Unit 1: Mystery, Murder and Madness
8th Grade Language Arts
24 Class Meetings

Updated May 2023

Essential Questions

- Why do people feel driven to solve mysteries?
- What strategies does a reader use when trying to solve a mystery?

Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals

EU 1: Readers are analytical and think critically, using implicit and explicit textual information to make conclusions and inferences that help them solve mysteries.
- Analyze how authors use irony, character interactions, and figurative language to develop a theme.
- Examine how dialogue and specific moments in a story reveal change in a character or provoke a character's decision.

EU 2: Strong text analysis requires relevant evidence that is thoroughly explained.
- Engage in the writing process to justify specific claims using relevant, contextualized evidence and detailed explanations.

EU 3: The persuasiveness of an oral argument depends on the presentation of relevant evidence in a focused, coherent manner.
- Present thoroughly researched, written and revised oral arguments in a Mock Trial.

Standards

Common Core State Standards:

- **RL.8.1**: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RL.8.2**: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **RL.8.3**: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- **RL.8.4**: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- **RL.8.5**: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
- **RL.8.6:** Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
- **W.8.1**: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- o **W.8.1.a:** Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- o **W.8.1.b**: Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- o **W.8.1.c**: Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- o **W.8.1.d**: Establish and maintain a formal style.
- o **W.8.1.e**: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- **W.8.4**: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **W.8.5**: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, 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.8.9**: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- **W.8.10**: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- **SL.8.1**: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
  - o **SL.8.1.A**: Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
  - o **SL.8.1.B**: Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
  - o **SL.8.1.C**: Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
  - o **SL.8.1.D**: Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
- **SL.8.4:** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- **L.8.1**: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- **L.8.2**: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- **L.8.3**: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- **L.8.4**: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on *grade 8 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- **L.8.5**: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- **L.8.6**: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

ISAAC Vision of the Graduate Competencies

Competency 1: Write effectively for a variety of purposes.
Competency 2: Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner.
Competency 3: Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team.
Competency 4: Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively.
Competency 5: Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community.

Unit Content Overview

- **Reading Literary Texts**
  - **Key Terms:** theme, central idea, main idea, annotate, summarize, characterization, plot, dramatic irony, point of view, support, conclusion, text structure, key details, justify, word choice, inference, author's point of view/message, author's intent/purpose, setting
  - **Vocabulary:** motive, mystery, clue, deduce/deduction, suspect, victim, witness, foreshadow, investigation, solution, alibi, perpetrator, testimony, homicide, judge, jury, defendant, trial, court, question of law, question of fact, guilt, innocence, insanity

Interdisciplinary Connection:
- Social Studies: History, Civics, Government

Daily Learning Objectives with *TWPS*

Students will be able to…
- Identify explicit details and implicit information to support provided inferences about *Holes*. **
  - *What is an inference?*
  - *What is the difference between explicit details and implicit information?*
- Determine themes or central ideas from *Holes* using relevant supporting details. **
  - *What two things do you need to make an inference?*
  - *Describe a time you've been punished for something you did. Did you think the punishment was too much? Not enough?*
- Describe the cause and effect of key events and details in *Holes*.
  - *What is a theme?*
- Determine meanings of words based on context.
  - *What is context and how does a reader use context to determine the meaning of an unknown word?*
- Compare and contrast the characters of Stanley and Zero.
  - *Describe one similarity between Stanley and Zero.*
- Analyze the extent to which the movie adaptation of *Holes* is different from the novel. **

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- o *Based on the trailer, make a prediction about a change we will see from the novel to movie version of Holes.*
- o *What is your favorite part of the movie version of Holes?*
- Build essential background knowledge and make pre-reading inferences for "Lamb to the Slaughter."
  - o *How might someone feel who has had their identity stripped away from them?*
- Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience create irony. **
  - o *Why do we feel tension or humor when we know something as the audience that the characters do not?*
  - o *How does the author use dramatic irony in "Lamb to the Slaughter"?*
- Complete an evidence organizer that supports their Mock Trial Claim using text evidence. **
  - o *Should Mary Maloney be found guilty of the murder of her husband?*
  - o *Explain which one of the following terms does not belong for "Lamb to the Slaughter": (1) Murder, (2) Dramatic Irony, (3) Mystery, (4) Appearances*
- Write a mock trial brief using text evidence and clear reasoning. **
  - o *Write three sentences starters that you could use to introduce text evidence (a quote) in your writing.*
  - o *Explain your role and responsibilities in the trial.*
- Revise their Mock Trial Claims.
  - o *What has been the most difficult part about writing your Unit Task part for the trial?*
- Present their Mock Trial Claims using strong eye contact, appropriate volume and clear pronunciation.

Instructional Strategies/Differentiated Instruction

- Whole group instruction
- Guided notes
- Paragraph frames and sentence starters
- Student-led instruction
- Teacher modeling
- Written feedback
- Think-pair-share and small-group discussions
- Graphic organizers
- Cornell notes
- Accountable talk
- Homework
- Word walls with visuals
- Anchor charts
- Small group instruction
- Conferencing
- Text and video chunking with guiding questions
- Close reading with text-dependent questions

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EL Differentiated Instruction:
- Explicit modeling
- Guided and independent practice
- Small group instruction
- Strategic grouping
- Key vocabulary
- Graphic organizers
- KWL charts
- Venn diagrams
- Sequence writing
- Reinforcing contextual definition
- Providing correct pronunciation by repeating student's response
- Predicting and inferring
- Directed reading-thinking activities (DR-TA)
- Glossaries
- Chunk and chew
- Sentence starters
- Word banks
- Google translate

Assessments

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:
- Do Nows
- TWPS
- Student discussions and responses
- Exit Tickets
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Completed notes
- Completed graphic organizers
- Homework
- Text dependent question responses
- Close reading notes and text annotations
- In-class work
- Verbal check-ins
- Vocabulary checks
- Unit Task- Mock Trial
  - Literacy Rubric
  - Accountable Talk Rubric

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:
- Quiz 1 (EU 1, EU 2)
- Quiz 2 (EU 1, EU 2)

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• Unit Task- Mock Trial (Mock Trial Scoring Guide)
• Unit 1 Test (IAB: Read Literary Texts)

Unit Task

Unit Task Name: Mock Trial

Description: In this task, students will be assigned a role as a defense attorney, prosecutor, or jury member in a mock trial to determine whether Mary Maloney is guilty of the murder of her husband in Roald Dahl's short story "Lamb to the Slaughter."

Students on the prosecution and defense will (1) analyze the story for evidence supporting their claim/role; (2) write a brief arguing for their position; and (3) participate in the live mock trial. (EU 1) (EU 2) (EU3).

Students on the jury will (1) analyze the story for evidence supporting both Mary's innocence *and* guilt; (2) write two briefs, one in which they argue for her innocence and one in which they argue for her guilt; and (3) participate as active listeners during the mock trial. (EU 1) (EU 2) (EU3).

Evaluation: Literacy Rubric, Accountable Talk Rubric, Mock Trial Scoring Guides

Unit Resources

- *The Writing Revolution* Judith C. Hochman and Natalie Wexler
- *Holes* by Louis Sachar
- "Lamb to the Slaughter" by Roald Dahl (Commonlit)
- "Lamb to the Slaughter" Pre-Reading Packet
- Mock Trial Evidence Organizer
- Mock Trial Independent Writing Assignment
- Mock Trial Writing Guide
- Mock Trial Prosecution/Defense Scoring Guide
- Mock Trial Jury Member Scoring Guide
- Mock Trial Resources
- Worksheets
- Laptops
- SBAC Prep Materials
- IAB Resource Materials
- Edulastic