




ELA Core Curriculum

for **GRADE 9**

 **ThinkCERCA™**



ThinkCERCA's Core Curriculum was designed to help students develop the skills, knowledge, and competencies to thrive in a global economy.

To be the problem-solvers, leaders, and job-creators of our future, students need to be able to consume complex information, think about it critically, and express their own points of view effectively.

Guiding Values in Our Design:

- Student engagement
- Comprehensive coverage of standards
- Ease of implementation
- Support for best practices in reading and writing routines
- High-quality authentic texts
- Deeper learning opportunities

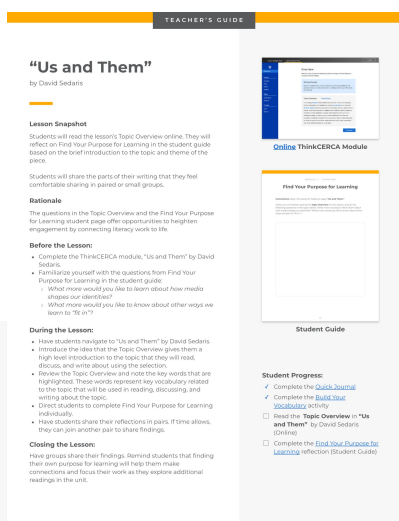
Each grade level invites students to engage in close-reading, analysis and collaboration, formal speaking and listening opportunities, and writing, research, and multimedia portfolio development – all grounded in our research-backed CERCA framework.



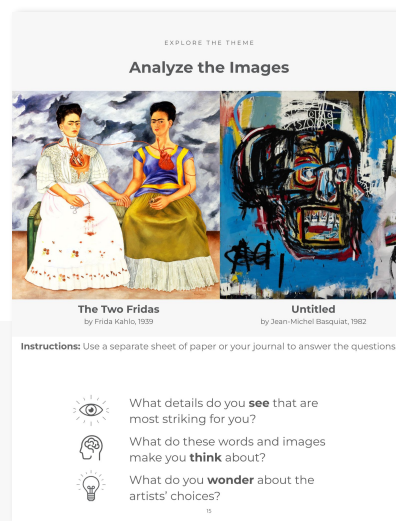
Ultimately, we espouse a pedagogy of confidence.

We truly believe that confident young people are the keys to the success of each and every one of our communities. This program is designed to help us spark courageous thinking!

Course Resources



Teacher's Guide



Student Guide

Course Overview

- Roadmap for course including assessment blocks (BOY, MOY, EOY) and unit snapshots
- Portfolio assessments listed to show progression by unit throughout the year
- Assessment practices aligned to SAT and ACT

Student Guide

- Previews for all unit features: goal-setting, modules, speaking/listening activities, portfolio, and reflection
- Offline activities for each module for each step: Before Your Read, Read, Analyze, Write

Unit Planner

- At-a-glance view of the unit lesson and activities included

Differentiation Guides

- Additional instructional supports and ready-made modified materials for both online and offline activities throughout each unit

Teacher's Guide with Facilitator Notes

- Step-by-step guide for unit instruction
- Module preview with summary, unit connection, and key knowledge, understandings, and skills
- Facilitator notes with detailed talking points

Direct Instruction/Skills Practice

- Comprehensive coverage of key skills + concepts
- Flexible implementation options for teacher-led, small group, or self-paced implementation
- Embedded assessment
- Additional leveled skills practice

360 Degrees of Text

Grade 9 Core ELAR

Comprehensive Assessment Resources



Benchmarks



Continuous Embedded Assessment



AP/ACT/SAT Aligned Practice

1

Where Are You From?

How can certain memories, places, and experiences shape who we become? Explore models of narrative nonfiction that examine growing up and becoming one's own person.

Portfolio: *Personal Narrative Writing*

2

How Do Communities Connect Safely?

How do we ensure that we build and become members of healthy virtual communities that allow us to share and learn? Explore models of nonfiction arguments about communication and how people and communities are working to communicate safely.

Portfolio: *Argumentative Writing*

3

How Do We Make Difficult Decisions?

What is the best way to behave in a situation where conflicting values are at odds? Explore a variety of short stories that involve characters and themes that are often at odds with one another.

Portfolio: *Literary Analysis Essay Writing*

4

How Does Food Impact the Environment?

How are protein sources made healthy and sustainably? Learn more about sustainable communities and efforts by individuals to solve problems for profit and not-for-profit entrepreneurship.

Portfolio: *Research Essay*

360 Degrees of Text

Grade 9 Core ELAR

5

What Is This Thing Called Love?

What happens when adults get in the way of childhood? Explore this question through a full-length drama and a variety of other pieces across genres.

Portfolio: Cause and Effect Essay Writing

6

What Interests You?

How can you use the activities and courses you enjoy to build a strong application for college? Explore readings about the future of work and the resources and frameworks for determining your pathway in life.

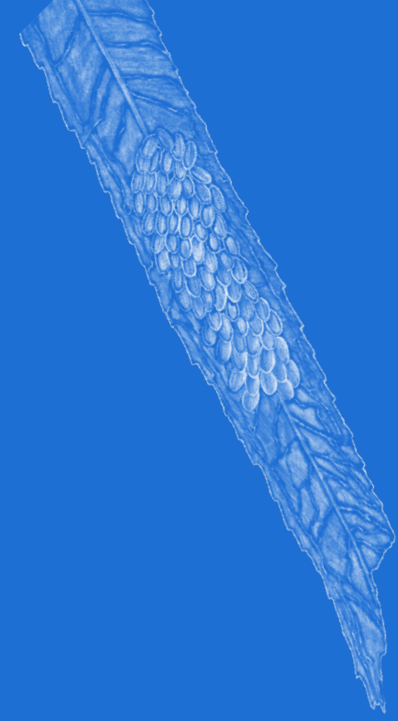
Portfolio: Research Paper

7

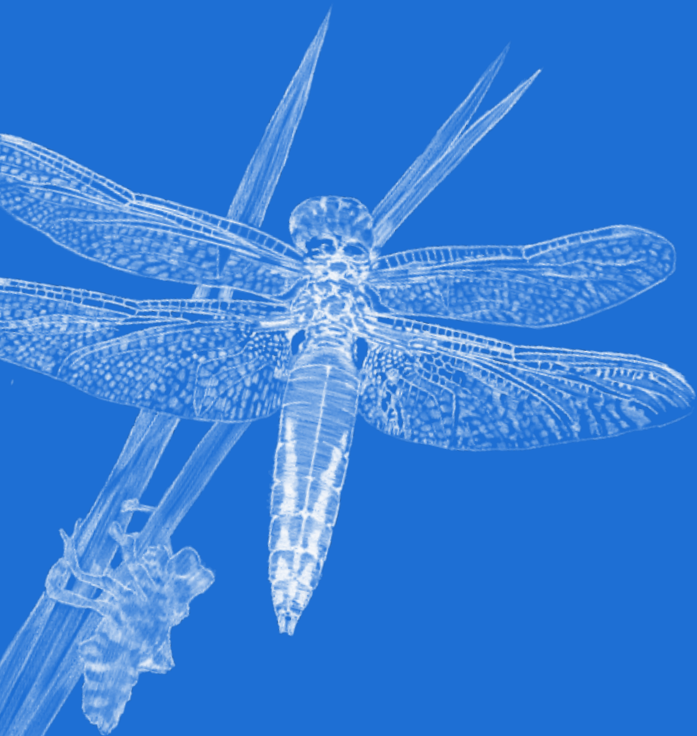
Why Does the Odyssey Endure?

What can we learn from the ancient texts that ripple through our literary traditions? Explore short stories and memoirs about the moments when we have to make defining choices in uncertain times.

Portfolio: Analytical Writing



Sample Units



Where Are You From?

Grounding students in the experiences of others similar to and different from them allows students to develop self-awareness, social awareness, and empathy, while giving them opportunities to express their own ideas through a variety of formats.

Mentor Texts




Personal Narrative
Once More to the Lake
By E. B. White



Memoir Excerpt
An American Childhood
By Annie Dillard




Poetry
Mango No. 61
By Richard Blanco




Novel Excerpt
Home
By Gwendolyn Brooks


Read Across Genres



Multimedia
NPR's Morning Edition: "Where I'm From"
By Kwame Alexander and Rachel Martin



Poetry
Where I'm From
By George Ella Lyon and NPR Crowdsourcing



Poetry
Things You May Find Hidden In My Ear
By Mosab Abu Toha



Informational Text
What Adolescents Miss When...
By Brent Staples



Informational Text
What Makes a New York City Kid?
By NY Times

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Story Elements: Analyze character, setting, plot
- Author's Craft: Narrative techniques
- Theme: Use evidence to determine theme
- Poetry: Compare details and imagery using the SOAPSTone strategy
- Informational Texts: Determine and trace a central idea through details; Summarize

CCSS.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Formal Socratic discussion

CCSS.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Use Language and Grammar

- Connotation and Denotation
- Sentence Structure: *but, because, so*
- Parts of Speech: Adjectives
- Punctuation: Non-restrictive elements

CCSS.L.9-10.5.B: Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

CCSS.L.9-10.2.A: Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.

CCSS.L.9-10.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write a personal narrative
- Writing process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

CCSS.W.9-10.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Error Analysis and Prediction

Essential Question

How can certain memories, places, and experiences shape who we become?

How Do Communities Connect Safely?

Investigating real issues that affect real communities all over the country allows for students to build informed opinions on the ways to improve systems. Social media, memes, influencers, and cyberbullying are just a few topics that help develop a clear picture of the virtual landscape today.

Mentor Texts



Informational News Article

Why Spying on our Kids to Solve Cyberbullying Might Not Work

By Emily Siner



Informational News Article

Influencers Aren't Going Anywhere.

By Christianna Silva



Informational News Article

Green Teen Memes: How TikTok Could Save the Planet

By Yasemin Craggs Mersinoglu



Opinion

It Was a Mistake to Let Kids on Social Media Sites.

By Yuval Levin

Read Across Genres



Multimedia

Social Media, Social Life: Teens Reveal Their Experiences

By Common Sense Media



Opinion

Why Kids Shouldn't Get Social Media Until They Are Eighteen

By Rachel Sample



Opinion

Silicon Valley Says Kids Over the Age of 13 Can Handle the Big, Bad World of Social Media

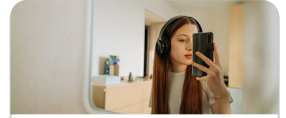
By Katie Canales



Photo Essay

Removed

By Eric Pickersgill



Infographic

The Impact of Social Media on Body Image

By Dove

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Parts of an Argument: evidence, issues, and appeals
- Author's Craft: Analyze an author's evidence/coherence
- Informational/Argument Texts: Trace and evaluate an argument; Analyze structure
- Compare Arguments: Compare issues, appeals, and evidence in opinion texts
- Visual Texts: Trace and evaluate arguments in photo essays and infographics

Use Language and Grammar

- Connotation and Denotation
- Pronouns (case, intensive)
- Punctuation: Commas

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Formal Debate

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write an argumentative essay
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Understanding Question Stems; Verify Your Answer

Essential Question

How do we ensure that we build and become members of healthy virtual communities that allow us to share and learn?

How Do We Make Difficult Decisions?

Short stories can show us the various experiences of others and how those shape the choices they make. In this unit, students will explore the essential question, “How do our experiences help shape or determine our values and our perceptions of the choices we have available to us?” to determine how our past shapes our choices.

Mentor Texts



Short Story
The Most Dangerous Game
 By Richard Connell



Short Story
A White Heron
 By Sarah Orne Jewett



Short Story
The Paper Menagerie
 By Ken Liu



Short Story
St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves
 By Karen Russell

Read Across Genres



Poetry
Tending
 By Elizabeth Alexander



Poetry
Aquí
 By Carmen Tafolla



Multimedia
The Designated Celebrator
 By Melinda Shoaf



Informational Text
Decision-Making
 By Psychology Today



Memoir Excerpt
Hot Dogs and Wild Geese
 By Firoozeh Dumas

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Parts of an Story: Determine characters, setting, plot, and theme in short stories
- Author's Craft: Setting, point of view, character, narrative techniques
- Compare Texts Across Genres
- Informational Texts: Use evidence to support central ideas

Use Language and Grammar

- Commas
- Context Clues

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Story Telling

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write a short story
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Understanding Question Stems; Verify Your Answer

Essential Question

How do our experiences help shape or determine our values and our perceptions of the choices we have available to us?

How Does Food Impact the Environment?

Students will examine where various protein sources come from and how those proteins can be made healthy and sustainably. They will also analyze how various protein sources can affect our climate.

Mentor Texts



Informational News Article
Is Grass-Fed Beef Really Better for the Planet? Here's the Science

By Nancy Matsumoto



Informational Text
How Cattle Can Help Save Birds of the Great Plains

By Molly Loomis



Opinion
Can Lab-Grown Burgers Help Stop Climate Change?

By Spencer Bokat-Lindell



Informational Text
Factory Farms Provide Abundant Food, but Environment Suffers

By John Flesher

Read Across Genres



Informational News Article
Perennial Rice Could Raise Yields and Cut Costs

By Sarah Kuta



Informational Text
Sea Change: Environmental Group Gives First Time Nod to Sustainable Salmon-Farming Method

By Clare Leschin-Hoar



Multimedia
Climate Change, Global Food Security, and the U.S. Food System

By The USDA



Informational Text
Food and Climate Change: Healthy Diets for a Healthier Planet

By the United Nations

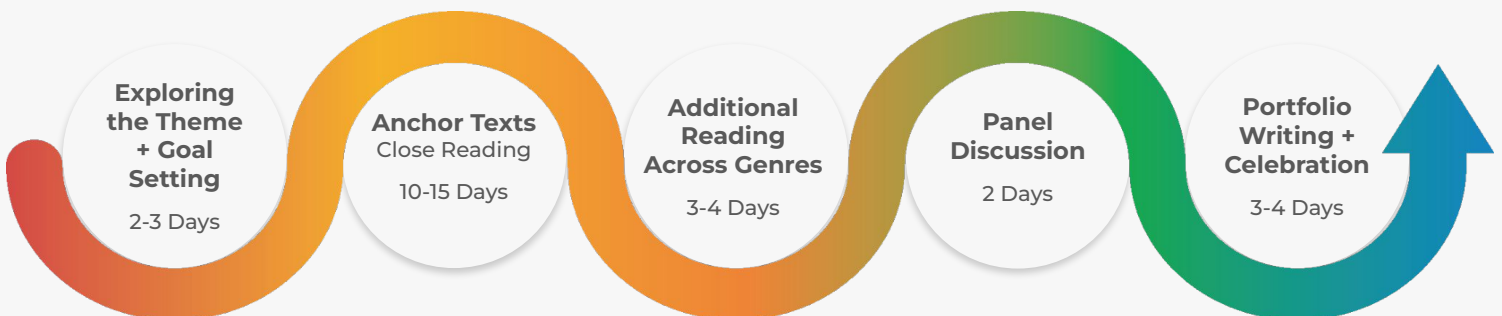


Informational News Article
Your Questions About Food and Climate Change, Answered

By Julia Moskin, Brad Plumer, Rebecca Lieberman and Eden Weingart

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Structure in Informational Texts: Interpret words and phrases, analyze sentences, paragraphs, and portions of the text
- Author's Craft: Understand point of view and purpose; Describe structure in informational texts
- Compare Texts Across Genres to understand a topic through multiple perspectives

Use Language and Grammar

- Writing According to Style Manuals
- Figurative Language

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Pitch Deck Presentation

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write a research paper
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Understanding Question Stems; Verify Your Answer

Essential Question

How are protein sources made healthy and sustainably?

What Is This Thing Called Love?

By examining a classic and well-known Shakespearean drama through the lens of conflict, students will discuss how adults can affect the conflict in teenagers' lives, positively or negatively. By the end of the unit, they will write a cause and effect essay, analyzing how personal choices, character traits, and external factors led to a protagonist's fate.

Mentor Texts



Drama
Romeo and Juliet:
Act I, Scenes I-II

By William Shakespeare



Drama
Romeo and Juliet:
Act I, Scenes III-V

By William Shakespeare



Drama
Romeo and Juliet:
Act II

By William Shakespeare



Drama
Romeo and Juliet:
Act III

By William Shakespeare



Drama
Romeo and Juliet:
Act IV

By William Shakespeare



Drama
Romeo and Juliet:
Act V

By William Shakespeare

Read Across Genres



Drama Excerpt
Romeo and Juliet:
Act I, Scene V

By William Shakespeare



Multimedia
Romeo + Juliet (1996) -
Star-crossed Lovers
Scene



Informational Text
The Infectious Pestilence
Did Reign

By Ben Cohen



Informational Text
Romeo & Juliet Has No
Balcony

By Lois Leveen

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Parts of a Drama: Determine how characters, setting, plot and theme evolve in a drama
- Author's Craft: Analyze the impact of author's choices and how playwrights develop character and theme in drama
- Compare interpretations and uses of drama across genres
- Informational Texts: Use evidence to understand context and impact

Use Language and Grammar

- Spelling
- Context Clues

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Performance

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write a cause and effect essay
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Context Clues; Analyzing Word Choices

Essential Question

What happens when adults get in the way of childhood?

What Interests You?

As students begin to consider post-secondary options, it is important for them to consider what they can do now to guide that process. Throughout this unit, students will explore various extracurricular activities they can participate in throughout their high school career and how those extracurriculars will be beneficial to them throughout their future.

Mentor Texts



Multimedia
Shonda Rhimes' Commencement Address



Informational News Article
How Colleges Weigh High School Extracurriculars
 By Tiffany Sorenson



Informational Text
Top 8 Benefits of Extracurricular Activities for High School Students
 From Crimson Education



Informational News Article
Pros, Cons of High School Jobs for College Applications
 By Alexandra Pannoni

Read Across Genres



Informational Text
The Best Summer Job You'll Ever Have
 By Marcia Amidon Lusted



Informational Text
5 Common Extracurricular Activities and Why They're Important
 By Emily Ewen



- Help you stand out from the crowd
- Reveal a lot about you
- Show what you're passionate about

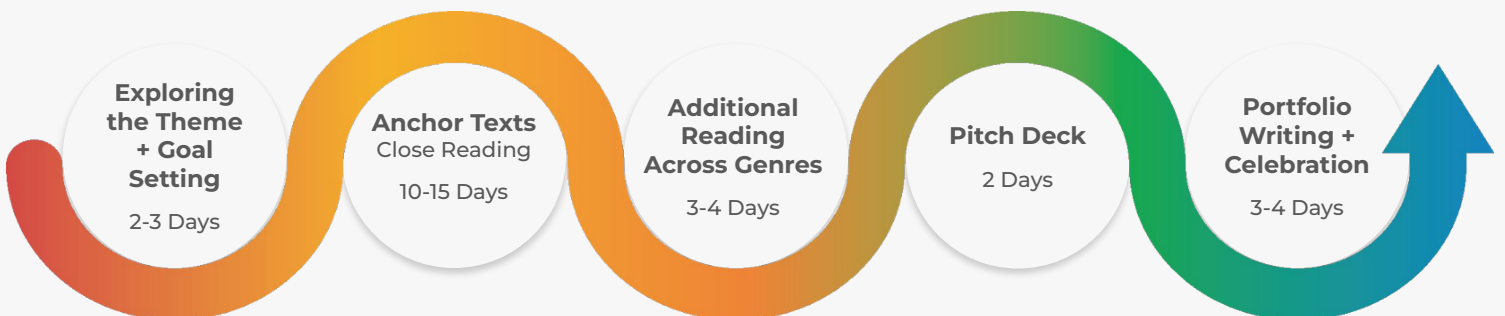
Multimedia
Why Extracurricular Activities are So Important
 By The USDA



Info Text/Extension
The Benefits of Extracurricular Activities for Students
 By Mark Anthony Llega

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Parts of an Informational Text: Use evidence and central ideas from a variety of texts
- Author's Craft: Analyze how text features and connections within informational texts help develop central ideas
- Develop a robust understanding of the postsecondary process
- Extensions: Engage in activities to support postsecondary planning

Use Language and Grammar

- Revising for Style and Word Choice
- Figurative Language

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Panel Discussion

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write postsecondary plans
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Understanding Question Stems; Verify Your Answer

Essential Question

How do your interests help you further your own future?

Why Does the Odyssey Endure?

Homer's Iliad and Odyssey are widely considered the most enduring tales of the western world. Throughout the history of European and American literature, writers and artists have found inspiration in the tales. Students will explore the texts inspired by and in conversation with this archetypal story including contemporary African American and Latino artists and writers.

Mentor Texts



Epic Poem
The Odyssey-The Wanderings of Odysseus (Section 1)
 By Homer



Epic Poem
The Odyssey-The Wanderings of Odysseus (Section 2)
 By Homer



Epic Poem
The Odyssey-The Wanderings of Odysseus (Section 3)
 By Homer



Epic Poem
The Odyssey-Stringing the Bow (Section 4)
 By Homer

Read Across Genres



Poetry
Siren Song
 By Margaret Atwood



Poetry
Ithaka
 By C.P. Cavafy



Multimedia
Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey



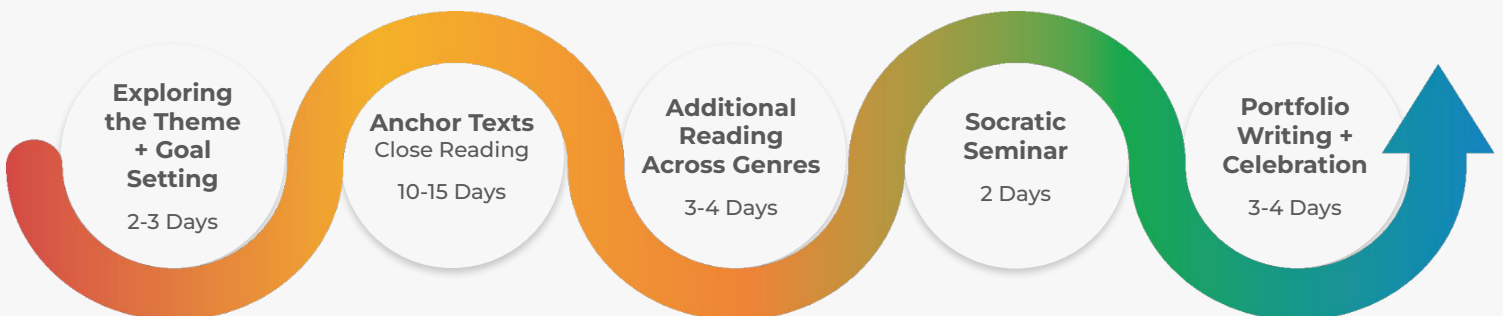
Biography
Excerpt from Enrique's Journey
 By Sonia Nazario



Informational Text
The Greatest Tale Ever Told?
 By Natalie Haynes

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Parts of an Informational Text: Analyze connections within informational texts
- Author's Craft: Analyze how various genres of literature and informational texts draw from other sources
- Develop a robust understanding of aspects of various literary forms and genres
- Extensions: Engage in informal research of a variety of myths and tales from across the globe

Use Language and Grammar

- Roots and Affixes
- Words that Capture Relationships
- Sentence Structure
- Revising for Clarity and Organization

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Socratic Discussion

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write a Comparative Analysis
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Analyzing Verbs in Writing Prompts

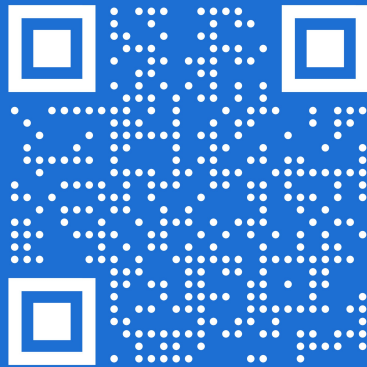
Essential Question

What makes the Odyssey such an enduring tale in world literature?

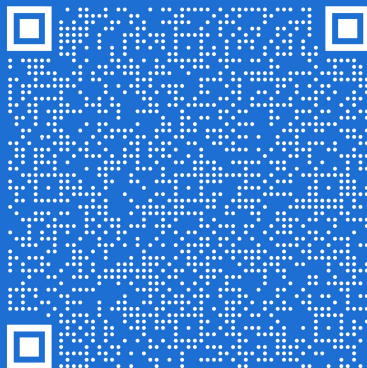
Next Steps

Ready to learn more about our Core ELA?

We'd love to partner and pilot Core with you! Scan the QR codes below to learn more or schedule a demo of Core ELA!



[Learn More](#)



[Schedule a Demo](#)