



GRADE
7

ELA

Grade Level Overview

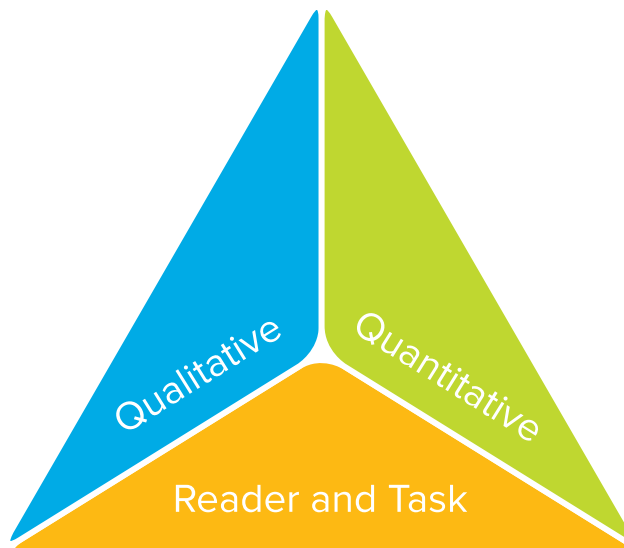


INTRODUCTION | GRADE 7

The Grade 7 Thematic Units take students through literary and informational texts about people pursuing a goal, exploring the principles of a just society, fighting for what’s right, and connecting with others. Unit 1, “In Pursuit,” examines what drives people to undertake a mission in spite of extraordinary risks. Unit 2, “The Powers That Be,” focuses on communities, from villages to nations, and asks the Essential Question: *What are the principles of a just society?* Unit 3, “Justice Served,” continues along the theme of justice by studying the lives of women and men who have fought for basic human rights and who, through their efforts, have brought about social change. Unit 4, “Getting Along,” asks students to consider the unit’s central question—*What are the challenges of human interactions?*—by providing a range of texts that examine the way people affect each other and the environment in which they live.

ELA Grade Level Overview Grade 7

Text Complexity





UNIT 1: IN PURSUIT

Grade 7 Unit 1 serves as the starting point for students' grade level goal of proficiently reading and comprehending a range of genres and text types, including stories, poems, and literary nonfiction "in the Grades 6-8 text complexity band, with scaffolding as needed in the high end of the range." This unit features a perfect balance of literature (6) and informational texts (6). While the quantitative dimensions (as measured by the Lexile® Framework) of two of the texts in this unit reach above the recommended quantitative band for Grades 6-8, qualitative dimensions, reader characteristics, and task demands make these texts accessible to seventh graders, enabling them to grow in skill by interacting with such appropriately challenging texts.

Four of the selections in this unit, *Call of the Klondike*, "The King of Mazy May," "The Cremation of Sam McGee," and *The Call of the Wild*, present multiple perspectives on the Klondike Gold Rush. The Skills lessons, Close Read questions and informative writing activities for two of the selections, the informational text *Call of the Klondike* and Jack London's short story "The King of Mazy May," ask students to compare and contrast London's fictional portrayal of the Klondike Gold Rush with the historical account to understand how authors of fiction manipulate or interpret history. These two texts represent a gradual increase of text complexity, intertextual references, and demands on the cultural/literary knowledge of seventh graders. To address both texts' prior knowledge demands, the "Build Background" section of the First Read lesson plan in "The King of Mazy May" includes a video about dog sledding in the Yukon. Understanding the challenges faced by the miners may be difficult for some English learners, so the First Read lesson in London's short story is scaffolded with print and online opportunities for EL students of differing English-language proficiencies to create artwork illustrative of the challenges faced by the miners. In addition, vocabulary instruction, including Access handouts for ELs, will help them with words and idioms from the text, while providing them with additional grammar supports. The use of textual evidence to analyze informational text structure in *Call of the Klondike* and poetic structure in the narrative poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee" highlights the importance of reading complex texts closely and thoughtfully in order to construct meaning.

Using textual evidence to analyze how an author supports his or her central (or main) idea is the first important task demand in this unit, appearing in the first selection, “Barrio Boy.” While the quantitative dimensions for this excerpt are higher than others in the unit, this autobiographical account of the immigrant experience in California, told from the point of view of a preadolescent boy, will draw on familiar cultural and experiential knowledge that render it an appropriate selection. The only text in the unit that dips below the recommended quantitative band for Grades 6-8 is “The Other Side of the Sky,” the memoir of an Afghani refugee. The Skill Lesson for this selection asks students to use textual evidence to support analysis, making this a challenging selection for students.

The informational texts in this unit represent a gradual increase in textual complexity and intertextual references, as well as in sophistication of language and concepts, as captured by the last informational text, “Apollo 13: Mission Highlights.” This text sits above the recommended quantitative dimensions for Grades 6-8 but its thematic relevance and rich qualitative dimensions make it a valuable addition to the unit. A focus on technical language in the accompanying Skill Lesson ensures that students challenged by the domain-specific vocabulary will have a path through the selection. Understanding the linguistic challenges of the text may be difficult for some English learners. Therefore, vocabulary instruction, including a glossary of technical language, will help ELs with the STEM content and domain-specific words and phrases. Further, a Blast about the Apollo missions, with research links to public documents and primary sources, equips students with the tools to extract meaning from the selection.

Levels of analysis become more sophisticated as the unit progresses. By the time they reach *The Call of the Wild*, students will be prepared to address the more complex ideas of theme, textual analysis, and structure and begin to incorporate these elements into their own writing.

Barrio Boy

AUTHOR	Name	Barrio Boy
	Gender	Ernesto Galarza
	Nationality	Male
	Translator	American
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1971
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Autobiography
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this excerpt from Barrio Boy, Ernesto Galarza gives a firsthand account of his days in first grade at an American school populated with immigrants like himself. With vivid detail, Galarza recalls learning English with the help of a kind and patient teacher. Through his own words, the author shares his thoughts, feelings, and reactions as he grows to appreciate his new culture and friends while holding onto his Mexican roots. To help students understand Galarza's adaptation to a new environment, culture, and language, use the following ideas to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text.
	ACT Features	<p>Connection of Ideas - In recounting the "immigrant experience" in the first grade in a school in California, the author introduces an important central idea: Being an immigrant is a challenge, but it doesn't have to mean forgetting who you are or where you came from. If readers recognize that they too belong simultaneously to a variety of "cultures," or groups (family, school, team, gender, and so on), they may find it easier to grasp Galarza's central idea.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Spanish terms, such as barrio (neighborhood) and Escuela Municipal Numero 3 para Varones of Mazatlán (Municipal School Number 3 for Boys of Mazatlán), may present a challenge to some readers.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - Geographical references, such as San Blas, Panama, Mazatlán, Mexico, and Sutter's Fort in Sacramento, California, may challenge some students. Readers may benefit by referring to a world map.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1080L
	Full-text Lexile®	1140L
	Word Count	1,605
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Central or Main Idea
	Close Read Prompt	What is the excerpt from Barrio Boy all about? How does Ernesto change from the beginning of the excerpt to the end? What do the details in the text have in common? Use your understanding of central (or main) idea to determine two central ideas that are developed over the course of the text. Then use these central ideas and the details that support them to write an objective summary of the text in your own words. Use transitions to clarify relationships among your ideas. Support your writing with textual evidence and precise language that fully explains your information. Establish a formal style and be sure not to include your feelings, opinions, or judgments. Provide a conclusion that logically follows the information you have presented.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

The Other Side of the Sky

AUTHOR	Name	Farah Ahmedi
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	Afghan-American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2006
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Memoir
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this excerpt from <i>The Other Side of the Sky</i> , Farah Ahmedi gives a firsthand account of her flight as a poor refugee escaping from Afghanistan into Pakistan. Ahmedi recalls with vivid detail the harrowing situation in which she and her mother find themselves at the Pakistani border and the difficulty of getting through the guarded gate between the two countries. Through her own words, Ahmedi tells how her fate becomes tied to the kindness of a stranger. To help students understand Ahmedi's challenging situation as she and her mother attempt to cross the border into Pakistan, use the following ideas to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text.
	ACT Features	<p>Connection to Ideas - The connection to the Unit's theme and Essential Question may not be evident from this excerpt alone. Readers will need to make inferences regarding Ahmedi's mission or goal and her motivation for achieving it within the chaotic sociopolitical context.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Medical terminology such as asthma and prosthetic leg may present a challenge to readers.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - The social, geographical, and political history of Afghanistan and Pakistan will be unfamiliar to many readers, along with the Islamic religious practices referenced in the text. Readers may need some background information to appreciate the events described in this excerpt.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	850L
	Full-text Lexile®	850L
	Word Count	1,382
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Textual Evidence
	Close Read Prompt	This excerpt from <i>The Other Side of the Sky</i> assumes a certain level of understanding about the geography, history, current events, and way of life of the Afghan people, including Islamic religious practices, that readers may not have. What examples of unfamiliar vocabulary, geography, history or current events, and the Islamic way of life might have presented problems for you (or other readers) to hinder a full understanding of the text? What explicitly stated details helped you draw inferences from the text so that you could better understand it? Write a brief informative/explanatory essay to explain how you figured things out in the text. Cite specific evidence and vocabulary from the text to support your writing. Use transitions to clarify relationships among your ideas, and conclude with a statement that supports the information and central ideas in your essay.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

The Song of Wandering Aengus

AUTHOR	Name	William Butler Yeats
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	Irish
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1899
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Poem
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In “The Song of Wandering Aengus,” Irish poet William Butler Yeats explores themes of love and longing as he follows the speaker’s lifelong search for the “glimmering girl” he glimpses but once in a “hazel wood.” Students are asked to analyze the poem’s themes and the allusions to Irish mythology. To help students master these skills, use the following ideas to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text.
	ACT Features	<p>Organization - The narrative is organized sequentially in three stanzas of eight lines each that form a pattern of end rhymes. Readers should use the punctuation clues to read the lines as units of meaning rather than stop at the end of each line.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Figurative language, such as “a fire was in my head,” may present a challenge for some readers.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - The poem contains a literary allusion with which students are likely to be unfamiliar. Explain to readers that Aengus Og, a Celtic mythological deity, shares the speaker’s experience with a “dream girl” and also spends years looking for her.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	NA
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
	Word Count	163
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Figurative language; Theme
	Close Read Prompt	Think about the speaker’s mission in “The Song of Wandering Aengus.” How determined is he to complete his mission of finding his “dream girl”? This question can help you identify another theme in the poem. What theme is it? Write your response in the form of a clear statement of theme. Then support that theme with specific evidence from the text. Organize and explain how figurative language, allusion, and other poetic elements in the poem support the theme you have identified. Use transitions to show the relationships among these ideas, and conclude with a statement that supports your information.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

*The Hobbit

AUTHOR	Name	J. R. R. Tolkien
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	English
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1937
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Novel
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This excerpt from The Hobbit is set in the home of Bilbo Baggins. The narrator tells how the wizard Gandalf has come to recruit Bilbo to be the “fourteenth man” for an expedition. Although the other members of the expedition and Baggins himself express doubt in Gandalf’s choice, Gandalf claims that Bilbo has the qualities of a burglar and a family history of heroism that make him perfect for the job of taking back treasure from the dragon Smaug. To help students understand Bilbo’s internal conflicts as he decides whether or not to join the expedition, use the following ideas to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text.
	ACT Features	<p>Organization - Much of the information is conveyed through dialogue. Readers may benefit from hearing the dialogue read aloud in different voices, while noting information about character, setting, and plot, which is gleaned from each speaker.</p> <p>Genre - Students who have limited experience with reading fantasy stories may need help with identifying characters, such as goblins and wizards, and their roles in the story.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - Sentences with multiple phrases or clauses may challenge students. Readers must remember to use the punctuation as a guide for isolating and interpreting units of meaning within each sentence.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,000L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,000L
	Word Count	1,374
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Story Elements
	Close Read Prompt	Story elements--setting, character, and plot--interact. Therefore, characters in a story may influence the action of the plot, or the plot may influence the actions of the characters. How might the story element of character influence the events of the plot (or the conflict of the plot) in The Hobbit? For example, how might the two sides of Bilbo’s personality--one excitable, nervous, and cautious, the other strong and fierce--impact the plot? Answer the question with a clear thesis statement. Draw inferences from the text, and support your writing with specific textual evidence. Organize your ideas, and use transitions to clarify and connect them. Write a strong conclusion that summarizes your ideas and “wraps up” your essay.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

*Suggested Full-text Study

Call of the Klondike: A True Gold Rush Adventure

AUTHOR	Name	David Meissner and Kim Richardson
	Gender	Male and Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2013
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Informational
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this excerpt from <i>Call of the Klondike</i> , primary and secondary sources give an account of prospectors' early expeditions to the Klondike region in search of gold. The sources recall the excitement of the people of Seattle when prospectors turned up with sacks of gold, and many residents decided to head to the Klondike in the hope of striking it rich. The excerpt also describes how stakes are claimed, how newcomers are swindled out of their savings, and how prospectors deal with the dangers of the frozen tundra. To help students understand the events from varying points of view, use the following ideas to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text.
	ACT Features	<p>Organization - This excerpt is pieced together through a series of primary and secondary sources. Thus, the narrative point of view shifts between third-person omniscient and first-person limited, a shift in narration that may be difficult for some readers to follow.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Mining terminology may present a challenge to some readers.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - Some students may not be familiar with the Klondike region of Canada or with nineteenth-century gold rushes.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,080L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,100L
	Word Count	886
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Structure
	Close Read Prompt	How do the text structure, text features, and added sidebar help you to understand the causes and motivation behind “gold fever” and the process involved in staking a claim? In a clear topic sentence, use these informational text elements (text structure, text features, and sidebar) to make inferences about life in the Klondike, using Pearce’s recollection of the stampede to Swede Creek. Organize and support your writing with evidence from the text, using precise language and specific vocabulary choices from the selection.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

The King of Mazy May

AUTHOR	Name	Jack London
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1899
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Short Story
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	<p>“The King of Mazy May” is set in the wild, frigid Yukon during the Klondike Gold Rush of the 1890s. Walt Masters, a 14-year-old boy, is charged with the task of protecting both his father’s and his neighbor’s gold claims near the Mazy May River while the two adults are away. When claim jumpers come to steal the neighbor’s claim, Walt steals their sled-dog team to prevent them from reaching the claim-filing office that is miles away. The men pursue Walt, and he barely escapes with his life. Nonetheless, Walt’s heroics earn him the title of the King of Mazy May. To help students understand the plot and the setting, use the following ideas to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text.</p>
	ACT Features	<p>Genre - In many ways, the setting drives the action-packed plot of this story. Readers need to pay attention to how each plot event leads to the next as well as to how the setting impacts the chain of events.</p>
		<p>Specific Vocabulary - Dog-sledding terminology may present a challenge to readers.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - The actions of making and jumping mining claims and the setting of the Klondike region will likely be unfamiliar to many readers.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,210L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,210L
	Word Count	3,231
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Textual Evidence; Story Elements; Compare and Contrast
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Jack London was famous for portraying history accurately in his short stories. What inferences can you make about the Klondike Gold Rush from reading “The King of Mazy May”? What textual evidence in Call of the Klondike, a historical account of the Klondike Gold Rush, supports or refutes the idea that London portrayed history accurately in his short story? Begin the prompt with a clear statement that explains your topic. Organize and support your writing with specific evidence, using precise language and selection vocabulary from the factual Call of the Klondike and from London’s fictional story “The King of Mazy May.” Conclude with a statement that supports your main ideas.</p>
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

The Cremation of Sam McGee

AUTHOR	Name	Robert W. Service
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	British-Canadian
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1907
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Poem
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In his famous narrative poem, “The Cremation of Sam McGee,” Robert W. Service uses similes, metaphors, personification, imagery, and sound devices, such as rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration, to tell a story of the Klondike Gold Rush and its harrowing effect on the lives of those prospecting for gold. The poem, which ends with a grim jest, is a study in contrasts, as it combines both light and dark tones, and deadly seriousness with humor. Reviewing the following concepts will help students understand the complexities of the text:
	ACT Features	<p>Connection of Ideas - When reading complex texts, students need to make inferences and synthesize information presented throughout the text. In this poem, the author uses figurative language, which creates vivid images in the reader’s mind. Some of the figures of speech and imagery may be difficult for readers to grasp.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - The rhyming pattern may prove difficult for some students. The poem uses internal rhyme (rhyme in the middle of a word) and end rhymes (rhymes at the ends of lines).</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Some phrases, such as “midnight sun,” are specific to the setting of the poem and may be unfamiliar to many readers.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - Students may be familiar with the California Gold Rush, but not with the Klondike Gold Rush, which took place fifty years later.</p>
	Excerpt Lexile®	NA
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
Word Count	886	
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Poetic Structure; Poetic Elements; Meaning of Words
	Close Read Prompt	“The Cremation of Sam McGee” is a study in contrasts. It includes language and imagery that point to the grim nature of death, and yet it also makes readers laugh about this serious subject. How does the poem use poetic structure and form as well as poetic elements, such as rhyme, figurative language and imagery, and tone, to produce this contrast? Begin with a statement that clearly explains your topic. Organize and support your writing with specific evidence from the text. Pay careful attention to your word choice, and use precise language and vocabulary from the selection.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

New Directions

AUTHOR	Name	Maya Angelou
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1993
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Biographical Essay
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this excerpt from “New Directions,” author Maya Angelou describes the transformation of her grandmother as she steps from the traditional role of a married woman into that of a single mother who founds and runs her own business. This transformation is made more challenging by the fact that Angelou’s grandmother must also overcome the racial and gender biases of the time. To help students understand the author’s theme that one must control one’s own destiny, provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of these more complex features of the text.
	ACT Features	<p>Purpose - One purpose of a biography is to inform readers about the life of the subject. Another purpose may be to suggest to readers how to live their own lives. In this case, Angelou tells the story of her grandmother to show readers how to control their own destiny rather than be limited by the choices prescribed by society. It will benefit readers to identify these multiple purposes in this biographical essay.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - Many sentences are complex and formal. For example, “When she told her husband, Mr. William Johnson, of her dissatisfaction with their marriage, he conceded that he too found it to be less than he expected, and had been secretly hoping to leave and study religion.” Readers should pay attention to punctuation to help them discover the author’s style and meaning.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Much of the word choice reflects the grandmother’s work and the times in which she lived. Students may need help with terms such as “iron brazier” and “dinner noon bell.”</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,360L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,360L
	Word Count	763
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Elements; Figurative Language; Compare and Contrast
	Close Read Prompt	Why does Maya Angelou use the extended metaphor that compares life to a road? What does the metaphor mean in the text? What is its purpose? Begin with a clear statement of explanation. How does this extended metaphor develop the central idea of this biographical excerpt? Organize and support your writing with specific evidence from the text. Use precise language and vocabulary from the selection. Provide a strong conclusion that supports your main ideas.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Travels with Charley

AUTHOR	Name	John Steinbeck
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1962
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Informational
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this excerpt from <i>Travels with Charley</i> , author John Steinbeck reflects on the nature of people and their relationship to weather and climate as he takes a road trip with his dog Charley through New England. Steinbeck describes the setting with vivid sensory detail as he notes the silence of New Englanders in the morning and the appreciation of the changing seasons. To help students understand Steinbeck’s observations, use the following ideas to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text.
	ACT Features	<p>Organization - The events are generally discussed chronologically, and the text structure is largely sequential. At times, however, Steinbeck refers to a past event or speculates about the future for a “down-Easter” living in Florida. Readers should take note of signal words that indicate time order.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - Sentences are complex and include figurative language and sensory detail. Readers should note similarities between items being compared as in “The customers were folded over their coffee cups like ferns” as well as how the sensory language enables visualization.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - The author’s word choice will challenge some readers who may need support for words such as “laconic” and “taciturnity.”</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,060L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,010L
	Word Count	1,062
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Elements
	Close Read Prompt	What insights, or new ideas, has John Steinbeck gained from his decision to travel with his dog, Charley, through New England? Does he seem to be succeeding in his mission to “reacquaint himself with the land and the people he wrote about”? How are the people influencing his ideas about New England and his experiences there? Begin your writing with a clear sentence explaining your topic. Organize and support your ideas in a well-written paragraph that cites specific evidence from the text. Use precise language and vocabulary from the selection. Complete your writing with a concluding statement that summarizes your central ideas.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Apollo 13: Mission Highlights

AUTHOR	Name	NASA Kennedy Space Center
	Gender	NA
	Nationality	US
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1970
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Informational
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This excerpt from “Apollo 13: Mission Highlights” provides a scientific or technical explanation regarding the Apollo 13 mission to the Moon and the on-board disaster that ends the expedition. The text describes the resulting effects of the oxygen tank explosions, the difficulties the command center and astronauts face in returning the astronauts safely home, and the dangers and discomforts the astronauts face in the space capsule. The scientific and technical complexities of the situation are reflected in the challenges of the text. To help students understand the cause-and-effect relationship of the mishap, use the following ideas to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text.
	ACT Features	<p>Connection of Ideas - To understand the physical setting, readers will need to visualize the structure and layout of the spacecraft.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Technical language, or domain-specific vocabulary, which is critical to unpacking the information in the text, may challenge many readers.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - The text references to Apollo missions 1, 11, and 13, as well as the NASA Space Program, may be unfamiliar to some students.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,120L
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
	Word Count	1,515
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Technical Language; Greek and Latin Affixes and Roots
	Close Read Prompt	The Apollo 13 mission has been called a “successful failure.” Explain why in an informative/explanatory essay. Begin with a clear thesis statement. Organize your information and supporting details, citing specific textual evidence from “Apollo 13: Mission Highlights.” Use technical language in your essay. Be sure to explain the meaning of scientific and technical terms, either by providing explicit evidence in the text or by using context clues to help readers draw inferences about the meaning of the terms. Clarify the connections among your ideas with transitions, and use a formal style suited to audience and purpose. Summarize your main ideas with a strong concluding statement.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Rikki-Tikki-Tavi

AUTHOR	Name	Rudyard Kipling
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	British
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1894
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Short Story
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	<p>“Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” is set in 19th century colonial India, a time of privilege for British colonialists. The narrator tells the story of a heroic mongoose who protects a British family from a pair of cobras living in the lush garden. The exotic setting and the focus on animal characters with human traits are reflected in the challenges of the text. To help students understand the theme of courage and loyalty, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text.</p>
	ACT Features	<p>Genre - Although much longer than a traditional fable, this story features animal characters who embody human traits. Readers should consider the author’s purpose for featuring animal rather than human characters to teach a moral lesson.</p>
		<p>Sentence Structure - Sentences are complex, comprised of some unfamiliar vocabulary words, and include many descriptive details. Readers should follow punctuation clues as they decipher units of meaning.</p>
		<p>Prior Knowledge - The setting of colonial India will likely be unfamiliar to many readers.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,010L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,010L
	Word Count	5,700
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Theme; Word Meaning
	Close Read Prompt	<p>A coming-of-age story focuses on the central idea or theme of a young person growing and changing by solving a problem, undertaking a mission, or accomplishing a goal. How could “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” be considered a coming-of-age story? What problem does he solve, mission does he undertake, or goal does he accomplish by the end of the story? Cite specific evidence from the text to convey how his thoughts and actions change over the course of the text to demonstrate that he has grown up at the end.</p>
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

The Call of the Wild

AUTHOR	Name	Jack London
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1903
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Novel
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This excerpt from “The Call of the Wild” is set in the Klondike gold-mining region in Canada’s Yukon. The narrator describes how Buck stirs up trouble among the sled-dog team and explores the dog’s ecstasy as he embraces the animal instincts he discovers in the wild as a “dominant primordial beast.” The abstract themes of the story are reflected in the challenges of the text. To help students understand London’s exploration of the irrepressible animal instinct that lies within both dogs and humans, use the following ideas to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text.
	ACT Features	Genre - The limited third-person narrator focuses on Buck’s experiences. Some students may have difficulty with the narrative point of view. It may help readers to envision that the story is being told via a video camera that follows Buck exclusively. Additionally, the theme that dogs and humans share instinctive traits may challenge some readers.
		Specific Vocabulary - Difficult vocabulary, such as “primordial” and “insidious,” may present a challenge for many readers.
	Prior Knowledge - Social hierarchy within a dog-team and the instinctive behavior of dogs will be unfamiliar to some readers. Some readers may also have difficulty with the references to dog sledding.	
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,160L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,120L
	Word Count	759
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Media
	Close Read Prompt	Compare and contrast the text and the audio versions of The Call of the Wild. Begin with a clear thesis statement that sets the direction for the rest of your writing. How are the two media alike, and how are they different? At what points does the audio version use expression, intonation, and /or pace to support or interpret the text? In what ways do these interpretations help to develop character, setting, plot, and theme? Using precise language and selection vocabulary, support your writing with evidence from the text and the audio file. Use transitions to show the relationships among your ideas. Present your information with a formal style. Summarize your main points in a conclusion that supports the ideas you have presented.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory



UNIT 2: THE POWERS THAT BE

Grade 7 Unit 2 moves students further along toward their grade level goal of proficiently reading and comprehending stories, poems, and literary nonfiction “in the grades 6-8 text complexity band, with scaffolding as needed in the high end of the range.” The unit balances informational texts (4) with literary texts (6), all of which support an examination of the following question: *What should be the principles of a just society?* The quantitative dimensions (as measured by the Lexile® Framework) of the texts in this unit fall within the recommended quantitative band for Grades 6-8, with one exception, *The Giver*, which dips below the quantitative band but is the full-text read for the unit. All selections in the unit demonstrate qualitative dimensions, reader characteristics, and task demands that make them accessible to and “appropriately challenging” for seventh-grade readers.

Three of the six literature selections in this unit are excerpts from contemporary novels—*The Giver*, *Feed*, and *The Hunger Games* -- and the protagonists of all three texts are adolescents or teenagers. Set in the future, these protagonists face similar dilemmas as they struggle against an unjust society. While the struggle may be universal, the specific dilemmas each character faces will be distinctly different from those facing most seventh graders. An additional short story, Shirley Jackson’s classic, “The Lottery,” warns against blindly following tradition, especially when it involves violence. These four selections, two of which are science fiction (“The Giver” and “Feed”) have relatively low cultural/literary knowledge demands.

Although three of the four informational texts in this unit—*Gladiator*, *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*, and the excerpt from *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*—connect to the four literature selections by exploring the theme of injustice, the demands on the life experience and cultural/literary knowledge of these texts are high. Although they all fall within the recommended quantitative band for Grades 6-8, these three informational texts present a gradual increase of text complexity and intertextual references, and all have high content/discipline knowledge demands.

The unit opens with an excerpt from *Gladiator* and an analysis of informational text structure. This task demand makes this a challenging text for students and its cultural/literary and content/discipline demands are high. To address the gladiator tradition in ancient Rome, part of the text’s prior knowledge demands, the “Build Background” section of the First Read lesson plan recommends that students watch a video that explores an ancient Roman school for gladiators and follow up with research.

As the unit progresses, the life experience, cultural knowledge, and content/discipline demands increase. For example, in *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*, the demand for students' cultural knowledge is high as an understanding of the social and political context in which the selection is set is useful in comprehension. Scaffolding in the form of a research activity in the “Build Background” section of the First Read lesson plan addresses the text's prior knowledge demands about the current sociopolitical conditions in North Korea, making the text more accessible to readers. Further, English idiomatic expressions, Korean terms, and complex sentence structure may be especially difficult for English learners, so the First Read lesson plan accompanying this text is scaffolded with additional vocabulary and grammar support.

The third informational text, Linda Monk's book *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*, the Common Core Appendix B text exemplar in the unit, with its intertextual references to American history and cultural/literary and content/discipline knowledge demands can be challenging for seventh graders. Although its quantitative and qualitative dimensions are similar to the two other informational texts, the task demands in this text are more challenging, especially for English learners. As students analyze the use of denotation and connotation in supporting and developing Monk's ideas about the evolving nature of the United States Constitution and the expanding notion of its phrase “We the People,” students are faced with a sophisticated task demand. Scaffolding in the form of a video of the author discussing her book about the Constitution provides students with a path through the selection. Further, a glossary of constitutional terms used in the text, an activity about denotation and connotation, a summary of the selection, and a Blast activity with related research links help make this text accessible to English learners and other seventh-grade students.

An analysis of media—print and audio—in a Skill lesson for *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution* and later in a Skill lesson for the poem “I, Too, Sing America” will help students to extract and construct meaning. Analyzing media is a key task demand in Unit 2, ensuring that students can compare and contrast media formats to determine how they differ in the delivery of the same content. Levels of media analysis become more sophisticated in the Skill lesson for *The Hunger Games*, in which students are asked to compare and contrast the written story with its audio and filmed versions, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium. Media analysis is especially important for English learners since listening and viewing skills provide them with access to the text.

By the time students have reached the final informational text in the unit, the point-counterpoint text, “Reality TV and Society,” they will have the tools to compare and contrast two authors' opposing points of view, as well as identify their purpose for writing. In addition, they will be well equipped to evaluate arguments and claims, reasons and evidence, and the persuasive language used to support an argument and convince an audience.

Gladiator

AUTHOR	Name	Richard Watkins	
	Gender	Male	
	Nationality	American	
	Translator		
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1997	
	Literature / Informational	Informational	
	Genre	Informational	
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This text outlines the history of gladiatorial combat in the Roman Empire, from its beginnings in 264 B.C., to its eventual demise in the fifth century A.D.. The text explains why gladiatorial combat became popular in Rome, and why it was abolished under the emperor Honorius. To help students understand how the rise of Christianity led to the decline of gladiatorial combat and of the Roman Empire as a powerful entity, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:	
	ACT Features	Connection of Ideas	The text connects the rise of gladiatorial combat with prestige, wealth, and political power; it connects its demise with the rise of Christianity and to a specific incident in A.D. 404
		Organization	The text is organized to show the progression of gladiatorial combat, from its early beginnings, to its peak, and its decline under Christianity. The text refers to various names and dates, which can be tricky for students to keep track of.
		Specific Vocabulary	The text contains vocabulary specific to the ancient Roman world, as well as names and titles.
Prior Knowledge		Students who have some background information about Julius Caesar, the Roman Empire, and Christianity may have an easier time with this text.	
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	N/A	
	Full-text Lexile®	N/A	
	Word Count	1,125	
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Structure	
	Close Read Prompt	Why does the author use sequence (or time order) in Gladiator to organize his ideas? How does telling about the events in the order that they happened help you understand what brought about the beginning and end of the gladiator tradition in Rome? Introduce your ideas clearly with a thesis statement. Use transition words and text features, such as headings or a timeline, to organize and connect your writing. Support your writing with evidence from the text and develop your ideas with facts and examples. Use precise language and maintain a formal writing style. Provide a strong conclusion to support your information.	
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory	

The Lottery

AUTHOR	Name	Shirley Jackson
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1948
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Short Story
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	<p>“The Lottery” is a classic American short story that takes place in a seemingly ordinary small town. The plot twist at the end of the story may present challenges for the reader as an ordinary town becomes transformed once the real meaning of the lottery is exposed. To help students understand the circumstances surrounding the tradition of the lottery, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:</p>
	ACT Features	<p>Genre - A short story is a short work of fiction that often has fewer characters than a novel and often focuses on a tightly knit setting, characters, and plot. “The Lottery” is very atmospheric and reads like the reporting of an event. The plot, which focuses on a sinister tradition, shocks readers as the surprise ending brings the story to a close.</p>
		<p>Prior Knowledge - Students may know about traditions that are in their family or culture, but the tradition in the story is both shocking and unreal.</p>
		<p>Specific Vocabulary - Some difficult vocabulary may present a challenge to readers.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,090L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,090L
	Word Count	3,379
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Story Elements
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Sometimes what you expect to happen doesn’t happen. That is the case with “The Lottery.” Explain how story elements interact in the text to lead to the surprise ending. For example, how did the warm, bright setting interact with the plot to lead you to expect that something good would happen in the story? Use precise language to demonstrate your understanding of story elements. Then provide examples of how characters influenced the plot or the plot influenced characters to turn your expectations upside down and produce the story’s shocking ending. Use transitions to clarify relationships between (or among) your examples. Cite specific evidence from the text to support your response. Maintain a formal writing style and end with a strong conclusion.</p>
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

*The Giver

AUTHOR	Name	Lois Lowry
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1993
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Novel
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This excerpt from the science-fiction thriller <i>The Giver</i> is a conversation between Jonas and his parents about the upcoming Ceremony of Twelve. Jonas asks his parents several questions about the ceremony so that he can prepare himself for the ritual that will decide his future occupation. The questions Jonas asks reflect his feelings about this life-altering event that he must undergo once he reaches the age of twelve. To help students understand how Jonas feels about having his future decided for him, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Organization - The text distinguishes two points of view: that of Jonas and his father. The varying points of view are illustrated by way of explicit information as well as implicit details. In addition, the text contains a flashback when Jonas's father recalls his experience of the Ceremony of Twelve.</p> <p>Connection of Ideas - The questions Jonas asks provide answers about the Ceremony of Twelve. They also provide information about the characters.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Some difficult vocabulary may present a challenge to readers.</p> <p>Genre - <i>The Giver</i> is a contemporary science-fiction novel. It takes place in the future and contains imaginative futuristic elements. These unfamiliar elements may be challenging for some readers.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	710L
	Full-text Lexile®	760L
	Word Count	998
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Point of View
	Close Read Prompt	How does the point of view from which <i>The Giver</i> is told focus on Jonas's thoughts and feelings about the Ceremony of Twelve? How is Jonas's point of view revealed? How does it differ from his parents' point of view about the ceremony? How do the differences contribute to the tension in the story? State a strong topic sentence for your writing. Use transitions to clarify connections between (or among) your ideas. Organize your essay in a logical way and cite specific evidence from the text to support your writing. Maintain a formal writing style and end with a strong conclusion.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

*Suggested Full-text Study

The Wise Old Woman: Retold by Yoshiko Uchida

AUTHOR	Name	Yoshiko Uchida
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	Japanese American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1965
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Folktale
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	The Wise Old Woman is a folktale set in Japan a long time ago. The genre, setting, and theme may present challenges for the reader. To help students understand the theme of the folktale, which teaches a lesson about respect for the wisdom of the elderly, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of the text:
	ACT Features	<p>Genre - A folktale usually teaches a moral lesson. The text shows how one character changes the mind of a cruel young lord by completing a number of complex tasks.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - Students may not have experiences in their own culture to understand why someone would treat the elderly badly.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Some difficult vocabulary may present a challenge to readers.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	930L
	Full-text Lexile®	930L
	Word Count	1,947
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Theme
	Close Read Prompt	How does the theme of “The Wise Old Woman” help you understand a larger lesson about life, human nature, or the experience of a specific people and culture? Use the details you have compiled from examining the point of view, setting, conflict, and plot, as well as the characters’ thoughts, dialogue, feelings, and actions, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write an objective summary of the folktale • identify the theme • show how the theme is developed over the course of the text Remember to support your writing with evidence and inferences from the text. Review the vocabulary words you have learned. Be sure to check each word’s etymology, or historical development, in a print or an online dictionary. Make sure that you are using the vocabulary in correct context to its meaning. Be aware of words with multiple meanings and use them appropriately.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea

AUTHOR	Name	Barbara Demick
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2010
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Informational
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This excerpt from <i>Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea</i> tells the true story of a North Korean journalist, Chang-bo, who is arrested and interrogated for making a seemingly innocent remark that is reported by his neighbors to the secret police. To help students understand the complexities of the North Korean government that is ruled by a harsh dictator and affords few individual freedoms to its citizens, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Prior Knowledge - Students may have difficulty imagining a society where the government controls every aspect of people's lives.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - High sentence density and long paragraphs may challenge students to locate textual evidence to support their answers to teacher questions. The Access Path can guide students to find textual evidence</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Some difficult vocabulary may present a challenge to readers.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1070L
	Full-text Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	1,357
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Elements; Word Meaning
	Close Read Prompt	How do ideas influence individuals or events in the text? Choose one important idea or individual, such as Chang-bo, in <i>Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea</i> , and demonstrate how an idea influenced him, which set off a chain reaction of events. Introduce your idea with clear and precise language, and with vocabulary or idioms from the selection. Use your understanding of informational text elements to determine how ideas, individuals, and events interact in the text. Provide transitions to clarify connections in your information. Use a formal style and cite specific textual evidence to support your response. Complete your writing with an effective conclusion that leaves your audience with an understanding of your topic and with an idea, fact, or question to think about.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Feed

AUTHOR	Name	M.T. Anderson
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2002
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Novel
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This excerpt from the science-fiction novel <i>Feed</i> portrays a futuristic society in which people are able to communicate telepathically using advanced technology. The concept of the technology used, such as computer chips directly implanted in the brain, may be difficult for some students to imagine. To help students understand the abstract nature of the technology, the technical language, and the complexity of the characters' interactions, use the following scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of the text.
	ACT Features	<p>Connection of Ideas - Readers will need help using inference to determine the reasons for the characters' actions and the motivations that drive them to behave in certain ways.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - The ACT can help students understand different types of sentences, such as simple and compound, and determine how the author uses them to achieve specific effects in the text.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Some technical language, usually found in informational texts, may present a challenge to readers.</p>
	Excerpt Lexile®	N/A
	Full-text Lexile®	770L
READER AND TASKS	Word Count	1,101
	Skill Lessons	Textual Evidence
	Close Read Prompt	In a clear thesis statement, make three inferences about what has happened to Violet and how it has influenced her point of view about the society in which she lives. Organize your writing and use textual evidence, such as dialogue, description, and events, to support your inferences, or logical guesses, about what may not be directly stated by the author in the text. Use precise language and transitions to show the connections between (or among) your ideas. Consider your own experiences. What influences your point of view about society? Your answer to this question will lead you to a better understanding of what might affect Violet's point of view. Establish a formal style of writing and end with a strong conclusion to summarize your ideas.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

The Hunger Games

AUTHOR	Name	Suzanne Collins	
	Gender	Female	
	Nationality	American	
	Translator		
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2008	
	Literature / Informational	Literature	
	Genre	Novel	
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This excerpt from <i>The Hunger Games</i> describes a dystopian future that presents many challenges and dangers for the characters. Like the novel as a whole, this excerpt has a dark tone that is reflected in the reaping ceremony in which children are selected to fight to the death in an annual tournament. To help students understand the circumstances surrounding these deadly games, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of the text:	
	ACT Features	Organization	The text is organized to give background for a futuristic world where conditions are harsh. The text's first-person point of view focuses on Katniss's perspective, revealing her internal thoughts about the challenges she faces. Students must view the actions of other characters with limited insight into their thinking.
		Genre	The story is set in a world that is different from the world we know. The setting and elements of this genre may challenge students trying to gain a deeper understanding of the story.
Specific Vocabulary		Some difficult vocabulary may present a challenge to readers.	
Prior Knowledge	The <i>Hunger Games</i> novel series has been made into movies that many students may have seen without reading the books. Their understanding of the story may differ from the three versions presented.		
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,000L	
	Full-text Lexile®	810L	
	Word Count	998	
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Media	
	Close Read Prompt	Consider the three versions of <i>The Hunger Games</i> --text, audio, and film--you have analyzed. Think about the similarities and differences in the way the story elements--character, setting, plot, conflict, and narration (or point of view) are conveyed in each. Also, think about the possible theme that has begun to emerge from the part of the story you have read, heard, and seen. In a clear thesis statement, choose the medium you think will best convey the theme and provide sound reasons for your choice. Organize and support your writing with relevant evidence from the text, audio, and film, using transitions to clarify relationships among the media. Review the vocabulary words you have learned. Be sure to check each word's etymology, or origin, in a print or digital dictionary. Make sure you are using the vocabulary correctly in context. Be aware of words with multiple meanings and use them appropriately. Use transitions to clarify how your ideas are related. Use a formal writing style and provide a strong conclusion that supports your ideas.	
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory	

The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution

AUTHOR	Name	Linda Monk
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2003
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Informational
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This excerpt from <i>The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution</i> briefly explores the idea that the United States Constitution is an evolving document, and that “We the People” has referred to different people over time. To help students understand this “living” document and the idea that the Constitution is “perfectible” through amendments, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Connection of Ideas - The text contains information about a document, historical figures, and historical events that all influence one another to make the point that the Constitution defines our country and how we live. These multiple components may be difficult for students to connect to help them gain a deeper understanding of the topic.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Some domain-specific vocabulary may present a challenge to readers.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - Historical figures and events may be unfamiliar to some readers.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,110L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,340L
	Word Count	854
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Media; Connotation and Denotation
	Close Read Prompt	Listen to the audio version of <i>The Words We Live By</i> at http://app.studysync.com/admin/library/index.cfm#read . Compare and contrast the printed text version of the selection with the audio version, which has the same content. Focus your writing on the following questions: • How are the two versions alike? • How are they different? • How does the medium affect the impact of the words? • How does it shape the message or central idea? • How does the delivery of the words affect the meaning of the selection and how you understand it? • How does the medium affect how you experience or enjoy the material? Begin with a clear thesis statement. Support your writing with specific evidence from both the text and audio versions of <i>The Words We Live By</i> , using precise language. Use transitions to show clear connections between the versions. Use a formal style, and end with a strong conclusion to support your information.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

I, Too, Sing America

AUTHOR	Name	Langston Hughes
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1925
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Poem
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	<p>“I, Too, Sing America” is a free-verse poem by the well-known poet Langston Hughes. In his poem, Hughes uses figurative language and alliteration to explore race relations in the United States. The poem also uses literary allusion as it references Walt Whitman’s famous poem, “I Hear America Singing.” To help students compare and contrast Whitman’s poem, which celebrates American workers, and Hughes’s poem, which explores social injustice and race relations, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:</p>
	ACT Features	Connection of Ideas - When reading complex text, students need to make inferences and synthesize information throughout the text. In this literary text, the poet uses words and figurative language to create strong images in the reader’s mind. These images may be hard for some students to grasp.
		Sentence Structure - Sentences are simple, but the use of metaphors, allusions, and alliteration may make it difficult for students to comprehend the implied meaning of the poem.
Specific Vocabulary - Some phrases, such as “eat in the kitchen,” are specific to the time period in which the poem was written, thereby making some cultural referents inaccessible to students.		
Prior Knowledge - Students may be familiar with some of Langston Hughes’s poetry, and that knowledge may help them better understand the poem. Some may be familiar with Whitman’s poem “I Hear America Singing,” to which Hughes is responding.		
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	N/A
	Full-text Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	62
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Poetic Structure; Media; Figurative Language
	Close Read Prompt	<p>What is the central theme of “I, Too, Sing America”? In a clear thesis statement, explain how Langston Hughes uses the open form of free verse, alliteration and assonance, and figurative language, such as allusion and metaphor, to develop the theme of the poem. In what ways does hearing the poem recited affect your understanding of it and the theme? Focus your writing on these questions: • How are the print and the audio versions alike? • How are they different? • How are they different? • How does the medium affect the impact of the words? • How does the medium affect the impact of the words? • How does the delivery of the words affect the meaning of the poem and how you understand it? • How does the medium affect how you experience or enjoy the material? Begin with a clear thesis statement. Support your writing with specific evidence from both the text and audio versions, using precise language. Use transitions to show clear connections between the versions. Maintain a formal style, and end with a strong conclusion to support your writing.</p>
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Reality TV and Society

AUTHOR	Name	Point/Counterpoint
	Gender	NA
	Nationality	NA
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2014
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Pro/Con Op-Ed
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This pair of essays that makes up the article addresses the pros and cons of reality television. The “Point” argument, “Stop Rewarding Bad Behavior,” takes the view that reality TV is “mindless” entertainment that actually has a negative influence on viewers by distracting them from more important issues and by convincing them that they can become rich and famous by emulating the bad behavior they see on television. The “Counterpoint” argument, “Reality TV Can Educate and Inspire,” provides the opposing view by suggesting that reality TV can have a positive effect on society by showcasing talented performers and launching their careers, and by introducing viewers not only to “everyday people” to whom they can relate but also “to lifestyles, cultures, and people different from themselves.” To help students understand the idea that these paired essays give readers a chance to examine both sides of an issue affecting society, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Purpose - Each essay has a clear purpose. The first, “Stop Rewarding Bad Behavior,” is intended to convince readers that reality TV has a negative impact on society. The second, “Reality TV Can Educate and Inspire,” is meant to show that the majority of reality TV shows are not harming society, and may actually provide some benefit.</p> <p>Organization - Overall, the text is organized around two essays with clearly opposing viewpoints; the “con” argument of the “Point” essay takes a negative view of Reality TV, while the “pro” argument of the “Counterpoint” essay takes a positive view of this TV genre. Within each essay, there is a distinct claim supported by reasons and evidence.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - The text makes reference to specific reality TV shows, such as Survivor, So You Think You Can Dance, and Project Runway, that may be unfamiliar to some readers.</p> <p>Genre - Argumentative texts such as “Stop Rewarding Bad Behavior” and “Reality TV Can Educate and Inspire” often employ specific techniques that readers need to recognize, such as making a claim and supporting it with strong reasons and evidence, acknowledging and refuting opposing claims, and including quotes from individuals perceived to have some expertise on the topic being discussed.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,110L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,110L
	Word Count	1,151
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Arguments and Claims; Author's Purpose or Point of View; Compare and Contrast
	Close Read Prompt	You have read the opposing viewpoints in the article titled “Are Reality Shows Good for Society?” With which author’s point of view do you agree? Are reality shows bad or beneficial for society? Use transitions to show relationships between ideas. In your opinion, which author made the stronger argument? Which writer was more convincing? Why? How strong was the author’s reasons and evidence? Support your own writing with clear reasons and relevant evidence from the text to explain why one author and not the other persuaded you to accept his or her point of view about the influence of reality TV on society. Maintain a formal writing style and end with a strong conclusion.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Argument Writing (with Counterclaim/Rebuttal)



UNIT 3: JUSTICE SERVED

Grade 7 Unit 3 continues to advance students further toward their grade-level goal of proficiently reading and comprehending fiction, poetry, and literary nonfiction “in the grades 6-8 text complexity band, with scaffolding as needed in the high end of the range.” This unit contains a mix of literature (4) and informational texts (7), with several of the literary works serving as a counterpoint to the informational texts, and all of the selections focusing on courageous women and men who endeavored to promote social justice. The quantitative dimensions (as measured by the Lexile® Framework) of most of the texts in this unit fall within or near the recommended quantitative band for Grades 6-8. The only selection significantly below the range is the folktale, “The People Could Fly.” The Unit 3 selections measuring slightly above the recommended Grade 7 quantitative range are the informational texts “About Cesar,” “Eulogy for Gandhi,” and the excerpt from Nelson Mandela’s memoir, *Long Walk to Freedom*. All of these selections focus on the lives of remarkable individuals, and so their subject matter and other qualitative dimensions render them appropriate to the demands of seventh-grade readers. In addition, the First Read lesson of each of these selections includes “Build Background” activities that give students support in comprehending the subject matter of the selection; furthermore, the Gandhi and Mandela pieces include Grammar supplements that scaffold students’ mastery of elements of sentence structure.

The literature selections in this unit include the folktale “The People Could Fly” and various types of poems: a nontraditional modern poem (“Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress--Toward”); an elegy (“Elegy on the Death of Cesar Chavez”); and a Petrarchan sonnet (“The New Colossus”). These selections represent a gradual increase of formal complexity, intertextual references, and demands on the life experience and cultural/literary knowledge of young readers. In addition, there are strong interconnections between the literature and informational texts in this unit, and such connections help to widen students’ path of access to and engagement with the texts. For example, the folktale “The People Could Fly” strongly correlates to the biography *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad*, since both selections concern slavery. “The People Could Fly” amplifies this connection with a Skill lesson on Comparison and Contrast that scaffolds students’ analysis of the two selections’ similarities and differences. The sonnet “The New Colossus,” which celebrates America’s welcoming attitude toward new immigrants, provides a counterpoint, in both form and content, to the informational text “Flesh and Blood So Cheap,” an account of the tragic 1911 fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, in which many immigrant workers perished.

Since Unit 3 occurs further along in the sequence of Grade 7 instruction, most of the informational texts in the unit are characterized by an appropriately challenging historical/cultural thrust, along with a high proportion of social studies content. The First Read lessons accompanying the selections, which place a higher demand on cultural/literary knowledge, are scaffolded with “Build Background” and related research links that foster students’ knowledge. Unit 3 helps students expand their understanding of other places and cultures, with presentations of the achievements of leaders such as Gandhi in India and Mandela in South Africa.

Analyzing informational text elements and structures, and using textual evidence to support analysis, are primary task demands in this unit. Such analysis gives students ample scaffolding toward the unit’s Extended Writing Project (Literary Analysis). The unit’s first selection, “Mother Jones,” includes a Skill lesson on informational text elements, and three subsequent selections include Skill lessons on informational text elements or informational text structure. The recommended full-text read for this unit is *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad*. One of the Skill lessons for this selection addresses the unit task demand of assessing and utilizing textual evidence to support analysis. Levels of analysis become increasingly sophisticated as the unit progresses, with later selections focusing on higher-level skills such as comparing and contrasting and formulating the central or main idea. By the time students read the final selection in the unit, the excerpt from Nelson Mandela’s memoir, *Long Walk to Freedom*, they have been prepared to analyze a complex text on an advanced level so that they not only can make and support inferences with textual evidence, but can also determine the author’s purpose and point of view, a high-level essential skill for the Unit 3 Extended Writing Project, Literary Analysis.

Mother Jones: Fierce Fighters for Workers' Rights

AUTHOR	Name	Judith Pinkerton Josephson
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1996
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Informational
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	Connection of Ideas - Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter for Workers' Rights is a biography. As such, it deals with real people, ideas, and events. This excerpt from Chapter 9 describes the people, ideas, and events that influenced Mother Jones to take a stand on child labor and the influence she had on other people, ideas, and events once she took action. Students are asked to look for key details in the text that describe or explain these influences and to highlight cause-and-effect relationships.
	ACT Features	<p>Specific Language - Like many writers of informational texts, Judith Pinkerton Josephson uses technical language to give authority to her subject. Students will encounter specialized language used in economics, history, and social studies. They will also encounter common or multiple-meaning words that take on technical meanings in this context, such as strike. These technical and multiple-meaning words may challenge students.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - Mary Harris Jones was a labor leader during a time in which industrial workers often faced exploitation and harsh working conditions. Child labor was widespread. Students may lack prior knowledge of this period in history, making it difficult for them to put Mother Jones's actions in context.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	930L
	Full-text Lexile®	900L
	Word Count	2,138
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Elements; Technical Language
	Close Read Prompt	How is Mother Jones like other individuals you have heard of who have worked hard to defend human rights? Begin with a clear thesis statement to introduce this topic. Think about the ways in which Mother Jones attempted to influence individuals, ideas, and events, especially the ideas of government officials. Organize and cite specific evidence from the text to support your response. Use transitions within your body paragraphs to show the relationships among your ideas. Choose specific vocabulary from the text and use precise language to deliver your ideas. Then, summarize these ideas in a concluding statement that leads logically from the information you have presented.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward

AUTHOR	Name	Gwendolyn Brooks
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1932
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Poem
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	Gwendolyn Brooks' poem "Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward" is short, but powerful. In it, she tackles ideas of racial progress and gives advice to the young on how to live their lives. Use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Genre - Gwendolyn Brooks uses repetition and rhyme to create a memorable tone and mood in her poem. Students are asked to identify examples of rhyme and repeated words and sounds. Students may struggle with determining how these poetic elements help the poem flow easily, as the speaker moves from correcting other people's negative attitudes to helping young people stay positive.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Brooks uses figurative language to convey her meaning and set the tone. By using strong metaphors with negative connotations, such as "down-keepers" and "sun-slappers," Brooks is able to paint vivid images in only two words. Students will need to identify these metaphors and use them to mentally fill in the bad personality traits for each group.</p> <p>Connection of Ideas - Students are asked to uncover the themes in "Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward." Since Brooks, like most poets, does not directly state the themes of her poem, students will need to use details in the poem as clues to infer the themes.</p>
	Excerpt Lexile®	NA
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	49
	Skill Lessons	Theme; Poetic Elements
	Close Read Prompt	How does the use of alliteration and other forms of repetition help Gwendolyn Brooks develop her themes in "Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward"? How does the use of figurative language, such as metaphors, contribute to the development of the themes? Use your understanding of poetic elements to determine the themes that emerge in this poem. Support your writing with specific evidence from the text.
READER AND TASKS	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and its Legacy

AUTHOR	Name	Albert Marrin	
	Gender	Male	
	Nationality	American	
	Translator		
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2011	
	Literature / Informational	Informational	
	Genre	Informational	
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this excerpt from <i>Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and Its Legacy</i> , author Albert Marrin combines facts and creative writing elements to explore the Triangle Fire. To help students analyze the selection, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:	
	ACT Features		Organization - Like many authors of informational texts, Albert Marrin uses a variety of text structures. In addition to an overarching text structure based on sequence, he uses a cause-and-effect text structure to “hook” his readers, a comparison-and-contrast text structure to compare events, and a descriptive text structure to create empathy on the part of his readers. Students may have difficulty analyzing the structures that the author uses to organize the text.
			Genre - Marrin uses figurative language and other creative elements that are more often found in poetry and fiction than in informational writing. Students may have difficulty understanding how and why Marrin goes beyond simply reporting the facts.
		Sentence Structure - Embedded quotes and complex sentences with modifiers and subordinate clauses may challenge students.	
		Connection of Ideas - The author ends the excerpt by comparing the Triangle Fire to the terrorist attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Students may have difficulty understanding the author’s purpose in including this comparison.	
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	900L	
	Full-text Lexile®	1,000L	
	Word Count	1,281	
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Structure	
	Close Read Prompt	A legacy of the Triangle Fire described in <i>Flesh and Blood So Cheap</i> was the call for laws to protect workers’ rights. What evidence is there that the health and safety of workers were not adequately protected at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory? Begin with a clear thesis statement and use your understanding of informational text structure to write a short essay to answer the question: Why is it necessary for the government to protect the health and safety of workers? Summarize your points in a strong conclusion, and support your writing with evidence and inferences drawn from the text.	
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory	

About Cesar

AUTHOR	Name	Cesar Chavez Foundation
	Gender	NA
	Nationality	NA
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2012
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Informational
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this excerpt, the Cesar Chavez Foundation briefly describes Cesar Chavez's early life, union victories, and legacy. Use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Connection of Ideas - In "About Cesar," the Cesar Chavez Foundation describes how Chavez improved the lives of farm workers through his efforts and ideas. Much of the text is devoted to presenting evidence of how events and ideas influenced Chavez, and how he then influenced other people, ideas, and events. Students may have difficulty making connections among key details in order to understand the influences.</p> <p>Specific Language - Students will encounter a number of academic and domain-specific words and phrases, such as strike, boycott, collective bargaining, and trade unionist. These terms may challenge students.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - The text assumes a general understanding of the plight of migrant farm workers and the purpose of unions and union activism. Students may lack adequate knowledge in these areas.</p>
	Excerpt Lexile®	1,290L
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	962
	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Elements
	Close Read Prompt	Why is "Sí, se puede!" ("Yes, it can be done!") a fitting motto for Cesar Chavez's life and for the influence he had on events, ideas, and the people around him? Why do you think Chavez thought it was important to defend human rights? In crafting your response, begin with a clear thesis statement and use your understanding of informational text elements by analyzing the interaction among people, ideas, and events in the selection. Organize and support your writing with textual evidence, and use precise language and vocabulary from the selection. Use transitions to show the relationships among your ideas, and provide a concluding statement that summarizes your key points.
READER AND TASKS	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Elegy on the Death of Cesar Chavez

AUTHOR	Name	Rudolfo Anaya
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2000
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Poem
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	Students may be unfamiliar with the purpose and structure of elegies. Use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of “Elegy on the Death of César Chávez”:
		Genre - An elegy is a lament, or poem, that honors the dead. In addition to honoring Chávez’s life, poet Rudolfo Anaya calls on people to carry on Chávez’s legacy. Students may have difficulty with some of the characteristics of elegies.
	ACT Features	<p>Specific Vocabulary - Anaya uses a rich assortment of figurative language, including personification, metaphors, and similes. In addition, the poet uses connotation to add meaning and depth to the poem in an economical way and Spanish phrases to honor Chávez’s heritage. Students may have difficulty understanding some of the language in the elegy.</p> <p>Connection of Ideas - Anaya quotes lines from “Adonais: An Elegy on the Death of John Keats,” a poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley, an English Romantic poet who wrote in the early 1800s. Many students may be unfamiliar with the poetry of Shelley. In addition, the Anaya makes historical and religious references that may be unfamiliar to students. Students might miss the allusions or be confused by them.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	NA
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
	Word Count	861
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Figurative Language; Compare and Contrast
	Close Read Prompt	Think about how Rudolfo Anaya uses figurative language and connotation in “Elegy on the Death of César Chávez.” How does his use of figurative language and connotation help him develop his message (or theme)? Begin your writing with a clear thesis statement. Then think about what you know of Chávez from having read “About César,” an informational text. How do both texts support the evidence that Chávez was a protector of human rights? Use textual evidence from both texts to support Anaya’s message (or theme), and draw on specific vocabulary and precise language from the selection. Consider how Anaya might have altered history a bit in his poem. Organize your support and use transitions to show the relationships among your ideas. Last, provide a conclusion that summarizes your main points.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

*Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad

AUTHOR	Name	Ann Petry
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1955
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Biography
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	This excerpt from <i>Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad</i> , by Ann Petry, describes Harriet's life as a six-year-old child. To help students connect Harriet's childhood experiences with her future role as a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:
		Connection of Ideas - Ann Petry doesn't make a direct connection between the knowledge that Harriet gained in childhood and her future use of this knowledge as one of the Underground Railroad's "conductors." Students must make inferences about the connection from the textual evidence they collect.
	ACT Features	Genre - This excerpt is available on StudySync in both a printed text format and an audio version. Students are asked to compare and contrast the two versions to determine how each medium affects the impact of the words. Students may be challenged by isolating the differences in order to compare the two versions.
		Prior Knowledge - Ann Petry references the song "Go Down, Moses" and Denmark Vesey. Although she provides some background in the excerpt, students may not be familiar enough with Vesey or with this period in United States history to understand the significance of the passage.
	Sentence Structure - Many complex sentences with modifiers and clauses may challenge students.	
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	970L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,000L
	Word Count	1,026
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Textual Evidence; Media
	Close Read Prompt	You have read the text and listened to the audio version of <i>Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad</i> . Briefly compare and contrast each version, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject, or topic. Think about these questions: What were the advantages of the print version? Of the audio version? What were the disadvantages of each? Which had a greater impact on the delivery of the content and the message of the text? Which version helped you better understand the information and ideas? How? Then discuss which experience you preferred—reading or listening to the text, and why. Support your comparison/contrast writing with specific evidence from both the print and audio forms of the selection.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Short Argumentative

*Suggested Full-text Study

The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales

AUTHOR	Name	Virginia Hamilton
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1985
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Folk Tale
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	The People Could Fly focuses on the issue of slavery through the folktale genre. Students are asked to compare and contrast this folktale with the historical account of slavery presented in Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad. To help students compare and contrast this fictional portrayal of slavery with the historical account of the same unjust period in American history, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Genre - The People Could Fly is a fictional depiction of the escape from slavery. As a work of literature, it takes liberties with historical fact and depicts running away to freedom in a figurative way—through the metaphor of flight. Students may have difficulty with this when asked to compare and contrast the folktale with the historical account of slavery in Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - In addition to the metaphor of flight, Hamilton uses a variety of metaphors and other figurative language to describe the Master, the Driver's whip, and the people who could fly. Students will need to determine the meaning of the figurative language to understand the folktale.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - The sentence structure in the folktale is patterned after speech common to oral traditions, with repeated word patterns and incomplete sentences. Some students may have difficulty with the structure.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	480L
	Full-text Lexile®	680L
	Word Count	656
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Compare and Contrast
	Close Read Prompt	Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad and The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales are similar, yet different. The first is an historical account of slavery in American history. The second is a fictional portrayal of the same topic or theme. Compare and contrast the two texts. How did Virginia Hamilton use historical fact in The People Could Fly to suit her purposes? Introduce your topic with a clear thesis statement. Then, organize and support your writing with specific evidence and vocabulary from both texts. Use transitions to show relationships among your ideas, and provide a conclusion that summarizes your main points.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

1976 Democratic National Convention Keynote Address

AUTHOR	Name	Barbara Jordan
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1976
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Speech
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	Because speeches are meant to be listened to rather than read by an audience, they can present special challenges for students. Use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Purpose - In her “1976 Democratic National Convention Keynote Address,” Barbara Jordan underscores the ideas of unity, equality, responsibility, and the American ideals of working for the “common good” and creating “a national community.” Her purpose in the speech is to persuade the American people to adopt her point of view and to take action in supporting the Democratic Party and its presidential candidate. To understand her argument, students need to look for key points in her speech that explain her message.</p> <p>Organization - Throughout her speech, Jordan uses the same basic informational text elements to get her message across. She presents ideas that she sees as harmful to the nation and those that she thinks could lead to positive change. Then she explores the consequences of each for individuals, events, and the nation. To understand and evaluate her message, students need to pay close attention to the key points, or central ideas, she puts forth and to the textual evidence she cites to support her claims.</p> <p>Connection of Ideas - Barbara Jordan notes at the beginning of her speech that her presence as a keynote speaker makes the night special. Students need to tap into their prior knowledge about race relations in United States history to understand that Jordan is not bragging. Rather, she is using her presence at the convention as an illustration of hope for the future, and her speech as a way to present her message of unity, equality, and justice for all.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	840L
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
	Word Count	1,191
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Elements
	Close Read Prompt	How does Barbara Jordan’s speech demonstrate that she believed it was essential to defend human rights? What ideas does she put forth in the speech to support this interpretation? In writing your response, use your understanding of informational text elements to analyze the interaction among individuals, ideas, and events in her speech. Begin with a clear statement to introduce your topic. Organize and support your writing with specific evidence from the text. Use precise language and selection vocabulary where possible. Develop body paragraphs and use transitions to show the relationships among your ideas. Establish a formal style that underlines the importance of your topic, and provide a conclusion that summarizes your central (or main) ideas.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

The New Colossus

AUTHOR	Name	Emma Lazarus
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1883
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Poem
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	Emma Lazarus wrote “The New Colossus” in the 1800s, when many of her readers would have been familiar with Greek mythology and history. Today’s students may find the references perplexing. Use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of the poem.
	ACT Features	<p>Genre - “The New Colossus” is written in the form of a Petrarchan sonnet, which was made popular by the Italian poet Petrarch in the 1300s. Students may be challenged by the rules that govern the structure, rhyme scheme, and meter of the poem.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Lazarus uses figurative language to communicate her message about freedom and opportunity for immigrants. In addition to allusions to Greek mythology and ancient Greek history, the figurative language includes similes, metaphors, and personification. Students may have difficulty understanding some of the figurative language, especially the use of negative similes.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - Lazarus’s allusions to Greek mythology and ancient Greek history may prove especially difficult for students. Students may lack the prior knowledge to understand the significance of the Colossus of Rhodes or the comparisons that Lazarus makes between the Greek statue and the Statue of Liberty.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	NA
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
	Word Count	105
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Poetic Structure; Figurative Language
	Close Read Prompt	Consider the use of allusion and the structure of the poem, “The New Colossus.” What does Emma Lazarus want readers to know about the United States? Begin with a clear thesis statement that addresses your topic. What insight does the message (or theme) of the poem convey about the importance of defending human rights? Use your understanding of poetic structure and figurative language, particularly the allusion to the Greek Colossus that Lazarus uses in the poem, to determine her message. Organize and support your response with specific evidence from the text, including precise language and selection vocabulary wherever possible. Use transitions to show the relationships among your ideas, and provide a conclusion that summarizes your key points.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Eulogy for Mahatama Gandhi

AUTHOR	Name	Jawaharlal Nehru
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	Indian
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1948
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Eulogy
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In “Eulogy for Mahatma Gandhi,” Jawaharlal Nehru addresses a nation grieving over the assassination of India’s great spiritual and political leader who helped guide India to independence. Use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Purpose - Because the speech is a eulogy, Nehru’s purpose is to honor Gandhi and provide comfort to the people who loved, respected, and admired him. The tone of the eulogy may challenge students.</p> <p>Connection of Ideas - Students are asked to determine Nehru’s central or main ideas. However, Nehru does not explicitly state these ideas. To understand the most important points in his speech, students must look for connections among details that will support each main point.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - The eulogy reflects the formal language of 1940s India and the solemn purpose of Nehru’s words. Students may be challenged by the eulogy’s flowery language and degree of praise</p> <p>Sentence Structure - Many complex sentences with modifiers and clauses may challenge students.</p>
	Excerpt Lexile®	1,290L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,290L
Word Count	785	
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Central or Main Idea
	Close Read Prompt	What are two central ideas that are developed over the course of “Eulogy for Mahatma Gandhi”? How do these two central ideas and the details that support them help to answer the Essential Question: Why is it essential to defend human rights? Begin with a clear thesis statement to introduce the topic. Use your understanding of the central or main idea to guide you as you identify central ideas in the selection and analyze how they relate to the Essential Question. Organize and support your writing with specific evidence from the text, including relevant selection vocabulary. Use transitions in your body paragraphs to show the relationships among your ideas. Establish a formal style to emphasize the nature of your topic, and provide a conclusion that summarizes your main ideas.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Long Walk to Freedom

AUTHOR	Name	Nelson Mandela
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	South African
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1994
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Autobiography
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this excerpt from his autobiography, Long Walk to Freedom, Nelson Mandela explores how the system of apartheid shaped his life, his views on freedom and courage, and his hope for the future. Use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Purpose - While the purpose of an autobiography is to inform readers about the writer's life, Nelson Mandela also wrote Long Walk to Freedom to explain his ideas about courage, resistance to oppression, and real social change. Students will need to pay careful attention to details in the text to understand Mandela's ideas.</p> <p>Connection of Ideas - In this excerpt, Mandela offers a unique point of view on what courage is. To understand Mandela's point of view, students need to analyze how the author contrasts his position from that of others and how sequences of events shaped his thoughts and actions.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - In this excerpt, Mandela recounts what led him to fight for social justice in South Africa, what gave him hope during dark times, and the obligations he believes people must keep. Students may lack sufficient knowledge of apartheid to fully understand Mandela's views.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,270L
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
	Word Count	1,665
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Author's Purpose and Point of View
	Close Read Prompt	This excerpt from Nelson Mandela's autobiography Long Walk to Freedom may be more philosophical than autobiographical as he reflects on oppression and transformation in South Africa. How does Mandela influence people's views about courage and freedom through his observations about and experiences with apartheid? In what ways do Mandela's observations and experiences impact his own feelings about the importance of defending human rights? Use your understanding of author's purpose and point of view in your response. Support your writing with reasons and specific evidence from the text.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Short Argumentative



UNIT 4: GETTING ALONG

Grade 7 Unit 4 further develops students' grade-level goal of proficiently reading and comprehending fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction "in the grades 6-8 text complexity band, with scaffolding as needed in the high end of the range." This unit contains a highly varied mix of literature (9 selections, including 3 short stories, 3 novel excerpts, 2 dramas, 1 poem) and informational texts (3). The qualitative dimensions, reader characteristics, and task demands of the selections in this unit make it an accessible but appropriately challenging set of texts for seventh-grade readers, despite some of the texts' falling either above or below the recommended quantitative dimensions (as measured by the Lexile® Framework) for Grades 6-8. Of the literature selections, only the excerpt from *The Outsiders* falls below the recommended range, but this measurement is counterbalanced by the author's use of sophisticated narrative techniques. Since this is the culminating unit in Grade 7 sequencing, the inclusion of several texts with higher-level vocabulary is particularly appropriate, given the students' ongoing advancement up the staircase of increasing text richness and complexity. The relatively high lexile score for "The Teacher Who Changed My Life" is balanced by the qualitative dimension of a moving, high-interest story. Similarly, the high lexile score for "California Invasive Plant Inventory" is appropriate to the scientific subject matter of the selection and is also mitigated by the scaffolding for domain-specific vocabulary in the Skill lesson. The selection is also a Common Core Appendix B text exemplar.

The literary selections in this unit address increasingly sophisticated themes and forms, and involve students in a wide variety of experiences, all developing various types of conflict. *The Outsiders* is one of the unit's recommended full-text reads, a gripping story that unfolds within the milieu of gang conflict. This high-interest piece, written when the author was herself a teenager, is particularly accessible (partly because of the simpler vocabulary and colloquial style of the narration); at the same time, it is also formally sophisticated, incorporating flashback and a subtly revealed point of view to portray personal and societal problems that will engage students. As the unit progresses, students will encounter protagonists in literature dealing with such challenges as physical impairments (*The Miracle Worker*; *Freak the Mighty*); tragic love (*The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*), impoverished social environment ("Thank You, M'am"), and a life-threatening natural environment (*My Ántonia*).

Analysis of structure and elements of story and drama are key task demands in the literature selections of Unit 4. Levels of analysis become more sophisticated as the unit progresses. The task demands in this unit progress through the literature selections to support greater comprehension of challenging texts and add depth to students' analysis of more accessible texts. For example, one of the recommended full-text reads for this unit, William Gibson's drama *The Miracle Worker*, which brings to life the triumph of Helen Keller and her teacher, Annie Sullivan, over the challenges of being hearing and sight impaired, includes Skill lessons with higher-level instruction on theme and dramatic elements. Analyzing dramatic elements in this more accessible selection helps to prepare students to move on to another drama, a scene from William Shakespeare's *Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, with its more challenging vocabulary and syntax, exotic cultural references, and rich figurative language that blends both poetry and prose in the dramatic genre.

*The Outsiders

AUTHOR	Name	S. E. Hinton
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1967
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Novel
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In these excerpts from <i>The Outsiders</i> , Ponyboy, a Greaser and the narrator of the story, recounts fellow gang-member Johnny's brutal beating at the hands of the Socs. Ponyboy explains to Cherry, a member of the Socs, that the beating Johnny received was so terrifying that it changed Johnny, instilling a fear in him for his life. Although she is a member of the rival gang, Cherry is disturbed by the story of Johnny and insists that not all Socs are like the four who beat him up. Although there is a visible class divide between the Greasers and the Socs, Cherry explains to Ponyboy that Socs have their troubles, too. To help students understand Ponyboy's point of view, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Organization - The first excerpt begins with a flashback, in which Ponyboy recounts Johnny's beating, which took place four months earlier. The use of flashback at the start of the chapter may confuse some readers.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - Students may be confused by the function of dialogue in this text, in that it is used both to recount past events and to move the plot forward.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Narration and dialogue include slang used by gangs during the 1960s, the time period in which the novel takes place. The slang will likely be unfamiliar to most readers.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	660L
	Full-text Lexile®	750L
	Word Count	1,060
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Textual Evidence; Point of View
	Close Read Prompt	Begin with a clear thesis statement. Use specific textual evidence to make three inferences about how interacting with Cherry has changed Ponyboy's point of view about the Greasers and the Socs. Consider which pieces of textual evidence help you make these inferences and how your own prior knowledge supports them. Use your understanding of textual evidence and point of view to organize and support your writing. Use transitions to show the relationships among your ideas, and provide a conclusion that summarizes your key points.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

*Suggested Full-text Study

The Teacher Who Changed My Life

AUTHOR	Name	Nicholas Gage
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1989
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Personal Essay
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this personal essay from his memoir <i>A Place for Us</i> , famed journalist Nicholas Gage recounts the harrowing details of leaving war-torn Greece at the age of 9 and immigrating to the United States to live in freedom with a father he didn't know. Despite the challenges he faced as a young boy, not the least of which was the loss of his mother at the hand of Communist guerillas, Gage focuses his essay not on the struggles he endured as a "war refugee" and an immigrant in a strange new land, but on the profound influence his junior high school English teacher and mentor Marjorie Hurd had on his schooling and career. Because of an emotionally challenging essay assignment, he credits Miss Hurd as leading him to discover the "power of the written word" and to placing him on a "literary path" that sent him "into journalism and indirectly caused all the good things that came after." To help students understand the strong and lasting effect that as a mentor, Hurd has had on Gage's life, use the following suggestions for a close reading of more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Purpose - Students may need support tracking the multiple purposes of the text. Gage wants to inform readers about a teacher who changed his life. On an emotional level, his essay serves as a "remembrance," or a memorial to his teacher.</p> <p>Connection of Ideas - Students may need support connecting multiple influences on Gage's life. Gage connects both his mother's story and the influence of Marjorie Hurd to his success as a journalist and to "all the good things that came after."</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,350L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,350L
	Word Count	2,058
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Elements
	Close Read Prompt	In the first paragraph of Nicholas Gage's personal essay, his teacher Marjorie Hurd is identified as the "person who set the course of . . . [his] life," influencing his choice of a career in journalism and shaping other events in his life. However, Gage's mother, Eleni Gatzoyiannis, also influenced the events in his life, as well as his ideas and actions. What evidence does the author present to support this idea? What role did Miss Hurd play in helping the young Gage recognize his mother's influence? In crafting your response, use your understanding of the interactions of individuals, events, and ideas to analyze the role that both women played in shaping the author's life? Cite specific evidence from the text to support your writing.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

The Miracle Worker

AUTHOR	Name	William Gibson
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1956
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Drama
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	Reading plays can be challenging for students. Because <i>The Miracle Worker</i> has no narrator, and readers are given Act III of the play to read, they must figure out the characters, setting, plot, and themes from the dialogue and stage directions. To help students understand the play's dramatic elements and themes, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of more complex features of this text:
		Genre - The text is a drama. Act III highlights the play's conflict by using dialogue and stage directions, but no narration.
	ACT Features	<p>Connection of Ideas - In order to discover the play's themes and the interaction of the dramatic elements of character, setting, and plot, students need to draw inferences from the text by synthesizing information from the dialogue and stage directions.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - There is a mixture of simple and complex sentences in the dialogue. In addition, a character's line of dialogue is sometimes interrupted by another character or by stage directions. This fragmentation may be challenging for some students to understand.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	NA
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
	Word Count	NA
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Theme; Dramatic Elements
	Close Read Prompt	How does the interaction of the elements of character, setting, and plot help to develop and shape the themes in <i>The Miracle Worker</i> ? Use the details you have compiled from analyzing the play to identify how: the setting affects the characters or events of the plot the plot shapes the characters and their relationship to one another the characters influence the plot the dramatic elements help to present the theme or themes Remember to support your writing with specific textual evidence and inferences.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet (Act I, Scene V)

AUTHOR	Name	William Shakespeare	
	Gender	Male	
	Nationality	English	
	Translator		
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1592	
	Literature / Informational	Literature	
	Genre	Drama	
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	Act I, Scene V is critical to the plot of The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet because in this scene, the conflict of the play is established. In Scene V, Romeo, a young Montague, attends a party held by his family's rival, the Capulets. At the party, he sets eyes on Lord Capulet's young daughter, Juliet, and falls instantly in love. The young pair engage in a poetic exchange professing their love to each other. After their meeting, each discovers that the other is a member of the enemy family. To help students understand Romeo and Juliet's love for each other and the obstacles they face in that love, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of more complex features of this text:	
	ACT Features		Genre - The text is a drama. Students may be challenged by the fact that the scene establishes the play's conflict using dialogue and stage directions, rather than narration.
			Sentence Structure - Students are likely to be challenged by the long and complex sentences. Much of the text follows rules of poetic form specific to the sonnet; students probably lack familiarity with sonnet structure.
			Specific Vocabulary - The scene's vocabulary will be challenging to most readers. The dialogue follows the standard English of Shakespeare's time, and therefore, many words and phrases will be unfamiliar to students. Multiple types of figurative language—including personification, simile, metaphor, allusion, and imagery—will also present challenges to many readers.
		Prior Knowledge - The text portrays a political and social environment that will be unfamiliar to most readers.	
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	NA	
	Full-text Lexile®	NA	
	Word Count	1,265	
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Story Structure; Figurative Language	
	Close Read Prompt	Think about the rising action of Act I, Scene V in the plot structure of The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet. How does this particular scene contribute to your understanding of the challenges Romeo and Juliet will likely face in their interaction with each other and with other characters? In your response, refer to Shakespeare's use of figurative language in the scene. Begin with a clear thesis statement and support and organize your response with specific textual evidence. Use transitions to show the relationships among your ideas. Establish a formal style and use precise language and selection vocabulary. Provide an effective concluding statement that summarizes your main ideas.	
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory	

Amigo Brothers

AUTHOR	Name	Piri Thomas
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1978
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Short Story
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	The short story “Amigo Brothers” explores friendship in the face of competition. Antonio Cruz and Felix Varga are teenagers who have been best friends since childhood and who share the same dream of becoming lightweight boxing champion of the world. The young men now must train for and compete in an important fight against each other. Their friendship is put to the test as both want to win the title, but neither wants to lose an “amigo brother.” Detailed description through third-person narration and limited dialogue between the characters build the tension that competition places on their close friendship. To help students understand the burden that the competitive fight places on Antonio and Felix, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	Sentence Structure - Students may be challenged by the long and complex sentences in this text.
		Specific Vocabulary - Because the piece is Latino Literature, the author has included many Spanish words in the dialogue and narration of the text. Words and phrases specific to boxing are also included in the story as well as figurative language such as similes, metaphors, personification, idioms, and onomatopoeia. This rich vocabulary adds color to the story, but may be difficult for some readers to understand.
		Prior Knowledge - The text portrays a culture that may be unfamiliar to some students.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	890L
	Full-text Lexile®	890L
	Word Count	3,474

Thank You, M'am

AUTHOR	Name	Langston Hughes
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1958
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Short Story
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	<p>“Thank You, M'am” tells the story of the unexpected way that Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones reacts when Roger, a dirty-faced, “frail and willow-wild” teenager tries to steal her purse, but fails. Rather than call the police, Mrs. Jones drags Roger to her home, makes him wash his face and comb his hair, feeds him, and gives him valuable advice about behaving himself. To help students understand how the positive effects of forgiveness, trust, kindness, and empathy are inherent in the selection, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a focused reading of the more complex features of this text:</p>
	ACT Features	<p>Purpose - Langston Hughes never directly states that his purpose is to show how people can be transformed by a chance encounter and a dose of kindness, forgiveness, and trust. Instead, readers need to look for clues in the dialogue and narration that show how Mrs. Jones's view of Roger changes over the course of the text and how Roger is affected by those changes.</p>
		<p>Organization - The short story is organized so that the changes in the characters are an outgrowth of the setting and are developed over the course of the plot. The story ends with the reader knowing that Roger has been positively affected by his encounter with Mrs. Jones, but the long-term effects of the encounter remain uncertain, given the social, economic, and emotional conditions that impact him in his environment.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	870L
	Full-text Lexile®	870L
	Word Count	1,334
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Setting
	Close Read Prompt	<p>How does the setting of “Thank You, M'am” shape the plot and the characters of the story? How do the setting, characters, and plot contribute to your understanding of the theme? Use the details you have compiled from examining the story elements of setting, plot, and characters to explain how the setting helps shape the characters and plot. identify how the characters change over the course of the text. identify the theme (or message) of the story. Remember to support your writing with textual evidence and inferences.</p>
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

California Invasive Plant Inventory

AUTHOR	Name	California Invasive Plant Council
	Gender	NA
	Nationality	NA
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2006
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Informational Text
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	<p>“California Invasive Plant Inventory” describes the efforts in California to categorize non-native invasive plants that threaten wildlands in the state as a way of keeping track of and controlling the spread of these invaders. The text focuses on the creation, use, and limitations of the Inventory and on definitions relevant to the purpose of the document. To help students understand the scientific or technical content of the selection and its use of domain-specific words or technical language, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of the more complex features of this text:</p>
	ACT Features	<p>Prior Knowledge - The selection assumes that readers have a basic understanding of environmental science and the ecological impact of non-native invasive plants on habitats and ecosystems. Students may not have the necessary prior knowledge to fill in the explanations that are missing from the text.</p>
		<p>Specific Language - The selection provides definitions for a few key terms directly related to the Inventory and its use. However, it also uses a variety of domain-specific words and technical terms to describe the assessment of invasive plants and the impact the plants have on native plants and habitats. Some of these terms are not defined and will need to be researched in print or online sources.</p>
	<p>Organization - The text consists of sections introduced by headings. These textual features aid readers in understanding the Inventory and in finding necessary information. To fully understand the Inventory and the issues involved in creating and using it, students need to connect ideas in the different sections. They also need to be able to identify the text structures the Council uses to organize information. Understanding the informational text structure may be challenging for some students.</p>	
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,350L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,350L
	Word Count	1,385
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Central or Main Idea; Technical Language; Informational Text Structure
	Close Read Prompt	How does the information in “Invasive Plant Inventory” support the idea that human interactions affect the environment? Use your understanding of the selection’s central or main ideas, text structures, and technical language to collect evidence for your analysis. Use the details you have collected to identify how human interactions contribute (or have contributed) to the spread of non-native invasive plants. identify how human interactions can help repair the damage of invasive plants. identify what role the Inventory plays in understanding the processes. Remember to support your writing with textual evidence and inferences.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

The Dangers of Social Media

AUTHOR	Name	NA
	Gender	NA
	Nationality	NA
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2015
	Literature / Informational	Informational
	Genre	Pro-Con/Op-Ed
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	Two writers present their differing points of views about preteen access to social media in the text “The Dangers of Social Media.” The “Point” writer is of the opinion that preteens should have access to social media, while the “Counterpoint” writer is of the opposing point of view. Both writers support their positions with reasons and evidence. To help students comprehend the point/counterpoint nature of the text’s presentation, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a focused reading of more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Purpose - The persuasive purpose of the selection may be challenging for some students. The writers present opposing points of view, thereby offering evidence and claims that are one-sided. Although each writer’s purpose is clear, students may have difficulty with the one-sided nature of the arguments.</p> <p>Connection of Ideas - Students need to connect the evidence and claims each writer makes in order to evaluate the writer’s argument. Tracing and evaluating each argument and the specific claims, and assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims, may be a difficult task for students.</p> <p>Organization - The text consists of two parts: the “Point” essay and the “Counterpoint” essay. In order to evaluate the arguments and determine which one is more persuasive, students will need to compare and contrast the two essays on the same topic. This may present a challenge for some students.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	1,180L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,180L
	Word Count	1,016
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Arguments and Claims; Compare and Contrast; Author’s Purpose or Point of View
	Close Read Prompt	You have read two opposing points of view in “The Dangers of Social Media.” In your opinion, which author made the stronger argument? Why was the author you chose more convincing? Support your own writing with sound reasoning and relevant evidence from the text to explain why one author and not the other persuaded you to accept his or her point of view about why preteens should (or shouldn’t) have access to social media.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Argument Writing (with Counterclaim/Rebuttal)

My Antonia

AUTHOR	Name	Willa Cather
	Gender	Female
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1918
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Novel
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this excerpt from the celebrated American novel <i>My Ántonia</i> , Jim, the narrator, relates how killing a rattlesnake changed the way Ántonia viewed him. The story of the transformation of the characters and their relationship is told through a combination of Jim's narration and character dialogue. The setting also plays a key role in shaping both the characters and plot. To help students understand the interactions of story elements, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Connection of Ideas - Some readers will need help drawing inferences from descriptions, dialogue, and situations to determine how the setting shapes the characters and plot.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - Ántonia is learning to speak English. Consequently, she makes grammatical errors when speaking. Some students may have difficulty with the grammar, usage, and spelling errors that are in Ántonia's dialogue.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Some difficult vocabulary and figures of speech may present a challenge to some readers.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	900L
	Full-text Lexile®	1,010L
	Word Count	1,710
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Character
	Close Read Prompt	How does the setting of <i>My Ántonia</i> contribute to the challenges Jim faces in his interactions with Ántonia? Use the details you have compiled from examining the setting and characters to identify the natural and historical conditions of the setting that help shape characters and the way they interact. Identify how and why the characters' interactions change over the course of the story. Begin with a clear thesis statement. Remember to organize and to support your writing with textual evidence and inferences, using precise language and selection vocabulary. Include transitions to show the relationships among your main ideas, and establish a formal style of delivery. Provide a conclusion that effectively summarizes your key information.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Freak the Mighty

AUTHOR	Name	Rodman Philbrick	
	Gender	Male	
	Nationality	American	
	Translator		
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1993	
	Literature / Informational	Literature	
	Genre	Novel	
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	In this excerpt from <i>Freak the Mighty</i> , Maxwell recounts the beginning of his friendship with Kevin. Both boys face severe personal challenges. Max is enormous and learning disabled, and Kevin suffers from Morquio syndrome, a rare genetic disease that has crippled him and stunted his growth. To help students compare and contrast in the Skills lesson and the Close Read, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a focused reading of more complex features of this text:	
	ACT Features	Organization	Students may not realize that Max is looking back on events and that the excerpt can be read as a memoir, or remembrance of the past. By the time Max begins to write about his and Kevin's adventures, Kevin has already died from complications of his disease. This leads to references at the end of the excerpt such as "But like Freak says later in this book, you can remember anything, whether it happened or not." In addition, Max's tendency to talk about himself in the third person while recollecting events may be challenging for some students.
		Sentence Structure	Students will need to pay close attention to sentence structure, including italics and other punctuation as well as grammar, to understand how the story can be effectively translated into an audio medium.
		Specific Vocabulary	Max uses a variety of figures of speech and cultural references in telling the story and these may confuse students. In addition, both he and Kevin have their own way of using words to describe things and convey ideas.
Prior Knowledge		Students likely will be unfamiliar with the physical challenges that the boys face.	
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	970L	
	Full-text Lexile®	1,000L	
	Word Count	1,057	
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Media	
	Close Read Prompt	Compare and contrast the text and audio versions of <i>Freak the Mighty</i> . How are the two alike, and how are they different? At what points does the audio version use expression, intonation, or pace to support or interpret the text? In what ways are these interpretations significant or insignificant in developing character, setting, plot, and theme? Support your writing with evidence from the text and audio file.	
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory	

The Ransom of Red Chief

AUTHOR	Name	O. Henry
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1910
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Short Story
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	If ever there was a short story that illustrated the humorous challenges of human interactions, it's O. Henry's "The Ransom of Red Chief." Written in 1907, this classic short story explores the situational irony that besets a pair of kidnappers who get more than they bargained for from the boy they stole for ransom. To help students understand the irony of the situation in the story, as well as the interplay of story elements—character, setting, and plot—use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for the more complex features of this text:
	ACT Features	<p>Organization - Students may not realize that the narrator, Sam, a career criminal, is looking back on events. By the time Sam begins to tell of the kidnapping of little Johnny Dorset, he and his partner in crime, Bill Driscoll, have made their getaway. This recollection of events leads to repeated references at the beginning of the story, such as: "It looked like a good thing: but wait till I tell you" or "But we didn't find that out till later," remembrances that allude to a plot twist at the end of the story and illustrate a narrative technique that may be difficult for some students to understand.</p> <p>Connection of Ideas - Some students will need help drawing inferences from the descriptions, dialogue, and events in the text to understand the situational irony and the interactions of the story elements of character, setting, and plot.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Dialect, descriptive language, malapropisms, slang, figures of speech, and unfamiliar vocabulary may present challenges for readers. In addition, Sam and Bill each has his own way of misusing words to describe things and convey ideas.</p> <p>Prior Knowledge - Students may be unfamiliar with some cultural and geographical references.</p>
	Excerpt Lexile®	940L
	Full-text Lexile®	940L
Word Count	4,161	
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Textual Evidence
	Close Read Prompt	The elements of a story do not exist in isolation. Characters, setting, and plot interact to influence conflict and theme. In "The Ransom of Red Chief," how do the characters, setting, and plot interact to shape the development of the story? Use your understanding of story elements, point of view, and inferences to analyze the story. Support your writing with textual evidence.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

Oranges

AUTHOR	Name	Gary Soto
	Gender	Male
	Nationality	American
	Translator	
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1995
	Literature / Informational	Literature
	Genre	Poem
	Scaffold Instruction to Access Complex Text	<p>“Oranges,” a narrative poem by Gary Soto, is written in free verse to tell a story of first love. Soto uses poetic elements such as figurative language, imagery, and alliteration to add a deeper level of meaning to this seemingly simple poem. To help students understand the poetic elements in the poem, use the following suggestions to provide scaffolded instruction for a close reading of more complex features of this text:</p>
	ACT Features	<p>Connection of Ideas - When reading a complex text, students need to make inferences and synthesize information throughout the text. In this poem, the poet uses figurative language such as similes, metaphors, and onomatopoeia to create strong visual images (or word pictures) in the reader’s mind. These images may be difficult for some students to visualize or grasp.</p> <p>Sentence Structure - Sentences and word choice are uncomplicated and simple in the poem, but the use of similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, and alliteration may make it harder for students to comprehend the implied meanings in the poem. The free-verse structure of unrhymed lines causes the poem to sound more like a slice-of-life short story as it expresses emotion. Students will need to listen for the sound pattern of alliteration to capture the rhythm of the poem.</p> <p>Specific Vocabulary - Some words, such as “rouge,” are specific to the time period (or setting) of the poem. These words may be unfamiliar to students and may need to be contextualized so that students can determine their meaning.</p>
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Excerpt Lexile®	NA
	Full-text Lexile®	NA
	Word Count	NA
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Poetic Elements
	Close Read Prompt	How do the poetic elements in “Oranges” contribute to both the theme and the emotional impact of the poem? Use the details you have compiled from examining the poem to: identify how Gary Soto uses figurative language (similes, metaphors, and onomatopoeia) and alliteration to add a deeper level of meaning to the poem identify how the use of figurative language creates strong imagery in the poem identify how the poetic elements contribute to your understanding of the theme. Remember to support your writing with specific textual evidence and inferences.
	Writing Form	Short Constructed Response: Informative/Explanatory

ELA Grade Level Overview Grade 7

Writing

Overall Approach to Writing Instruction

StudySync instructs students on a variety of writing forms that adhere to the CA CCSS for ELA. Each unit of the program exposes students to a different writing form and all of its associated skills and processes, which they practice through unit-specific Extended Writing Projects (EWP). At each grade level, one EWP covers each of the following writing forms: narrative, informative/explanatory, literary analysis, and argumentative writing.

Direct instruction in writing includes reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language lessons and activities, all of which are scaffolded to support learners of varying backgrounds and abilities. Writing activities in each unit, from the in-depth Extended Writing Project to the shorter writing prompts and online Blast responses, explore different aspects of the writing process, giving students a variety of writing practice opportunities to hone their skills and enhance their understanding of each unit's particular writing form. This application of the writing skills and processes culminates in the Extended Writing Project which challenges students and holds them accountable to their learning experiences. Students write reflective pieces, short constructed responses, immediate response pieces, and pieces that require summary and exploration of both literary and informative readings. They evaluate and assess Student Model examples that connect to the modes of writing in each unit. Lessons push students to effectively express themselves and rely on textual evidence as a basis of support for their ideas. Students have a myriad of opportunities to enrich their writing, including immersion in specific academic vocabulary, peer review and revision, and group discussion and collaboration. They explore different formats of presenting and publishing the finished works that represent their best possible writing efforts in the program.

WRITING TASK CHART

		UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4
		In Pursuit: What drives us to undertake a mission?	The Powers that Be: What should be the principles of a just society?	Justice Served: Why is it essential to defend human rights?	Getting Along: What are the challenges of human interactions?
EXTENDED WRITING PROJECT	Writing Form	Informative/Explanatory	Narrative	Literary Analysis	Argumentative
	Prompt	You have been reading nonfiction accounts of the lives and experiences of real people who have undertaken a mission to pursue their goals. You have also been reading fictional stories of adventure—and of characters who have also undertaken missions, often while facing great personal risk. Now you will think about the experiences of these people and characters as you write your own informative/explanatory essay.	Think about the principles of an open and just society, and contrast them with the rules of a closed and unjust society. Then write a fictional narrative (or story) about a character who is seeking justice in an unjust society. Model your story on one of the texts you have read in this unit.	Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela also fought for change. Both Gandhi and Mandela are inspiring, but the texts that you have read about them are very different. Write a literary analysis in which you compare and contrast the text about Gandhi with the text about Mandela to determine which is more convincing in presenting and supporting the claim that this individual was a great defender of justice and human rights. Analyze the reasons and evidence presented in the text as well as the language that is used to describe the individual's words, actions, and accomplishments. Then decide which writer was more persuasive in defending his claim about the impact this person had on human rights.	Write an argumentative essay in which you explore the challenges caused by human interaction (interference) with the environment. First, reread "California Invasive Plant Inventory" to review the issue of invasive species. Then do research. Choose an invasive plant or animal, such as the Burmese python that people have introduced into the Florida Everglades or kudzu, a spreading invasive plant. Research your invasive plant or animal in at least three print or digital sources, such as books, magazines, or reliable websites. As you research, ask yourself: Should humans try to solve this problem or let nature take its course?
	Student Model	"Worth the Risk"	"Theo's Song"	"Mother Jones and Cesar Chavez: Standing Up for Workers' Rights"	"What Do We Do About Invasive Alien Species?"
	Process Steps	Prewrite; Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit, Proofread, and Publish	Prewrite; Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit, Proofread, and Publish	Prewrite; Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit, Proofread, and Publish	Prewrite; Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit, Proofread, and Publish
	Writing Skills	Thesis Statement, (Audience and Purpose), Organize Informative Writing, Supporting Details, Introductions, Body Paragraphs and Transitions, Conclusions, (Style), and Sources and Citations	(Audience and Purpose), Organize Narrative Writing, Descriptive Details, Introduction/Story Beginning, Narrative Techniques and Sequencing, Conclusions, and (Style)	Thesis Statement, (Audience and Purpose), Organize Argumentative Writing, Supporting Details, Introductions, Body Paragraphs and Transitions, Conclusions, (Style), and Sources and Citations	(Audience and Purpose), Research and Note-Taking, Thesis Statement, Organize Argumentative Writing, Supporting Details, Introductions and Conclusions, Body Paragraphs and Transitions, Sources and Citations
	Language Skills	Using Precise, Vivid Words, Using "Only" Correctly, and Words with Greek and Latin Roots	Coordinate Adjectives, Omitting Useless Words, Words with Spellings from Other Languages, Phrases and Clauses, Sentence Types, and Misplaced Modifiers	Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers, Combining Sentences to Eliminate Repetition, and Easily Misspelled Words	Using Adjective Clauses to Combine Sentences, Identifying Modifiers, and Adding Prefixes
	Mentor Texts	Call of the Klondike, The Other Side of the Sky, and "New Directions"	"The Lottery" and "The Wise Old Woman"	Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter for Workers' Rights, About Cesar, and "1976 Democratic National Convention Keynote Address"	"California Invasive Plant Inventory"



UNIT 1: IN PURSUIT

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 7, Unit 1 instructs students on the specifics of the informative/explanatory form of writing. Students examine the unit’s central question—What drives us to undertake a mission?—reflecting on the ideals and situations that inspire people to pursue their goals, sometimes while facing personal risk and potential consequences to themselves and others. The Extended Writing Project is the cumulative writing response to the unit’s question, and it gives students opportunity and experience in developing their own informative writing.

A Student Model appears throughout the EWP and will provide a useful reference for teachers as they guide students through the various components of informative writing. This student example accompanies instruction that develops specific informative writing skills in response to the directions of a prompt. For a more complete background in addressing the unit’s central question, students will also read fictional and informative selections that portray characters and real people experiencing the motivations and results of pursuing one’s goals. Unit selections demonstrate the application of these essential informative writing skills, and students can refer to them as examples to follow.

In addition to providing writing skills applicable to most of the writing modes—such as audience and purpose, introductions and conclusions, and body paragraphs and transitions—students will focus on skill lessons particular to informative writing, such as thesis statement, organization, supporting details, and citations. Students learn to distill their approach to a topic, to organize their main ideas, to select supporting details relevant to their key information, and to credit the sources from which they draw their understandings. Excerpts from some of the mentor texts in the unit selections appear in skill lessons to offer solid examples of the skills students will apply to the informative EWP.

The next step in the EWP process is for students to practice and develop the skills they learn. They do this in each of the five process lessons of the Extended Writing Project: prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, and editing/proofreading/publishing. The process lessons are interspersed with skill lessons that students develop in subsequent process lessons. Each process lesson teaches a stage of writing that builds on the one before it. Students offer one another thoughtful peer reviews and use rubrics specific to informative writing. Writers use this feedback to revise and improve their work. These collaborative opportunities give students a forum to practice the speaking and listening inherent in a structured discussion and offers opportunities to present their findings to their classmates.

Short constructed writing responses accompany all Close Read lessons in the unit, and they help students to understand specific reading and language skills that accompany specific texts, such as informational text structure, textual evidence, central or main idea, and technical and figurative language—to name a few. The prompts lead students to explore the central question of what drives people to attain their goals through strategies integral to gaining a deeper understanding of a text. They examine the attributes of informational text structure, as in Jack London’s short story “The King of Mazy May,” and they review the significance of using textual evidence, as in *Call of the Klondike*, by David Meissner and Kim Richardson. In responding to Ernesto Galarza’s *Barrio Boy*, students focus on identifying and supporting the central or main idea in a piece of writing, and they recognize the influence of precise language use—either technical or figurative—in texts such as “Apollo 13: Mission Highlights” and “The Song of Wandering Aengus.” Another engaging unit experience that students enjoy is the Blast, often a real-world issue or question on which they give their opinion in a short, effective written response that fellow students then return with immediate feedback on StudySync. All of the writing practice that students deliver in this unit prepare them for its application in the unit’s informative EWP.



UNIT 2: THE POWERS THAT BE

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 7, Unit 2 focuses on the narrative form. Students probe the unit’s central question—*What should be the principles of a just society?*—as they consider a situation in which the government has banned their favorite TV show. In order to write an original narrative about a character who seeks justice in an unjust setting, students will imagine an unfair situation that enables them to relate to the central theme of the unit—justice—and to consider what principles separate a fair, or just, society from one that is not. The unit’s fiction and nonfiction selections about characters and real people who have suffered injustice provide a context for students as they begin their narratives.

In order to assist students in their work, the EWP provides a Student Model that contains the essential features of the narrative form and offers an example of a structured academic grade-level response to the prompt. The Student Model is used to help students better understand how narrative elements such as characters, point of view, and plot work together to create an engaging story; analyze how the Model employs specific skills, such as effective organization and descriptive details, to capture and retain readers’ interest; examine the process the writer used to develop the narrative through graphic organizers and story road maps; and identify how the model might, like their own narratives, benefit from revision. Additionally, the unit offers excerpts from the reading selections that act as mentor texts to show students how professional, real-world examples of narratives exhibit essential features of the form. For example, students analyze how Shirley Jackson introduces the setting and sets the stage for the conflict and theme in the opening paragraph of “The Lottery,” or how “The Wise Old Woman,” retold by Yoshiko Uchida, alerts readers to its audience and purpose early in the text. These striking models serve as both teaching tools and sources of inspiration for young writers.

In addition to reviewing writing skills applicable to all modes, such as audience and purpose, style, and introductions and conclusions, this EWP contains several skills unique to the narrative form of writing. Three examples of such lessons include the skills lessons on organization, descriptive details, and narrative techniques and sequencing. The Organize Narrative Writing lesson introduces students to different methods of organizing the events of their plot. For example, writers may use chronological order, or relating events in the sequence in which they occur. They may also organize the action through moving backwards in time, using character flashbacks, or even begin the story in its middle, when certain key events have already occurred. The Descriptive Details lesson offers students the chance to learn how to develop setting, characters, and plot through precise language and descriptive details. The Narrative Techniques and Sequencing lesson provides instruction on strategies, such as description, pacing, and dialogue, that students can apply to their

narratives to truly bring the story to life for readers. These activities provide scaffolding to allow students of a variety of backgrounds and experiences access to an in-depth understanding of the narrative writing form.

Students apply all of the narrative writing skills they have learned in the unit as they engage in five writing process lessons: prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, and editing/proofreading/publishing. Within these process lessons, students plan, organize, create, and enhance an original narrative work to achieve a polished final product. For example, in the Plan lesson, students create a road map based on an example offered by the Student Model that presents an engaging story arc. Students also benefit from the Draft and the Revise lessons. These steps of the writing process emphasize student application of the particular narrative skills they have learned. Additionally, students offer one another thoughtful peer reviews after each stage in the writing process, using specific rubrics that apply to narrative writing; writers are encouraged to consider and incorporate this feedback in subsequent stages. These opportunities for collaboration help students to internalize the aspects of narrative writing. They practice the art of discussion, offering constructive suggestions, and they learn to listen to the feedback of their peers in a cooperative effort to revise their narrative writing to the highest possible standard.

Short constructed responses that accompany all Close Read lessons in the unit help students demonstrate understanding of the specific reading and language skills developed in conjunction with the texts, such as identifying informational text structure, comparing works in different mediums, exploring character and point of view, analyzing figurative language, and raising awareness of word meanings. The prompts also enable students to develop their thinking about the principles of a just society in preparation for writing about a character facing an unjust situation in their narrative EWP. For example, students are prompted to take a position on which medium—text, audio, film—most effectively conveys the theme of how to apply justice in a dystopian society, such as that featured in *The Hunger Games*. They also have the opportunity to reflect on the role that technology, such as reality TV, plays on society. Additionally, unit Blasts provide a range of topics that affect the principles of a just society, such as characteristics of utopian and dystopian societies, the helpful and harmful effects of superstitions, and real-world examples of tumultuous political unrest. These topics enable students to develop succinct responses to readings and stimulate their thinking about how to develop their own narratives.



UNIT 3: JUSTICE SERVED

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 7, Unit 3 concentrates on the literary analysis form of writing. Students examine the unit’s central question—*Why is it essential to defend human rights?*—as they reflect on unit texts that present real-life examples of people who have stood up for the rights of others and inspired social change, such as Mother Jones, a defender of child labor laws, and Cesar Chavez, an advocate for the rights of ill-treated farm workers. The Extended Writing Project for this unit offers students a chance to turn their efforts to the literary analysis essay.

As in previous units, students learn about the writing form through a close examination of a Student Model specifically created to demonstrate fundamental aspects of the literary analysis. The Student Model provides instruction of the pertinent writing skills in response to a writing prompt outlining the expectations of the essay that students will produce. The composition of the unit balances its writing requirements by providing reading selections that offer students a glimpse of how people who take a position against injustice can impact the lives of its victims. In the EWP, students are asked to consider two particular Unit 3 selections: *Long Walk to Freedom* and “Eulogy for Mahatma Gandhi.” Students will follow the directions of the writing prompt to compose a literary analysis essay that compares and contrasts the two texts to determine which writer provides the more convincing claim that the central figure of the text—Nelson Mandela in *Long Walk to Freedom* and Mahatma Gandhi in “Eulogy for Mahatma Gandhi”—was a defender of justice and human rights.

Students learn in the unit that a literary analysis can be a form of argumentative writing, and certain writing skills necessary to this mode of writing provide the necessary context for students to produce their essays. The most relevant skills in this unit include Thesis Statement, Organize Argumentative Writing, Supporting Details, and Sources and Citations. Although some of these skills are taught in the EWPs of other units—for example, in informative and argumentative modes of writing—this unit provides instruction in these skill lessons that teaches students to trace the argument of a writer from his or her claim in the thesis statement through the evidence he or she provides in supporting details. The EWP provides a structure for this mode of writing in an example of a compare-and-contrast organization, and it stresses the importance of using credible sources to strengthen the argument as a whole. Students apply their understanding of the writing form by evaluating a writer’s overall claim in comparison to a claim belonging to another writer.

The process lessons of the EWP give students the chance to apply the writing skills they have learned in the unit to their own literary analysis essays. In particular, they use the various writing stages—prewriting,

planning, drafting, revising, and editing/proofreading/publishing—to practice writing a solid claim built on relevant evidence, sound reasoning, and fundamental sources. Students synthesize their understanding of the components of a literary analysis and then they evaluate the strength of writer’s arguments in relation to each other. They then go one step further in the process lessons and give one another feedback for revision and improvement, using rubrics designed to help them evaluate the impact of each other’s arguments and to judge the strength of each other’s reasoning based on the claims made in the essays.

The balance of the unit offers students a number of short constructed responses that they make in reply to a variety of Close Read writing prompts and unit Blasts proposing various ideas for consideration. Students study different writers in their use of structure, language, and textual evidence to trace and understand the claims they express and the themes they explore. Perhaps the most important learning in this unit occurs when students move beyond expressing a mere opinion and understand the value in building a strong foundation to support their claims. Students realize that supplying evidence and walking a reader clearly through their reasoning is paramount to that reader believing the claims that students wish to express in their own literary analysis essays.



UNIT 4: GETTING ALONG

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 7, Unit 4 challenges students to write an argumentative research paper and consider the unit’s central question—*What are the challenges of human interactions?*—where they seek answers that revolve around the idea of the way people affect each other and the environment in which they live. For example, one reading selection in the unit, “California Invasive Plant Inventory,” examines how humans have “interfered” with the environment and introduced into an area invasive alien species, such as plants and animals, not normally found there. The results of our actions and the consequences that follow comprise the theme around which this unit is built.

Students study the Student Model in the EWP to confirm their understanding of what the writing prompt asks them to do in their own argumentative essays. This Model guides students through instruction and review of various skill and process lessons in the EWP. This particular EWP concentrates on teaching students the necessary elements of research writing as they develop their argumentative essays. Both the Model and mentor texts provided throughout the unit give students a solid grounding in learning to rely on textual evidence to build a claim and to argue for that claim while still acknowledging other points of view. It is through the practice of sound reasoning that students are able to include arguments that suggest a different possibility than one students have chosen. Through this EWP, students learn to emphasize the strength of their own arguments.

As in other units, the argumentative EWP reviews some basic writing skills necessary to writing an effective essay: audience and purpose, style, introductions and conclusions, and body paragraphs and transitions. Similar to the literary analysis EWP in Unit 3, this EWP emphasizes the elements essential to a strong argumentative essay: thesis statement, organization, supporting details, and sources and citations. In addition, Unit 4 offers a skill lesson called Research and Note-Taking, providing an essential road map for writing a research paper and emphasizing the importance of obtaining solid, credible sources from which to gather information to support their arguments. In the Sources and Citations lesson, students gain additional practice in identifying solid sources, learning the correct ways to cite their sources and giving credit to the writers who supplied the original information. They then apply these very important research skills to their argumentative essays.

The process lessons of the argumentative EWP follow the usual order of prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, and editing/proofreading/and publishing. Students apply the varied and somewhat involved skills

at different points of the writing process, concentrating in detail on the research aspect of each step. As with the literary analysis of Unit 3, students focus on exploring material for the best possible sources; they cite their sources within the essay in correct academic manner, using a formal style of citation; and they substantiate the claims of their essays, using the most effective and solid evidence they find to support and direct their arguments.

Other writing in the unit includes a variety of Close Read writing prompts and unit Blasts that students will study and respond to as they learn reading skills in the unit, such as in the Central or Main Idea and the Technical Language lessons that accompany the “California Invasive Plant Inventory” and in the Arguments and Claims lesson that corresponds to the selection “The Dangers of Social Media.” The Close Read writing prompts give students the opportunity to practice incorporating these skills in their writing. The unit Blasts expose students to various issues that address the unit’s central question, such as the Big Idea Blast that explores why people behave differently in groups than they behave on their own; the Blast accompanying “The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet” that appropriately focuses on feuds between groups; and the Unit Wrap Blast that examines different ways to resolve conflicts that arise between people. The students write in response to these Blasts as they continue to focus on the central question of the unit.



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