

**Fair Lawn Public Schools
Fair Lawn, NJ**

**Literature Connections
Grade 7**

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I. Course Synopsis

The 7th Grade Literature Connections Curriculum creates the foundation for students' growth and development within the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language acquisition.

The four themes of Responsibility, Society, Perseverance, and Overcoming Adversity serve as the guiding principles of the course. Essential questions and Common Core State Standards drive instruction within each unit and provide a purpose for learning. Grammar, speaking, and NJASK preparation are infused into the curriculum and targeted throughout.

II. Philosophy & Rationale

The purpose of the 7th Grade Literature Connections Curriculum is to encourage students to find the link between literature and their lives. An integral objective of the course is to promote and foster independent readers and thinkers who identify themes and symbols that are woven throughout a piece of literature or unit of study. Students will apply higher order thinking skills and become engaged as they grapple with issues rooted in the text. An important component of the course is the continual written and spoken expression of their responses. Students will write formally and creatively, exhibiting standard mechanics of grammar.

III. Scope & Sequence

Unit 1: Decisions and Responsibility

**Nothing But the Truth* by Avi <7 weeks>

The Pigman by Paul Zindel <4 weeks>

Topic 1: Point of View

Topic 2: Cause and Effect

Topic 3: Open-ended Responses

Topic 4: Explanatory Quote Response

Unit 2: Society

<6-8 weeks>

**The Giver* by Lois Lowry

Topic 1: Utopia / Dystopia

Topic 2: Compare and Contrast

Topic 3: Foreshadowing and Symbolism

Topic 4: Theme

Topic 5: Open-ended Responses

Topic 6: Expository Essay

Unit 3: Perseverance

**Lupita Manana* by Patricia Beatty <6 weeks>

OR *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen <4 weeks>

Topic 1: Setting, Plot, and Characterization

Topic 2: Understanding Motivation

Topic 3: Author's Purpose

Topic 4: Open-ended Responses

Topic 5: Explanatory Quote Response

Unit 4: Overcoming Adversity

**The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte <6 weeks>

Or **Brian's Song* by William Blinn <4 weeks>

Topic 1: Characterization

Topic 2: Symbolism

Topic 3: Discrimination and Tolerance

Topic 4: Open-ended Responses

Topic 5: Explanatory Quote Response

*Required text

IV. Unit Descriptions

*Required text

This course focuses on summer reading during the first week of school and the following types of writing during the year: expository, explanatory, compare/contrast.

UNIT 1: DECISIONS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Literature

**Nothing But the Truth* by Avi

The Pigman by Paul Zindel

Independent Reading

Enduring Understanding

1. All decisions have consequences.
2. We are responsible for our actions.

Essential Questions

1. What role does conscience play in a character's decision-making process?
2. What are the consequences of one's actions?
3. Is honesty always the best policy?

Learning Objectives/Common Core Standards

RL.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says

RL.7.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings

RL.7.6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text

RI.7.2 Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.7.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

RI.7.5. Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

RI.7.8. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

W.7.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

W.7.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

W.7.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

W.7.7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

SL.7.2. Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

SL.7.3. Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

SL.7.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples

L.7.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

L.7.3. Use knowledge of language and conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

L.7.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases

Suggested Activities

***Nothing But the Truth* by Avi**

http://my.hrw.com/la_2010/na_lit/teacher/website/novelwise_ms_te_version/find/bytitle/title_n_07.htm

Related readings:

“honesty” by Don Marquis (from *archys life of mehitabel* , 1927)

“A Nice Old-Fashioned Romance, With Love Lyrics and Everything by William Saroyan (from *My Name is Aram*, 1940)

“For LB, 1943-1993” by Cecil Morris (from *English Journal*, 1995)

“The Catbird Seat” by James Thurber (from *My World—And Welcome To It*, 1942)

Before novel:

1. Angel/Devil activity- Pose controversial choices to students in groups of 3 or 4. Have them explain the right choice along with its effects and the wrong choice and its effects
2. Research - Define and discuss Freedom of Speech, First Amendment, Patriotism, and Star-Spangled Banner.
3. <http://www.nick.com/videos/clip/nick-news-lies-we-tell-in-middle-school.html>

During novel:

1. Act out scenes.
2. Write out a conversation using proper punctuation and add narration.
3. Reading comprehension questions
4. quizzes/tests/essays
5. character analysis map

After the novel:

Options:

1. Create a yearbook page for 5 characters in the novel.
2. Create a poetry book with a minimum of 5 poems.
3. Character trading cards.
4. Character report card.
5. Give a gift to five different characters.

Suggested open-ended questions:

1. Is telling only part of the truth dishonest?
2. Are there circumstances when rules should be broken?
3. Is it ever permissible to lie?
4. Why wasn't Philip completely honest with his parents?
5. Who is most responsible for the downward spiral of events in the novel?
6. Is Philip's father a good parent?
7. How important is the school budget vote in this novel?

Notable quotations for explanatory writing:

- "If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything." Mark Twain
- "A lie told often enough becomes the truth." Lenin
- "A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes." Mark Twain
- "It takes two to speak the truth- one to speak, and another to hear." H. D. Thoreau
- "Telling the truth to people who generally misunderstand you is generally promoting falsehood." Anthony Hope Hawkins
- "Children and fools tell the truth." Thomas Fuller
- "A truth that's told with bad intent beats all the lies you can invent." William Blake
- "We see the same thing and yet find different truths." Laurence Yep
- "Misinformation can be worse than no information."
- "Every time I've done something that doesn't feel right, it's ended up not being right."
Mario Cuomo

Explanatory Prompt suggestion:

What is the best piece of advice you ever received? Write an essay about this advice including who gave it to you, when, why and how it affected you.

Assessments

Quizzes, tests, journals, essays, projects

Suggested Activities***The Pigman* by Paul Zindel**

http://my.hrw.com/la_2010/na_lit/teacher/website/novelwise_ms_te_version/find/bytitle/title_p_04.htm

Before the novel:

1. Author's background
2. *The Pigman* was written in 1968. Have parent/child relationships changed since then? Who are influential people in your life? Have you ever felt isolated and/or alienated?

During the novel:

1. Reading comprehension questions
2. quizzes/tests/essays
3. character analysis map
4. role-playing actual scenes and role-playing changes in those scenes
5. examining character traits

After the novel:

1. Create a character report card- Grade 5 characters based on their personality. Cite specific details using evidence from the novel in your evaluation.
2. Make a Pigman Joke book.
3. Write your "pigman" a letter of gratitude.

Open-ended questions:

1. a. How much do others have to do with the quality of a person's life?
b. How do John and Lorraine contribute to their own problems?
2. If you could change one part of your life, what would it be?
3. How are we responsible for our own happiness?
4. What is the difference between being lonely and being alone?

Suggested quotations

- "Happiness and Trouble stand at everyone's gate. Yours is the choice which you will invite in." Chinese proverb
- "Our life would be what we made of it- nothing more, nothing less." Paul Zindel
- "If you could kick the person responsible for most of your troubles, you wouldn't be able to sit down for months." Anonymous

Explanatory Prompt suggestion:

Who is your "pigman"? Write an essay about a special person in your life who has helped make you the person that you are today.

Assessments

Quizzes, tests, journals, essays, projects

UNIT 2: SOCIETY

Literature

The Giver by Lois Lowry

http://my.hrw.com/la_2010/na_lit/teacher/novel_guides/ms/giver.pdf

Independent Reading

Enduring Understanding

1. Freedom should be protected.
2. Feelings and memories are essential qualities of being human.

Essential Questions

1. Should we trade individual freedom for safety and security in our lives?
2. What are the advantages of diversity and individuality?
3. How do our memories protect and serve us?

Learning Objectives/Common Core Standards

RL.7.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.7.3. Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact

RL.7.10. Read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

RI.7.2. Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.7.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

W.7.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

W.7.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W.7.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

SL.7.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

L.7.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

L.7.6. Gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

The Giver* by Lois Lowry*Related Readings:**

- “Newbery Award Acceptance Speech” By Lois Lowry (from *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*. Volume 7, 1994)
- “The Role of the Griot in West African Society” by D’Jimo Kouyate (from *Talk That Talk*)
- “Jeremiah’s Song” by Walter Dean Myers (from *Visions*, 1987)
- “The Pedestrian” by Ray Bradbury
- “Old Glory” by Bruce Coville, 1991 (poem)
- “The Forecast” by Dan Jaffee, 1964
- “Drawing by Ronnie C., Grade One” by Ruth Lechlitner (poem)
- “The Case of S” by Milton Meltzer (from *The Landscape of Memory*, 1987)

Suggested Activities**Before the novel:**

1. **Research** - A number of utopian communities were established in the U.S., such as the Shakers in the eighteenth century, the Fruitlands led by Bronson Alcott (father of Louisa May Alcott) in the mid-nineteenth century, Twins Oaks, and the Amish. Have students choose one of these communities and list the principles that guided it, as well as the assumptions behind those principles. What generalizations might be made about why such a community may not last?
2. 4 corners activity for topics related to the novel (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)
3. journal activities
4. vocabulary building

During the novel:

1. reading comprehension questions
2. illustrate Jonas’s community
3. compare/contrast Jonas’s world and our world
4. summarize, make connections, make predictions
5. identify symbols and what they represent (i.e. Sevens- front buttoned jacket- independence)
6. create a bumper sticker for those living in Jonas’s world
7. identify cause and effect relationships
8. identify pros/cons of the rules in Jonas’s world
9. constructive controversy- Should Jonas leave the community?
10. color/memory activity

Non fiction articles

1. Twin Oaks Intentional Community
2. Pennsylvania Amish history & beliefs
3. Sointula Co-operative Association
4. Shakers in Early American History
5. Scientists may be closer to erasing bad memories
6. New surgery claims to turn brown eyes blue

After the novel:

1. Essay- Is Jonas a hero or villain? *or* Is Jonas's world a utopia?
2. Film study – Truman Show and *The Giver* - compare/contrast
3. iPod playlist- Choose 3 songs that relate to the novel and explain where they would be played during the course of the novel. Cite lyrics in the paragraphs.
4. Song parody- Take a song and rewrite the lyrics to include plot, characters, setting, conflict, and theme of the novel. Perform in class.
5. Memory book- Create a booklet filled with illustrations, pictures and mementos. Pick one memory to explain in full detail.
6. "Newbery Award Acceptance Speech" by *Lois Lowry*
In her acceptance speech for the Newbery Medal, Lois Lowry explains how her own memories inspired ideas for her book. Evaluate the symbolism found within the novel.
7. postcard

Open-ended Questions:

1. In Jonas's world, twelves are given job assignments. If someone were observing you for the last few years, what assignment would you be given?
2. Which hurts more- physical pain or emotional pain?
3. If you could give someone your absolute favorite memory, but in turn lose that memory forever, would you do it?
4. Do you think experiences of great happiness and achievement make up for experiences of pain and hardship?
5. Describe the one thing you would have liked *most* about living in Jonas's community.
6. Describe the one thing you would have liked *least* about living in Jonas's community.
7. If you could only have one – hearing beyond or seeing beyond – which would you choose?

Notable quotations for explanatory writing:

- “We gained control of some things. But we had to let go of others.” (95)
- “The worst part of holding the memories is not the pain. It is the loneliness of it. Memories need to be shared.” (154)

- “My work will be finished when I have helped the community to change and become whole.”
- “It’s choice- not chance- that determines your destiny.” Jean Nidetch
- “The more alternatives, the more difficult the choice.” Abbe D’Allanival

Assessments

Quizzes, tests, journals, essays, projects

UNIT 3: PERSEVERANCE

Literature

****Lupita Manana* by Patricia Beatty**

or

****Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan**

***Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen**

Independent Reading

Enduring Understanding

1. The power of positive thinking should not be underestimated.
2. Determination is essential to achieving goals.

Essential Questions

1. How do dreams and goals serve as driving forces?
2. How do experiences change who we are as a person?
3. How does an understanding of the historical and cultural background enhance the reading of the novel?

Nonfiction Articles

1. How Should America Treat Illegal Immigrants?
2. How Should the Government Respond to Illegal Immigration?
3. Does Illegal Immigration Threaten American Society?
4. Does Illegal Immigration Harm the U. S Economy?
5. Crossing the Line? Arizona Immigration Debate www.weeklyreader.com
6. Justice Department Warns Alabama Over Immigration Law www.izzit.org

Learning Objectives/Common Core Standards

RL.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says

RL.7.2 Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text

RL.7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings

RL.7.9 Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history

RI.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.7.2. Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.7.3. Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

RI.7.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

RI.7.8. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

RI.7.9. Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence.

W.7.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

W.7.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W.7.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.7.6 Use technology to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources

W.7.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation

W.7.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively

SL.7.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners

L.7.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking

L.7.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, or and spelling when writing.

L.7.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

http://my.hrw.com/la_2010/na_lit/teacher/website/novelwise_ms_te_version/find/bytitle/title_e_05.htm

Suggested Activities

Before the novel:

1. “No hay rosas sin espinas.” Create a rose of the student’s life. The roots are their support; the stem holds them up; the thorns protect them and cause them pain; the blossom is what makes them shine.
2. Research a culturally significant element of the novel (i.e. Dust bowl, immigration, Great Depression)
3. Consider the kinds of changes that people might have to adapt to and endure when they immigrate to a new country

During the novel:

1. Double-entry journals, identifying important quotations and passages from the text
2. *Separate visions*: Write journal entries for Esperanza and Miguel in which they each describe their feelings about leaving Mexico and starting a new life in California
3. *Moment of Shame*: Both Esperanza and Mama are ashamed of how Esperanza treats the little girl on the train. How do you think other people who witnessed the incident interpreted Esperanza’s actions? What would they have said?
4. *Extra Extra!* Imagine you are a photojournalist for *The Bakersfield Gazette*. You are touring Esperanza’s and Marta’s labor camps, and you want the pictures taken to illustrate the conditions of the camps. Based on the scenes from the book, describe four photographs that you would take to tell the story.
5. *Strike!* – Marta is trying to persuade all the workers to strike for higher wages and better conditions. Write each character’s reason for not striking and explain whether you think each reason is strong or weak. Finally, tell whether you would have joined the strike and why.

After the novel:

1. In small groups, nominate the hero of the book. Provide story details to back up reasoning.
2. Imagine some years have passed since the end of the story. Write an epilogue for *Esperanza Rising* to explain what has happened to the characters since then.
3. Create a classroom fiesta. To prepare, research culture, music, and traditions familiar to Esperanza.

Open-ended Questions:

1. After “1924” – Papa asked Esperanza to lay down on the ground and listen to earth’s heartbeat. “You can only feel the earth’s heartbeat when you are still and quiet,” he says. What is Papa trying to teach Esperanza? Do you think that most people you know would be able to hear the earth’s heartbeat? Why?
2. After “Figs” – What do you think of the portrayal of Tio Luis? In real life, are people usually all good or all bad? What is the danger of labeling people as good or bad?

3. After “Onions” – What did Esperanza’s parents teach her about the world around her? What didn’t they teach her about the world? Why didn’t they want her to know these things?
4. After “Potatoes” – Esperanza believes that if she can bring Abuelita to California, Mama will recover. Do you think it’s possible that one person can have such an effect on another person’s well-being?
5. After “Peaches” – Miguel had said earlier in the novel that he and his family had planned to come to California because the opportunities for a better life were much greater than they were in Mexico. Do you think after his year in California that Miguel still believes in the American Dream? Do you think you have the same opportunities as someone in a different social class?
6. The author chose to write about migrant workers because it reflected her family’s history and culture. What other historical or modern-day issue might be a good topic to use as the basis of an historical fiction novel? Why?

Notable quotations for explanatory writing:

- “He who falls today may rise tomorrow.” – Mexican proverb
- “Wait a little while and the fruit will fall into your hand.” (2)
- “No hay rosas sin espinas.” (14).
- “Do not be afraid to start over.” (15)
- “We are like the phoenix,” said Abuelita. “Rising again, with a new life ahead of us.” (50)

Explanatory Prompt suggestion:

Tell about a time when you had to learn not to be afraid.

Assessments

Quizzes, tests, journals, essays, projects

***Lupita Manana* by Patricia Beatty**

http://my.hrw.com/la_2010/na_lit/teacher/website/novelwise_ms_te_version/find/bytitle/title_1_04.htm

Suggested Activities

Before the novel:

1. Locate the Baja Peninsula. Discuss working conditions in Mexico. Discuss immigration. Explain dangers/difficulty of crossing the border.
2. Identify and explain Spanish terms.
3. journals- Explain how you’d feel if you suddenly had to move out of state? Alone? No adults?

During the novel:

1. 4 I's activity- Students in groups of 4 take a different job for each section of the novel. Illustrator, Investigator (research), Illuminator (makes connections), Interrogator (option for a 5th I- Imitator- dramatize a scene)
2. build vocabulary
3. read articles about illegal immigration, migrant workers, green cards, INS
4. reading comprehension questions
5. double journal entries
6. letter writing
7. map the journey

After the novel:

1. Combine 4 I's activities into a booklet.
2. Create a newspaper of different aspects of the book. (Lupita's struggles, classified, cartoons, editorials.)
3. Film study: *Sweet 15*.

Suggested Explanatory Prompt

Sometimes life does not work according to plan. Write an essay about a time when your life did not work out as planned.

Open-ended questions

1. Why isn't Lupita entirely truthful with her mama? Is it a wise decision?
2. How does Salvador change throughout the novel? Do you know someone who has changed or behave similarly?
3. How is Lupita able to remain positive throughout all her difficulties? How can this be applied to your life?

Notable quotations for explanatory writing:

- "Salvador and Lupita were growing up, growing older and further apart in this alien land to which they had never been chosen to come. What would become of them separated as they were now?"
- "We say we want to help the tormented and oppressed find a haven in America; in reality, we have turned away many of those who may need the United States the most."
- "Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." Abraham Lincoln
- "It's not whether you get knocked down; it's whether you get back up." Vince Lombardi
- "Tough times never last, but tough people do." Dr. Robert Schuller
- "A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work." Colin Powell

- “If you’re never scared or embarrassed or hurt, it means you never take any chances.”
Julia Sorel
- “I find that the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have.” Thomas Jefferson

Assessments

Quizzes, tests, journals, essays, projects

***Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen**

http://my.hrw.com/la_2010/na_lit/teacher/website/novelwise_ms_te_version/find/bytitle/title_h_01.htm

Suggested Activities

Before the novel:

1. research topics: effects of divorce, Canadian wilderness, Cessna planes, heart attacks, building fires, survival
2. journals- being lost, anger towards a parent, changes in life, divorce
3. build vocabulary
4. create a survival kit

During the novel:

1. Identify figurative language, irony, foreshadowing and flashback
2. Reader response journals
3. Cooperative learning activities
4. Role-playing and illustrating scenes
5. jigsaw discussion groups

After the novel:

1. collage of Brian’s life
2. Brian’s poetry book
3. *Hatchet* board game
4. movie *A Cry in the Wild* (film adaptation of *Hatchet*)

Open-ended Questions

How is Brian creative? Explain how you have used creativity at some point in your life.

Notable quotations for explanatory writing:

“Change is difficult but often essential to survival.” Les Brown

“Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough.” Og Mandino

Assessments

Quizzes, tests, journals, essays, projects

UNIT 4: OVERCOMING ADVERSITY**Literature**

**The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte

Or **Brian's Song* by William Blinn

Independent Reading

http://my.hrw.com/la_2010/na_lit/teacher/novel_guides/ms/contender.pdf

Enduring Understanding

1. It takes courage, discipline, and inner strength to change one's life.
2. To achieve something worthwhile, one must learn to face and control fears.

Essential Questions

1. How do obstacles affect the evolution of a character?
2. How do people influence one another to evoke change?
3. How does setting affect the outcome of potential conflict?

Learning Objectives/Common Core Standards

RL.7.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development

RL.7.3. Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact

RL.7.5. Analyze how a drama's form and structure contributes to its meaning.

RI.7.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

RL.7.7. Compare and contrast a written drama to its filmed version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, or camera focus and angles in a film).

RI.7.9 Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by advancing different interpretations of facts.

RI.7.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiency, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

W.7.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W.7.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.7.6. Use technology to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.

W.7.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

W.7.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

SL.7.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

L.7.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage

L.7.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language and nuances in word meanings.

L.7.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases

Suggested Activities

***THE CONTENDER* by Robert Lipsyte**

Related Readings:

“The Seventh Round” by Jmaes Merrill (from *The Yellow Pages*, 1974)

“Fury” by T. Ernesto Bethancourt (from *Ultimate Sports*, 1995)

“A Crown of Wild Olive” by Rosemary Sutcliff

excerpt from *Black Boy* by Richard Wright

“Joan Benoit: 1984 U. S. Olympic Marathon Gold Medalist” by Rina Ferrarelli (poem)

Muhammad Ali by Bill Littlefield

“To a Field Goal Kicker in a Slump” by Linda Pastan (poem)

Before novel:

1. Examine “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost
2. Discuss the use of informal English and colloquialisms vs. formal language
3. Write about a personal goal

During novel:

1. Identify imagery and descriptive details in chapter 1 (pages 1, 2, 8) related to setting
2. Chart major conflicts
(Alfred vs. James, Alfred vs. Major, Black nationalists vs. Reverend Price, Alfred’s need to be “somebody” vs. his growing dislike for boxing)
3. Character map/Identify influences on a character
4. Identify and examine symbolism (cave, movie theater, stairs, robe, cash register)

After novel:

1. Choice project geared toward multiple intelligences
2. Character analysis/Identify character traits

3. Compare/Contrast with *Rudy*

Suggested Open-Ended Questions:

- How can success be measured?
- Alfred and James grow up in Harlem during the post-Harlem Renaissance. Describe this setting and point out the difficulties these characters face. How does each character react differently to this environment?
- How can Donatelli be described as a man of honor?
- How does Alfred's character change throughout the course of the novel?
- Consider the significance of the title. Is Alfred a contender?
- What themes prevail throughout the novel?

Notable Quotations:

- "It's the climbing that makes the man. Getting to the top is an extra reward."
- "You have to start by wanting to be a contender, the man coming up, the man who knows there's a good chance he'll never get to the top, the man who's willing to sweat and bleed to get up as high as his legs and his brains and his heart will take him."
- "Dreamers are not doers." – Rudy
- "Having dreams is what makes life tolerable." – Rudy
- "You can encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated." – Maya Angelou
- "Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together." – Vincent Van Gogh
- "Only surround yourself with people who will lift you higher." – Oprah Winfrey

Suggested topic for explanatory writing:

We are learning all the time. Some of our learning takes place in school and some outside of school. Write about something you have learned recently and how it has affected you.

Assessments

Quizzes, tests, journals, essays, projects

Suggested Activities

BRIAN'S SONG

Before reading:

1. Examine the elements of drama.
2. Write an expository piece about a friend who is also a competitor or someone who faces tough situations with courage and/or a sense of humor
3. Vocabulary building

During reading:

1. Plot diagram (exposition, rising action, climax, resolution)
2. Identify internal and external conflicts as they relate to the progression of the plot
3. Discuss how characters' movements, gestures, and facial expressions affect their depiction
4. Character Analysis Map

After reading:

1. Identify themes found within the story
2. Research the lives of Brian Piccolo and Gale Sayers

Nonfiction articles:

- "40 Gale Sayers" www.chicagobears.com/history
- "Fame Couldn't Wait for Sayers" by M. B. Roberts espn.com
- Gale Sayers [sports encyclopedia](http://sports.encyclopedia)
- "Brian's Life, a Song of Friendship and Courage" by Mike Puma espn.com
- "The Brian Piccolo Cancer Research Fund" www.brianpiccolo.org
- "Cancer Research needs another Brian's Song"
- *Wake Forest Magazine*, July 1970
- "The Song Lives On" by Don Pierson *TV Guide* December 1, 2001

3. Compare play with character relationships found in movie *Remember the Titans*

Suggested Open-Ended Questions:

- Both Brian and Gale have serious medical conditions. Compare and contrast how each of the men reacts to the challenge.
- Gale Sayers said that Brian Piccolo "gave us all something, all of us who knew him." Explain about how Brian affected those around him.
- How is *Brian's Song* more a story of friendship than of football?
- Describe the relationship between Brian and Gale at the beginning of the play. Tell how their relationship changed.
- What do you think the play's title means? Explain how it relates to the play.

Notable Quotations:

- "It's not how he died that they remember but, rather how he lived" – Narrator
- "A true friend is someone who thinks that you are a good egg even though he knows that you are slightly cracked." Bernard Meltzer

- “A true friend is one who knows all about you and loves you just the same.” Elbert Hubbard
- “True friends are always there - through good and bad.”

Suggested topic for explanatory writing:

Think about a person who has had an influence on you and your life. This person might be someone famous, someone from history, or someone you know personally. Write an essay telling who this person is and explaining why he/she has had an influence on you.

Assessments

Quizzes, tests, journals, essays, project

V. Course Materials

Nothing But the Truth by Avi

The Pigman by Paul Zindel

The Giver by Lois Lowry

Lupita Manana by Patricia Beatty

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

The Contender by Robert Lipsyte

Elements of Literature Course One

-*Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen

-*Brian's Song* William Blinn

nonfiction pieces related to literature