English Language Arts—Grade 8

COURSE LENGTH
(4 Units—Each Approximately 9 Weeks)

Course Description

English Language Arts 8 offers students a well-rounded learning experience rooted in the New Jersey State Learning Standards (NJSLS). The course emphasizes the development of essential language and literacy skills through the exploration of a wide range of literary works. Students will refine their abilities in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, while also embracing cross-curricular learning opportunities, helping them grow into thoughtful, engaged, and responsible members of society. It is the vision of this curriculum to empower each student to harness 21st Century literacy skills in order to build and lift their voices, as well as establish meaningful connections to their personal development and the communities around them.

Unit I: Coming of Age: Navigating Themes of Growth

This unit explores the journey of adolescence and identity formation through the lens of social class, stereotyping, friendship, family, and personal resilience. Students analyze how individuals use voice, agency, and dreams to define themselves and challenge expectations. Core texts like *The Outsiders* and *The Skin I'm In* showcase characters who navigate adversity, discover their worth, and shape their futures. Literary and poetic elements, such as those in Robert Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay," enrich discussions on growth, belonging, and transformation.

Unit II: Windows and Mirrors: Exploring Voices of the Past, Present, and Future

Through historical fiction and memoir, students examine how the past informs the present and can guide the future. This unit focuses on representation, equity, and the impact of community. Texts such as *The Boy Who Dared* and *Night* provide windows into difficult historical moments and mirrors for personal reflection. Students consider how courage, memory, and storytelling shape legacies, inspire change, and affirm identity across generations.

Unit III: Beyond the Page: Finding Life in Every Story

Students delve into literature that blurs the line between fiction and truth, using speculative and allegorical texts to examine power, conformity, and the human condition. In works like *Animal Farm, The Giver,* and

"Harrison Bergeron," authors challenge societal norms and explore the consequences of control and complacency. This unit emphasizes how storytelling is a tool for social commentary, personal reflection, and envisioning alternative futures.

Unit IV: Words of Wisdom: Life Lessons in Literature

In the final unit, students explore timeless insights on identity, resilience, and purpose through dramas, poetry, and influential speeches. Works such as *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Shakespearean sonnets and soliloquies, and a diverse range of modern speeches invite students to reflect on values, personal growth, and the role of language in shaping thought. Through close reading and personal writing, students analyze how the wisdom of others can illuminate their own voices and worldviews.

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Board Approval Date: (Enter Date Here)

Unit 1: Coming of Age: Navigating Themes of Growth

Grade Level: 8	**Content Area: ELA Unit 1** **Theme/Topic: Coming of Age: Navigating Themes of Growth** **Duration: 9 weeks**
Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Unit Summary:* This unit explores the journey of adolescence and identity formation through the lens of social class, stereotyping, friendship, family, and personal resilience. Students analyze how individuals use voice, agency, and dreams to define themselves and challenge expectations. Core texts like *The Outsiders, The Skin I'm In,* and *Hidden Figures* showcase characters who navigate adversity, discover their worth, and shape their futures. Literary and poetic elements, such as those in Robert Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay," enrich discussions on growth, belonging, and transformation. *Students will understand that…* ● Experiences such as social class, stereotyping, friendship, family, community, and adversity shape a person's identity, worldview, and sense of belonging. ● Voice and agency empower individuals to challenge stereotypes and define their own paths as they grow. ● Dreams, resilience, and self-expression help individuals navigate conflict and create change.
Essential Questions	● What does it mean to "come of age," and how is this journey portrayed differently across fiction and nonfiction texts? How do authors construct characters that convey powerful stories of growth? ● In what ways do social class, societal expectations, and challenges influence a person's opportunities, choices, and relationships? ● How do individuals break barriers and find their voice or sense of agency while facing social or personal obstacles?
Misconceptions	*Students may think that...* ● "Coming of age" happens all at once or only when someone turns a certain age (e.g., 18), rather than being a gradual, personal, and often non-linear process. ● Individuals who live in the same environment (community, school, social class) all experience life the same way. ● Growth and identity are only shaped by success or positive experiences—not by struggle, failure, or adversity. ● Voice is only literal (spoken or written), not symbolic or expressed through actions, choices, and artistic forms. ● Comprehension, analysis, and interpretation are interchangeable.
Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…*

	• Read rich, challenging texts that build their knowledge of the world, grow their confidence and identities as readers, and develop critical thinking skills necessary for long-term success. • Recognize and reflect on how personal and societal challenges shape identity, growth, and belonging. • Analyze how authors and real people use voice, structure, and storytelling to communicate powerful messages. • Express their own experiences, values, or beliefs through narrative and analytical writing. • Express their own values, experiences, and beliefs through narrative and analytical writing, using techniques modeled in both fiction and nonfiction texts. • Independently generate story ideas by observing everyday life and recognizing meaningful moments or issues, developing authentic writing habits as lifelong writers.
Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know how to. . .* • Analyze through writing how authors develop character through actions, dialogue, motivations, and internal conflict. • Identify and interpret textual evidence that supports literary analysis. • Compare how different authors and genres portray coming-of-age experiences. • Examine how point of view, structure, and language choices shape meaning. • Write narrative and memoir pieces that include reflection, voice, and purposeful language. • Cite evidence to support how authors craft their writing to reveal deeper meaning • Distinguish between objective summary, personal opinion, and analysis. • The key literary elements found across texts and genres • How to identify the author's point of view and purpose and analyze how it's conveyed. • Structuring coherent written responses with logical organization and clarity. Concepts (Enduring academic and thematic ideas students will internalize): • Close reading techniques that demonstrate how literature helps us reflect on identity, values, and personal growth through characters and real people. • Characters' choices and transformations reveal broader truths about growing up, belonging, and navigating conflict. • Fiction and nonfiction texts can serve as mentors, guiding how we express complex experiences and ideas in writing. • Analytical and narrative writing deepen our understanding of others and ourselves through reflection and evidence. • Reading across genres helps us see connections between lived experiences and literary representations.
Standards	
NJSL Content-Specific Student Learning Standards	

Reading

- RL.CR.8.1 - Close Reading - Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.CI.8.2. - Central Ideas and Themes - Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- RL.IT.8.3 - Interaction Among Text Elements - Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
- RI.CR.8.1. - Close Reading - Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.CI.8.2. - Central Ideas and Themes - Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- RI.IT.8.3. Interaction Among Text Elements—Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

Writing

- W.IW.8.2. - Informational and Explanatory Writing: Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- W.NW.8.3. - Narrative Writing - Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.WP.8.4 - Writing Process - With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

Language

- L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
    - Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.
    - Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.
    - Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
    - Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.
    - Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
    - Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
    - Recognize spelling conventions.
- L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening**.**

Speaking and Listening

- SL.PE.8.1. Participate Effectively—Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners
ELD-LA.6-8.Narrate.Interpretive
Interpret language arts narratives by
● Identifying a theme or central idea that develops over the course of a text
● Analyzing how character attributes and actions develop in relation to events or dialogue
● Evaluating impact of specific word choices about meaning and tone

ELD-LA.6-8.Narrate.Expressive
Construct language arts narratives that
● Orient audience to context and point of view
● Develop and describe characters and their relationships
● Develop story, including themes with complication and resolution, time, and event sequences
● Engage and adjust for audience

Computer Science and Design Thinking
8.2.8.EC.1: Explain ethical issues that may arise from the use of new technologies. In this first unit, students will discuss the impact of AI and ethical issues that arise from the use of it.

Career Readiness, Life Literacies & Key Skills: This unit connects to Career Readiness and Life Literacies by helping students develop transferable skills such as analyzing diverse perspectives, communicating effectively, and using evidence to support ideas. Through reading and writing about characters who navigate themes of growth, students build awareness, empathy, and critical thinking skills essential for success in school, work, and life.
(9.4.8.GCA.1, 9.4.8.IML.7, 9.4.8.CT.2, 9.4.8.TL.4, 9.4.8.CI.1)

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by…
[selections determined by grade level teachers]

Formative Assessments
Reader's Notebook & Independent Reading
Summer Reading
National Day on Writing, October 20th—Not Graded
Low-stakes quizzes and reflection prompts will be used for retrieval practice, ensuring long-term understanding of key texts and concepts.
Grammar/Usage/Conventions Work
Mini Memoirs
Character Analysis Connections
Theme Comparison Chart & One-Pager

Literature Circle Discussions

Benchmark Assessments
Literary Analysis Sentences & Paragraphs
Inferences, Analysis & Interpretations Activity

Summative Assessments
Interpretive Project
- "Theme Talk Show"—students act out a talk show in which major characters discuss the impact of the theme on their development.
- Character to Character imagine a scene between two characters that doesn't already exist in the text

Independent Reading Project
- Independently complete a one-pager analyzing the literary elements in their independent reading choice.

Mini Character/Literary Analysis Essay
Unit 1 Test: Literary Analysis Task- NJSLA Style

Alternative Assessment:
Personal Memoir (W.NW.8.3)—Through a choice of modalities or mediums, students produce a personal memoir of a moment or period of time in their lives that sparked growth and change.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Describe how one content area may connect to the core content area in this unit.

Standards for Cross-Content Areas
Social Studies: This unit connects to social studies by exploring how historical context, social class, and environment influence identity, access to opportunity, and community belonging—key themes that mirror topics such as civics, social environments, and cultural narratives.
(6.1.8.CivicsHR.4.b, 6.3.8.CivicsPR.4, 6.1.8.HistoryCC.5.a)

Visual and Performing Arts: By encouraging students to explore identity, growth, voice, and theme through creative expression, this unit fosters a strong interdisciplinary connection to the visual and performing arts. As they analyze literature, students can extend their understanding through visual representations, dramatic readings, or multimedia storytelling to deepen their engagement with literature.
(1.4.8.Cn11a, 1.4.8.Cn10a)

Accommodations and Modifications

Special Education	• Allow pre-recording of presentations and scene templates for interpretive projects. • Provide a graphic organizer or template for One-Pager. Allow students to use graphic design technology. • Use a paragraph-by-paragraph or sentence frames for analytical essays.

	• Provide outline and limit number of texts used in Literary Analysis Task - NJSLA style.
504	• Schedule checkpoints for multi step interpretive project • Allow student to work in partnerships or small groups when applicable. • Use speech to text or dictation software for writing assignments.
At Risk/ I&RS	• Provide sample script or video models of interpretive project • Regular teacher or partner check ins to monitor progress • Pre-assessment study guides and teacher check ins
ML	• Translations for texts available on platforms such as CommonLit with the translate tool ○ Spanish texts also linked in this document under the Resources section • Use of graphic novel
Gifted	• Independent comparative text studies • Extended Literary Analysis Task • Creative synthesis projects • Literature circle leadership roles

Resources

[selections determined by grade level teachers]

Core Texts

Novels
The Outsiders (S.E. Hinton)
The Skin I'm In (Sharon Flake)
"Nothing Gold Can Stay" (Robert Frost)

Supplemental Texts

Memoirs/Nonfiction/Artwork
Hidden Figures: Young Readers Edition (Margot Lee Shetterly)
"Names/Nombres" by Julia Alvarez
"The Terror" by Junot Díaz
"Us and Them" by David Sedaris
"The Danger of a Single Story"—TED "Talk
Jacob Lawrence—Selections from *The Migration Series*

Fiction
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn (Betty Smith)
The House on Mango Street—excerpts (Sandra Cisneros)

"Our Town" (Thornton Wilder)

Writing Instructional Resources
The Writing Revolution—Natalie Wexler
6+1 Traits of Writing
Vocabulary Workshop Achieve- Sadlier

Unit II: Windows and Mirrors

Grade Level: 8	**Content Area: ELA Unit 2** **Theme/Topic: Windows and Mirrors: Exploring Voices of the Past, Present, and Future** **Duration: 9 Weeks**
Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Unit Summary:* Through historical fiction and memoir, students explore how the past informs the present and guides the future. This unit focuses on representation, fairness, and the impact of community. Texts such as *The Boy Who Dared* and *Night* offer windows into significant historical moments and mirrors for personal reflection. Students consider how courage, memory, and storytelling shape legacies, inspire change, and affirm identity across generations. *Students will understand that…* ● Historical and personal events shape individuals and influence future choices, identities, and communities. ● Representation and inclusion in literature allow readers to see themselves (mirrors), understand others (windows), and imagine new possibilities (sliding glass doors), helping individuals feel empowered and connected in a diverse society. ● Individual growth is shaped by community, relationships, and the ability to navigate adversity—and these changes can have lasting impact.
Essential Questions	● How can voice be a form of power to challenge injustice and inspire change across time? ● How do identity, culture, and place shape who we are—even when others try to silence or erase them? ● How can literature, speeches, and storytelling serve as both mirrors of our own experiences and windows into others'? ● How does examining voices from the past and present help us imagine and create a more just future? ● How can research and storytelling together shape better decisions for the future?
Misconceptions	*Students may think that...* ● That current events are isolated and not reflective of past events. ● Actions taken today have little impact on the future. ● Historical events hold limited value or relevance to today's youth ● Change comes about easily.
Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…* ● Discuss civil rights issues and specific moments in history when voices were silenced (i.e. the Holocaust). ● Identify ways in which they can use their voice in our society now and in the future. ● Examine how laws have evolved over time and discuss their purpose and effects.

	● Analyze information through historical, literary, and sociological perspectives. ● Consider how technological development have transformed society and daily life.
Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know how to. . .* Skills: ● Analyze how authors and speakers develop and convey voices. ● Trace and compare central themes across genres. ● Determine the meaning of words and phrases, including figurative language and connotative meanings. ● Analyze how authors structure texts and develop arguments or narratives. ● Evaluate the impact of rhetorical devices and appeals in speeches. ● Gather and analyze data to build reasoning and understanding. ● Use multiple forms of media to learn and build on understanding. ● Write an informational essay based on the research and analysis of multiple sources. ● Evaluate information to determine best references for their topic and purpose. ● Cite textual evidence to support claims and inferences. ● The context of historical events and their impacts ● Biographical background of historical figures ● Individuals have made a lasting impact on the world by using their "voice" ● An understanding of commonly used rhetorical devices ● Structure and style differences between autobiographies, speeches, and modern fiction ● Identify literary elements and analyze their development throughout a text ● The purpose and process of planning when writing ● Effective methods for gathering and analyzing information ● Incorporate MLA format when constructing a final draft Concepts: ● Literature can serve as both a mirror reflecting our own identities and a window into others' experiences. ● Authors and speakers use voice, structure, and language to advocate for change and express identity. ● Storytelling is a powerful form of resistance, resilience, and reclaiming identity. ● Historical and social contexts shape the creation and receptions of texts ● Language and rhetoric can influence beliefs, inspire action, and shape public opinion, ● Understanding diverse perspectives promotes empathy, critical thinking, and civic awareness.
Standards	
NJSLS Content-Specific Student Learning Standards **Reading** ● RL.CR.8.1 - Close Reading: Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	

- RI.CR.8.1. - Close Reading: Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.PP.8.5.Perspective and Purpose: Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader.
- RI.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- RI.AA.8.7. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
- RL.CT.8.8.Comparison of Texts: Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.
- RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

Writing

- W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- W.AW.8.1. Argumentative Writing: Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g. social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- W.WP.8.4. Writing Process: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

Speaking and Listening

- SL.PE.8.1. Participate Effectively: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.II.8.2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats
    - Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
    - Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
    - Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).

- SL.ES.8.3. Evaluate Speakers: Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
- SL.PI.8.4.Present Information: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

Language

- L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners

ELD-LA.6-8.Inform.Interpretive
Interpret informational texts in language arts by
● Identifying and/or summarizing main ideas and their relationship to supporting ideas
● Analyzing observations and descriptions in textual evidence for key attributes, qualities, characteristics, activities, and behaviors
● Evaluating the impact of author's key word choices over the course of a text

ELD-LA.6-8.Inform.Expressive
Construct informational texts in language arts that
● Introduce and define topic and/or entity for audience
● Establish objective or neutral stance
● Add precision, details, and clarity about relevant attributes, qualities, characteristics, activities, and behaviors
● Develop coherence and cohesion throughout text

Computer Science and Design Thinking

8.2.8.EC.1: Explain ethical issues that may arise from the use of new technologies. Students will identify how technology has changed society and how it impacts daily life.

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

9.4.8.GCA.1: Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect.
9.4.8.IML.1: Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
This unit will give students the opportunity to explore events and social structures through different lenses. By gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, students will promote creativity for expressing themselves.

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by…
[selections determined by grade level teachers]

Formative Assessments

Journal Responses/Independent Reading Responses

Low-stakes quizzes and reflection prompts will be used for retrieval practice, ensuring long-term understanding of key texts and concepts.
Research and reflection tasks
Text annotation
Grammar/Usage/Conventions Work
Socratic Seminar Prep
Literary analysis charts
One-pagers
Summarization
Character profiles

Summative Assessments
Novel based test NJSLA Aligned
Research Simulation Task
Socratic Seminar:
"How does examining voices from the past and present help us imagine and create a more just future?"
Compare/Contrast Essay: Fiction vs Reality (IRB Text + Research)

Benchmark Assessments
Short Written Responses
Journal Responses
Discussion

Alternative Assessment
TED Talk or Podcast

Interdisciplinary Connections

Describe how one content area may connect to the core content area in this unit.

Social Studies: This unit will use historical content to enhance the students' understanding of contemporary issues and events. By understanding past events, students will be able to analyze social issues that affect people today.

6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.c: Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a variety of governmental and nongovernmental contexts.

Science: This unit will use scientific texts and research to build on the students' understanding of psychology and its impact on human action. The students will review how events impact an individual and cause them to act.

MS-LS1-8 Gather and synthesize information that sensory receptors respond to stimuli by sending messages to the brain for immediate behavior or storage as memories.

Visual and Performing Arts: This unit will give students an opportunity to explore alternative ways to convey their knowledge and understanding.

Accommodations and Modifications	
Special Education	• Differentiation of core texts to promote access/ analysis across a range of reading levels • Graphic organizers to track key concepts • Glossary of essential unit vocabulary • Author's craft visual menu to support identification of writerly moves authors and speakers use to develop voice • Guide of frequently used text structures in specific types of writing • Annotation key to support close reading • Quite writes/ stop and jots related to summative writing tasks as checkpoints along learning process • Visual and video resources to increase background information about historical figures/ time periods
504	• Pre-teaching vocabulary. • Access to word glossary • Access to characterization charts • Use of teacher provided summaries
At Risk/ I&RS	• Peer models or peer editing partners • Relate prompts to personal experiences to increase relevance. • Allow for revision opportunities and low-stakes drafting before summative tasks. • Use guided questions and prompts in writing assignments
ML	• Use visual supports: icons, images, labeled diagrams. • Provide sentence starters, language frames, and modeled responses. • Offer oral presentations or multimedia formats as an alternative to essays. • Accept simplified vocabulary and shorter written responses.
Gifted	• Offer extension options: advanced literary theory, author study, or multimedia creation. • Allow students to take on leadership roles in group discussions and seminars. • Require deeper analysis in essays (multiple layers of figurative language or thematic complexity). • Allow choice in medium or format for projects (digital mood boards, podcasts). • Invite comparative analysis between class texts and outside works.
Resources	
[selections determined by grade level teachers] **Core Texts**	

Literary Texts

- *The Boy Who Dared* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti
- *Night* by Elie Wiesel

Supplemental Texts

Nonfiction Texts

- “Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom” by Lynda Blackmon Lowery
- Frederick Douglass' "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July" (Newsela)
- “Seneca Falls Keynote Address” by Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- “Remember the Ladies” by Abigail Adams
- Standing Bear vs. Crook (Teaching American History)
- Exploring Anne Frank’s Diary—United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (video and lesson)

Poems

- “Harlem” by Langston Hughes—Poetry Foundation
- “Oh, Freedom!”
- “The Grammar of Silk” by Cathy Song—Poetry Foundation

Writing Instructional Resources

The Writing Revolution—Natalie Wexler

6+1 Traits of Writing

Vocabulary Workshop Achieve- Sadlier

Unit III: Beyond the Page

Grade Level: 8	**Content Area: ELA Unit: 3** **Theme/Topic: Beyond the Page: Finding Life in Every Story** **Duration: 9 Weeks**
Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Unit Summary:* Students delve into literature that blurs the line between fiction and truth, using speculative and allegorical texts to examine power, conformity, and the human condition. In works like *Animal Farm, The Giver,* and "Harrison Bergeron," authors challenge societal norms and explore the consequences of control and complacency. This unit emphasizes how storytelling is a tool for social commentary, personal reflection, and envisioning alternative futures. *Students will understand that…* ● Literature is more than just fiction; it is a lens through which we can examine human behavior, social structures, and personal identity. ● Authors use storytelling to reflect truths, question norms, and inspire self-reflection. ● Narrative elements and literary techniques bring stories to life and show how these stories influence our understanding of the real world.
Essential Questions	● How can fictional stories reveal real-world truths? ● In what ways do authors use literature to comment on/criticize society? ● How can literature help us develop empathy and critical thinking?
Misconceptions	*Students may think that...* ● Literature's only purpose is to entertain, not to teach or inspire. ● Fictional characters cannot portray real emotions or relatable experiences. ● There is only one correct way to interpret a text. ● "Classic" literature is irrelevant to today's readers.
Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…* ● Interpret and analyze texts beyond surface meaning. ● Make personal connections to themes in literature. ● Express and defend ideas through thoughtful discussion and writing. ● Recognize the power of storytelling as a tool for reflection and change.
Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know how/how to. . .* ○ Analyze theme, symbolism, character development, and POV. ○ Identify author's purpose. ○ Identify appeal techniques and how they are used in propaganda: ethos, logos, pathos and kairos. ○ Use text evidence to support written and verbal analysis. ○ Compose analytical essays and creative responses.

	○ Participate in Socratic seminars and peer-led discussions. ○ Narrative structure influences meaning. ○ The role of symbolism and allegory is critical in *Animal Farm*. ○ The themes of memory, control, and choice are critical in *The Giver*. ○ Fgurative language is used to convey deeper truths. ● Concepts: ○ Power and oppression ○ Freedom and Responsibility ○ Identity and Self-Discovery ○ Storytelling as Reflection ○ Analyze how central ideas and themes develop across texts through spaced reading and cumulative discussion.

Standards

NJSL Content-Specific Student Learning Standards

Reading

- RL.CI.8.2. Central Ideas and Themes: Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- RL.IT.8.3. Interaction Among Text Elements: Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
- RL.PP.8.5. Perspective and Purpose: Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).

Writing

- W.AW.8.1. Argumentative Writing: Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g. social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- W.NW.8.3. Narrative Writing: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.WP.8.4. Writing Process: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

Language

- L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Speaking and Listening

- SL.PE.8.1. Participate Effectively: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- SL.II.8.2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
- SL.PI.8.4. Present Information: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
    - Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
    - Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
    - Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
    - Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners
ELD-LA.6-8.Argue.Interpretive
Interpret language arts arguments by
● Identifying and summarizing central idea distinct from prior knowledge or opinions
● Analyzing how an author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints
● Evaluating relevance, sufficiency of evidence, and validity of reasoning that support claim(s)

ELD-LA.6-8.Argue.Expressive
Construct language arts arguments that
● Introduce and develop claim(s) and acknowledge counterclaim(s)
● Support claims with reasons and evidence that are clear, relevant, and credible
● Establish and maintain formal style
● Logically organize claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence; offer a conclusion

Computer Science and Design Thinking
8.2.8.EC.2: Examine the effects of ethical and unethical practices in product design and development. Apply the examined effects of ethical and unethical practices in product design and development on freedom versus control. How much control do humans have over ethical and unethical practices in product development? How does this extent of control vary depending on the role being played in the process? Who oversees such practices? Who is responsible?

Career Readiness, Life Literacies & Key Skills: This unit connects to Career Readiness and Life Literacies by helping students develop transferable skills such as analyzing diverse perspectives, communicating effectively, and using evidence to support ideas. Through reading and writing about characters who navigate themes of growth, students build awareness, empathy, and critical thinking skills essential for success in school, work, and life.

- 9.4.8.GCA.1: Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect.
- 9.4.8.IML.1: Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by…

[selections determined by grade level teachers]

Formative Assessments

Theme Tracker: Freedom vs. Control
Grammar/Usage/Conventions Work
Quick Writes / Entry Prompts
Character Development Timelines
"Dear Author" Letter
Socratic Seminar
Figurative Language Scavenger Hunt
Low-stakes quizzes and reflection prompts will be used for retrieval practice, ensuring long-term understanding of key texts and concepts.

Summative Assessments

Literary Analysis Essay "Truth as Rebellion"
Creative Writing Project
Independent Reading Book Project
Unit 3 Test: Research Simulation Task—NJSLA Style—Argumentative Essay

Benchmark Assessment:

Socratic Seminar Prep Notes & Self Reflection
- Prepare notes with ideas and evidence for Socratic Seminar

Quizzes
Journals

Alternative Assessment:

Creative "Redesign Society" Project
Story Mood Board
Propaganda Remix Project

Additional (Optional) Activities/Warm Ups:

- Vocabulary activities

Interdisciplinary Connections

Describe how one content area may connect to the core content area in this unit.

This unit can connect to both Social Studies and Civics. It will include historical connections to totalitarianism and dystopian societies. It will also address rights, responsibilities, and consequences of action/inaction in society. This unit will also explore how humans rely on natural resources from the geosphere (land), hydrosphere (oceans), atmosphere (air), and biosphere (living things). Students will read the nonfiction article "Protecting the Environment" (Newsela) to build scientific understanding of environmental challenges and sustainability. They will then apply this knowledge to analyze the dystopian society in their novel, identifying and evaluating environmental problems or consequences within the fictional world. This interdisciplinary task supports connections between literary themes and real-world environmental science issues.

Standards for Cross-Content Areas

- 6.3.8.Civics PI.2: Evaluate the extent to which different forms of government reflect the history and values of various societies (e.g., monarchy, democracy, republic, dictatorship).
- ESS3.A: Natural Resources Humans depend on Earth's land, ocean, atmosphere, and biosphere for many different resources. Minerals, fresh water, and biosphere resources are limited, and many are not renewable or replaceable over human lifetimes. These resources are distributed unevenly around the planet as a result of past geologic processes. (MS-ESS3-1)

Accommodations and Modifications

Special Education	• Provide a graphic organizer for essay structure • Offer sentence starters or paragraph frames. • Break the task into manageable steps with checkpoints • Allow alternative formats for creative writing project (comic strip, audio story, visual storyboards) • Provide a choice board with diverse project types for independent reading project (poster, digital slideshow, podcast, comic, etc.). • Allow oral presentations in place of written ones • Provide a structured outline or scaffolded graphic organizer for research simulation task.
504	• Provide a graphic organizer for essay structure • Offer sentence starters or paragraph frames. • Break the task into manageable steps with checkpoints • Allow alternative formats for creative writing project (comic strip, audio story, visual storyboards) • Provide a choice board with diverse project types for independent reading project (poster, digital slideshow, podcast, comic, etc.).
At Risk/ I&RS	• Allow choice in the prompt or theme when possible to build engagement • Give explicit examples of strong and weak analysis. • Break projects into small, clear steps with mini-deadlines. • Give samples of creative pieces and highlight key elements. • Offer one-on-one or small group conferencing during planning.
ML	• Provide a glossary of key literary terms with visuals or translated definitions. • Allow responses in native language brainstorms before drafting in English. • Provide sentence frames for description, dialogue, and narrative structure for creative writing project. • Give vocabulary support and guided comprehension checks for the independent reading project. • Allow oral discussions or pre-writing conversations in home language or with a

	partner before a large project or writing piece.
Gifted	• Allow comparative analysis with another text, film, or historical event for literary analysis. • Allow students to mentor peers, offering feedback or writing support groups for creative writing project. • Allow students to create a cross-curricular connection (e.g., historical context, philosophical implications, scientific relevance) for the independent reading project. • Use self-assessment rubrics to push reflection and self-directed improvement for research simulation task.

Resources

Core Texts;
The Giver by Lois Lowry
Animal Farm by George Orwell

[selections determined by grade level teachers]

Fiction Texts
"Harrison Bergeron"
"The Lottery"
Animal Farm by George Orwell
The Giver by Lois Lowry

Poems
- "The Road Not Taken" poem by Robert Frost
- "I, Too" poem by Langston Hughes

Nonfiction Texts
- "When Power Turns Toxic"
- "Why Fiction Is Good for You"
- "Why Do People Follow Leaders?"
- "Propaganda Techniques in Today's Media"
- Propaganda Posters– "Keep Calm and Carry On" (1939); "Rosie the Riveter – We Can Do It!" (1943); "Your Country Needs You" (1914)

Supplemental Articles for *The Giver*
- China allows parents to sue their children (NEWSELA)-to be read with Chapter 4
- Ageism (Chapter 4)
- Black soldiers are honored, name by name, at a Civil War battlefield (NEWSELA)-to be read with chapter 6 (Naming Ceremony)
- Drones & AI Powered Surveillance (Chapter 10-Privacy)
- The Importance of Color in Our Lives (chapter 13)
- Color Blindness (NEWSELA-chapter 13)

- Newsela: What is Pain? (Chapters 15-16)

Research using FMS Media Center Online A-Z Databases:

- Research forms of government (e.g., monarchy, democracy, republic, dictatorship) and the history and values of these societies. Explain how this knowledge deepens understanding of the literature under study. Select a different type of government for the literature under study and write a short description about how events, actions, and/or characters would be different.

Writing Instructional Resources

The Writing Revolution—Natalie Wexler
6+1 Traits of Writing
Vocabulary Workshop Achieve- Sadlier

Unit IV: Words of Wisdom

Grade Level: 8	**Content Area: ELA Unit 4** **Theme/Topic: Words of Wisdom: Life Lessons Through Literature** **Duration: 9 weeks**
Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Unit Summary:* In the final unit, students explore timeless insights on identity, resilience, and purpose through dramas, poetry, and influential speeches. Works such as *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Shakespearean sonnets and soliloquies, and a diverse range of modern speeches invite students to reflect on values, personal growth, and the role of language in shaping thought. Through close reading and personal writing, students analyze how the wisdom of others can illuminate their own voices and worldviews. *Students will understand that…* ● "What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality." — Plutarch ● Dramas, poetry, and speeches can offer meaningful insights into our beliefs about identity, resilience, and purpose as well as how we live, what we value, and how we grow. ● Wisdom can be found in diverse sources—from dramas to intellectual journeys to the expressive language of speeches and classic literature. ● Writing is not only a way to analyze the wisdom of others but also a means of developing and communicating our own values and identity.
Essential Questions	● In what ways does self-awareness or internal growth shape our actions and impact on others? ● How do authors of dramas, poetry, and speeches use language, structure, and word choice to create powerful and lasting messages? ● How can analyzing an author's use of figurative language, repetition, irony, and symbolism help us better understand a text's meaning and message? ● How do the time and place in which a text was written shape its message and how people respond to it?
Misconceptions	*Students may think that...* ● Literature/Drama is just entertainment and doesn't offer real or applicable life lessons. It can also be outdated and not relevant to contemporary life. ● Authors include figurative language or symbolism just to sound creative, not to communicate deeper meaning. ● Each story, whether it is a drama or novel, is separate and different from the next and there is only one "right" interpretation of a theme or message. ● Speeches are only informational or celebratory and don't have literary value or a deeper message.

Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…* ● Recognize and analyze the connections and allusions within and between classic and contemporary texts. ● Analyze how authors use language to express complex ideas. ● Apply literary insights to real-world choices and relationships. ● Write purposeful and reflective pieces using clear structure and effective word choice. ● Use grammar and conventions to enhance clarity and impact writing. ● Evaluate and revise their own writing for style, meaning, and precision.
Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know how/ how to. . .* ● Determine and analyze themes in drama, poetry, and speeches, and explain how they are developed through specific details. ● Trace and evaluate character development across a dramatic narrative and describe how a character's arc reflects a broader theme or life lesson. ● Analyze the impact of word choice, figurative language, and structure on tone, mood, and meaning in both poetry and prose. ● Write clear and purposeful arguments or literary analyses supported by text-based evidence. ● Use dramatic and rhetorical devices to develop original writing that conveys personal wisdom. ● Proper use of literary terms: theme, tone, mood, symbolism, motif, character archetype, trope, dramatic devices, techniques, and methods. ● Key elements of author's craft work: figurative language, repetition, structure, and diction ● Narrative/dramatic structure and character development techniques ● Features of speeches, including rhetorical appeals, repetition, and parallel structure. ● Structure of academic and creative writing, including claims, evidence, elaboration, transitions, and purposeful word choice. Concepts: (Enduring academic and thematic ideas students will internalize) ● Wisdom is conveyed through many forms of literature and can help us reflect on our own identities, values and life paths. ● Characters' growth and decisions reveal broader truths about the human experiences, especially through how they respond to conflict or change. ● The language authors choose - down to individual words - shapes meaning, tone and reader interpretation. ● Literary texts can serve as mentors, offering models for how we express complex ideas, beliefs and reflections through writing. ● Writing is both analytical and expressive, helping us examine the insights of others while refining and communicating our own. ● Analyze how central ideas and themes develop across texts through **spaced reading and cumulative discussion**.

Standards

NJSL Content Specific Student Learning Standards

READING

RL.IT.8.3 - Interaction Among Text Elements - Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

RL.PP.8.5 - Perspective and Purpose - Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).

RL.CT.8.8. - Comparison of Texts - Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.

RI.IT.8.3. Interaction Among Text Elements - Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

RI.TS.8.4 Text Structure - Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.

RI.PP.8.5 Perspective and Purpose - Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

RI.MF.8.6 Diverse Media and Formats - Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.

WRITING

W.AW.8.1. - Argumentative Writing - Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g. social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

W.IW.8.2. - Informational and Explanatory Writing - Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W.WP.8.4. - Writing Process - With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

LANGUAGE

L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
B. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
C. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
D. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
E. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred

meaning in context or in a dictionary).

SPEAKING AND LISTENING
SL.ES.8.3: Evaluate Speakers - Delineate a speaker's arguments and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
SL.II.8.2. Integrate Information - Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation. (Students may analyze the criteria and constraints of a design problem that is the result of the local impact of climate change, taking into account the source of the criteria, its credibility, and the motives behind its presentation.)
SL.PI.8.4 Present Information—Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners
ELD-LA.6-8.Argue.Interpretive
Interpret language arts arguments by
● Identifying and summarizing central idea distinct from prior knowledge or opinions
● Analyzing how an author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints
● Evaluating relevance, sufficiency of evidence, and validity of reasoning that support claim(s)

ELD-LA.6-8.Argue.Expressive
Construct language arts arguments that
● Introduce and develop claim(s) and acknowledge counterclaim(s)
● Support claims with reasons and evidence that are clear, relevant, and credible
● Establish and maintain formal style
● Logically organize claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence; offer a conclusion

ELD-LA.6-8.Narrate.Expressive
Construct language arts narratives that
● Orient audience to context and point of view
● Develop and describe characters and their relationships
● Develop story, including themes with complication and resolution, time, and event sequences
● Engage and adjust for audience

Computer Science and Design Thinking

Students use digital tools to create and publish multimedia projects, such as digital speeches, video reflections, or visual representations of life lessons. They also reflect on the role of digital platforms in shaping modern communication and consider the ethics of sharing personal ideas in public or online spaces.

- 8.1.8.IC.1 - Compare the trade-offs associated with computing technologies that affect individual's everyday activities and career options.
- 8.2.8.ITH.1 - Explain how the development and use of technology influences economic, political, social,

and cultural issues.
- 8.2.8.EC.1 - Explain ethical issues that may arise from the use of new technologies.

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills
The unit fosters introspection and communication of personal beliefs through speeches and narrative writing. Students assess how identity, past experiences, and cultural influences shape decision-making and future goals, aligning with college and career readiness pathways.

- 9.4.8.CI.3 - Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas.
- 9.4.8.DC.2 - Provide appropriate citation and attribution elements when creating media products
- 9.4.8.GCA.1 - Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect
- 9.4.8.GCA.2 - Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by…
[selections determined by grade level teachers]

Formative Assessments:
Reader's Notebook/Quote Reflection Journals
Frequent low-stakes quizzes and reflection prompts will be used for retrieval practice, ensuring long-term understanding of key texts and concepts.
Author's Craft and Rhetorical Strategies Chart/Reflection
Grammar/Usage/Conventions Work
Conventions and Mentors in Context
Metaphor/Wisdom Gallery
Dramatic Devices Presentation
Passion Project Proposal and Essay Draft

Summative Assessments:
- Words of Wisdom Speech
- Capstone Socratic Seminar
- Passion Project Independent Reading Component: *This assessment will support the performance task, "8th Grade Passion Project"*
  - Student-designed Reader's Notebook
- Passion Project Written Components
  - Personal Essay
  - Literary Critique
- Narrative Task

Benchmark Assessment:
Socratic Seminar Prep Notes & Self Reflection

Quizzes
Journals

Alternative Assessment:

- 8th Grade Passion Project—Students will synthesize the insights from the year's literary and nonfiction readings, as well as their independent reading, by creating a project that reflects their personal values, interests, and visions for the future.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Describe how one content area may connect to the core content area in this unit.

Standards for Cross-Content Areas
Social Studies: Students analyze historical and cultural contexts in motivational and graduation speeches by figures such as Malala Yousafzai, Steve Jobs, and Amanda Gorman. These texts offer perspectives on identity, resilience, and purpose rooted in global and historical events, encouraging students to consider how personal and societal challenges shape beliefs and actions.
Related Standards: 9.1.8.CR.2, 9.4.8.GCA.1

Visual and Performing Arts: Students engage with Shakespearean sonnets and monologues not just as written texts but as performance pieces. They analyze tone, rhythm, and word choice and then interpret those elements through oral presentation, developing expressive skills and deeper understanding of emotional nuance.
Related Standards: (1.4.8.Cn11a, 1.4.8.Cn10a)

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): This unit centers on students' self-awareness, perspective-taking, and social awareness by encouraging them to reflect on personal growth, identity, values, and the challenges of others through literature. Through writing and discussion, students build empathy, emotional expression, and respectful dialogue around meaningful life experiences.

Accommodations and Modifications

Special Education	• Allow the use of speech-to-text for drafting and recorded video delivery instead of live performance. • Provide a sentence frame scaffold for each paragraph of speech • Scaffold thesis building with graphic organizers for essays • Exemplars of varied performance levels • Visual aids
504	• Break summative tasks into smaller parts with individual due dates (passion project) • Provide discussion questions ahead of time • Chunk drafting into small segments

	• Guided notes • Exploration activities to expose students to critical skills and concepts prior to unit
At Risk/ I&RS	• Small group discussions before whole-class participation • One-on-one writing conferences for speeches and essays • Build guided journal entries to develop and brainstorm ideas • Oral questioning to supplement written work
ML	• Vocabulary banks and translation of texts/materials • Graphic organizers for theme development • Oral questioning to supplement written work
Gifted	• Independent exploration of additional resources • Analytical comparisons of themes • Choice-based writing assignments with advanced revision expectations • Leadership roles during literature circles

Resources

[selections determined by grade level teachers]

Core Texts

CKLA Unit 7- "The Importance of Being Earnest" (Oscar Wilde)
"Wear Sunscreen" (Mary Schmich)
Jerry Covers For Newman | The Andrea Doria | Seinfeld (select scene)

Selection of Modern Speeches

- Martin Luther King Jr. "Three Dimensions of a Complete Life"
- Steve Jobs - "How to Live Before You Die"
- Neil Gaiman - "Make Good Art"
- Conan O'Brien - Dartmouth Commencement
- Denzel Washington - "Fall Forward" - highlights
- Dear Basketball - Kobe Bryant
- Michelle Obama, "Dear Class of 2020" Virtual Speech
- Chadwick Boseman, 2018 Howard University Commencement Speech
- Malala Yousafzai – UN Youth Assembly, 2013
- Greta Thunberg – UN Climate Action Summit, 2019
- J.K. Rowling—Harvard Commencement Address, 2008

Selections from Shakespeare

- Sonnet 18 – "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"
- Sonnet 29 – "When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,"
- Sonnet 60 – "Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,"
- Hamlet – "To be or not to be" (Act 3, Scene 1)
- Macbeth – "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" (Act 5, Scene 5),
- As You Like It – "All the world's a stage" (Act 2, Scene 7),

- The Tempest – Prospero's farewell speech (Act 5, Scene 1),
- King Lear – "A man more sinned against than sinning" (Act 3, Scene 2)

Supplemental Texts

- "The Three Questions" Leo Tolstoy
- "New Directions" - Maya Angelou
- "This I Believe" - NPR Series
- The Moth: Storytelling
- "Advice to Youth" (Mark Twain)
- "Rules of the Game (Amy Tan)
- "Everyday Use" (Alice Walker)

Writing Instructional Resources

The Writing Revolution—Natalie Wexler

6+1 Traits of Writing

Vocabulary Workshop Achieve- Sadlier