Grade 7

Red Scarf Girl & Narrative

Building knowledge overview
The unit’s opening lesson launches the seventh grade curriculum, and many of the Getting Started lessons aim to build those individual habits and classroom routines that will enable students to work well together as they proceed. At the unit’s center is Red Scarf Girl, a thrilling memoir of growing up through the upheavals of China’s Cultural Revolution. The unit’s source materials complement the memoir with a range of propaganda posters that portray an idealized vision of the utopia that the Revolution aims to create—and the role of Chairman Mao within it. Students also examine photographs that present the Revolution in a very different light, and part of their work in the unit is to consider the conflict between these dreamy visions and horrific actualities.

Building knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior knowledge</th>
<th>Future learning</th>
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</table>

Several lessons in the unit introduce students to the ways that the leaders of the Cultural Revolution used art as a tool of political propaganda. But art can also be used to change the beliefs and behavior of citizens within a democracy. Can your students think of photos, cartoons or drawings that aim to shape the viewer’s thoughts or feelings? Their ideas about who to vote for? or how to dress?

In earlier units, students acted out scenes as a way to evaluate characters’ actions and motives. They use the same approach in this unit, when they portray Jiang’s suffering during the dark days of the Cultural Revolution.

The first unit of the sixth grade curriculum also begins with a memoir: Roald Dahl’s Boy, a remembrance of his childhood in England. And throughout the year, students will read a number of other autobiographical texts. The lessons they learn about writing from experience will prove invaluable as they explore these readings—as will their increasing sense of how to approach an autobiographical text.

Global history is part of many junior high curricula. And many high schools will spend a unit—if not a larger portion of time—on the history of China. Reading Red Scarf Girl develops students’ familiarity with the subject matter, while the more specialized vocabulary they learn (terms like “communism,” “revolution” or “liberate”) will deepen students’ reading fluency in future encounters with similar texts.

When we teach students about the uses of propaganda, whether in totalitarian countries or in democracies, we are fostering responsible citizenship. Ji-li Jiang, the author of the Red Scarf Girl, continually confronted the onslaught of a propaganda machine aimed at children even more than at adults—which may make the posters included within this unit even more compelling to your middle-schoolers.

The next unit in the seventh grade sequence is Character & Conflict. The anchor text of the unit, A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry, is a play. Students will also watch a film version of the play. They will discuss how actors interpret and portray conflicts through the use of drama.

Memoirs describe the stories of individuals, but they also serve as a way of observing, through the perspective provided by those individuals, much larger historical events or eras. For example, seventh grade students will learn about the Harlem Renaissance through the eyes of Langston Hughes, while, in the eighth grade, they will learn about the years leading up to the American Revolution by following the story of Benjamin Franklin.
Suggestions for enrichment

With the abundance of digital cameras and cell phones, many teenagers may well consider themselves expert photographers. Nonetheless, they likely could learn a great deal about composition and other artistic techniques from a photography or other fine arts teacher—and thus gain another way of examining the posters that play a large part in this unit.

Similarly, a drama teacher can help students with those lessons where they are called upon to act out specific scenes.

You can encourage and assist your students as they conduct research on the use of art in political propaganda. Many intriguing questions can guide this research. For example: How do we define art? If it is used as a political tool can we still call it art? Is there “good” and “bad” propaganda? How might we evaluate the effectiveness of art used as propaganda?

The Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution by Ji-li Jiang is one of many young adult memoirs that have been published in recent years. This is a popular genre for students. They are easily captivated by stories of other young teens. A few examples are: Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Houston and James D. Houston; Number the Stars by Lois Lowry; I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai. See the independent reading recommendations, noted below, for many other ideas for further reading.

Vocabulary development

This unit has great interdisciplinary potential. The chart below lists a number of domain-specific words. Consider, for example, the social studies list: Cultural Revolution; slogan; emblem; revolution; liberate; oppression; political; idealist; and domineering. Students will encounter these words over and over again.

Teachers can also expand the list in the art section. They can draw from a variety of fields, including drawing, photography and graphic art.

Recommendation for independent reading

Familiarize yourself with the extensive list of recommended reading in The Independent Reader’s Guide: Red Scarf Girl & Narrative (in the Appendix). Invite a social studies teacher to join you when you discuss the authors and the events that the books portray. The links also give students an opportunity to view more examples of the uses of art for propaganda purposes.
## Red Scarf Girl & Narrative | Interdisciplinary overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>ELA/Literacy</th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
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</table>
| **Texts/Activities** | *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* by Ji-li Jiang | Brueghel’s Hunters in the Snow, Propaganda posters | Propaganda art  
The Cultural Revolution |
| **Topics and Content** | • Political memoir  
• Family and loyalty | • Images tell stories  
• Analysis of propaganda art | • The Cultural Revolution  
• Art and politics |
| **Domain-specific vocabulary (samples)** | indistinct; relatively; expectantly; cautiously; irritated; quivered; impact; squabbling; displayed; jostling; flabbergasted; strived; taunt; colliding; pandemonium; fervor; domineering; snide; disheveled | image; zoom; focus; posters | Cultural revolution; slogan; emblem; revolution; liberate; oppression; political; idealist; domineering; |
| **Standards** | CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.1;3  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.1;2;3;4;5  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1;2  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.2;4a  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5;5 | 3.1 | Research, Evidence, and Point of View: 5  
6.6  
7.3 |
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<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>ELA/Literacy</th>
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<th>Social Studies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td>Students develop observational skills; noticing details, writing details; and focusing on specific moments. They continue to read as skilled detectives; annotating, and rereading.</td>
<td>Students research and describe how art reflects cultural values in various traditions throughout the world.</td>
<td>Students detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made (the questions asked, sources used, author’s perspective). Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of China. Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of China in the Middle Ages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade 7

Character & Conflict

Building knowledge overview
Students read three texts in this unit: *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, “Harlem” by Langston Hughes, and “Sucker” by Carson McCullers. They watch the 1961 movie version of the Hansberry play and also conduct an immersive, multimedia Quest: Black, White and Blues in Chicago. The texts incorporated into the Quest provide a rich historical context for Hansberry’s influential play.

Building knowledge

Prior knowledge

Have your students ever been to the theater? What plays have they seen? One way to open this unit is to ask students about their experience with theater, explore what they know about this art form, and discuss how it differs from other ways of telling a story.

In the previous unit, *Red Scarf Girl & Narrative*, students studied the use of art as propaganda. With this background, they’re ready to consider how theater, too, can function as a political tool. In Act II, Scene 1 of *A Raisin in the Sun*, George Murchison exits the stage after saying to Walter: “Good night, Prometheus!” Walter does not recognize George’s reference, but your students should! In The Greeks unit, they learned about how Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to humankind. This exchange of knowledge across units (and art forms) powerfully illustrates E. D. Hirsch’s contention that: “To become a good comprehender a child needs a great deal of knowledge.”

Future learning

Students will watch a film version of the play, *A Raisin in the Sun*. Can they think of other movies that are based on plays? For example: some of your students may have seen recent productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, a play they will read later this year.

In every aspect of their lives, students will be exposed to the ways that art is used to convey ideas. Artists, photographers, authors, and playwrights each use their distinctive modes to express opinions (theirs and others’) about the world we live in.

The multimedia Quest included within this unit plays a crucial role in what E.D. Hirsch describes as its “intellectual structure.” By engaging students in an immersive experience of the social context surrounding the play, the Quest whets their curiosity and draws them toward knowledge-building explorations of people, events, and places.

In this unit, as in the rest of the Amplify ELA curriculum, writing activities are carefully developed and deliberately structured to lead students to develop strong, well-supported claims that build into clearly structured arguments.
**Suggestions for enrichment**
Consider this research topic: What political role did theater play at different points in history? Throughout history, theatrical art forms have been used not only to entertain, but also to persuade people to believe and to act in specific ways. This aspect of theater’s power may intrigue your students—especially if you help them explore the ways in which advertising can also use imagery and narrative to persuade us.

The Quest offers a change of pace, and you can conduct it after your class reads *Raisin in the Sun*, or at the very end of the unit. Consider when your students are likely to benefit most from the Quest’s more hands-on mode of learning. (Keep in mind that the Quest, too, offers a great chance to collaborate with teachers in other disciplines—e.g., a social studies teacher.)

Have you noticed the beautiful paintings that serve as the background to each lesson? These were painted by Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000), and each tells a story. You may also wish to introduce them to other artists of the Harlem Renaissance, such as William H. Johnson, Lois Mailou Jones, and Aaron Douglas. Your school’s art teacher can broaden the discussion about the artists and their skills.

Similarly, you may also wish to collaborate with a drama teacher, and work together on those lessons in which students act out scenes.

**Vocabulary development**
Building vocabulary is a fundamental component of the Amplify instructional approach. As described below, the unit contains additional interdisciplinary potential; see the chart below for domain-specific terminology.

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**Recommendation for independent reading**

The Independent Reader’s Guides (see Appendix) for both *A Raisin in the Sun* and “Sucker” sketch out a wide range of routes for further exploration.

In the reader’s guide for *A Raisin in the Sun*, you’ll find a reading list divided into historical periods: slave narratives and the post-slavery period, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Civil Rights era. These lists, too, suggest a range of ways to expand collaboration between your class and social studies teachers in your school.

The reader’s guide for McCullers’s short story, “Sucker,” offers background information about the author, including the fact that she wrote the story at the age of 17—when she was just a few years older than your students! The guide lists many of McCullers’s other works as well as other similar texts that your students may choose to read.
### Character & Conflict | Interdisciplinary overview

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<th>ELA/Literacy</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
<th>Art</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Texts/Activities</strong></td>
<td>A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry</td>
<td>Black, White and Blues in Chicago in the early 1950s, photos</td>
<td>Chicago in the early 1950s, photos</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Huge Success”</td>
<td></td>
<td>A Raisin in the Sun, the film</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Letter to Mother by Lorraine Hansberry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jacob Lawrence paintings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sucker” by Carson McCullers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Harlem” by Langston Hughes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics and Content</strong></td>
<td>• Characters and conflicts</td>
<td>• Racial struggles</td>
<td>• Portraits of African-American life (Lawrence paintings; photos)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dreams deferred</td>
<td>• Assimilation</td>
<td>• Visual interpretation (film)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• African heritage</td>
<td>• Civil Rights era (Quest)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain-specific vocabulary (samples)</strong></td>
<td>doggedly; tentatively; furtively; emphatic; futile; clinically; immoral; meddling; evading; subtly; imploring; ignorance; misgiving; martyr; fester; despise; exasperated; whittling; meddling</td>
<td>assimilation; Uncle Tom; plaintively; resignation; beseechingly; insinuatingly; deferred; efficiency; nobility</td>
<td>No additional domain-specific vocabulary words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standards</strong></td>
<td>CA CCSS.ELA.Literacy. RL.7:1;3;4;6;7</td>
<td>Grade 8 CA SS Standards 8.1.2 8.6.4 8.9.6</td>
<td>CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RH.6-8.1.4;5;7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disciplines</td>
<td>ELA/Literacy</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Art</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td>Students evaluate impact of authors’ language; they conduct close textual analysis of the text; they analyze characters and their response to conflicts.</td>
<td>Students analyze the philosophy of government expressed in the Declaration of Independence, with an emphasis on government as a means of securing individual rights (e.g., key phrases such as “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights”). They study the lives of black Americans who gained freedom in the North and founded schools and churches to advance their rights and communities. They describe the lives of free blacks and the laws that limited their freedom and economic opportunities.</td>
<td>Students describe the environment and selected works of art, using the elements of art and the principles of design. They develop increasing skill in the use of at least three different media and they take an active part in a small-group discussion about the artistic value of specific works of art, with a wide range of peer viewpoints being considered.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Building knowledge overview

Each of the three texts covered in the Brain Science unit approach this topic from a different angle and in a different way. John Fleischman’s *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* is a compelling narrative that weaves together an exploration of science and history around the story of one man’s extraordinary experience. By contrast, “Demystifying the Adolescent Brain” by Laurence Steinberg studies the brain from a more strictly biological perspective. Lastly, Oliver Sacks’s *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* explores the ways that various neurological conditions play out within the lives of particular individuals, weaving together questions of science, psychology, and philosophy within the context of these distinctly human dramas.

The unit also includes Perception Academy, a Quest that immerses students in a multimedia experience of how different neurological conditions shape the way we process sensation—and thus prepares them for reading *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. 
Building knowledge

<table>
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<tr>
<td>You may want to begin this unit by reviewing the work that students did last year with the Chocolate Collection—specifically, their exploration of the effects of chocolate on the brain.</td>
<td>The news is filled with examples of how science impacts our lives, and many raise questions that your students may find compelling. The recent debate around the measles outbreak, for example, raises some fascinating questions about what vaccines are, how they function, and how we need to understand science in order to make wise choices about our ordinary lives (“should I have my child vaccinated?”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science books are popular among elementary and middle school students. Ask students to share some titles of the books they have read. It is possible that occasionally they may not even realize that the topic of a book they read is related to a field of science. An excellent example is <em>The Lorax</em> by Dr. Seuss—a book that calls upon young readers to be aware of the dangers to the environment.</td>
<td>When our students adopt the habit of reading, their reading ability improves. E.D. Hirsch—author of <em>Cultural Literacy</em>—says that “The factual knowledge that is found in books is the key to reading comprehension.” Repeated visits to the Independent Reader’s Guide section—encouraging our students to read on their own—will expand their knowledge. This will prepare them for high school where the classroom texts present an even more difficult challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You may also want to open the unit by discussing with your students the challenges they’ve faced when reading informational texts in the past—especially those that require specific background knowledge. Help students to understand the importance of relevant background knowledge and discuss with them the strategies they might use to gain it.</td>
<td>In two of the eighth grade units—Biography &amp; Literature and Science &amp; Science Fiction—students will also wrestle with significant scientific issues. While exploring the life of Benjamin Franklin, for example, students re-create several of his experiments in electricity. To complement their work with Frankenstein—a text deeply concerned with the “scientific” approach to life and its alternatives—students read excerpts from Walter Isaacson’s <em>The Innovators</em>, a work which also connects to questions of science and technology. In these ways, Amplify’s grade-by-grade sequence of increasingly challenging texts prepares students to delve ever deeper into scientific ideas and methods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggestions for enrichment
This unit offers you (the ELA teacher) an excellent opportunity to broaden your own background knowledge by learning more about a topic that will likely prove highly relevant to your own work: the workings of the brain. Your ability to discuss science fluently in your classroom will convey to students the importance of reading across the curriculum. The Independent Reader’s Guide provides an excellent resource for you, as well as your students, to turn to for additional reading.

As described below, this unit opens readily across the curriculum. You may, for example, wish to collaborate with a science teacher and explore these topics from a scientific as well as a historical perspective. Add an art teacher as well to take advantage on the opportunities for illustrating the materials explored—both the historical and the scientific documents will become much richer. (Note: advance planning usually makes these interdisciplinary collaborations much easier.)

If your schedule has some flexibility, you may wish to engage your students in a research project. A simple online search will show how widely researched the topic of the adolescent brain has become. And several of the topics discussed in this unit have been recently explored in greater depth—in ways that students may find very interesting. For example, Laurence Steinberg has recently expanded his studies of the adolescent brain to explore the impact of groups on adolescent decision-making (see: http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2015/03/11/391864852/the-teenage-brain-spock-vs-captain-kirk).

Vocabulary development
Students will encounter some challenging vocabulary in this unit, ranging from Tier 1 academic terms like “associate” and “capable,” to Tier 2, domain-specific words such as “cortex” and “dopamine.”

Recommendations for Independent Reading
Turn your students’ attention to Independent Readers’ Guide: Brain Science (see Appendix). Ask a science teacher to help introduce your students to the extensive list of recommended texts. The guide offers a long list of fictional, informational, and multimedia texts to guide further reading.
## Brain Science | Interdisciplinary overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>ELA/Literacy</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Texts/Activities** | - *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by John Fleischman  
- “Demystifying the Adolescent Brain” by Laurence Steinberg  
- *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks | - *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by John Fleischman  
- “Demystifying the Adolescent Brain” by Laurence Steinberg  
- *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks |
| **Topics and Content** | - Science detectives  
- The adolescent brain and us  
- Reflections on use of journals in search of scientific facts | - The challenge of reaching precise answers in scientific endeavors  
- The mystery of the brain  
- Benefits in scientific comparisons |
| **Domain-specific vocabulary (samples)** | confer; hoist; counter; conducts; cultured; bland; array; enable; vital; fundamental; irreverent; indulging; associated; aspects; relatively; enhances; acquire; elicited; simultaneously; capable; exuberant; grave; cordial; scoffed; approximately; abate | cortex; phrenologists; whole brainers; cerebellum; dopamine; cognition; extracts; decay; delirious; fractured; manifesting; speculate; miniscule; malleable; affected; speculation; optimal |
| **Standards** | CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.1;2;3;4;5;6;7;8;9  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.1;2;5  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.1  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1  
CA CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.L.4;5 | MS.LS1-3.  
LS1.d |
| **Skills** | Students analyze texts structure and determine central ideas in texts; they also describe how a text engages them. They determine meanings of words in context. They write arguments and support claims using details and relevant information. Students engage in collaborative discussions. | Students plan and carry out investigations. They construct explanations and design solutions. |
Building knowledge overview
This unit begins with three poems: “The White Horse” by D. H. Lawrence, “The Silence” by Federico García Lorca, and “A narrow fellow in the grass” by Emily Dickinson. These are followed by two short stories and a poem by Edgar Allan Poe: “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Cask of Amontillado,” and “The Raven.” Students will also read several informational texts in the multimedia Quest that rounds out the unit, including Mark Twain’s and Rufus Griswold’s reviews of Poe.

Building knowledge

Prior knowledge
Encountering Edgar Allan Poe’s characters for the first time can be daunting for young students. Alienated and detached from the world around them, Poe’s characters may be stranger and more unsettling than any others the students have met in literature. A conversation about how writers choose to depict their characters and the world they live in can help set up these unfamiliar readings.

When students read “The Tell-Tale Heart,” they use the M’Naghten Rule to evaluate the narrator’s sanity—thereby bringing the field of psychology into the unit. Some students may already be familiar with famous court cases where the insanity defense was used; others may be familiar with various mental disorders. Encourage students to share what they know, and open their exploration of the science of psychology.

Students have mastered several skills on which they can build in this unit. They learned to “read like a detective” when working on the Sherlock Holmes stories, and can draw on these detective skills when they read Poe. Students also have experience reading poetry, including Langston Hughes’s “Harlem.” In exploring that poem, students considered how the poet transforms something as abstract as a dream—and, even more abstractly, a “dream deferred”—into the tangible things that compose our ordinary world. In the Poe unit, students are asked to visualize silence, another abstract concept.

Future learning
As they move into high school and college, students will encounter an increasing number of literary characters who are alienated from the worlds around them. Whether they read Franz Kafka’s Metamorphosis, or F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby, discussions of authors’ portrayal of these kinds of characters will lay a strong foundation for reading similar literary texts in the higher grades.

When students debate the sanity of the narrator in “The Tell-Tale Heart,” they prepare themselves for other texts they may read in which a character’s mental state is uncertain. Henry James’s The Turn of the Screw, for example, also raises the question of whether the story we’re being told is the product of an unbalanced mind.

Part of our task in teaching our students to read these texts is to help them understand the ways in which literary texts are often complex and ambiguous.

After this unit, students read Romeo and Juliet. The play’s prologue is a sonnet. Long passages in the play use poetic techniques. Having some prior encounters with poetry will prepare students for the coming challenges of reading Shakespeare.
Suggestions for enrichment
In the first lesson of the unit, after reading D. H. Lawrence’s “The White Horse” and García Lorca’s “The Silence,” students try to visualize the idea of silence and write their own “silent” poems. You may choose to expand on this activity by asking your students to imagine what “silent noise” might sound like. This is an enjoyable way for students to build on the earlier activity, while expanding their creative thinking and writing skills.

Open-ended by design, the unit provides a rich range of activities (skits, videos, stills, and a mystery Quest) that leaves room for your creative additions and embellishments. Invite your students to come up with their own ideas as well.

As indicated below, this unit has interdisciplinary potential; you may want to teach it in collaboration with art and/or drama teachers.

Vocabulary development
In addition to this unit’s vocabulary lessons (listed in the Art section in the interdisciplinary map below), students will learn words that are domain-specific. You may select more words, depending on your potential collaboration with an art or drama teacher.

Recommendations for independent reading
The Independent Reader’s Guide: Poetry & Poe includes both expected readings (such as additional poetry by Emily Dickinson) and unexpected ones—like The Mouse of Amherst, in which Elizabeth Spires creates a charming portrait of Dickinson as seen through the eyes of a mouse living in her house. You’ll also find a mystery: Emily’s Dress and Other Missing Things (2012) by Kathryn Burak.

To add flavor and context to the Poe stories, the Independent Reader’s Guide also includes other ghostly and “whodunit” titles. For example, “The Horla,” written by Guy de Maupassant, describes an encounter with a terrifying invisible creature, while “The Yellow Wallpaper” offers us Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s famous account of psychological horror.

Beware: the Independent Reader’s Guide may become one of your students’ favorite places to go to in search of even more scary stories!
### Poetry & Poe | Interdisciplinary overview

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| **Texts/Activities** | “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,” “The Cask of Amontillado,” and “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe”  
“The M’Naghten Rule,” from Queen v. M’Naghten (1843)  
Mark Twain’s and Rufus Griswold’s reviews of Poe’s work (in Quest) | skit script; skit video; carnival images; cask stills; cask animations |

| Topics and Content | • Visualizing abstracts  
• Insanity defense  
• Ambiguity in texts | • Potential in animation  
• The author vs. the director |

| Domain-specific vocabulary (samples) | cunningly; fluently; resembled; acute; vexed; hypocritical; precautions; scarcely; stealthily; hideous; audacity; derision; vehemently; reposed; enveloped; wary; waned; premises; impunity; retribution; accosted; obstinate; succession; colossal; entreating; quaff; melancholy; foul play; respite; laden; divining; countenance; decorum; placid | animatics; director; story boards; skit script; skit video; animation |

| Standards | CA CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1;2;3;4;6;7  
CA CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1;4;6  
CA CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1;2;3;5  
CA CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1;2;3;4;5  
CA CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.1;4a  
CA CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4;5 | CA Art Standards 6th Grade  
2.5  
2.6  
CA Art Standards 8th Grade  
2.3 |

| Skills | Students conduct close textual analysis and draw inferences from the text. After determining the main idea, students write arguments to support their claims. Students compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium. | Students create, perform, and participate in the visual arts. They create an original work of art, using film, photography, computer graphics, or video. |
Grade 7

Shakespeare’s Romeo & Juliet

Building knowledge overview

In this introductory unit to the work of William Shakespeare, students read selections from *Romeo and Juliet* in order to encounter the narrative delights of the play’s most famous scenes, experience the distinctive thrills of Shakespeare’s language and, in the process, further develop the core skills of close reading and careful writing.

To enrich and deepen this experience, students also work with a range of source materials that include film clips and bespoke illustrations of select scenes. They also work with Wordplay Shakespeare, a multimedia platform that uses a split-screen to allow students to watch actors enact a scene while following the text that’s being performed.

Students continue their at-home reading with *Summer of the Mariposas*, a rich and engaging young adult novel by Guadalupe Garcia McCall that sets the story of Homer’s *Odyssey* in modern-day Mexico.

Building knowledge

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<th>Prior knowledge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many of your students will be familiar with the story of the tragic young lovers: Romeo and Juliet. Sharing this knowledge will build students’ confidence as they embark on the challenge of reading Shakespeare. Consider asking students to retell what they know (or think they know) about the story, and then asking them if/how it reminds them of contemporary books, or movies, or songs. In the course of reading <em>Romeo and Juliet</em>, students will discuss a range of profound questions about the nature of romantic love, the motives of vengeance, and the forces that fuel family feuds. Several of these themes may well echo with ones your students have encountered in books they read for earlier units: for example, such as the family rivalry that threads through Virginia Hamilton’s <em>M.C. Higgins the Great</em>. As you help your students explore the story of Romeo and Juliet, you’re also introducing them to a set of strategies that will help them make sense of Shakespearean English. These new approaches will feel more manageable if they feel not-so-somewhat unfamiliar—so help students recognize the set of reading skills that they will be bringing with them to the Shakespeare unit. For example, their work with the language of Mark Twain and Arthur Conan Doyle (in the Tom &amp; Sherlock unit) has taught them a great deal about reading patiently and letting the text gradually make sense.</td>
<td>Since Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets are a mainstay of many high school curricula, your students will most likely encounter his language over and over as they progress through school. The comfort and confidence they gain during this unit—their deepening facility with Shakespeare’s diction, syntax, and dramatic form—will serve them well in these later reading experiences. Romeo’s and Juliet’s story is still popular today, and not only because of its engaging plot or the beauty of Shakespeare’s language. The play also touches upon universal themes that students will continue to encounter in future readings, in movies, indeed in their own lives.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Suggestions for enrichment
Part of Shakespeare’s lasting legacy is his brilliant language. Send your students on an online scavenger hunt that challenges them to discover phrases coined by the Bard that still resonate today.

Shakespeare’s repertoire of insults is rich, various, and often thrilling to students. You’ll find a range of “insult generators” online (for example: http://insult.dream40.org/) that combine Shakespeare’s actual language into new permutations—and help students see the rich playfulness of his use of words.

Your students viewed clips from two different film versions of Romeo and Juliet. Did you know that since 1908, dozens of films based on the play have been produced? You can invite your students to research different productions—and compare the different ways in which these productions realize the same play.

Remind your students that they can read the entire play in the Amplify Library.

Vocabulary development
Unlike with other units, vocabulary activities in Romeo and Juliet are embedded within the lessons. While reading Shakespeare is intellectually challenging it can also be fun. Shakespeare used—and sometimes invented—many strange and wonderful words still in use today.

Recommendations for independent reading
Turn your students’ attention to the extensive list of recommended texts in the Independent Reader’s Guide. The first section, A Pair of Star-Cross’d Lovers, lists literary works that were influenced by Romeo and Juliet. Point those students who want to read more of Shakespeare’s timeless masterpieces to the Shakespeare and Co. section. The Poem’s the Thing lists novels written in verse. The guide also lists several multimedia resources.
Romeo & Juliet | Interdisciplinary overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>ELA/Literacy</th>
<th>Art</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Texts/Activities</strong></td>
<td><em>Romeo and Juliet</em>, by William Shakespeare</td>
<td>Clips from Baz Luhrmann’s 1996 <em>Romeo and Juliet</em> + Franco Zeffirelli’s 1968 <em>Romeo and Juliet</em> Illustrations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Topics and Content** | • A story in a sonnet  
• Power of hate and power of love | • Actors/directors interpret text  
• Illustrating scenes |
| **Domain-specific vocabulary (samples)** | doth; hath; art; thou; thee; hast; lest; shalt; wretched; hapless; elated; fortunate; courteous; civil; impolite; brash; insolent; dishonorable; infamous; lauded; revered; vile; repugnant; exemplary; irreproachable; gallant; reckless; craven; timorous | No additional domain-specific vocabulary words |
| **Standards** | CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1;4;7  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.1.a,b,c,d;2;4;5  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1b,c,d  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.1;4;5 | 2.0  
2.1  
4.3 |
| **Skills** | Students paraphrase lines from Shakespeare and explain their paraphrases. They analyze the meaning and uses of metaphor and trace extended metaphors throughout a passage. They memorize and perform lines from Shakespeare, using intonation and gestures that convey the meaning of the words. | Students create, perform, and participate in the visual arts and apply artistic processes and skills, using a variety of media to communicate meaning and intent in original works of art. Students take an active part in a small-group discussion about the artistic value of specific works of art, taking into account a wide range of the viewpoints of their peers. |
Grade 7

The Gold Rush Collection

Building knowledge overview
Over the course of this unit, students explore different aspects of the Gold Rush through the disciplines of literature and history.

Students learn about the “gold fever” that spread across California during the 1800s through a wide range of primary and secondary sources, which include excerpts from a memoir by Mark Twain, Walt Whitman’s poetry, contemporary letters, photographs, paintings, recipes, and song lyrics.

The unit culminates in an independent research project through which students use these materials to piece together their own understanding of the complex story of the California Gold Rush.

Source documents include selections from:

- “California Culinary Experiences,” The Overland Monthly by Prentice Mulford
- “Oh My Darling Clementine” by Percy Montrose
- Sights in the Gold Region, and Scenes by the Way by Theodore T. Johnson
- “The Magic Equation, “ from California: The Great Exception by Carey McWilliams
- “Good Haul of Diggers,” from Digger: The Tragic Fate of the California Indians from the Missions to the Gold Rush by Jerry Stanley
- Roughing It by Mark Twain
- “Letter the Tenth: Amateur Mining—Hairbreadth ‘Scapes, &c.,” from The Shirley Letters from California Mines in 1851–1852, by Dame Shirley
- “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” from Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman

Photos and Artwork:

- Head of Auburn Ravine, Unknown Artist (1852)
- Gold Mining at Sutter’s Mill, Coloma, California, Unknown Artist (19th century)
- James Marshall at Sutter’s Mill, Coloma, CA in 1848, Unknown Artist
- The Gold Seeker, (Between 1849 and 1852)
- The Last War-Whoop by A. F. Tait (1856)
- California Gold Diggers. Mining Operations on the Western Shore of the Sacramento River, (1849-1852)
- Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way, W.J. Morgan & Co. (Lithographer)(19th century)
Building knowledge

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<th>Prior knowledge</th>
<th>Future learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiarize yourself with the rich and diverse texts in this unit. There are</td>
<td>In California, most students learn about the Gold Rush in the fourth grade—so you can assume that your students will come to this unit with prior knowledge. You can also count on students soon heading into studies of American history that will build on what they will learn in this unit. Nonetheless, students may well be surprised by what they learn about the Gold Rush in this unit. For example, most of your students are probably unaware of the extraordinary poverty in which most of the prospectors lived.</td>
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<td>many historical and political issues to explore, and a wide range of background</td>
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<td>knowledge on which your students can build. You might, for example, discuss coal</td>
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<td>mining, a topic your students originally encountered in the Reading the Novel</td>
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<td>unit. Or you might ask your students what they already know about American</td>
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<td>pioneers: the challenges faced by the Western settlers; the devastation</td>
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<td>inflicted upon Native Americans during America’s westward expansion...</td>
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<td>A general discussion about gold as a mineral and as a commodity might also be</td>
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<td>interesting. What do your students know about gold—what it is, what we use it</td>
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<td>for (currency? electronics? art?), how we mine for it. You might focus on the</td>
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<td>question of why we consider gold to be so valuable. As you lead them down some</td>
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<td>of these paths, students will see how readily the topic of gold opens up into</td>
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<td>some fascinating areas of inquiry.</td>
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<td>This unit is not the first research your students have done. Spend a few</td>
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<td>minutes discussing the research skills that they have already developed. What</td>
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<td>do they remember about choosing research sources? About developing research</td>
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<td>questions?</td>
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Suggestions for enrichment
The interdisciplinary map below makes clear the power of collaborations between ELA and social studies teachers.

Is there an economist on your faculty? He or she may assist students who wish to continue to learn about the economic history of gold. Students might also consider learning more about how today’s financial markets operate and what role gold plays in the commodities market.

A science teacher can guide students who want to learn more about gold. What is this element and what makes it special? How does its chemical structure explain its remarkable properties—for example, its extraordinary conductivity.

In the Amplify Library, students will find Alison Hart’s *Murphy, Gold Rush Dog*. A historical novel written from a dog’s-eye view, Hart’s story follows the adventures of Sally and her mother in Alaska at the turn of the century.

Vocabulary development
This is a research unit. Students will conduct an independent search on the Internet and will select the texts they will use. This is an excellent opportunity for students to find new vocabulary words. Encourage each of them to come up with five words and share them with the rest of the class.
### Gold Rush Collection | Interdisciplinary overview

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### Topics and Content

- The complex story of the Gold Rush
- Documenting the Gold Rush
- The quest for gold and injustice
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<td><strong>Domain-specific vocabulary (samples)</strong></td>
<td>amateur; eras; precipitated; whim; oeuvre; domain; rotundity; culinary; deemed; insertion; feat; leaden; censured; floundered; preceding; epoch; satiety; diabolical; ingenuity; manipulation; attire; remote; overshadowing; omnivorous; fruitful; behold; disputed; confidence; coaxing; lavish; procuring; prevalent; idyllic; peer-reviewed; rigorous; satirical; pious; morose; fibrous; hailing; robust; moderation; caveat; penultimate; enclose; procured; duly; assure; apropos; gravely; erroneous; auriferous</td>
<td>migration; natural; disseminated; prospecting; stratifications; refinement; ornamental; regulation; destructive; protocol; repatriation; migratory;</td>
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| **Standards** | CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI.7.1  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.1; 2;3;4;5;7;8;9:10  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1;4;5;6  
CA CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.1;4 | Grades 6-8 CA Skills: Research, Evidence, and Point of View. 1;2;3;4;5  
CA content standard 8.8 |
| **Skills** | Students conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. They learn how to tell the difference between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, determine if a source is reliable, and understand the ethical uses of information. They produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience and they develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. | Students frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research. They distinguish fact from opinion in historical narratives and stories and they distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, essential from incidental information, and verifiable from unverifiable information in historical narratives and stories.  
Students assess the credibility of primary and secondary sources and draw sound conclusions from them and they detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made (the questions asked; sources used; author’s perspectives). Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the West from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced. |