

Novel ELA

Unit Unpacking Protocol



Note: This protocol can be used to unpack a unit with a large group or a small group (1–2 teachers). We recommend you reserve approximately 45–60 minutes for unit unpacking two to three weeks before the start of each unit.

We advise unpacking the unit’s performance task about two weeks prior to launch of the task. A protocol for unpacking the performance task can be found [here](#).

Vision for Unit Unpacking

Just like our students learn best through discussion, we believe that teachers will more deeply grapple with the unit and more effectively plan if they engage in meaningful dialogue with others.

The purpose of unpacking each unit is to allow teachers to collaboratively:

- understand the goals, world and disciplinary knowledge, and essential questions of the unit and how these skills and knowledge build across the unit.
- consider how their own identities and students’ identities influence how they engage with text and plan for how to leverage identity and address challenging or problematic content.

Note: Based on the content of the unit and text, you may want to spend more or less time on the questions provided below. This protocol is not meant to be a script that you execute the same way every time but should be adjusted to reflect the content of the unit and be responsive to the needs of your teachers.

Prework:

- 1) Read and annotate the full text.
- 2) Read and annotate the full unit plan.
- 3) Answer the unit’s essential questions in your own words.

Unit Unpacking Protocol

Reading and Writing: Investment (10–15 min)

What can we celebrate about the text? How do our identities affect our understanding of the text? What can we problematize?

Celebrate

- What is engaging to you about this text and task?
- Which essential questions and enduring understanding spoke to you? Which will likely be engaging to your students?
- How do the unit texts, including the supplementals, address these questions? OR How might you answer these questions yourself,

Refer teachers to these parts of the unit plan to drive discussion in this section:

given your experience of the unit texts and your review of the unit plan? Identity • How does this text and writing task offer windows or mirrors for you? How might your own identity affect how you teach this text or task? • How might this text and writing task offer students windows or mirrors? • What are the moments that you want to ensure students get to reflect and react to the text and the task on a personal level? • In what ways might this text uphold problematic or harmful world views (e.g., single stories, white supremacy culture, systems of oppression)? How does the unit and writing task create space to problematize the text? What else might we need to do? ◦ Resources for addressing racist language and racial violence ◦ Where are there potentially triggering moments in the text? What might we need to create space to problematize or criticize?	• Unit Overview: “Why this Text?” & link to “Text Selection Rationale” • Unit Overview: “Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings” • Focusing the Inquiry: “Building Background, Criticality” (including how to frame sensitive content)
Reading: Understand the Goals and Outcomes (10–12 min) <i>What are the most important goals of the unit? What knowledge about literature does it help students develop?</i>	
Unpack the Goals and Outcomes • What is the core purpose of this unit? ◦ How does it fit within the scope of the year given where students have been and are going? • What are the most important skills and disciplinary knowledge that students develop in this reading unit? • How do these skills and disciplinary knowledge connect to the reading standards? • How does the text or reading unit give students at-bats at applying and using the disciplinary knowledge? • What must students understand and be able to do in order to be successful on the Final Performance Task? • Optional: Let’s click into the teacher copies for our unit assessment and/or quizzes. What do we notice about the demands of the assessment(s): passage genres, standards coverage, item types? Are there any test-taking strategies or disciplinary skills we want to review/practice during the unit to support students’ success on these tests? When do these tests happen? Where would they fall in our course calendar?	<i>Refer teachers to these parts of the unit plan to drive discussion in this section:</i> • Grade-level Course Overview to see zoomed out view of course sequence, how disciplinary knowledge is leveled up • Focusing the Inquiry: Disciplinary Knowledge and Skills (and aligned standards); option to have them open up grade-level CCSS

- What are additional lessons that are based on the unit goals and assessments that we want to potentially IP? Tools to Access the Text - Given the big ideas/focus content, what context or content knowledge would kids need to access these understandings? Salient techniques/devices that help students unlock deeper meaning? - How does the unit develop this knowledge? - Recommended: Scroll down to the “Supporting the Inquiry” section. - What is the Language Focus for multilingual learners in this unit? - Which of the UDL supports outlined for this unit will be important access points for your students?	Pacing and Lesson Overview: Look at the lessons where Disciplinary Knowledge is taught - Click open the unit Knowledge Organizer and crosswalk it with the Pacing and Lesson Overview
Writing: Goals and Unit Outcomes (10–12 min) <i>What are the most important goals of the writing unit? How does it connect to the reading unit?</i>	
- Now, let’s look at the writing task. During IP, approximately the week before the writing unit starts, we are going to do a deeper dive into this part of the unit and norm on our exemplar. Right now, we are going to look at the writing unit and task “big picture.” - What are the transferable skills and disciplinary knowledge we are developing? - What skills does this unit build upon from past years? Past units? - How does it connect to the reading unit? (enduring understanding, conventions of the genres) - During the reading unit, what structures are in place to set up students for success in the writing unit? <u>Supporting MLLs</u>: What are the language demands of the performance task? How can you support your multilingual learners to develop proficiency before they are expected to complete the task?	<i>Refer teachers to these parts of the unit plan to drive discussion in this section:</i> Assessment of the Inquiry: Overview of Performance Task - task description + task requirements; optional look at the task rubric (should be linked into task)
OPTIONAL: Lesson Level Goals (10–15 min) <i>What are the goals of X lesson? How do the lesson’s objectives and skills connect to the larger goals of the reading and writing units? The unit assessments?</i>	
- Let’s take a look at one specific lesson, uniquely Lesson X. - What are the transferable skills and disciplinary knowledge we are developing?	<i>Link in the precise lesson(s) you want teachers to look at here—usually a lesson</i>

■ What skills does this unit build upon from past years? Past units? ○ How does it connect to the reading unit? (enduring understanding, conventions of the genres) ○ How does it support student success in the writing unit? In other domains, such as listening and speaking? On their daily and unit assessments?	<i>within the first four lessons is the best choice here, especially one you might not IP as a team.</i>
Final Reflection and Logistics (5 min) <i>What will be top of mind as you intellectually prepare? What are our next steps?</i>	
● What will you keep top of mind as you intellectually prepare to teach the unit? ○ IP Together: ■ ● Next Steps for team IP: ○ What lesson will we IP first together? ■ ○ What prework do we need to complete? ● Tactical items for team: ○ Who owns the anthology, knowledge organizer, pacing calendar, book distribution, printing handouts, etc.	

Identifying Potential Lessons to IP

Performance Task Unpack
<i>Ideally, this happens during a team meeting the week before the performance task begins</i>
Prework for Meeting (30–60 min) ● Teachers read and annotate any new texts that accompany the Writing Unit. ● Teachers internalize the rubric for the summative writing task. ○ Note: Each rubric is customized to the writing task this year, so there will be a new rubric for each unit. ● Teachers internalize the end-of-unit writing prompt and compose their own exemplar for the end-of-unit writing task. ○ Note: Coaches may determine that a detailed outline is more appropriate than a full exemplar, depending on the task.
Debrief the Exemplar (20–25 min)

Internalizing the Task

- What makes this writing task exciting/engaging/relevant for our students?
- Zooming in on the writing prompt, what are the essential components of this task?
- Zooming in on the writing rubric, what are the CFS or core disciplinary skills we're looking for in this task?

Internalizing the Exemplar (examining prework)

- What would be an acceptable bar for this task?
- What would not meet the bar for this task?
- What's the connection to the core disciplinary knowledge in the unit?

See It: Release to Task

Understanding Flow of the Unit

- Let's talk through the flow of the unit—how each day connects to the next. How is the unit sequenced to support students' independence?
- Considering the flow of the unit, let's think about critical outputs, potential tricky spots, etc. What do we want to be aware of?

Identifying "Do Not Pass Go" Moments

- What are "Do not Pass Go" moments for student outputs? Teacher grading/feedback?

Logistics + IP Guidance for Writing Unit (10–15 min)

What will IP look like for writing lessons? How is it similar to/different from IP for reading lessons?

Coached IP Meetings Logistics:

- Which lessons should we IP together during the Writing Unit?
- What will the prework be for those meetings?
- Is there any student work you want to look at together?

Establishing Independent IP Expectations for Writing Lessons:

- Teachers should independently IP any writing lessons that are not prepped during leader-led IP. Take a moment at the blue highlighted tweaks to the [Teacher Lesson Preparation Checklist](#).
 - Ask teachers:
 - What is similar about the Independent IP Checklist for Writing lessons? What is different?
 - Do you have any clarifying questions about what writing IP should look like?
 - When will you submit your independent IP for your writing lessons? When will the coach provide feedback?

Final Reflections

- What will be top of mind as you intellectually prepare for your writing lessons?
- What next steps need to happen for you to be ready to begin the Writing Unit next week?