



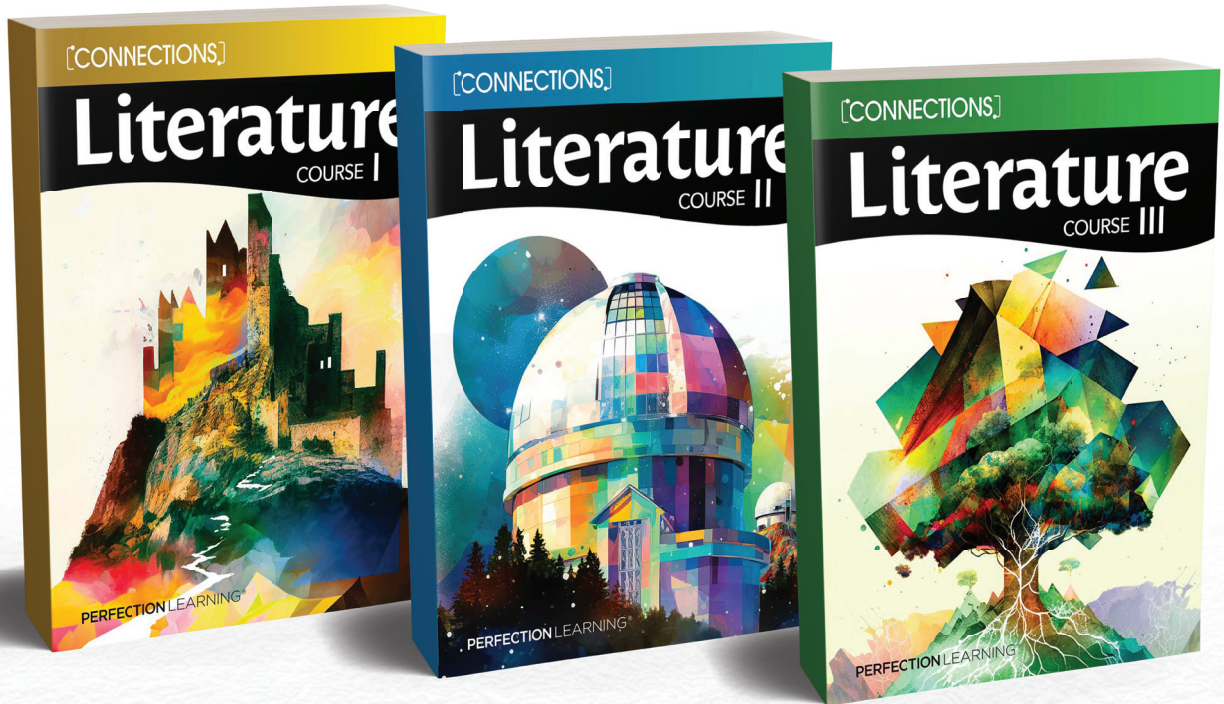
[CONNECTIONS.]  
**Literature**

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Grades 6–8

**Connect  
Worlds,  
Empower  
Minds.**

[CONNECTIONS]  
**Literature**

Grades 6–8



## Tables of Contents

Each course table of contents includes title selections, authors, genres, Lexile levels, and additional suggested texts to explore the Essential Question.

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*Connections: Literature* supports learners as they engage in the study of **dynamic, relevant texts** and brings the richness of **diverse voices** to students through literature.

Grounded in learning science, proven instructional strategies **break down learning barriers** and support academic growth.

- Connect students to a diverse/dynamic world of reading and writing.
- Enable deep understanding, critical thinking, and effective communication.
- Empower academic growth and remove learning barriers.



UNIT 1

Theme: **School Days**

Consider whether the way you act at school is different from the way you act in other settings.

**Essential Question: What influences your behavior in school?**

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
"The Hand"	Mary Ruefle	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
"Charles"	Shirley Jackson	Short Story	610L
"David Talamántez on the Last Day of Second Grade"	Rosemary Catacalos	Poem	N/A
from <i>The First Rule of Punk</i>	Celia C. Pérez	Novel Excerpt	700L
"Outside the Box"	Karen Bush Gibson	Article	990L
"Tuesday of the Other June"	Norma Fox Mazer	Short Story	610L
from <i>Fight, Molly</i>	Ralph Moody	Novel Excerpt	1090L
"Dead Men's Path"	Chinua Achebe	Short Story	880L
"Primer Lesson"	Carl Sandburg	Poem	N/A
from <i>The Wheel on the School</i>	Meindert DeJong	Novel Excerpt	710L
"Uncovering the Past: Students See and Feel History at This Field School"	Tracy Vonder Brink	Article	1000L

**Mentor Text for Student Essay**

"Should Students Wear Uniforms?"	Staff writers at <i>Time for Kids</i>	Article/Debate	510L
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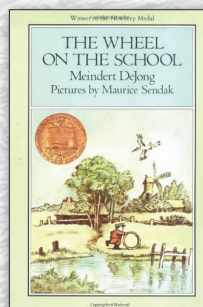
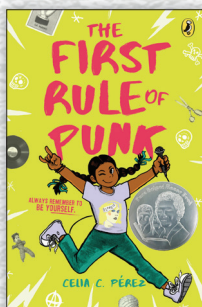
**Performance-Based Assessment: Writing an Informational Essay**

**Additional Related Readings Online**

"'Webcamgate' Shows Youth are Not Apathetic About Privacy"	Mario Rodriguez	Blog	1620L
"Seen & Heard"	Mary Moley Kalergis	Interviews	1000L & 1060L
"Moving Into the Mainstream"	Slade Anderson	Personal Narrative	920L
"Little Rock Warriors Thirty Years Later"	Melba Pattillo Beals	Autobiography	1020L
"Crossing the Line"	Nell Bernstein	Article	1280L
"This Girl Gets Her Kicks"	Rick Reilly	Essay	1180L

**Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question**

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>The First Rule of Punk</i>	Celia C. Pérez	Main	670L
<i>Fight, Molly</i>	Ralph Moody	Main	840L
<i>The Wheel on the School</i>	Meindert DeJong	Main	710L
<i>Not Your All-American Girl</i>	Madelyn Rosenberg & Wendy Wan-Long Shang	Suggested	630L
<i>Confessions of a Closet Catholic</i>	Sarah Darer Littman	Suggested	930L



# UNIT 2

**Theme: *What Makes You, You?***

*Are you a unique individual, or are you a product of your family and cultural background?*

**Essential Question: *How does a person’s cultural background and family affect who they are?***

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
“Knoxville, Tennessee”	Nikki Giovanni	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
“Eleven”	Sandra Cisneros	Short Story	890L
“Change”	Charlotte Zolotow	Poem	N/A
from <i>The Devil’s Arithmetic</i>	Jane Yolen	Novel Excerpt	730L
from <i>Wonder</i>	R.J. Palacio	Novel Excerpt	790L
“The All-American Slurp”	Lensey Namioka	Short Story	860L
“Pig Brains”	Alden R. Carter	Short Story	650L
“The Curious Treasure of Captain Kidd”	Alvin Schwartz	Biographical Essay	890L
“X Marks the Spot”	Nick D’Alto	Article	1190L
“Courtney Craven: Gamer and Disability Activist”	Interviewed by Melissa Hart	Interview	890L

**Mentor Text for Student Essay**

“Peers Helping Peers”	Marcia Amidon Lusted	Article	1070L
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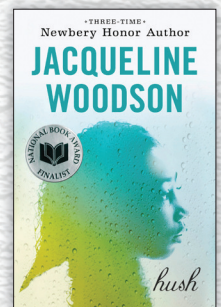
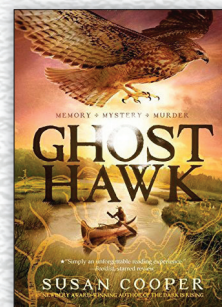
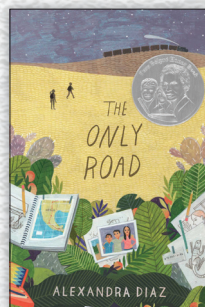
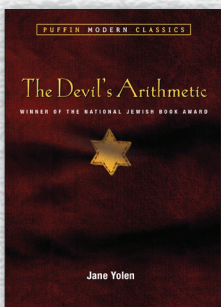
**Performance-Based Assessment: Writing an Informational/Expository Essay**

**Additional Related Readings Online**

“The Cutting of My Long Hair”	Zitkala-Sa	Memoir	950L
“Holly, Age Fifteen”	Jill Krentz	Personal Essay	1070L
“Our Blended Family and the ‘Togetherness’ of Ramadan”	S.K. Ali	Personal Essay	1030L
“At Last, Connected by Blood”	Amy Carleton	Essay	900L
“Tiffany, Age Eleven”	Rebecca Carroll	Personal Essay	1010L
“Birth-Order Blues”	Paula Lynn Parks	Article	1040L
“Third Child”	Erma Bombeck	Humor Column	1120L

**Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question**

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>The Devil’s Arithmetic</i>	Jane Yolen	Main	730L
<i>Wonder</i>	R.J. Palacio	Main	720L
<i>The Only Road</i>	Alexandra Diaz	Suggested	830
<i>Ghost Hawk</i>	Susan Cooper	Suggested	940L
<i>Hush</i>	Jacqueline Woodson	Suggested	640L



Outlined selections are paired texts.

## UNIT 3

Theme: *Tales We Tell: Fables, Fairy Tales, Folklore, and Tall Tales*

Consider what makes a good narrative.

**Essential Question:** *How do such narratives make sense of the world, and how would you tell a tale about your own life or unique perspective on the world?*

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
"Interview"	Sara Henderson Hay	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
"Knee-High Man Wants to be Sizable"	Retold by Angelica Whitmal	African American Folktale	1000L
"The Boy Who Found the Light"	Pat Betteley	Play/Drama	N/A
"Tales and Lore"	Kimberly N. Ruffin	Article	1350L
"Where the Girl Rescued Her Brother"	Gayle Ross & Joseph Bruchac	Legend	980L
from <i>In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse</i>	Joseph Marshall III	Novel Excerpt	620L
"The Living Kuan-Yin"	Retold by Carol Kendall and Yao-Wen Li	Chinese Folktale	1060L
"Shrewd Todie and Lyzer the Miser"	Isaac Bashevis Singer	Folktale	920L
"The Cremation of Sam McGee"	Robert Service	Poem	N/A
"Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind"	Retold by Mary Pope Osborne	Tall Tale	820L
"The Fitting of the Slipper"	William J. Brooke	Reimagined Fairy Tale/Folktale	690L

### Mentor Text for Student Essay

"The Princess and the Tin Box"	James Thurber	Reimagined Folktale	1200L
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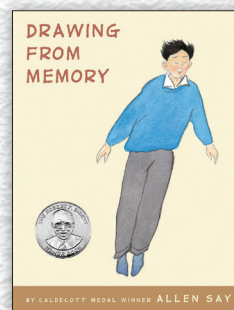
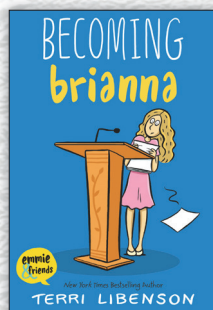
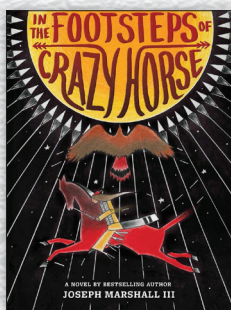
### Performance-Based Assessment: Write a Narrative: Fairy Tale

#### Additional Related Readings Online

"The Watchful River Spirit"	Jo Hales Tunstall	Article	960L
"Ticing' the Fairies"	Wim Coleman	Article	1070L
"Fantasy"	Isaac Asimov	Essay	1260L
"Battle by the Breadfruit Tree"	Theodore Waldeck	Article	910L
"The Wise Goddess: Athena"	Betty Bonham Lies	Essay	1010L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse</i>	Joseph Marshall III	Main	620L
<i>Becoming Brianna</i>	Terri Libenson	Suggested	490L
<i>Drawing from Memory</i>	Allen Say	Suggested	HL560L
<i>Ella Enchanted</i>	Gail Carson Levine	Suggested	670L



# UNIT 4

## Theme: A Helping Hand

Think about the saying, “opposites attract.”

**Essential Question: Do you think friendships are based on similarities, differences, or a combination of traits? Which traits or values in a friendship are most important?**

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
“What Happened During the Ice Storm?”	Jim Heyden	Short Story	720L
from <i>Front Desk</i>	Kelly Yang	Novel Excerpt	670L
“What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything?”	Avi	Short Story	570L
“The Runaway”	Robert Frost	Poem	N/A
“Seventh Grade”	Gary Soto	Short Story	620L
“Deaf Friends: Want to Communicate Better with Kids with Hearing Loss? Try These Tips”	Melanie Ashford	Article	890L
“Beneath the Cherry Trees” from <i>Marley and Me</i>	John Grogan	Personal Essay	990L
“The Dog of Pompeii”	Louis Untermeyer	Short Story	840L
“Power of the Powerless: A Brother’s Lesson”	Christopher de Vinck	Personal Essay	830L

### Mentor Text for Student Essay

“A Famous Friendship”	Jean McLeod	Article	1040L
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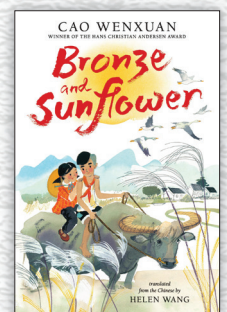
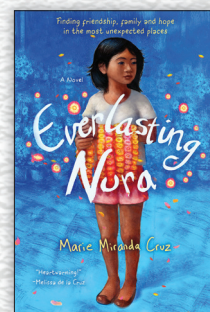
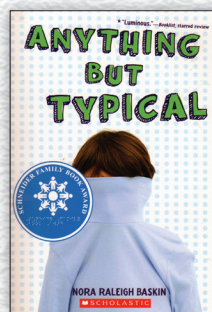
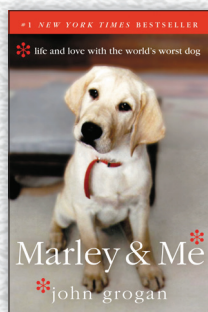
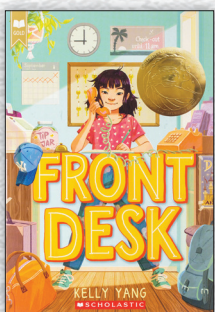
### Performance-Based Assessment: Writing an Informational/Expository Essay

#### Additional Related Readings Online

“Dirk the Protector”	Gary Paulsen	Autobiography/ Memoir	920L
“The Teacher Who Changed My Life”	Nicholas Gage	Memoir	1360L
“The Man in the Water”	Roger Rosenblatt	Essay	1060L
“Mighty Vesuvius Erupts”	Pliny the Younger	Historical Document	910L
“The Price of Life”	Pamela Grim	Article	800L
“Older Run”	Gary Paulsen	Autobiography	1080L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>Front Desk</i>	Kelly Yang	Main	640L
<i>Marley &amp; Me: Live and Love with the World’s Worst Dog</i>	John Grogan	Main	990L
<i>Anything But Typical</i>	Nora Raleigh Baskin	Suggested	HL640L
<i>Everlasting Nora: A Novel</i>	Marie Miranda Cruz	Suggested	700L
<i>Bronze and Sunflower</i>	Cao Wenxuan	Suggested	790L



Outlined selections are paired texts.

## UNIT 5

Theme: *Mischief and Malice*

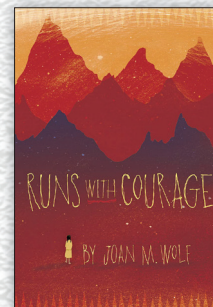
Consider how the texts in this unit explore behavior that is considered evil, bad, or naughty.

**Essential Question:** *How do the authors help the reader understand the reasons behind “bad” behavior, and does understanding a character’s behavior help justify it?*

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
“The Legend of Bonnie and Clyde”	Merle Haggard	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
“The Tell-Tale Heart”	Edgar Allan Poe	Short Story	840L
“Thank You, M’am”	Langston Hughes	Short Story	650L
from <i>Tight</i>	Torrey Maldonado	Novel Excerpt	650L
“All Summer in a Day”	Ray Bradbury	Short Story	770L
“Damon and Pythias”	Fan Kissen	Radio Play	N/A
“The Highwayman”	Alfred Noyes	Poem	N/A
“Auto-de-Fe”	Barbara F. Weissberger	Article	1200L
Mentor Text for Student Essay			
“Heroine and Villain”	Carolyn Fay	Article	1090L
Performance-Based Assessment: Writing an Informational/Expository Essay			
Additional Related Readings Online			
“Fickle Friends: How to Deal with Frenemies”	Kirsten Weir	Informational Article	1230L
“Could A Woman Do That?”	Anita Gustafson	Essay	1090L
“The Fourth of July and Slavery”	Frederick Douglass	Speech	1140L
“Emmett Till, 1955”	Henry Hampton	Interview	880L
“Zoo Complicated: Are Captive Animals Happy?”	Kathryn Hulick	Article	940L
“The White Rose: Long Live Freedom”	Jacob G. Hornberger	Essay	930L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>Tight</i>	Torrey Maldonado	Main	600L
<i>Blackbird Fly</i>	Erin Entrada Kelly	Suggested	660L
<i>Runs with Courage</i>	Joan M. Wolf	Suggested	680L





## UNIT 1

### Theme: *A Work In Progress*

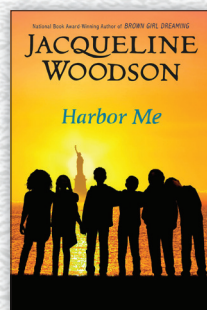
Consider how the characters in this unit are still shaping their worldviews—and how the world is shaping them.

**Essential Question:** *How have your personality and interests changed over the years, and how have these changes influenced who you are?*

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
"My Father's Hands Held Mine"	Norman H. Russell	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
"The One Who Watches"	Judith Ortiz Cofer	Short Story	730L
"I'm Nobody! Who are you?"	Emily Dickinson	Poem	N/A
from <i>Harbor Me</i>	Jacqueline Woodson	Novel Excerpt	630L
"Jared"	David Gifaldi	Short Story	660L
"Atomic Blue Pieces"	Angela Johnson	Short Story	730L
<b>Mentor Text for Student Essay</b>			
"On Being Seventeen, Bright, and Unable to Read"	David Raymond	Nonfiction Essay	760L
<b>Performance-Based Assessment: Informational Writing: Writing a Personal Essay</b>			
<b>Additional Related Readings Online</b>			
"How It Feels to Be Colored Me"	Zora Neale Hurston	Nonfiction Essay	900L
"On the Rainy River"	Tim O'Brien	Short Story	1000L
"Von"	Janet Bode	Oral History	680L
"Embarrassed? Blame Your Brain"	Jennifer Connor-Smith	Article	990L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>Harbor Me</i>	Jacqueline Woodson	Main	630L
<i>Celeste's Harlem Renaissance</i>	Eleanor E. Tate	Suggested	780L
<i>The Big Field</i>	Mike Lupica	Suggested	970L



## UNIT 2

Theme: **FACING CHALLENGES, INSIDE AND OUT**

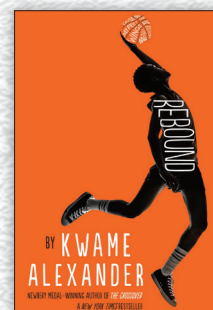
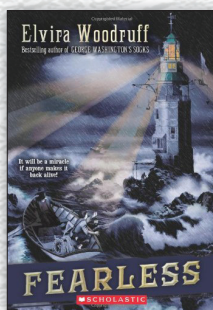
Think about the biggest challenges that you and your peers face.

**Essential Question:** *In our daily lives, are the biggest challenges we face external, internal, or a combination?*

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
"Pass/Fail"	Linda Pastan	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
"Casey at the Bat"	Ernest Lawrence Thayer	Poem	N/A
<i>Fern the Mighty</i>	Liz Siedt	Drama/Play	N/A
from <i>The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child</i>	Francisco Jiménez	Novel Excerpt	860L
"Names/Nombres"	Julia Alvarez	Short Story	960L
from <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	Harriet Ann Jacobs	Nonfiction Book Excerpt	950L
"Homeless"	Anna Quindlen	Essay	980L
from <i>The Stars Beneath Our Feet</i>	David Barclay Moore	Nonfiction Excerpt	720L
<b>Mentor Text for Student Essay</b>			
"What's the Worst That Could Happen?"	Bruce Coville	Short Story	880L
<b>Performance-Based Assessment: Narrative Writing</b>			
<b>Additional Related Readings Online</b>			
"The Letter 'A'" from <i>My Left Foot</i>	Christy Brown	Autobiography	1300L
"Moon"	Chiam Potok	Short Story	850L
"The United States v. Susan B. Anthony"	Margaret Truman	Essay	1130L
"Search and Rescue"	Tim Cahill	Autobiography	910L
"The Fine Madness of Iditarod"	Gary Paulsen	Autobiography	1240L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>Fearless</i>	Elvira Woodruff	Suggested	810L
<i>Leviathan</i>	Scott Westerfeld	Suggested	790L
<i>Rebound</i>	Kwame Alexander	Suggested	780L



# UNIT 3

## Theme: *The Meaning of Independence*

Consider how the people or groups in the following texts are trying to gain independence.

**Essential Question:** *What rules or laws are the groups in the following texts challenging, and why are they challenging these rules or laws?*

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
"Time Somebody Told Me"	Quantedius Hall	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
Malala Yousafzai's Speech to the UN Youth Assembly	Malala Yousafzai	Speech	910L
"Golden Glass"	Anna Villanueva	Short Story	980L
"Almost Ready"	Arnold Adoff	Poem	N/A
from <i>George vs. George: The American Revolution as Seen from Both Sides</i>	Rosalyn Schnazer	Illustrated Historical Book Excerpt	1120L
from <i>From Lawyer to Patriot</i>	Charles F. Baker III	Drama/Play	N/A
"Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death"	Patrick Henry	Speech	960L
"On Women's Right to Vote"	Susan B. Anthony	Speech	1160L
"Don't Let Them Vote"	Joyce Haworth	Article	1030L
"Kids vs. Government"	Alice Andre-Clark	Article	1300L

### Mentor Text for Student Essay

"The Girl Who Silenced the World for 5 Minutes" (Speech given to U.N. Earth Summit, 1992)	Severn Cullis-Suzuki	Speech	1020L
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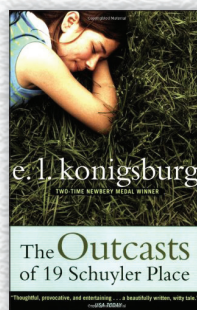
### Performance-Based Assessment: Argumentative Writing: Writing a Speech

#### Additional Related Readings Online

from <i>1984</i>	George Orwell	Novel Excerpt	1060L
"The Courage of Their Convictions: Fannie Lou Hamer"	Linda R. Monk	Nonfiction Book Excerpt	1150L
"Brown v. Board of Education"	Earl Warren	Supreme Court Decision	1320L
"A More Perfect Union"	Barack Obama	Speech	1310L
The Declaration of Independence		Historical Document	1790L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>George vs. George: The American Revolution as Seen from Both Sides</i> , pages 7–31	Rosalyn Schnazer	Main	1120L
<i>The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place</i>	E.L. Konigsburg	Suggested	840L
<i>Uprising</i>	Margaret Peterson Haddix	Suggested	790L



## UNIT 4

### Theme: *Role Models*

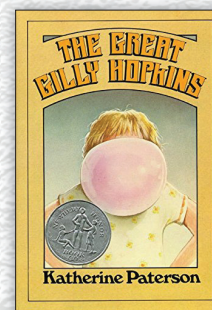
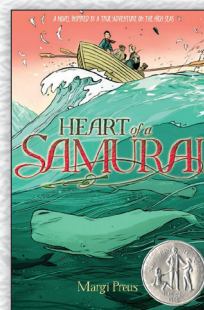
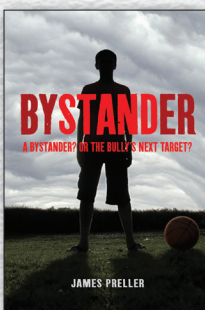
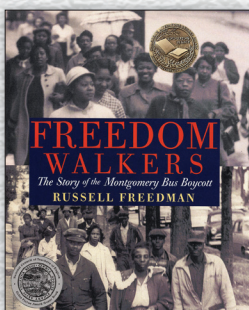
Consider how the young adults in the following stories view the habits of adults.

**Essential Question:** *Do the young people want to emulate the adults? Why or why not? Why might young people feel conflicted when they look to adults as role models?*

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
"Mother to Son"	Langston Hughes	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
"Saying Good-bye to the Tall Man"	Rick Book	Short Story	830L
from <i>Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott</i>	Russell Freedman	Novel Excerpt	1110L
"Dawn"	Tim Wynne-Jones	Short Story	730L
"Mrs. Goldwasser"	Ron Wallace	Poem	N/A
"Looking for Work"	Gary Soto	Memoir	1090L
"Ashes"	Susan Beth Pfeffer	Short Story	670L
from <i>Ordinary Hazards: A Memoir</i>	Nikki Grimes	Novel Excerpt	840L
<b>Mentor Text for Student Essay</b>			
"America's First Woman Soldier"	Richard Bauman	Article	1080L
<b>Performance-Based Assessment: Informational Writing: Writing an Article</b>			
<b>Additional Related Readings Online</b>			
"Flying in the Face of the Führer"	Phil Taylor	Article	1310L
"Hero's Return"	Kristin Hunter	Short Story	730L
"The Front of the Bus"	Rosa Parks	Autobiography	840L
"In Search of Zora Neale Hurston"	Alice Walker	Essay/Personal Narrative	900L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott</i>	Russell Freedman	Main	1110L
<i>Looking for Work</i>	Gary Soto	Main	1090L
<i>Bystander</i>	James Preller	Suggested	600L
<i>Heart of a Samurai</i>	Margi Preus	Suggested	760L
<i>The Great Gilly Hopkins</i>	Katherine Paterson	Suggested	800L



# UNIT 5

## Theme: *The Role of Technology in Your Life*

Consider how the following stories examine the impact of technology on our lives.

**Essential Question:** *According to the authors, how does technology help you or hurt you, and how can we find balance that allows you to use it without being overwhelmed by it?*

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
“Southbound on the Freeway”	May Swenson	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
from <i>See You in the Cosmos</i>	Jack Cheng	Novel Excerpt	1130L
“The Defender”	Robert Lipsyte	Short Story	810L
“A Robot Doesn’t Have a Curve Ball”	Ron Koertge	Short Story	500L
from <i>The Science of Breakable Things</i>	Tae Keller	Novel Excerpt	840L
<i>You’re Out of This World, Mary Catherine!</i>	Nick D’Alto	Play/Drama	N/A
“Farewell Address”	Dwight D. Eisenhower	Speech	1200L
“There Will Come Soft Rains”	Ray Bradbury	Short Story	880L
“The Secret of the Machines”	Rudyard Kipling	Poem	N/A
<b>YourTech:</b> “How Trustworthy is Social Media?” “Is Your TikTok Feed Too Perfect?” “Could You Live Without Your Cellphone?”	Kathryn Hulick	Articles	1120L 880L 880L
<b>Mentor Text for Student Essay</b>			
“Games,” from <i>Everything Bad Is Good for You: How Today’s Popular Culture Is Actually Making Us Smarter</i>	Steven Johnson	Nonfiction Book Excerpt	1150L
<b>Performance-Based Assessment: Argumentative Writing: Writing an Essay</b>			
<b>Additional Related Readings Online</b>			
from <i>Thinking Machines: The Quest for Artificial Intelligence—and Where It’s Taking Us Next</i>	Luke Dormehl	Nonfiction Book Excerpt	1250L
from <i>Feed</i>	M.T. Anderson	Novel Excerpt	920L
“Your Body Is Your ID”	Hank Schlesinger	Article	1230L
“From Science Fiction to Science Fact”	Julie Nobles	Article	1200L
“It’s ‘digital heroin’: How screens turn kids into psychotic junkies”	Dr. Nicholas Kardaras	Article	1300L
“Why Calling Screen Time ‘digital heroin’ is digital garbage”	Rachel Becker	Article	1240L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>See You in the Cosmos</i>	Jack Cheng	Main	1120L
<i>The Science of Breakable Things</i>	Tae Keller	Main	840L
<i>Everything Bad Is Good for You: How Today’s Popular Culture Is Actually Making Us Smarter</i>	Steven Johnson	Main	1150L
<i>Mr. Lincoln’s High-Tech War: How the North Used the Telegraph, Railroads, Surveillance Balloons, Ironclads, High-Powered Weapons, and More to Win the Civil War</i>	Thomas B. Allen & Roger MacBride Allen	Suggested	1180L
<i>TBH, This Is So Awkward</i>	Lisa Greenwald	Suggested	540L
<i>Fever Crumb</i>	Philip Reeve	Suggested	1000L

Outlined selections are paired texts.

# UNIT 1

Theme: *The Story of Us*

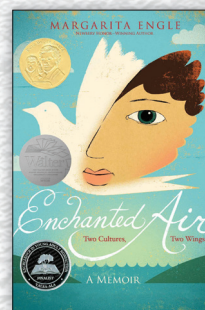
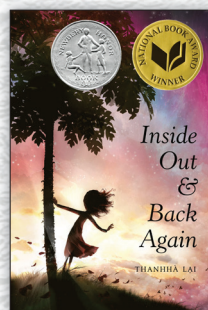
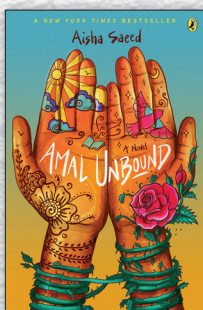
Consider how the characters in the following texts use storytelling to share and make sense of adolescent experiences.

**Essential Question:** How do the characters in the following selections use stories to express their personal experiences and their reactions to those experiences?

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
"Hanging Fire"	Audre Lorde	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
"Dear Marsha"	Judie Angell	Short Story	920L
"The Dream Keeper"	Langston Hughes	Poem	N/A
"President Cleveland, Where Are You"	Robert Cormier	Short Story	1020L
from <i>Another Brooklyn: A Novel</i>	Jacqueline Woodson	Novel Excerpt	850L
"A Letter from the Fringe"	Joan Bauer	Short Story	710L
"Noodle Soup for Nincompoops"	Ellen Wittlinger	Short Story	720L
"What Is and Ain't Grammatical"	Dave Barry	Essay	980L
"Rules and Regulations"	Lewis Carroll	Poem	N/A
"Daisy Turner, Master Storyteller"	Jane C. Beck	Article	1060L
<b>Mentor Text for Student Essay</b>			
from <i>Amal Unbound</i>	Aisha Saeed	Novel Excerpt	600L
<b>Performance-Based Assessment: Narrative Writing</b>			
<b>Additional Related Readings Online</b>			
"Kimchee and Cornbread"	Helie Lee & Stephanie Covington	Nonfiction Article	1080L
from <i>How I Came to Be a Writer</i>	Phyllis Reynolds Naylor	Memoir Excerpt	940L
"Joe King"	Bailey White	Personal Reminiscence	1110L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>Amal Unbound</i>	Aisha Saeed	Main	600L
<i>Inside Out &amp; Back Again</i>	Thanhha Lai	Suggested	800L
<i>Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings: A Memoir</i>	Margarita Engle	Suggested	1120L
<i>Devoted: A Novel</i>	Jennifer Mathieu	Suggested	860L



# UNIT 2

## Theme: *Being a Good Citizen*

Consider whether the characters in the following texts prioritize their own interests, or the interests of the communities they live in.

**Essential Question: How do people manage to balance—or not balance—their own needs with the needs of other people?**

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
“Caged Bird”	Maya Angelou	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
“The Pill Factory”	Anne Mazer	Short Story	620L
Block Party—145th Street Style	Walter Dean Myers	Short Story	660L
from <i>Bad Boy: A Memoir</i>	Walter Dean Myers	Memoir Excerpt	970L
from <i>The House that Lou Built</i>	Mae Respicio	Novel Excerpt	730L
“Amir”	Paul Fleischman	Short Story	780L
“Golden Spike”	Cynthia Overbeck Bix	Short Story	610L
“The Idea of Citizenship”	Chippy Slavicek	Article	1250L
“Celebrating Citizenship”	Kathiann M. Kowalski	Article	680L

### Mentor Text for Student Essay

“Puerto Rico Has Earned the Right to Statehood”	Julia Comer	Article	1280L
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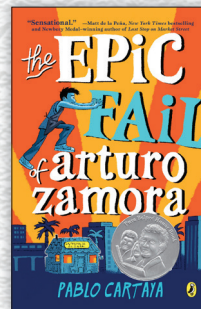
### Performance-Based Assessment: Writing an Argumentative Essay

#### Additional Related Readings Online

“Going to America”	Nicholas Gage	Autobiography	1420L
“Someone Who Saw”	David Gifaldi	Short Story	860L
“And Justice for All”	Johnny D. Boggs	Article	1010L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>Bad Boy: A Memoir</i>	Walter Dean Meyers	Main	970L
<i>The House That Lou Built</i>	Mae Respicio	Main	660L
<i>The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora</i>	Pablo Cartaya	Suggested	750L
<i>My Family Divided: One Girl’s Journey of Home, Loss, and Hope</i>	Diane Guerrero	Suggested	730L



## UNIT 3

Theme: **Your Place in History**

Consider the historical issues and concerns that characters face in the following texts.

**Essential Question: How do characters try to overcome these issues, and do these issues reflect similar concerns that young people face today?**

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
"in the inner city"	Lucille Clifton	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
"Ayoka and Sequoyah: Writing Cherokee History"	James Gilbertson	Article	770L
Abd al-Rahman Ibrahim from <i>Now Is Your Time! The African-American Struggle for Freedom</i>	Walter Dean Meyers	Biography	1030L
from <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i> , chapter 12	Mildred D. Taylor	Novel Excerpt	920L
from <i>Reflections on the Civil War</i>	Bruce Catton	Historical Book Excerpt	1110L
"The Mysterious Mr. Lincoln"	Russell Freedman	Essay	1040L
The Gettysburg Address	Abraham Lincoln	Speech	1420L
"Paul Revere's Ride"	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	Poem	N/A
"Global Warming Is a Myth"	Edmund Contoski	Article	1190L
"2021: A Year of Climate Change and Records Broken"	Jerry Schnoor	Article	1140L

### Mentor Text for Student Essay

"Greta Thunberg's Speech to the United Nations"	Greta Thunberg	Speech	880L
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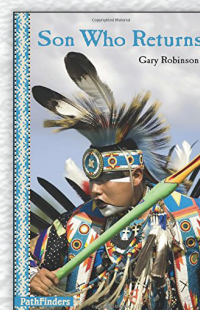
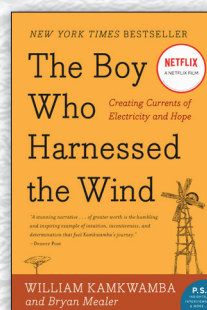
### Performance-Based Assessment: Writing an Argumentative Speech

#### Additional Related Readings Online

from <i>Rescue in Denmark</i>	Harold Flender	Historical Account	1110L
"I would have preferred to carry through"	Richard Nixon	Speech	1330L
"Nixon Resigns"	John Herbers	Article	1440L
"Built to Last"	Donald Dale Jackson	Article	1250L
"Scream of the Little Bird"	David S. Jackson	Article	1180L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope</i>	William Kamkwamba & Bryan Mealer	Suggested	960L
<i>Son Who Returns</i>	Gary Robinson	Suggested	690L





# UNIT 4

## Theme: *Make Me Laugh*

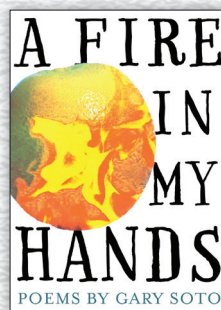
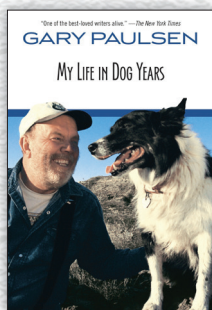
Consider how the passages in this unit use humor to address serious subjects.

**Essential Question:** *What subjects do authors use humor to examine, and why might humor be an effective way to address these subjects?*

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
"A Picture Story for the Curious"	Alice Walker	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
"Clowning Around the World"	Meg Moss	Article	1130L
"Growing Up Clowning Around"	John Stubbs	Article	950L
"Kissing Tennessee"	Kathi Appelt	Short Story	880L
"The Night the Bear Ate Goombaw"	Patrick F. McManus	Short Story	980L
from <i>The Season of Styx Malone</i>	Kekla Magoon	Novel Excerpt	680L
"These Shoes of Mine"	Gary Soto	Drama/Play	N/A
"Confused"	Sara Holbrook	Poem	N/A
"A Plate of Peas"	Rick Beyer	Memoir	830L
"Josh: The Smartest Dog in the World"	Gary Paulsen	Personal Narrative/ Memoir	1180L
<b>Mentor Text for Student Essay</b>			
"Laughter: A Prescription for Good Health"	Written by Perfection Learning editors	Article	1290L
<b>Performance-Based Assessment: Write a Research Report</b>			
<b>Additional Related Readings Online</b>			
"Memories of Dating"	Dave Barry	Newspaper Columnn	1180L
"How to Eat Like a Child"	Delia Ephron	Parody	740L
"Dumb Criminal Tales"	Daniel Butler, Leland Gregory & Alan Ray	Anecdotes	960L

### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>The Season of Styx Malone</i>	Kekla Magoon	Main	510L
<i>My Life in Dog Years</i>	Gary Paulsen	Main	1150L
<i>Tall Story</i>	Candy Gourlay	Suggested	670L
<i>A Fire in My Hands</i>	Gary Soto	Suggested	NP
<i>I Was Their American Dream: A Graphic Memoir</i>	Malaka Gharib	Suggested	490L



Outlined selections are paired texts.

## UNIT 5

### Theme: *The Outer Limits*

Consider how stories that explore the unexplainable or fantastic help us make sense of ourselves and the world around us.

**Essential Question: What purpose does the supernatural or fantastic serve in our lives?**

PASSAGE TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	LEXILE
"Horse By Moonlight"	Alberto Blanco	Read-Aloud Poem	N/A
"Black Angel"	Nancy Springer	Short Story	810L
"Muffin Explains Teleology to the World at Large"	James Alan Gardner	Short Story	620L
from <i>The Jumbies</i>	Tracey Baptiste	Novel Excerpt	690L
"The Elevator"	William Sleator	Short Story	720L
"This Is a Test"	Stephen Gregg	Play	N/A
"Dreams Gone Bad: The Truth Behind Midnight Hauntings"	Jennifer Conner-Smith	Article	910L
"The Iliad"	Homer	Poem	N/A
"Troy"	Adele Geras	Short Story	670L

#### Mentor Text for Student Essay

"The Wife's Story"	Ursula K. LeGuin	Short Story	780L
Model Literary Analysis	Model essay by Staci Thota	Literary Analysis	1185L

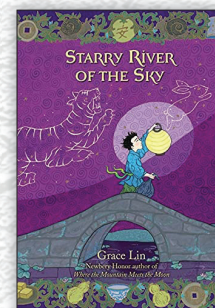
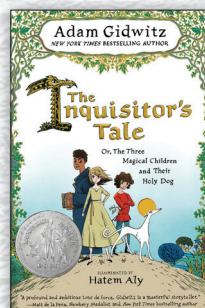
#### Performance-Based Assessment: Write a Literary Analysis

#### Additional Related Readings Online

"Dark They Were, and Golden-Eyed"	Ray Bradbury	Short Story	900L
"Crop Circles"	Jerome Clark & Nancy Pear	Article	1160L
"Pegasus for a Summer"	Michael J. Rosen	Personal Narrative	1260L
"Pegasus: Looking Back at the Myth"	Julie Schumacher	Nonfiction	1200L
"Homer: The Blind Poet"	Alisoun Witting	Essay	1380L

#### Additional Texts for Further Exploration of the Essential Question

TITLE	AUTHOR	READING	LEXILE
<i>The Jumbies</i>	Tracey Baptiste	Main	680L
<i>The Inquisitor's Tale: Or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog</i>	Adam Gidwitz	Suggested	620L
<i>The Sea in Winter</i>	Christine Day	Suggested	770L
<i>Starry River of the Sky</i>	Grace Lin	Suggested	810L



## Program Consultants



**Almitra L. Berry, Ed.D.**

Almitra L. Berry is a nationally recognized motivational speaker, author, and consultant on the topic of culturally and linguistically diverse learners in America’s K–12 education system. Her works and research focus on equity and academic achievement for marginalized learners—particularly in majority-of-color, low-wealth, large, urban school districts.

Dr. Berry is host of the podcast *Educational Equity Emancipation* and author of the book *Effecting Change for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners* as well as numerous other articles addressing educational equity.

A graduate of the University of California, Davis, Dr. Berry has worked with leaders and school systems throughout the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. She has presented at scores of state, national, and international conferences on equity, leadership, curriculum reform, and meeting the needs of historically underserved and disenfranchised learners. She calls upon educators and educational leaders to evaluate policy, curriculum, instruction, supervision, and professional learning with a lens focused on equity.



**Laura Kebart, M.Ed.**

Laura Kebart leverages her 20 years of classroom teaching and instructional coaching experience to serve busy middle school English language arts teachers. Laura’s passion lies in the intersection of crafting rich, relevant, and accessible learning experiences for students and ensuring user-friendly methods of lesson planning and delivery for teachers in the trenches. By providing educational consulting, online workshops, and annual virtual conferences, Laura helps educators across the country teach with confidence while increasing student engagement.

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