AmplifyELA

Welcome!

7A: Red Scarf Girl & Narrative

During this unit, students read a highly engaging memoir about a young girl growing up in China in 1966 during the Cultural Revolution. Students will learn some of the history and politics of this tumultuous period by focusing on the story of Ji-li Jiang and her family, who live through the upheaval. As students follow Ji-li's journey through a world turned upside down, they will track how her understanding and feelings about what is happening to her society change over time.

Core texts your student will read:

- *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* by Ji-li Jiang

What your students will do/learn:

- Students experiment with some narrative writing techniques, creating focused descriptions by zooming in on a moment and using strong verbs, dialogue, and vivid details to capture the feeling of a moment.
- Students learn key classroom routines, including the sharing routine, during which classmates respond to shared writing by noting one effective way the writer used language or details or evidence.
- Students analyze some of the propaganda images Ji-li Jiang was exposed to and consider how this material influenced the attitudes of young people like Ji-li.
- Students read and discuss Jiang's experiences in China during the Cultural Revolution as they read *Red Scarf Girl*. Using a specially designed app, the Hope-o-Meter, students analyze levels of hopefulness and gain insight into how Ji-li's feelings and motivations change as the Revolution impacts her school, her friendships, and her family.
- Students write consistently throughout the unit, developing their idea or claim about the text and providing textual evidence.
- Students will write an end of unit essay responding to the following prompt: How does Ji-li change over the course of her story?

Here are some conversation starters that you can use during this unit to promote discussion and encourage continued learning with your student.

1. What are two of the moments from your experiences that you wrote about as you learned to focus on one moment? What caught your attention about those moments? What techniques did you use to try to communicate the experiences and feelings of those moments? Which technique made the biggest impact on your writing?
2. What stands out to you about Ji-li's life or about China during the Cultural Revolution? What was it like being a child during this time period?

3. Can you share a piece of writing with me in which you used precise details to show, not tell? (Provide feedback to your student by finding something in their writing that you can respond to as a reader. For example, “In your writing, I noticed your detail about how you were unable to eat ‘a bite of dessert.’ Including that detail shows me how sad and upset you were.”)
4. Can you tell me about a part of *Red Scarf Girl* when Ji-li feels hopeful? When does she feel less hopeful?
5. What other emotions does Ji-li experience in *Red Scarf Girl?* What major events make her feel that way?

Amplify ELA

Welcome!

7C: Brain Science

In this unit, students explore a series of narrative non-fiction and informational texts that expose the workings of the brain, ask them to reflect on what it means to be human, and allow them to consider how the development of their own brains during adolescence may impact their experiences and thinking. This unit supports students as they build awareness of their unique cognitive strengths and challenges, and of the ways in which they can exert control over their own learning.

Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science, documents the fascinating story of Phineas Gage, whose dramatic accident, injury, and recovery made him a famous case study in neuroscience. Students trace the impact of Phineas's extraordinary brain injury, the remarkable efforts of doctors and scientists to learn from his survival, and the early understanding of brain structure and function that grew from that knowledge. Students then move on to readings from *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain*, where they add information to their working model of the brain and consider whether and how adolescent behavior may be shaped by their developing brains. In excerpts from Oliver Sacks's book, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, students apply their growing understanding of how the brain functions to modern brain injury cases. Finally, the *Perception Academy* Quest lets students apply their newly acquired knowledge to a fictional case of brain injury to diagnose the injured region of the brain based on the symptoms and behaviors of the patient.

Core texts your student will read:

- *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by John Fleischman
- Excerpts from *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain* by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore
- Excerpt from "Demystifying the Adolescent Brain" by Laurence Steinberg
- Excerpts from *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks
- Excerpts from the majority and dissenting opinions in *Roper vs. Simmons*

What my students will do/learn:

- Students read about and discuss Phineas Gage's traumatic accident and brain injury, focusing on what might be learned about the structure and function of the brain through the physical and psychological effects of the injury on Phineas.
- Students explore the biology of adolescent brain development and consider the debates about the ways in which this brain development affects teenage behaviors, including organization and risk taking. They discuss what they are learning in light of their own experiences, and society's expectations of adolescence.
- Students continue to add to their understanding of the structures and functions of the brain as they investigate additional case studies and consider the symptoms and behaviors of other brain injury patients. Students continue to use key classroom

Amplify ELA

Welcome!

7D: Poetry & Poe

In this unit, students learn to read like a movie director. First, they read poems by D. H. Lawrence, Federico García Lorca, and Emily Dickinson to learn to form mental images while reading. Then, they read three texts by Edgar Allan Poe—"The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Cask of Amontillado," and "The Raven." They use the rich details from "The Tell-Tale Heart" to create a visual storyboard that helps them understand the curious perspective of the strange, first person narrator in this story. They watch thoughtful, animated adaptations of "The Raven" and "The Cask of Amontillado" and compare the adaptations to the original texts. After reading these stories, students' knowledge of Poe's tales allows them to participate in the murder mystery Quest, *Who Killed Edgar Allan Poe?*, where they investigate a fictitious crime scene, interrogate characters to find and interpret clues, and present their proposed solution to the mystery before the true solution is revealed. At the end of the unit, students write an essay arguing for or against the reliability of the narrator of one of the unit's texts.

Core texts your student will read:

- "The White Horse" by D. H. Lawrence
- "The Silence" by Federico García Lorca
- "A narrow fellow in the grass" by Emily Dickinson
- "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe
- M'Naghten Rule, from *Queen v. M'Naghten*
- "The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allan Poe
- "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe

What my student will do/learn:

- Students identify and discuss the imagery in several challenging poems, examining how the ability to "see" the vivid images in a text supports their understanding.
- As they read "The Tell-Tale Heart," students use the Tell-Tale Art app and the details in the text to visually storyboard a climactic scene from both the narrator's and the reader's perspectives.
- After studying "The Tell-Tale Heart," students use an early legal definition to debate the narrator's sanity.
- Students analyze the characters, setting, and mood Poe crafts in both "The Cask of Amontillado" and "The Raven," and then compare their interpretations of the original text to animated adaptations of each tale.
- Students continue to use key classroom routines, including the sharing routine, during which classmates respond to shared writing by noting one effective way the writer used details or evidence.
- Students continue to write in response to prompts 2–3 times weekly, and practice analytic writing in response to text by developing a controlling idea or claim and providing support with details or evidence.

- Students write an end-of-unit essay responding to the following prompt: Can you trust that the narrator is accurately describing what's happening in the story or poem? Why or why not?

Here are some conversation starters that you can use during this unit to promote discussion and encourage continued learning with your student:

1. In one of the poems you've read, find an example of imagery that helps you visualize something in your mind. Could you draw what you see? What details would you use?
2. What stood out to you about the characters and settings in Poe's short stories and poem?
3. After looking at the way other people visualize Poe's texts, including students and professional animators, how are their ideas different from or similar to your own? In what ways did comparing your own visualizations to theirs help you gain a better understanding of the text?
4. Can you share a piece of writing with me in which you provide evidence from the text to support your controlling idea or claim? (Provide feedback to your student by finding something in their writing that you can respond to as a reader. For example, "I like that you focused on the idea that the speaker seems unable to stop his or her body from feeling scared, but that the snake's actions—"rides," "divides," and "wrinkled"—do not seem scary.")
5. Which of Poe's narrators seems the most trustworthy? The least trustworthy? What makes you say so?

AmplifyELA

Welcome!

7E: The Frida & Diego Collection

In this Collection unit, students explore primary source documents and conduct independent research to learn about some of Mexico's most famous artists, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, an extraordinary couple who lived in extraordinary times. In each sub-unit, students analyze primary source materials with a goal of building their ability to independently research a topic, generate a question, select and analyze credible sources, and write using those sources. Students learn to determine if a source is credible and understand the ethical uses of information; construct their own research questions and explore the Internet for answers; practice working with descriptive writing; and participate in a Socratic seminar about the complicated issues inherent in the work of Frida and Diego. As students reach the end of the unit, they synthesize all of the skills they've developed to tackle a culminating research assignment—part essay, part multimedia project.

Core texts your student will read:

- Excerpt: "Rockefellers Ban Lenin in RCA Mural and Dismiss Rivera" from *The New York Times*
- Excerpt: "Frida Becomes My Wife" from *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* by Diego Rivera
- "Detroit Industry: The Murals of Diego Rivera" from *NPR.org* by Don Gonyea
- "Letter to Ella and Bertram Wolfe" from *The Letters of Frida Kahlo: Cartas Apasionadas* by Frida Kahlo, compiled by Martha Zamora
- Excerpt: "Statement by Frida Kahlo" from *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* by Diego Rivera
- Excerpt: "Life with Frida" from *Frida's Fiestas: Recipes and Reminiscences of Life with Frida Kahlo* by Guadalupe Rivera and Marie-Pierre Colle
- Excerpt: "Frida Kahlo" from *Smithsonian* by Phyllis Tuchman

What my student will do/learn:

- Students conduct scavenger hunts to become familiar with the texts and images included in the Collection.
- Students construct effective research questions, evaluate Internet sources, and craft responses using those sources.
- After comparing Frida's writing to a Shakespearean sonnet, students engage in descriptive writing of their own.
- Students establish expectations, prepare questions for, and engage in a Socratic seminar, discussing the lives, times, and work of Frida and Diego.
- Students continue to write in response to prompts 2–3 times weekly, and practice analytic writing in response to text by developing a controlling idea or claim and providing support with details or evidence.
- Students write an end-of-unit essay responding to one of the following prompts:
    a. Research Option 1: Informative Essay: Frida Kahlo: The Early Years—Why did Frida Kahlo begin painting? How did this circumstance affect the type of

paintings that she did? What did that mean for her long-term career? Write an informative essay about the beginning and development of Frida's artistic work.

b. Research Option 2: Argumentative Essay: Who has the right to decide what public art should be: the artist or the public?—There was controversy surrounding Diego Rivera's mural, Detroit Industry. Why did many people object to this work of art? What role does the public play when a work of art is being commissioned for a public space? What role does the artist play? Should Rivera have followed the demands of the public or was he right to follow his artistic instincts? You will write an argumentative essay stating your claim that either Rivera was right to follow his artistic vision or the public was right to demand that he paint the mural they envisioned. Be sure to identify at least 2 sources you can use in your work.

   As you conduct your research in both the Collection and on the Internet, be sure to look for relevant facts, concrete details, and clear evidence to support your claim.

- Students also create a digital collage to share their essay research with the class.

Here are some conversation starters that you can use during this unit to promote discussion and encourage continued learning with your student.

1. As you worked to evaluate sources, what did you notice about the credible websites? What advice might you give a friend looking for information on the Internet?
2. What does it mean to "cite your sources?"
3. What are some facts that you learned about the lives, artwork, or times of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera? In what ways were Frida and/or Diego controversial? What do you think continues to inspire people about their lives and art ?
4. Can you share the descriptive poem you wrote using comparisons to describe an animal? (Provide feedback to your student by celebrating their poem and responding to something specific as a reader. For example, "It's very funny when you describe the orangutan's teeth as 'sharp as my 2-year old baby brother's teeth.'"

AmplifyELA

Welcome!

7F: The Gold Rush Collection

In 1848, gold was discovered in California and the gold rush began. People came to California from all over America and the world—including Mexico, China, and Europe—to find (and lose) their fortunes, significantly shaping the economy and the landscape of California, and the lives of its indigenous and other existing residents. In this Collection, students explore primary documents and conduct independent research to better understand the complex story of the California gold rush. Students build information literacy skills and learn how to construct their own research questions and explore the Internet for answers. They also participate in a Socratic seminar in which they rely on their research to examine the many issues inherent in the gold rush story.

Throughout these activities, students conduct research to learn about the wide diversity of people who took part in the California gold rush. They compare and contrast a fictional portrayal with historical accounts and use the information they gather to write narrative accounts from the point of view of a specific person living through this complex and dynamic era. As students reach the end of the unit, they synthesize all of the skills they've developed to tackle a culminating research assignment—part essay, part multimedia project.

Core texts your student will read:

- Excerpt: "California Culinary Experiences" from *The Overland Monthly* by Prentice Mulford
- Excerpt: "Letter the Tenth: Amateur Mining—Hairbreadth 'Scapes, &c." from *The Shirley Letters from California Mines in 1851–1852* by Dame Shirley
- Excerpts: Chapter XXVII and Chapter XXVIII from *Roughing It* by Mark Twain
- Excerpt: "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman
- Song Excerpt: "Oh My Darling, Clementine" by Percy Montrose
- Excerpt: Chapter 3—"The Magic Equation" from *California: The Great Exception* by Carey McWilliams
- Excerpts: Preface and Chapter XI from *Sights in the Gold Region, and Scenes by the Way* by Theodore T. Johnson
- Excerpts from July 22–August 10, 1849, *The Gold Rush Diary of Ramón Gil Navarro* by Ramón Gil Navarro
- Excerpt: Chapter 8—"Good Haul of Diggers" from *Digger: The Tragic Fate of the California Indians from the Missions to the Gold Rush* by Jerry Stanley
- Excerpt: "The Toil of Trace and Trail" from *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London

What my student will do/learn:

- Students conduct fun and "low-stakes" scavenger hunts to become familiar with the range of texts and images included in this unit.
- Students learn how to construct research questions and identify appropriate and relevant websites and Internet sources for answers.
- Students assume the identity of someone who experienced the gold rush, then research their experience and write a diary entry from their point of view.
- Students establish expectations, prepare questions for, and engage in a Socratic seminar, discussing the circumstances and consequences of the California gold rush.

- Students continue to write in response to prompts 2–3 times weekly, and practice analytic writing in response to text by developing a controlling idea or claim and providing support with details or evidence.
- Students write an end-of-unit essay responding to one of the following prompts:
    a. Research Option 1: Argumentative Essay: Was the gold rush good for the state of California? Like all things, it depends on how you look at it. Who benefited from the gold rush (remember to consider different populations such as Native Americans and immigrants)? How and why? How did the gold rush affect California in the short term? How did it shape the California we know today? Conduct research and write an argumentative essay that persuades the reader of your point of view.
    b. Research Option 2: Informative Essay: Who was John Sutter? Who was Elsa Jane Guerin? Choose one of these two famous figures from the gold rush era and start digging. Where did this person come from? Did he or she strike it rich? Has his or her legacy had a lasting impact on the state of California? Conduct research and write an informative essay on one of these fascinating characters from the Old West.
- Students also create an interactive timeline to share their essay research with the class.

Here are some conversation starters that you can use during this unit to promote discussion and encourage continued learning with your student:

1. As you worked to evaluate sources, what did you notice about the credible websites? What advice might you give a friend looking for information on the Internet?
2. What is the difference between an open-ended and closed-ended question? Why do people prefer open-ended questions during a Socratic seminar?
3. What are some facts you learned about the circumstances and/or consequences of the California gold rush?
4. What are some of the ways particular people's lives changed for the better? What about for the worse?
5. Can you share the diary entry you wrote as someone who participated in the California gold rush? (Provide feedback to your student by finding something in their writing that you can respond to as a reader. For example, "This is great how you describe being sick and not being able to help with panning for gold. Nice job adding in those specific details of the poor conditions they experienced.")