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| **Unit 1: The American Dream** | State Standards: RI11.2, RI11.3, W11.1 | **Description:** This unit will serve as an in-depth focus on the American Dream and the way in which it is conveyed and interpreted in a variety of literature. Given the dynamics of our classrooms, students may explore the “American” dream that many of our culturally diverse students share. In this unit, students will determine two or more central ideas or themes and analyze their development over the course of a text. Additionally, students will analyze the impact of authors’ choices to develop and relate elements of a text.  
**Big Idea:** The author’s point of view, cultural influences, and personal experiences contribute to the development of the “American dream” theme.  
**Suggested Novel Options:**  
- *A Raisin in the Sun* (also an option in unit 4)  
- *The Great Gatsby*  
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God*  
- *Nickel and Dimed.* | How does literature convey the idea of the American Dream?  
How has the American Dream changed over time?  
How do authors develop multiple central ideas or themes in a work?  
How do authors’ structural choices impact the reader and the message of the work? | **Argumentative Letter**  
Using research completed and the grant proposal written to address a community need, students will compose a cover letter for their grant proposal. The cover letter will include the following:  
- an awareness of the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases;  
- a summary of the proposal, establishing the significance of the claim;  
- the amount of funding being requested, the population it will serve, and the need it will help solve; and  
- an argument to convince an audience that the project is worth funding by providing relevant evidence. |
| **Unit 2: Youth Growing Up American** | State Standards: RL11.5, RL11.6, W11.2 | **Description:** This unit explores the overarching course theme of the American Story by beginning with an in-depth focus on the depiction of youth in American literature. Students will analyze the structure of literary and informational texts, as well as the role of satire, sarcasm, irony, and understatement as critical for grasping an author’s point of view. Students will engage in textual analysis using the “whole novels” approach, and they may participate in literature circles and/or readers’ workshops.  
**Big Idea:** The structure of texts as well as the role of satire, sarcasm, irony, and understatement are critical for understanding author’s point of view.  
**Suggested Novel Options:** | How do authors’ choices impact the meaning and purpose in a text?  
How does literature convey the idea of growing up in America?  
How do an author’s choices concerning the structure of a work influence its impact on the reader?  
What does it mean to grow up American? | **Literary Analysis Essay**  
Students will create a plan for a television show based on their analysis of a studied text. The show will parallel the studied text by including the following points of analysis within the synopsis:  
- reference how the show represents growing up American;  
- describe how the structure of the show contributes to the meaning and its aesthetic impact; and  
- reference the show’s point of view and its intentional use of satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement as well as the intended impact on the viewer. |
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| • *A Lesson Before Dying*  
• *The Catcher in the Rye*  
• *The Joy Luck Club*  
• *A Separate Peace*  
• *Into the Wild*  
• *Between the World and Me* (also an option in unit 4) | How does an author use structure to make an argument clear and convincing?  
How do documents of historical and literary significance use rhetorical features to convey themes and purposes?  
How does literature convey the idea of protest in America? |  |

**Unit 3: American Activism**  
State Standards:  
RI11.5  
RI11.6  
RI11.8  
W11.2  

**Description:** Students explore the concept of protesting through American activism in literature. This unit includes writers and poets of the Revolutionary Period, the 1920’s Harlem Renaissance, the 1950’s McCarthyism era, the Civil Rights movement, and modern activists. Students will analyze poems and original artifacts to understand the purpose of protest in fiction and the rhetoric of non-fiction thinking that provides the foundation of major political movements in history. The study of these texts will allow students to develop a deeper understanding of the literary elements, including a focused analysis of perspective and purpose.

**Big Idea:** An author’s stylistic and structural choices provide perspective and purpose for a clear, convincing, and engaging argument.

**Suggested Novel Options:**  
• *The Crucible*  
• *Fahrenheit 451* (Also an option in Grade 9)  
• *Invisible Man*  
• *Tipping Point*  
• *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.*  
• *All American Boys*  

**Arguments Analysis Essay**  
Students will read a speech for human rights issue or call to action. Using evidence and reasoning from the speech, students will write an essay to analyze how the author builds an argument to persuade and inspire his/her audience to change. The analysis will focus on the most relevant features of the passage.

| Unit 4: Expression: Poet, Artist and Storyteller | State Standards:  
RI11.2  
RL.11.2  
RL.11.3  
W11.3 | **Description:** This unit pairs foundational works with pieces of modern and mid-century poetry, prose, music and art. Students will determine how themes and central ideas develop and interact over the course of the text by examining author’s choices and rhetoric. | How do multiple themes or central ideas develop and interact over the course of a text? |  |

**Creative Piece**  
Students will create either a poem, a piece of art, or a narrative that traces the themes, ideas, and evolution of the experiences of women or historically marginalized communities in America represented in the texts.
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<td>Students will read a variety of shorter texts to draw conclusions regarding what it means to express the American Story.</td>
<td>How do foundational works of various centuries in American literature treat similar topics?</td>
<td>studied. A written explanation will accompany the creative piece. This explanation, complete with specific text references, will detail how unit readings informed the creation of the final product. Additionally, students will explain their artistic choices when creating their creative piece.</td>
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<td><strong>Big Idea:</strong> Each poet, artist, and writer are storytellers with a specific point of view, purpose, and medium to communicate themes and ideas that have developed and progressed throughout history.</td>
<td>How has the expression of the American artist, poet and storyteller evolved throughout time?</td>
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|          |                    | **Suggested Novel Options:**  
- *A Raisin in the Sun* (also an option in unit 1)  
- *Fences*  
- *The Awakening*  
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*  
- *Between the World and Me* (also an option in unit 2) | How does literature portray the American experience of women and historically marginalized communities? | |
|          | **Capstone**       | **Analysis of Values and Alienation in the American Story** | | |
|          |                    | The unifying concept of the course has been “The American Story.” Writers often highlight the values of a particular culture or society in America by writing about individuals who are alienated from that culture or society because of gender, race, class, or creed. Choose two or more works studied over the course of the year in which such individuals appear. Compose an essay that analyzes how each individual’s alienation reveals the surrounding society’s assumptions or values. | |
|          |                    | Be sure that your essay: | | |
|          |                    | - avoids mere summary of the texts. | | |
|          |                    | - clearly identifies your chosen texts and characters | | |
|          |                    | - discusses the chosen characters roles in developing the themes/central ideas of alienation and societal values/assumptions | | |
|          |                    | **Optional Speaking and Listening Activity:** Deliver a prepared speech that answers the following question: Which societal values or assumptions discussed in your essay continue to alienate individuals today? Support your response with reference to your text(s) and with specific evidence from the particular culture or society you choose to address. | | |