | Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; and include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful in aiding comprehension. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adapt planning and prewriting to address the demands of an informative text, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Refining the focus of a topic. ▶ Gathering information on a specific topic. ▶ Examining information to determine the ideas and concepts. ▶ Effectively organizing information within an established structure. ▶ Including appropriate text features to aid understanding. ● Compose a draft of an introduction that presents a thesis clearly and establishes the important concepts and ideas. |
| W.2.b | Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compose a draft of the body with attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Effective organization of information. ▶ Recognition of inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person. ▶ Subject-verb and pronoun antecedent agreement. ▶ Formation of complete sentences. ▶ Frequently confused words. |

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|-------|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recognition of variations from standard English, and use of strategies to improve expression in conventional language. ▶ Placement and function of phrases and clauses in sentences. ● Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy. |
| W.2.d | Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. |
| W.2.f | Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compose a draft conclusion that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ integrates key components of the explanation, and ▶ provides reinforcement for the explanation of a topic. ● Apply the revision and editing stages of the writing process to the writing piece, focusing on the audience and the purpose. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Revise to choose words and phrases for effect and to convey ideas precisely. ▶ Edit for correction of vague pronouns, punctuation of nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements, correction of misplaced and dangling modifiers, and correct spelling. ● Prepare the final product for presentation and/or publication. |
| 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"> ● See W.3.a, W.3.b, W.3.c, W.3.d, W.3.e below. |
| W.3.a | Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adapt the prewriting stage of the writing process to a narrative piece, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Focus on an experience or event. ▶ Begin development of a character or characters and conflict. ▶ Outline a plot. ● Compose a draft of an introduction that |

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|--------------|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ reveals the character or characters and the conflict, and ▶ establishes the beginning of a plausible plot development. ● Establish the role of the narrator, contrasting it to the roles of other characters. |
| W.3.b | Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compose a draft of the body of a narrative with a plausible set of characters and events. ● Apply knowledge of characterization and plot development and their effect upon each other. ● Compose with attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement. ▶ Choosing words and phrases for effect and to convey ideas precisely. ▶ Formation of complete sentences. ▶ Varying sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest and style. ▶ Maintaining consistency in style and tone. ▶ Recognition of inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person. ▶ Choosing language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy. |
| W.3.c | Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use transition words purposefully to promote comprehension. ● Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely. ● Use accurately grade-appropriate general academic words. ● Use words or phrases important to comprehension. |
| W.3.d | Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use figures of speech. |

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|--------------|---|---|
| W.3.e | Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compose a draft of a conclusion that considers the events in the narrative, draws the events together and clarifies them. ● Apply the revision and editing stages of the writing process to the narrative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Revise for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – choosing words and phrases for effect and to convey ideas precisely, and – varying sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest and style. ▶ Edit for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – frequently confused words, – punctuation used for effect – correction of vague pronouns, – correction of misplaced and dangling modifiers, and – punctuation of nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements. ● Prepare the final product for presentation and/or publication. |
| W.4 | Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See W.1, W.2, W.3 and W.7 . |
| 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, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See W.1, W.2, W.3 and W.7 .. |

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|-------------|---|---|
| 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 discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on Grade 7 topics, texts and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own ideas clearly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See SL.1.a and SL.1.c below. |
| SL.1.a | Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched the material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text or issue, to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. | <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. Access prior knowledge to extend the topic under discussion. |

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|---------------|---|---|
| SL.1.c | Pose questions that elicit elaboration, and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate collegiality when asking questions and when responding to questions and comments. ● Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. |
| SL.3 | Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply critical listening strategies to determine the speaker's argument and claims. ● Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. ● Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others. ● Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims. |
| SL.4 | Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details and examples; 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. ● Address audience needs by including complete support and emphasizing the most important points in a coherent manner. ● Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. |
| 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"> ● See L.1.a and L.1.b below. |
| L.1.a | Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of the formation and the function of phrases and clauses, i.e., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ verb, prepositional, and appositive phrases, and ▶ independent versus dependent (noun, adjective and adverb) clauses. ● Describe the use of a phrase or clause in a specific sentence. ● Analyze professional, peer and their own writing for the use of phrases and clauses. |
| L.1.b | Choose among simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of how clauses create relationships between and among ideas in a sentence. ● Apply an understanding of how sentence types create relationships between and among ideas. ● Use clauses to clarify the relationships among claims, reason and evidence. ● Use a variety of clauses to convey sequence. ● Analyze the use of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences in professional, peer and their own writing. |
| L.2 | Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of the difference between coordinate adjectives and adjectives in a series. ● Apply an understanding of punctuation to produce clear writing. ● Analyze professional, peer and their own writing to determine the effect of punctuation upon meaning. ● Strengthen writing by editing for correct punctuation to separate coordinate adjectives. ● Spell correctly grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words. |

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|--------------|--|---|
| L.3 | Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See L.3.a below. |
| L.3.a | Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of how inexact or repetitive language affects meaning in speech and writing. ● Apply an understanding of denotation and connotation and their effect upon meaning in speech or writing. ● Strengthen speech or writing by revising sentences for precision and conciseness. ● Analyze professional, peer, and their own writing or speech to determine the effect of word choice upon meaning. |
| L.4 | Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on Grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply an understanding of the various types of context clues to determine word or phrase meaning. ● Apply an understanding of inference and drawing conclusions to determine word or phrase meaning. |
| L.5 | Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See L.5.a and L.5.c below. |
| L.5.a | Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, biblical and mythological allusions) in context. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply knowledge of figurative language, including literary, biblical and mythological allusions, to a critical reading of a text. ● Use sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. ● Determine the meaning of words and phrases, including figurative language, as they are used in a text. ● Analyze professional, peer and their own writing to determine how figurative language contributes to meaning. |

| Code | Standard | Learning Targets |
|-------|--|--|
| L.5.c | Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply an understanding of connotation to judge word choice. Use precise words to capture the action and convey experiences and events. Analyze professional, peer and their 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 7 L.4.a, L.4.b, L.4.c, L.4.d and L.5.a, L.5.b, L.5.c to increase vocabulary and differentiate between word choices in order to improve writing and speaking. |

Unit Assessments and Rubrics

Pre-Assessments and Formative Assessments

- Beginning-of-Year Pre-Assessments (Selected Response and Writing Sample in response to short story)
- Mango Street* Anticipation Guide
- Mango Street DEJ
- Speech Color-Marking/Annotation
- Speech Analysis Graphic Organizer (Read, Listen, Watch)
- Name Speech Outline
- Passage Close Reading Annotation (Focus Connotation, Figurative Language and Imagery/Sensory Details)
- “Hairs” Language-Inference Chart
- “Hairs” Vignette Rubric
- Character Portrait
- Cluster Chart: Personal Narrative
- Exit Cards

Summative Assessments

- Name Speech Rubric
- Character Written Analysis and Rubric
- Point of View Rewrite and Rubric
- Personal Narrative Rubric

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/

Theme-Specific

- Forging
- Identity
- Point of view
- Perspective
- Self-reflection
- Voice

Writing

- Process
- Thesis
- Evidence
- Quote
- Paraphrase
- Transition
- Synthesis
- Personal narrative
- 6 Traits of Writing
 - ▶ Ideas and Development
 - ▶ Organization
 - ▶ Voice

- ▶ Word Choice
- ▶ Sentence Fluency
- ▶ Conventions

Language

- Denotation
- Connotation
- Figurative Language
- Hyperbole
- Alliteration
- Imagery/sensory details
- Personification
- Simile
- Metaphor
- Diction

Reading

- Close reading
- Annotation
- Context clues
- Inferences
- Tone
- Theme
- Characterization
- Dialogue

Speaking and Listening

- Pitch
- Volume
- Intonation
- Emphasis
- Gestures
- Posture

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 are listed below for reference.

Theme-Related Fiction

Adam of the Road by Elizabeth Janet Gray (1030L)
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain
Catherine, Called Birdy by Karen Cushman
Dear Dumb Diary: Never Do Anything, Ever by Jim Benton
Down to the Last Out by Walter Dean Myers
Fanny's Dream by Caralyn Buehner (790L)
Freak the Mighty by Rodman Philbrick
Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! by Laura Amy Schlitz
Heartbeat by Sharon Creech
The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros (870L) ***Suggested age-appropriate vignettes only**

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë
My Life as a Book by Janet Tashjian
The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
Pedro's Journal by Pam Conrad
Red Kayak by Priscilla Cummings (800L)
The Sign of the Chrysanthemum by Katherine Paterson
A Single Shard by Linda Sue Park (920L)
The Wednesday Wars by Gary Schmidt
Where the Lilies Bloom by Vera Cleaver
The Wonder of Charlie Ann by Kimberly Newton Fusco

Theme-Related Nonfiction

Bully for You, Teddy Roosevelt! by Jean Fritz (980L)
Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story by Ben Carson
"I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King Jr. (1030L)
Julian Nava: My Mexican American Journey by Julian Nava
Knots in My Yo-Yo String by Jerry Spinelli
Langston Hughes: A Biography by Milton Meltzer
Louisa May's Battle by Kathleen Krull
"A More Perfect Union" by Barack Obama
My Furthest-Back Person by Alex Haley
My Life in Dog Years by Gary Paulsen (1150L)
"Names/Nombres" by Julia Alvarez
"On Women's Right to Vote" by Susan B. Anthony
Steve Jobs by Joshua Gregory
The Story of My Life by Helen Keller (1090L)

Theme-Related Short Stories

"The Cat and the Coffee Drinkers" by Max Steele

“A Crown of Wild Olive” by Rosemary Sutcliff
“Fish Sticks” by Amy Tan
“Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut Jr.
“One Ordinary Day, with Peanuts” by Shirley Jackson
“Seventh Grade” by Gary Soto
“The Somebody” by Danny Santiago
“Thank You, Ma’am” by Langston Hughes
“The War of the Wall” by Toni Cade Bambara
“The White Umbrella” by Gish Jen
“Zebra” by Chaim Potok (810L)

Teacher Resources

(Websites change frequently. Check sites ahead of time for content and accuracy.)

- www.achievethecore.org Provides resources for teaching the Common Core State Standards.
- www.ixl.com/ela/grade-7 Offers a wide variety of links to mini-lessons on conventions, sentence structure and language.
- thecornerstoneforteachers.com/2014/08/close-reading.html Offers strategies for close reading.
- www.readwritethink.org Contains various lessons and resources for reading and writing. Hosted by the National Council for Teachers of English.
- www.shmoop.com/literature/ Shares literature with students in a light-hearted, easy-to-digest manner — a fun resource.
- www.educationalrap.com/song/public-speaking/ Includes a rap that teaches effective public speaking skills.
- www.theteacherscorner.net/teacher-resources/websites.php Provides lesson plans and links, including printable handouts.
- www.teachervision.com/fiction/activity/5952.html Offers ideas for teaching *The House on Mango Street*.

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.

Launching the unit will involve intense language instruction, primarily to practice crafting and recognizing diction, connotative meaning and sensory details (imagery). A variety of methods will be used, including a taste test of a mango as an introduction to the selected vignettes from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros as well as study and discussion of the first vignette of the text, “My Name.”

Week 2 will introduce elements pertinent to speaking and listening. Students will read and annotate a speech continuing their study of language from Week 1. After reading and annotating, students will listen to audio and watch a video of the same speech, completing a graphic organizer that records comparisons and contrasts between the different forms of delivery.

After studying another's speech, students will spend Week three creating their own, emphasizing both content and delivery. This Name Speech will be an additional step in establishing the identity referenced in the unit's theme and will build on the self-discovery and awareness noted in Week 1's analysis of "My Name."

Weeks 4, 5 and 6 will be an intensive character study where students will delve into additional excerpts and texts (both fiction and nonfiction) in order to glean a clear understanding of how an author creates a character. Students will work in pairs or small groups to create character portraits and ultimately produce their first formal writing assignment in the form of a well-written paragraph analyzing how an author uses language to reveal character. This task is the culmination of our study of character and relies on the students' abilities to look beyond the explicit and draw inferences from the text. Synthesizing information from the previous weeks will be a skill imperative to the success of this assignment. Preparatory assignments like the character portrait allow students to dialogue with one another and think critically about the characters before writing. Careful attention should be paid to establishing a clear thesis and to utilizing textual detail as evidence and support for one's claim.

The final weeks of the unit see a return to the personal perspective associated with the study of identity. Week 7's primary focus is a creative assignment that examines how a story would change through another's perspective/point of view. Students will select a piece previously read and annotated (either fiction or nonfiction) and will rewrite it from a different perspective. They will also include an analysis of how the change in narrator alters the work as a whole.

Week 8 will give voice to the students and allow time for inward reflection about the unit's Essential Questions and how they apply to each individual. Ultimately, students will compose a personal narrative demonstrating their awareness of character and their ability to command diction and construct figurative language. Since the unit ends with three written responses, Week 9 is left as a time to peer review, revise, polish and publish. Students will be asked to synthesize information from each of the tasks and to reflect on what they learned about themselves and each other over the course of the unit.

It is important to note that these are suggested time frames and that teachers can and should differentiate the length of assignments based on the needs of individual students while still keeping to the learning targets. Additionally, by Grade 7 a portion of written tasks can be completed as homework.

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

