

Sample New Jersey Unit Guide

[School Name]

All New Jersey public schools are required to participate in the QSAC process, but all schools have the freedom to set up their Atlas site as they deem appropriate. Here are some common examples of categories used in schools; keep in mind that vocabulary varies. To create a Unit Guide that reflects your school's unique template, [click here](#) to make a copy of this document.

What are our goals in the unit?

Content and Interdisciplinary Standards

Description: Identify the core unit goals and interdisciplinary standards to help ensure curricular alignment.

Considerations:

- Computer Science & Design Thinking standards should be used in courses such as computer science.
- What are the relevant standards that this unit will address?
- How many standards should be in each unit?
- Does every standard need to be assessed?

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

Description: Identify standards that naturally fit and complement the content in the unit.

Considerations:

- What relevant technology standards in strand 9.4 should be included in units?
- How are the other strands strategically taught across all subjects and appropriate grades?
- How many standards should be in each unit?
- Does every standard need to be assessed?

NJ Mandates

Description: Topics/requirements that should be included in the curriculum.

Considerations:

- Are these topics integrated into subjects and lessons?
- Do they promote interdisciplinary connections and real-world application?

Enduring Understandings

Description: Statements outlining what we want students to *know* beyond the scope of the unit of study.

Enduring Understandings go beyond discrete facts or skills to focus on larger concepts, principles, or processes. They are transferable – applicable to new situations within or beyond the subject.

Considerations:

- Is it broad & overarching?
- Does it touch on core concepts, principles, theories, & processes within a discipline?
- Will it transfer to other contexts beyond this year and grade level?
- Do they align to Standards, EQs, etc.?
- Are they formatted as a bulleted list of 2-5 Enduring Understandings?

Examples:

- **Science Grade 2:** Plants and animals have different characteristics that help them live in their habitats.
- **Social Studies Grade 5:** To understand a historical event, we must look at it from multiple perspectives.

Essential Questions

Description: Open-ended questions designed to stimulate thought and provoke student inquiry into a topic.

Essential Questions anchor knowledge in larger, more global “buckets” for students. They allow the teacher to connect academic content with broader, real-world applications. EQs tap into students’ natural curiosity so they engage with the content through inquiry.

Considerations:

- Are the EQs authentic & age-appropriate?
- Do the EQs spark conversation, research, or reflection?
- Are they connected to standards, EUs, etc.?
- Are they formatted as a bulleted list of 2-5 Essential Questions with corresponding unit questions added as sub-bullets if applicable?

Examples:

- **Science Grade 2:** Why do plants and animals live where they live?
- **Social Studies Grade 5:** How does perspective shape or distort our understanding of an event?
- **English Grade 8:** How can we derive

- **English Grade 8:** Effective authors capture human elements that allow readers to connect to their own experiences.
- **Math High School:** The symbolic language of algebra can be used to communicate and generalize patterns.

personal connections to something set in a different place and time?

- **Math High School:** How can patterns and functions be used as tools to explain real-life situations?

Content/Knowledge

Description: The information students should know from the unit: the subject matter, key concepts, facts, and events.

Considerations:

- Is it noun-driven?
- Is it clear & concise?
- Is it specific enough for an outsider to understand?
- Does it connect to the Standards, EUs, EQs, etc.?
- Is it formatted as a bulleted list?
- Are long lists of content broken into subgroups (for example: English could be broken into Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar, Speaking/Listening, etc. or Math may be broken into Algebraic Principles, Problem Solving and Modeling)?

Examples:

- Social Studies Grade 1 Unit on **Communities:**
 - Distinguish between **near & far**
 - Identify **people and places** often found around the **neighborhood**

Skills

Description: The measurable actions that students should be able to do (physically or mentally) with the content from the unit.

Considerations:

- Is it verb-driven?
- Does it reflect the appropriate level of thinking (Bloom's Taxonomy/Webb DOK)?
- Does it align back to Standards, EUs, EQs, etc.?
- Is it formatted as a bulleted list?
- Are long lists of skills broken into subgroups (for example: English could be broken into Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar, Speaking/Listening, etc. or Math may be broken into Algebraic Principles, Problem Solving, and Modeling)?
- Are they formatted as a bulleted list?

Examples:

- Social Studies Grade 1 Unit on **Communities:**
 - **Distinguish** between near & far
 - **Identify** people and places often found around the neighborhood
 - **Describe** ways that each community member can work together to make it

- Describe ways that each **community member** can work together to make it a nice place to live

- Health Grade 7 Unit on **Wellness:**

- Reflect on **daily highlights and lowlights**
- Research ways to manage **stress (exercise, meditation, friendships, etc.)**
- Compare and contrast **prices and nutritional values** to create a **grocery budget**
- Articulate a **wellness plan** that is viable for his/her individual **lifestyle**

- English Grade 10 Unit on **Character Development and Theme:**

- Purpose of Reading

- Practice **close reading strategies**
- Interpret and generalize based on **textual evidence** after close reading
- Sit and reflect on **personal bias** when reading literature
- Identify and understand **major themes** in a **novel**
- Analyze the **development of a character** in a **novel**

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How will we measure student learning?

Assessments

Description: The opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding of the objectives and skills they have acquired.

Assessments are observable and measurable. They may include demonstrated proficiency in the classroom through participation in discussion, presentations and completed projects, as well as traditional tests, quizzes, and homework assignments. They should allow students to demonstrate understanding in a variety of ways, promoting student choice and voice in the classroom. Please refer to your school's Assessment Method Guide for examples of each of the four types of assessments (Formative, Summative, Benchmark, Alternative).

Considerations:

- How do we define each Assessment Method and Assessment Type?
- How many formative and summative assessments should we include?
- What resources can we provide (ie. rubrics, student examples, outlines, directions)?

How will students learn?

Unit Key Learning Phases

Description: The dynamic big picture phases used to structure the learning and engage the student. These key learning phases are foundational to a unit and should guide more specific lesson planning.

Considerations:

- How will the unit be broken up into key moments?
- What are key strategies and activities for this unit?

Core and Supplemental Resources

Description: The curricular resources (textbooks, online applications, etc.) required or helpful to execute the unit of study.

Considerations:

- What adopted curricular resources are referenced in the unit?
- What information is needed to provide these resources to teachers and students (downloads, login information, etc.)
- Does time need to be reserved to obtain/distribute any resources?

- What resources need to be printed or otherwise produced before the unit?
- What other preparation is required before beginning the unit?

What accommodation and modification will support learning?

Please reference the section below for specific examples of each category

Special Education (Students with Disabilities)

Description: Ensure access to learning for students with physical and/or learning disabilities that include an IEP. These IEP's remove barriers and also provide specialized instruction and services to help a child develop the skills that their disability makes harder to learn

Considerations:

- Do the accommodations and modifications directly support individual student IEP goals and plans?
- Do these adjustments take into account the specific goals and objectives for the student's progress?
- Are learning specialists and/or related services taken into consideration?

Students with 504 Plans

Description: Describe adjustments, known as accommodations, in the school setting to remove barriers to the regular education in school

Considerations:

- How is scaffolding for complex tasks provided?
- How are the physical components of the learning space supporting safety and focus?
- What barriers could be limiting access to content?

Multilingual Learner

Description: Aid in language acquisition and ensure access to learning for students learning English as an additional language

Considerations:

- How is academic vocabulary articulated and defined?
- How can work in the content area support language acquisition?
- Is the planned pacing of instruction appropriate?
- Are procedures and tasks clearly broken down into manageable steps that can be understood without making inferences or being familiar with American English idioms or slang?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the accommodations and modifications culturally responsive?
<p>At-Risk of School Failure</p> <p>Description: Ensure access to learning for students at-risk of school failure</p> <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is scaffolding for complex tasks provided? • How many opportunities for practice and feedback are provided before the assessment? • Is a different method of direct instruction, practice, or assessment needed? • Are the accommodations and modifications culturally responsive? 	<p>Gifted & Talented</p> <p>Description: Ensure rigorous learning for students who demonstrate readiness beyond grade level</p> <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the accommodations beyond the scope of a specific task or lesson extensions of learning or opportunities for additional practice at the same level? • Do the accommodations move the learning outcome into deeper complexity (further up the pyramid of Bloom's Taxonomy)? • Do the modifications and extensions of tasks reflect real-world relevance? • Do the modifications and extensions of tasks allow students to explore and deepen their own interests? • How do modifications and extensions facilitate cross-curricular connections and/or use of technology?

New Jersey Accommodation and Modification Checklist Examples

Special Education (Students with Disabilities)

The most successful list of accommodations and modifications will directly support individual students IEP goals and plans

Differentiated Instruction:

- Flexible Grouping: Group students according to their learning needs, allowing for targeted instruction and peer support
- Tiered Assignments: Offer assignments with varying levels of difficulty to accommodate different learning abilities within the classroom

Accommodations and Modifications:

- Extended Time: Provide students with additional time for tests and assignments to help them succeed
- Assistive Technology: Offer technology tools such as text-to-speech or speech-to-text software to assist with learning and processing

Clear Communication and Organization:

- Written Instructions: Provide written instructions and checklists to help students understand tasks and stay organized
- Visual Aids: Use charts, diagrams, and other visual tools to clarify concepts and instructions

Regular Monitoring and Feedback:

- Frequent Check-ins: Schedule regular meetings with students to discuss progress and address any concerns
- Immediate Feedback: Provide quick and constructive feedback on assignments to guide student improvement

Supportive Classroom Environment:

- Positive Reinforcement: Recognize and reward student achievements and efforts to build confidence and motivation
- Flexible Seating: Allow students to choose seating arrangements that help them focus and learn more effectively

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Multilingual Learner

Visual Supports:

- Charts and Diagrams: Use labeled diagrams, flowcharts, and graphic organizers to help students understand and retain information

- Pictures and Images: Include images that represent vocabulary words or concepts to make learning more concrete and accessible
- Color-Coding: Use color-coding for different types of information, such as grammar structures or themes, to help students differentiate and categorize concepts

Simplified Language:

- Short Sentences: Use brief, direct sentences when giving instructions or explaining concepts to avoid confusion
- Rephrasing: If a student does not understand, rephrase the question or instruction using simpler language or synonyms
- Check for Understanding: Regularly ask students to repeat instructions or explain concepts in their own words to ensure comprehension

Extended Time:

- Assignments and Tests: Provide extra time for students to complete assignments and tests, allowing them to process information and formulate responses at their own pace
- Reading Time: Give students additional time to read texts or materials, especially if they are in a language they are still learning
- Speaking Opportunities: Allow students more time to express their thoughts and ideas in class discussions or presentations

Peer Support:

- Language Buddies: Pair students with peers who speak the same native language or are more proficient in English to provide guidance and support
- Group Work: Organize group activities where MLL students can collaborate with others, benefiting from diverse perspectives and language models
- Peer Tutoring: Encourage students who excel in specific subjects to tutor MLL students, helping them with language and content understanding

Use of Technology:

- Translation Tools: Introduce translation apps and online dictionaries to help students understand unfamiliar vocabulary and phrases
- Language-Learning Software: Use software designed to improve language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the target language
- Interactive Resources: Incorporate multimedia resources like videos, interactive exercises, and games that cater to various learning styles and language levels

At-Risk of School Failure

Differentiated Instruction:

- Varied Assessment Methods: Offer different types of assessments, such as oral presentations, portfolios, or projects, to accommodate various learning styles
- Flexible Grouping: Group students based on their needs or abilities, and adjust these groups regularly to promote peer support and collaboration

Emphasize Growth Mindset:

- Encouraging Resilience: Teach students the value of perseverance and that mistakes are opportunities for learning and improvement
- Celebrating Effort: Recognize students' hard work and progress, not just their achievements, to motivate continued effort

Consistent Monitoring and Feedback:

- Frequent Check-ins: Conduct regular one-on-one or small group meetings to discuss students' progress and provide targeted support
- Immediate Feedback: Provide timely feedback on assignments and assessments to help students understand where they stand and how they can improve

Multisensory Learning:

- Hands-on Activities: Incorporate hands-on learning experiences such as experiments, projects, or manipulatives to engage students
- Visual and Auditory Aids: Use multimedia resources like videos, charts, or audio recordings to present information in different formats

Positive Behavior Supports:

- Clear Expectations: Establish and communicate clear, consistent expectations for behavior and learning outcomes
- Incentive Systems: Implement reward systems or behavior charts to reinforce positive behavior and acknowledge achievements

Gifted & Talented

Differentiated Instruction:

- Flexible Grouping: Group students based on their abilities and interests, allowing for targeted instruction and collaboration with peers who share similar learning goals

- **Tiered Assignments:** Design assignments with varying levels of difficulty, enabling students to work at their own pace and challenge themselves appropriately

Curriculum Compacting:

- **Pre-assessment:** Assess students' prior knowledge before beginning a unit to determine which parts of the curriculum they have already mastered
- **Acceleration:** Allow students who have mastered content to advance to more challenging material or higher-level classes

Enrichment Programs:

- **Advanced Coursework:** Offer honors or Advanced Placement (AP) classes to provide challenging academic content and help students engage in more rigorous learning
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Encourage participation in academic competitions, clubs, and other programs that nurture students' talents and interests

Individualized Learning Plans:

- **Goal Setting:** Collaborate with students to set personal learning goals and create plans to achieve them, fostering ownership of their education
- **Mentorship:** Pair students with mentors who can provide guidance, support, and encouragement as they pursue their academic and personal goals

Social-Emotional Support:

- **Counseling Services:** Provide access to counselors who understand the unique social and emotional needs of gifted students
- **Peer Support Groups:** Organize groups for gifted students to share experiences and connect with peers who can relate to their challenges and successes