

8th Grade Language Arts 2020-21 Curriculum Overview

	Module/Quarter 1	Module/Quarter 2	Module/Quarter 3	Module/Quarter 4
Focus	Reading Closely and Writing to Learn	Working with Evidence (Drama)	Understanding Perspectives	Research, Decision-Making, and Forming Positions
Title	Finding Home: Refugees	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> and the Comedy of Control	The Civil Rights Movement and the Little Rock Nine	Sustainability of World's Food Supply
Main Text	<i>Inside out and Back Again</i> by Thanhha Lai	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> by William Shakespeare	<i>A Mighty Long Way</i> by Carlotta Walls LaNier & Lisa Frazier Page	<i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i> by Michael Pollan
Description	Students consider the challenges of fictional and real refugees in addition to analyzing critical incidents in the story that reveal the dynamic nature of Ha, a 10-year-old Vietnamese girl whose family flees during the fall of Saigon. They also read complex informational texts to learn more about the history of war in Vietnam, the historical context of Ha's family's struggle, and the universal themes of refugees' experiences of fleeing and finding home. Students work in research groups to study the experiences of refugees from one of several cultures. Then, using the novel's poems as mentor texts, students write free verse narrative poems that capture the universal refugee experience.	Students read and analyze Shakespeare's <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , focusing primarily on the theme of control by examining why the characters seek control, how they try to control others, and the results of attempting to control others. They build background knowledge as they explore the appeal and authorship of Shakespeare and study how Shakespeare drew upon Greek mythology as he crafted the play within the play. To conclude the module, students write a "confessional" narrative from the point of view of one of the characters in <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> to creatively explain his or her attempts to control or manipulate someone else in the play.	Students study the U.S. civil rights movement, focusing particularly on the Little Rock Nine. They consider the question "How can stories be powerful?" as they learn about segregation, the civil rights movement, the Little Rock Nine and the role of the various mediums in shaping perceptions of events. Students consider the different ways in which the story of the Little Rock Nine has been told and build background about the history of segregation and Jim Crow laws in the United States. They analyze the role of various mediums in depicting the Little Rock Nine. Students finish the module by choosing four photographs to lift up as key events to include in a film about the Little Rock Nine, and a song for a film soundtrack. For their final performance task, students present and justify their photograph and song choices.	Students learn how to make evidence-based decisions as they consider the issue of how to best feed all the people in the United States. They analyze Michael Pollan's arguments and evidence (as well as the arguments in other informational texts and videos) to determine whether sufficient and relevant evidence has been used to support the claim. They first read <i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i> to build background knowledge about what happens to food before it gets to the consumer, and the different choices the consumer can make when buying food. Then, students engage in a robust research project in which they investigate the consequences of each of the food chains and the stakeholders affected, and use an evidence-based process to take a position. For a culminating project, students write a position paper addressing the question: Which of Pollan's four food chains would you choose to feed the United States?

