Short Story and Culture

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Short Story and Culture: Introduction to Unit

In this creative writing unit, students develop a better understanding of culture, the role of storytelling in culture, and what makes a story work. The unit is designed to follow the earliest community building activities of the year as it encourages students to share their ideas, personal experiences and writing on a daily basis. Our aim has been to provide students with a broad picture of who writes and what they write about: gender roles, generation gaps, poverty, music, love, family, drug addiction, hegemony, migrant labor, and more. We've knowingly sacrificed depth for breadth in this opening unit.

The opening activities provide a common language with which to discuss culture, as well as framing the way we will look at the stories within the unit (and potentially the entire year). Three texts/speeches are provided which espouse complimentary and contrasting ideas on the role of story in culture and specifically the role of multicultural literature. Students investigate these ideas to discover essential questions such as: What is culture? What is the role of the short story (or literature) in culture? How does point of view and personal perspective affect meaning? How do we recognize what is individual and what is universal in everything? It is our hope that through this initial work, students can be more conscious of their own cultural perspective and also the dangers of attributing too much significance to cultural representation in literature.

Each class day juggles the need to address the content and develop skills. To adequately prepare students for success they need a healthy dose of ideas for their short stories and methods for communicating these ideas. To the later, in each short story workshop students read a text and identify one or more elements of storytelling, work to a deeper understanding of how that element makes a meaningful gesture, and extend that understanding as they attempt to apply it in their own writing. Consider providing the students with the Culminating Assessment directions and scoring guide at the beginning of the unit. While it is certainly one of our goals to develop a common language of literary discourse, the primary concern is not that students have the “right name” for each feature, but that their conception of the whole of a literary text is expanded. We're looking for awareness, appreciation and application, assuming that students can become better writers through regular practice of writing and reading like a writer.

There are more stories in this unit than you are likely to have time for. Select those stories that offer meaningful reading experiences for your students and teach skills that you will assess in the culminating assessment. In an attempt to meet the needs of the broadest range of classroom communities, we have sometimes suggested alternative texts for teaching a literary element. “Sonny's Blues,” for instance, is taught in some advanced placement courses at senior level in this district, and it is offered in this unit as a “reading challenge,” a culminating reading if you will. There is also a reading group activity which can be duplicated with other texts in order to approach more texts, compress time, and individualize for student levels & interest.

Our hope is that the unit closes and your students feel that the class will expose them to many different ways of seeing, challenging and rewarding reading experiences, and enough scaffolding to be successful in these experiences.

Please make sure that you acquire a copy of the resources packet for this unit.
SHORT STORY AND CULTURE
Unit Template

Stage 1: Desired Outcomes

Priority Standards: (number and description)

Reading Standards
10.06 – Compare and contrast information on the same topic, making perceptive connections
10.07 - Draw conclusions about reasons for actions/beliefs and support assertions

Literature
10.9 - Identify and analyze the development of themes
10.10 - Identify the qualities of a character and analyze the effect of these qualities
10.11 - Describe the function and effect upon a literary work of common literary.

Writing Standards
10.18.9 - Develop Characters of appropriate complexity;
10.18.11 – Reveal the significance of the subject and events;

Speaking/Listening
10.21 – Respond to presentations with relevant questions
10.23 – Compare and contrast points of view in media

Understandings:
Students will understand that…
• There are issues that make cultural conversations, or dialogues, challenging.
• Perspective creates meaning in literature and life.
• Reading informs writing.
• There are different types of short fiction with distinguishing features.
• Writing is a process.

Essential Questions:
• What is culture?
• What is the role of the short story (or literature) in culture?
• How do cultures attempt to assert their values on another culture?
• What makes a story work?
• How does point of view and personal perspective affect meaning?
• How do we recognize what is individual and what is universal in everything?

Students will know:
• Components of culture.
• The relevance and importance of reading world literature.
• Types of short stories
• Elements of storytelling

Students will be able to:
• Free write to make personal connections to ideas and themes in the stories studied.
• Write short story drafts from prompts and on their own.
- Identify literature features and devices.
- Describe the effect of literary features and devices.
- Read and communicate using language of literary discourse
- Use literary features and devices in their own work.
- Read multi-cultural literature with an awareness of the individual and the universal.

### Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culminating Assessment (learning task)</th>
<th>Other Evidence</th>
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| Students will write a piece of flash fiction (a short story) of less than 1,000 words and more than 500, demonstrating your understanding of the elements of storytelling studied in this unit. If possible, include the idea of cultural encounters in your story. | - Quickwrites and journal entries  
- Discussion  
- Pre-assessment  
- Character Tracking Chart for Orbiting  
- Hot Seat performance  
- Symbol tracking chart for “American Horse”  
- A Dialogue of Conflict for “The Circuit”  
- Plot Pyramids for flash fiction  
- A character and conflict organizer for “Two Kinds”  
- Local and Universal T-Charts  
- Reading Group Story Notes |
## Stage 3: Learning Plan

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**Academic Vocabulary**
The vocabulary used extensively in this unit:
Culture
Setting
Allusion
Atmosphere
First-person point of view
Indirect and direct characterization
Limited and unlimited narration
Second person point of view
Third Person Objective narration
Dialogue tags
Protagonist
Antagonist
Conflict
External conflict
Internal conflict
Subordinate characters
Dynamic characters
Static characters
Motivation.
Flash fiction
Short story
Mystery
Fantasy
Realistic fiction
Exposition inciting incident
Rising action
Climax
Falling action
Resolution
Denouement
Symbolism
Symbol
Dialogue
Dialogue Tags
Blocking
Sensory Images
Active verbs
Peer Review
Pre-writing
Drafting
Revising
Proofreading
Peer Review
Publishing
Lesson #1: Essential Questions

Duration: 50 Minutes
Priority standards: 10.07

Brief overview of lesson:
• Students work to define and describe culture and categorize terms related to culture. This lesson borrows heavily from the Cultural Conversations unit in SpringBoard English Textual Power.

Materials needed:
• A variety of resource materials for finding definitions
• Index cards
• Contemplating Culture Handout

Key vocabulary: Culture

Addressing Essential Question(s):
• What is culture?

Steps/Procedures:
1. In order to activate prior knowledge, brainstorm the definition of culture by asking students to think about the word culture and write a quick definition of what they think culture means.
2. Think-pair-share by asking students to pair with a partner and discuss their definitions. Then, allow various students to share their definitions with the class.
3. Next, assign selected students to look up the definition of culture in three or four different sources. For example, one student could check a dictionary, one could use a social science textbook, one student could use the Internet, and so on. Ask students to report their findings.
4. Now that students have made their own predictions of meaning and heard classmates’ predictions and resource definitions, think aloud with students about the various definitions of culture. Be sure to discuss the commonalities among the definitions that have been presented. As a class, decide on a working definition of culture that students find meaningful and understandable. (An example might be Culture: the learned behaviors and customs of a particular group of people.)
5. Instruct students to use the handout to write the class definition of culture and to begin to explore the categories of behavior frequently related to a study of culture.
6. Manipulative: Using the list on the handout, direct students to write each word on an index card. Then, in a small group, students may group the words into appropriate categories. Next, encourage students to attempt to identify the various categories most closely associated with each word. Examples include:
   • Sports: cricket, jaialai, soccer, curling
• Religion: Islam, Hindu, Christianity, Judaism, Mecca, Dalai Lama
• Foods: sushi, tortilla, borscht, poi, hot dogs, croissant
• Clothing: blue jeans, kimono, sari, dashiki, gele
• Music: sitar, jembe, tango, diggery-doo
• Governments: democracy, communism, monarchy, socialism
• Languages: Portuguese, French, Japanese, Swahili

7. Distribute the “Circles of Influence” handout to students. Ask them to complete the chart by responding to the following questions, “Who are you within the context of this circle? For example, to my family I am the piano player, the dishwasher and the clown. Consider how these circles influence your lifestyle. For example, my family influences the kinds of food I eat and the religion that I practice. Choose at least three.

8. Close with a discussion of how our lifestyle and cultural codes and influenced by these circles.
Contemplating Culture

**ACTIVITY**

After your class discussion, write your class definition of culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture is:</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

The words listed below are taken from a variety of cultures. First, determine the meaning of each word. Then, group the words into appropriate categories, giving each category a name. *(Example: Tortilla would be listed under the category of Foods.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kimono</th>
<th>Swahili</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Yam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Mecca</td>
<td>Tortilla</td>
<td>Croissant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sari</td>
<td>Dalai Lama</td>
<td>Dashiki</td>
<td>Blue jeans</td>
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<td>Cricket</td>
<td>Borscht</td>
<td>Flemish</td>
<td>Socialism</td>
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<td>Diggery-doo</td>
<td>Gele</td>
<td>Curling</td>
<td>French</td>
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<td>Jai-alai</td>
<td>Communism</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
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<td>Sushi</td>
<td>Sitar</td>
<td>Poi</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
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<td>Babushka</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Judaism</td>
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<td>Tango</td>
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<td>Hot dogs</td>
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<td>Monarchy</td>
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</table>
Circles of Influence

ACTIVITY

Who are you within the context of each circle? For example, to my family I am the piano player, the dishwasher, and the clown. Consider how these circles influence your lifestyle. For example, my family influences the kinds of food I eat and the religion that I practice. Choose at least three.
Lesson #2: Pre-Assessment Part One: What is review and what is new?

Duration: 50 minutes

Priority standards: 10.09; 10.10; 10.11

Brief overview of lesson:
This lesson is designed to provide you and your students with actionable data on student awareness of literary features and devices. After the assessment, you should know the concepts that need a brief review and those that need the most instruction. This should help you select from the menu of texts in the learning plan. In this activity, students are introduced to the culminating assessment; they read a piece of short fiction and identify literary features; they discuss their answers as a class and reflect on the activities.

Materials needed:
- Identifying Literary Features Quiz
- Copies of “The Wig” included in the resource packet
- Student handout “Identifying Your Strengths and Focusing Further Study”
- Student handout of the Culminating Assessment Directions

Addressing Essential Question(s):
- What makes a story work?

Steps/Procedures:

1. Distribute the culminating assessment handout to students to make them aware of our end unit goal, writing our own stories and being capable readers of short stories. Read the description of the assignment and ask students to look over the whole handout tonight. Come back to the handout throughout the unit.

2. During this unit, we are going to further our understanding of the elements of storytelling by reading and discussing stories as much as by writing them. Our next step is to figure out where we are as individuals and as a class in our awareness of literary features and devices. Distribute the pre-assessment in this context and explain that they earn full credit by completing it. It is not a “test.” This activity should help you know what terms and concepts will need the most attention as you progress with the unit. In some cases, it may help you determine what activities to include.

3. Ask students to look at the handout titled, “Identifying Your Strengths and Focusing Further Study.” Ask a student to read the directions. Answer clarifying questions and check for understanding. Students complete the right side of the table after the test.
4. Distribute and read “The Wig” to the class. Ask students to complete the pre-assessment. Encourage them to re-read the selection.

5. Before you discuss the answers as a class, ask students to read allow the steps at the bottom of “Identifying Your Strengths and Focusing Further Study.

6. Go over the questions as a class. Use an overhead of the pre-assessment and discuss the best answers and what would qualify as a correct answer. Acknowledge the subjective nature of some of the questions. Allow students to support their answers. Explore how they came to this conclusion. Mark their answers correct if they demonstrate an understanding of the literary feature or device. Be ready to define and explain each of these literary terms. Leave number 15 for the teacher to read and assess.

7. Collect the pre-assessment and the reflections. Use another copy of “Identifying Your Strengths and Weaknesses...” and have a TA record the results for the entire class. Make special note of those terms needing further review.
Identifying Literary Features  
Pre-Assessment  

Directions: Review “The Wig” and answer the following questions to the best of your ability. When a question asks you to find an example, record that example in the space provided.

1. The story uses ______________________ point of view.
   a. First-person  
   b. Second-person  
   c. Third-person Limited  
   d. Third-person Omniscient

2. a. An important symbol in the story is _______________________________.
   b. Briefly explain how the symbol is important.

3. Find an example of direct characterization.

4. Find an example of indirect characterization.

5. a. _______________ is the protagonist because _________________________________.
   b. Is this character dynamic or static? Briefly explain your decision.

6. a. _______________ is the antagonist because _________________________________.
   b. Is this a round or a flat character? Briefly explain your decision.

7. Find an example of an inciting incident in this story.

8. Find an example of an external conflict in the story.

9. Find an example of an internal conflict in the story.

10. a. What moment is the climax of the story? ____________
    b. Why?

11. Find three setting details.

12. Find an example of flashback. Write it below.

13. Find an example of an allusion.

14. Identify the theme of the story. ________________________________

15. In a paragraph of writing, explain how the writer develops the theme. (use the back of this page)
Identifying Your Strengths and Focusing Further Study

As you answer each question on the pre-assessment, decide whether you feel confident in your answer or are unsure about it, and mark the corresponding box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Knew it</th>
<th>Wasn't Sure</th>
<th>Guessed</th>
<th>Got it Right</th>
<th>Got it Wrong</th>
<th>Simple Mistake</th>
<th>Further Study</th>
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1. As we correct your pre-assessment in class, identify which problems you got right and which you got wrong by putting Xs in the “Right” and “Wrong” columns.

2. Of the problems you got wrong, decide which ones were due to a simple mistakes and mark the “Simple Mistake” column.

3. For all of the remaining wrong answers, mark the “Further Study” column.
Lesson #3: “One Word of Truth”
Duration: 50 minutes
Priority standards: 10.07; 10.09; 10.21.

Brief overview of lesson:
Students learn strategies for reading difficult texts as they read and discuss “One Word of Truth Outweighs the World.” This begins our discussion of why it is important to read world literature. Students begin using an organizer that will be completed in the following two lessons.

Materials needed:
- Highlighters
- Dictionaries
- Solzhenitsyn’s, “One Word of Truth Outweighs the World”
- Idea Comparison Chart

Key vocabulary: Partisans, Parties

Addressing Essential Question(s):
- What is the role of literature in culture?

Hook/Anticipatory Set:
- Ask students the essential question, what is the role of literature in culture? Think-Pair-Share and have a few students share ideas after the pairs discuss. List what stories do on the board. Transition to the activities by explaining that we are going to read a text that offers a perspective on this question.

Steps/Procedures:
1. Before attempting to understand Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s text, it would be helpful for students to know a little bit about Solzhenitsyn himself. This can be accomplished in a couple of different ways. Students could do an Internet search and locate biographical information about him, or you could provide the information to them. Essential pieces of information for students to have would be Solzhenitsyn’s nationality, the subjects about which he wrote, and the price he had to pay in order to be a writer. When students have gained an overview level of understanding of who Solzhenitsyn was, they will be ready to tackle the text. Some autobiographical information is included in the resources section.

2. Read aloud the first sentence of the text. Point out to students that this is the thesis statement of the article. Discuss the possible meanings of this sentence. Instruct students to make notes in the margins of the text regarding their predictions of what Solzhenitsyn was referring to when he said “these frightening times.” Also, ask students to comment on the times in which we are currently living. Next, ask students to use the margin to comment on the juxtaposition of “literature” to “partisans and parties.”
3. Ask students to re-read the first sentence and to **skim** the remainder of the first paragraph. As they read, tell students to begin the process of diffusing the text. This process includes asking students to **mark the text** by highlighting or underlining unfamiliar words. Then, have students discuss those words with one another and use a dictionary to look up any words they cannot define. Students should note meaningful definitions in the margins of the text. Next, ask students to substitute a word they do know for each unfamiliar word they highlighted. Finally, students should re-read the text with the new words they have substituted. This process will enable students to read for meaning.

4. In addition to unfamiliar words, students may also identify the many strong adverbs that are used in this text. You may discuss the effect that is achieved by the repeated use of these strong adverbs. Follow the same procedure for each of the remaining paragraphs. First, read aloud to students and allow them to note questions they have about the text as you proceed. Next, assist students as they diffuse the text. Last, re-read the text with students and discuss it with them. Direct students to their Student Pages and provide assistance and support as they begin to understand the text.

5. Distribute the “Comparing Ideas” notes sheet. Now have students re-read the text and highlight phrases that are unfamiliar and hard to understand. Students should (individually or in small groups) add information from the text to the “Comparing Ideas” chart, writing questions in relation to each of the difficult phrases highlighted in the margin. Next, students should re-read the text and underline passages they find easier to understand and write a personal reaction to those passages in the “You” column. Students should share their highlighted and underlined passages, answering questions and stating reactions to the text when possible.

**Closure:** As a class, come to a consensus on what Solzhenitsyn has to say about the role of literature (Art) in culture? Indicate that they will hear from two other writers and will continue to compare the ideas presented on the notes sheet.

**Support for ELL students**
Pre-identify and define vocabulary in the margins so that students can focus on comprehending the message rather than decoding. Highlight sections they should focus on.

**Support for TAG students**
The text is fairly dense already. These students might be encouraged to read more about the author & his work.

**Support for students with special needs**
Pre-identify and define vocabulary in the margins so that students can focus on comprehending the message rather than decoding. Highlight sections they should focus on.
As you listen to and read these authors’ words, take brief notes on their ideas in these categories. In the “you” column, write down any questions or comments you have as you work with their complementary and contrasting ideas.

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One Word of Truth Outweighs the World

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

I THINK THAT WORLD LITERATURE has the power in these frightening times to help mankind see itself accurately despite what is advocated by partisans and by parties. It has the power to transmit the condensed experience of one region to another, so that different scales of values are combined, and so that one people accurately and concisely knows the true history of another with a power of recognition and acute awareness as if it had lived through that history itself—and could thus be spared repeating old mistakes. At the same time, perhaps we ourselves may succeed in developing our own WORLD-WIDE VIEW, like any man, with the center of the eye seeing what is nearby but the periphery of vision taking in what is happening in the rest of the world. We will make correlations and maintain world-wide standards.

Who, if not writers, are to condemn their own unsuccessful governments (in some states this is the easiest way to make a living; everyone who is not too lazy does it) as well as society itself, whether for its cowardly humiliation or for its self-satisfied weakness, or the lightheaded escapades of the young, or the youthful pirates brandishing knives?

We will be told: What can literature do against the pitiless onslaught of naked violence? Let us not forget that violence does not and cannot flourish by itself; it is inevitably intertwined with LYING. Between them there is the closest, the most profound and natural bond: nothing screens violence except lies, and the only way lies can hold out is by violence. Whoever has once announced violence as his METHOD must inexorably choose lying as his PRINCIPLE. At birth, violence behaves openly and even proudly. But as soon as it becomes stronger and firmly established, it senses the thinning of the air around it and cannot go on without befogging itself in lies, coating itself with lying’s sugary oratory. It does not always or necessarily go straight for the gullet; usually it demands of its victims only allegiance to the lie, only complicity in the lie.

The simple act of an ordinary courageous man is not to take part, not to support lies! Let that come into the world and even reign over it, but not through me. Writers and artists can do more: they can VANQUISH LIES! In the struggle against lies, art has always won and always will. Conspicuously, incontestably for everyone. Lies can stand up against much in the world, but not against art. Once lies have been dispelled, the repulsive nakedness of violence will be exposed—and hollow violence will collapse.

That, my friend, is why I think we can help the world in its red-hot hour: not by the nay-saying of having no armaments, not by abandoning oneself to the carefree life, but by going into battle!

In Russian, proverbs about TRUTH are favorites. They persistently express the considerable, bitter, grim experience of the people, often astonishingly:

ONE WORD OF TRUTH OUTWEIGHS THE WORLD.

On such a seemingly fantastic violation of the law of the conservation of mass and energy are based both my own activities and my appeal to the writers of the whole world.

Lesson #4: “The Danger of a Single Story”

Duration: 40 minutes
Priority Standards: 10.06, 10.21, 10.23

Overview: Students watch and/or read the transcript of Chimamanda Adichie’s speech, “The Danger of a Single Story,” in which she discusses the idea of the single story through relating personal anecdotes. She cautions us about the power of a single story as it relates to our perceptions of peoples and cultures. Students continue to layer this author’s information on top of the information from the previous lesson.

Materials:
- “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Adichie speech transcript
- “Idea Comparison” Notes

Addressing Essential Question(s):
- What is culture?
- What is the role of the short story (or literature) in culture?
- How do cultures attempt to assert their values on another culture?
- What makes a story work?
- How does point of view and personal perspective affect meaning?
- How do we recognize what is individual and what is universal in everything?

Steps:
1. Quick write: Write about a time when you felt that someone was only seeing/understanding one side of you or a group you associate with. How did you feel? What do you wish that person had known about you?
2. Instruct students to take out their “Idea Comparison” Notes.
3. Play the speech (20 minutes) or read the transcript of the speech. Note: Consider playing the speech (possibly with subtitles) while also providing the text. The speaker is a dynamic presence, and the text may help with understanding certain phrases.
4. Students meet with partners or in small groups to discuss and complete the notes sections for this speech. Remind them that the “You” column is there for them to question and add their own thoughts.
5. Return to the whole class and solicit student thoughts and clarify meaning (single story, representational foreigner, etc.) Be sure to touch on conflicts and similarities with the Solzhenitsyn text. Inform students that they will be layering one more speech on top of this information.
6. Return to the earlier quick write. With Adichie’s speech in mind, continue writing (or possibly begin a new narrative).

Support for ELL students:
Annotate the speech transcript with definitions for uncommon words. Provide a concept map to work with the students on the concept of a single story.
Support for Special Education students:
Arrange viewing and reading supports for students with visual or hearing challenges.
Annotate the speech transcript with definitions for uncommon words.
Provide a concept map to work with the students on the concept of a single story.

Support for TAG students:
The concepts within the speech are fairly sophisticated. Students could research the work of Adichie or essays on similar subjects.
I'm a storyteller. And I would like to tell you a few personal stories about what I like to call "the danger of the single story." I grew up on a university campus in eastern Nigeria. My mother says that I started reading at the age of two, although I think four is probably close to the truth. So I was an early reader. And what I read were British and American children's books.

I was also an early writer. And when I began to write, at about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obligated to read, I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading. All my characters were white and blue-eyed. They played in the snow. They ate apples. (Laughter) And they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out. (Laughter) Now, this despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria. I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow. We ate mangoes. And we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to.

My characters also drank a lot of ginger beer because the characters in the British books I read drank ginger beer. Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was. (Laughter) And for many years afterwards, I would have a desperate desire to taste ginger beer. But that is another story.

What this demonstrates, I think, is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books, by their very nature, had to have foreigners in them, and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify. Now, things changed when I discovered African writers. There weren't many of them available. And they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books.

But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized.

Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are.

I come from a conventional, middle-class Nigerian family. My father was a professor. My mother was an administrator. And so we had, as was the norm, live-in domestic
help, who would often come from nearby rural villages. So the year I turned eight we
 got a new house boy. His name was Fide. The only thing my mother told us about
 him was that his family was very poor. My mother sent yams and rice, and our old
 clothes, to his family. And when I didn't finish my dinner my mother would say,
 "Finish your food! Don't you know? People like Fide's family have nothing." So I felt
 enormous pity for Fide's family.
 Then one Saturday we went to his village to visit. And his mother showed us a
 beautifully patterned basket, made of dyed raffia, that his brother had made. I was
 startled. It had not occurred to me that anybody in his family could actually make
 something. All I had heard about them is how poor they were, so that it had become
 impossible for me to see them as anything else but poor. Their poverty was my single
 story of them.

 Years later, I thought about this when I left Nigeria to go to university in the United
 States. I was 19. My American roommate was shocked by me. She asked where I had
 learned to speak English so well, and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened
 to have English as its official language. She asked if she could listed to what she
called my "tribal music," and was consequently very disappointed when I produced
my tape of Mariah Carey. (Laughter) She assumed that I did not know how to use a
stove.

 What struck me was this: She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her
default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronizing, well-meaning,
pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa. A single story of catastrophe. In this
single story there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her, in any way. No
possibility of feelings more complex than pity. No possibility of a connection as
human equals.
I must say that before I went to the U.S. I didn't consciously identify as African. But
in the U.S. whenever Africa came up people turned to me. Never mind that I knew
nothing about places like Namibia. But I did come to embrace this new identity. And
in many ways I think of myself now as African. Although I still get quite irritable
when Africa is referred to as a country. The most recent example being my otherwise
wonderful flight from Lagos two days ago, in which there was an announcement on
the Virgin flight about the charity work in "India, Africa and other countries."
(Laughter)

 So after I had spent some years in the U.S. as an African, I began to understand my
roommate's response to me. If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about
Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of
beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting
senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves, and
waiting to be saved, by a kind, white foreigner. I would see Africans in the same way
that I, as a child, had seen Fide's family.

 This single story of Africa ultimately comes, I think, from Western literature. Now,
here is a quote from the writing of a London merchant called John Locke, who sailed to west Africa in 1561, and kept a fascinating account of his voyage. After referring to the black Africans as "beasts who have no houses," he writes, "They are also people without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breasts."

Now, I've laughed every time I've read this. And one must admire the imagination of John Locke. But what is important about his writing is that it represents the beginning of a tradition of telling African stories in the West. A tradition of Sub-Saharan Africa as a place of negatives, of difference, of darkness, of people who, in the words of the wonderful poet, Rudyard Kipling, are "half devil, half child."

And so I began to realize that my American roommate must have, throughout her life, seen and heard different versions of this single story, as had a professor, who once told me that my novel was not "authentically African." Now, I was quite willing to contend that there were a number of things wrong with the novel, that it had failed in a number of places. But I had not quite imagined that it had failed at achieving something called African authenticity. In fact I did not know what African authenticity was. The professor told me that my characters were too much like him, an educated and middle-class man. My characters drove cars. They were not starving. Therefore they were not authentically African.

But I must quickly add that I too am just as guilty in the question of the single story. A few years ago, I visited Mexico from the U.S. The political climate in the U.S. at the time, was tense. And there were debates going on about immigration. And, as often happens in America, immigration became synonymous with Mexicans. There were endless stories of Mexicans as people who were fleecing the healthcare system, sneaking across the border, being arrested at the border, that sort of thing.

I remember walking around on my first day in Guadalajara, watching the people going to work, rolling up tortillas in the marketplace, smoking, laughing. I remember first feeling slight surprise. And then I was overwhelmed with shame. I realized that I had been so immersed in the media coverage of Mexicans that they had become one thing in my mind, the abject immigrant. I had bought into the single story of Mexicans and I could not have been more ashamed of myself. So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become.

It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is "nkali." It's a noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali. How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power.

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that if
you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story, and to start with, "secondly." Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story.

I recently spoke at a university where a student told me that it was such a shame that Nigerian men were physical abusers like the father character in my novel. I told him that I had just read a novel called "American Psycho" -- (Laughter) -- and that it was such a shame that young Americans were serial murderers. (Laughter) (Applause) Now, obviously I said this in a fit of mild irritation. (Laughter)

I would never have occurred to me to think that just because I had read a novel in which a character was a serial killer that he was somehow representative of all Americans. And now, this is not because I am a better person than that student, but, because of America's cultural and economic power, I had many stories of America. I had read Tyler and Updike and Steinbeck and Gaitskill. I did not have a single story of America.

When I learned, some years ago, that writers were expected to have had really unhappy childhoods to be successful, I began to think about how I could invent horrible things my parents had done to me. (Laughter) But the truth is that I had a very happy childhood, full of laughter and love, in a very close-knit family.

But I also had grandfathers who died in refugee camps. My cousin Polle died because he could not get adequate healthcare. One of my closest friends, Okoloma, died in a plane crash because our firetrucks did not have water. I grew up under repressive military governments that devalued education, so that sometimes my parents were not paid their salaries. And so, as a child, I saw jam disappear from the breakfast table, then margarine disappeared, then bread became too expensive, then milk became rationed. And most of all, a kind of normalized political fear invaded our lives.

All of these stories make me who I am. But to insist on only these negative stories is to flatten my experience, and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

Of course, Africa is a continent full of catastrophes. There are immense ones, such as the horrific rapes in Congo. And depressing ones, such as the fact that 5,000 people apply for one job vacancy in Nigeria. But there are other stories that are not about catastrophe. And it is very important, it is just as important, to talk about them.

I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather
than how we are similar.

So what if before my Mexican trip I had followed the immigration debate from both sides, the U.S. and the Mexican? What if my mother had told us that Fide's family was poor and hardworking? What if we had an African television network that broadcast diverse African stories all over the world? What the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe calls "a balance of stories."

What if my roommate knew about my Nigerian publisher, Mukta Bakaray, a remarkable man who left his job in a bank to follow his dream and start a publishing house? Now, the conventional wisdom was that Nigerians don't read literature. He disagreed. He felt that people who could read, would read, if you made literature affordable and available to them.

Shortly after he published my first novel I went to a TV station in Lagos to do an interview. And a woman who worked there as a messenger came up to me and said, "I really liked your novel. I didn't like the ending. Now you must write a sequel, and this is what will happen ..." (Laughter) And she went on to tell me what to write in the sequel.

Now I was not only charmed, I was very moved. Here was a woman, part of the ordinary masses of Nigerians, who were not supposed to be readers. She had not only read the book, but she had taken ownership of it and felt justified in telling me what to write in the sequel.

What if my roommate knew about my friend Fumi Onda, a fearless woman who hosts a TV show in Lagos, and is determined to tell the stories that we prefer to forget? What if my roommate knew about the heart procedure that was performed in the Lagos hospital last week? What if my roommate knew about contemporary Nigerian music? Talented people singing in English and Pidgin, and Igbo and Yoruba and Ijo, mixing influences from Jay-Z to Fela to Bob Marley to their grandfathers. What if my roommate knew about the female lawyer who recently went to court in Nigeria to challenge a ridiculous law that required women to get their husband's consent before renewing their passports? What if my roommate knew about Nollywood, full of innovative people making films despite great technical odds? Films so popular that they really are the best example of Nigerians consuming what they produce. What if my roommate knew about my wonderfully ambitious hair braider, who has just started her own business selling hair extensions? Or about the millions of other Nigerians who start businesses and sometimes fail, but continue to nurse ambition?

Every time I am home I am confronted with the usual sources of irritation for most Nigerians: our failed infrastructure, our failed government. But also by the incredible resilience of people who thrive despite the government, rather than because of it. I teach writing workshops in Lagos every summer. And it is amazing to me how many
people apply, how many people are eager to write, to tell stories.

My Nigerian publisher and I have just started a non-profit called Farafina Trust. And we have big dreams of building libraries and refurbishing libraries that already exist, and providing books for state schools that don't have anything in their libraries, and also of organizing lots and lots of workshops, in reading and writing, for all the people who are eager to tell our many stories. Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity.

The American writer Alice Walker wrote this about her southern relatives who had moved to the north. She introduced them to a book about the southern life that they had left behind. "They sat around, reading the book themselves, listening to me read the book, and a kind of paradise was regained." I would like to end with this thought: That when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise. Thank you. (Applause)
Lesson #5: “The Politics of Fiction”
Duration: 60 minutes
Priority Standards: 10.06, 10.21, 10.23

Overview: Students watch and/or read the transcript of Elif Shafak’s speech, “The Politics of Fiction,” in which she discusses the idea of cultural cocoons, identity politics, and representational foreigner. She discusses the tendency to expect cultural representation from non-American writers. Students continue to layer this author’s information on top of the information from the previous lesson. Students synthesize ideas from all three texts through a classroom discussion.

Materials:
- Speech transcript by Elif Shafak – “Politics of Fiction”
- “Idea Comparison” Notes
- Optional: Socratic Seminar instructions.

Steps:
1. Quick write: Who do you hang out with most of the time? Are these people very similar to, or different from, you? Why do you think people choose to spend time with similar people? What might be the dangers/problems with, and benefits of staying within “like” groups?
2. Instruct students to take out their “Idea Comparison” Notes.
3. Play the speech (20 minutes) or read the transcript of the speech. Note: Consider playing the speech (possibly with subtitles) while also providing the text. The speaker is a dynamic presence, and the text may help with understanding certain phrases.
4. Students meet with partners or in small groups to discuss and complete the notes sections for this speech. Remind them that the “You” column is there for them to question and add their own thoughts.
5. Return to the whole class and solicit student thoughts and clarify meaning (circle metaphor, compass metaphor, identity politics, cultural cocoon, etc.) Be sure to touch on conflicts and similarities with the Solzhenitsyn and Adichie texts.
6. Give students a few minutes to ask questions and react in the “You” Column.
7. Debrief the overall picture that the three pieces provide. Students should practice using evidence for their thoughts with the aid of their “Idea Comparison” notes. You might choose a Socratic Seminar here, if you’d like. Some questions to consider: What is the role of the story? Do authors have a responsibility to represent their culture? Why is this only expected of non-Americans? How can stories both inform us about people and ideas outside of our “cultural cocoons”? How then, at the same time do we need to be careful of making assumptions about cultures and peoples (American Psycho example)? As readers, how can we know when something is representative and when it is not? What impact does our own perspective have on how we read “multicultural” literature?
Support for ELL students:
- Annotate the speech transcript with definitions for uncommon words.
- Provide a concept map to work with the students on the concept of a cultural cocoon and identity politics.
- Provide students with sentence frames to help them discuss the text, especially if you are requiring them to participate in a Socratic seminar.
- If you are using a Socratic seminar with an inner and outer circle, have these students begin in the outer circle until they are comfortable to join the inner.

Support for Special Education students:
- Arrange viewing and reading supports for students with visual or hearing challenges.
- Annotate the speech transcript with definitions for uncommon words.
- Provide a concept map to work with the students on the concept of a cultural cocoon and identity politics.
- Provide students with sentence frames to help them discuss the text, especially if you are requiring them to participate in a Socratic seminar.
- If you are using a Socratic seminar with an inner and outer circle, have these students begin in the outer circle until they are comfortable to join the inner.

Support for TAG students:
- The concepts within the speech are fairly sophisticated. Students could research the work of Shafak or essays on similar subjects.
- If running a Socratic Seminar, have these students act as facilitators/leaders in the discussion.
I'm a storyteller. That's what I do in life -- telling stories, writing novels. And today I would like to tell you a few stories about the art of storytelling and also some supernatural creatures called the djinni. But before I go there, please allow me to share with you glimpses of my personal story. I will do so with the help of words, of course, but also a geometrical shape, the circle. So throughout my talk, you will come across several circles.

I was born in Strasbourg, France to Turkish parents. Shortly after, my parents got separated, and I came to Turkey with my mom. From then on, I was raised as a single child by a single mother. Now in the early 1970s, in Ankara, that was a bit unusual. Our neighborhood was full of large families, where fathers were the heads of households. So I grew up seeing my mother as a divorcee in a patriarchal environment. In fact, I grew up observing two different kinds of womanhood. On the one hand was my mother, a well-educated, secular, modern, westernized, Turkish woman. On the other hand was my grandmother, who also took care of me and was more spiritual, less educated and definitely less rational. This was a woman who read coffee grounds to see the future and melted lead into mysterious shapes to fend off the evil eye.

Many people visited my grandmother, people with severe acne on their faces or warts on their hands. Each time, my grandmother would utter some words in Arabic, take a red apple and stab it with as many rose thorns as the number of warts she wanted to remove. Then one by one, she would encircle these thorns with dark ink. A week later, the patient would come back for a follow-up examination. Now, I'm aware that I should not be saying such things in front of an audience of scholars and scientists, but the truth is, of all the people who visited my grandmother for their skin conditions, I did not see anyone go back unhappy or unhealed. I asked her how she did this. Was it the power of praying? In response she said, "Yes, praying is effective. But also beware of the power of circles."

From her, I learned, among many other things, one very precious lesson. That if you want to destroy something in this life, be it an acne, a blemish or the human soul, all you need to do is to surround it with thick walls. It will dry up inside. Now we all live in some kind of a social and cultural circle. We all do. We're born into a certain family, nation, class. But if we have no connection whatsoever with the worlds beyond the one we take for granted, then we too run the risk of drying up inside. Our imagination might shrink. Our hearts might dwindle. And our humanness might wither if we stay for too long inside our cultural cocoons. Our friends, neighbors, colleagues, family -- if all the people in our inner circle resemble us, it means we are surrounded with our mirror image.

Now one other thing women like my grandma do in Turkey is to cover mirrors with velvet or to hang them on the walls with their backs facing out. It's an old Eastern tradition based on the knowledge that it's not healthy for a human being to spend too much time staring at his own reflection. Ironically, [living in] communities of the like-minded is one of the greatest dangers of today's globalized world. And it's happening
everywhere, among liberals and conservatives, agnostics and believers, the rich and the poor, East and West alike. We tend to form clusters based on similarity, and then we produce stereotypes about other clusters of people. In my opinion, one way of transcending these cultural ghettos is through the art of storytelling. Stories cannot demolish frontiers, but they can punch holes in our mental walls. And through those holes, we can get a glimpse of the other, and sometimes even like what we see.

I started writing fiction at the age of eight. My mother came home one day with a turquoise notebook and asked me if I'd be interested in keeping a personal journal. In retrospect, I think she was slightly worried about my sanity. I was constantly telling stories at home, which was good, except I told this to imaginary friends around me, which was not so good. I was an introverted child to the point of communicating with colored crayons and apologizing to objects when I bumped into them. So my mother thought it might do me good to write down my day-to-day experiences and emotions. What she didn't know was that I thought my life was terribly boring, and the last thing I wanted to do was to write about myself. Instead, I began to write about people other than me and things that never really happened. And thus began my life-long passion for writing fiction.

So from the very beginning, fiction for me was less of an autobiographical manifestation than a transcendent journey into other lives, other possibilities. And please bear with me. I'll draw a circle and come back to this point.

Now one other thing happened around this same time. My mother became a diplomat. So from this small, superstitious, middle-class neighborhood of my grandmother, I was zoomed into this posh, international school (in Madrid), where I was the only Turk. It was here that I had my first encounter with what I call the "representative foreigner." In our classroom, there were children from all nationalities. Yet, this diversity did not necessarily lead to a cosmopolitan, egalitarian classroom democracy. Instead, it generated an atmosphere in which each child was seen, not as an individual on his own, but as the representative of something larger. We were like a miniature United Nations, which was fun, except whenever something negative with regards to a nation or a religion took place. The child who represented it was mocked, ridiculed and bullied endlessly. And I should know, because during the time that I attended that school, a military takeover happened in my country, a gunman of my nationality nearly killed the Pope, and Turkey got zero points in the Eurovision Song Contest. (Laughter)

I skipped school often and dreamed of becoming a sailor during those days. I also had my first taste of cultural stereotypes there. The other children asked me about the movie "Midnight Express," which I had not seen. They inquired how many cigarettes a day I smoked, because they thought all Turks were heavy smokers. And they wondered at what age I would start covering my hair. I came to learn that these were the three main stereotypes about my country, politics, cigarettes and the veil. After Spain we went to Jordan, Germany and Ankara again. Everywhere I went I felt like my imagination was the only suitcase I could take with me. Stories gave me a sense of center, continuity and coherence, the three big Cs that I otherwise lacked.
In my mid-twenties, I moved to Istanbul, the city I adore. I lived in a very vibrant, diverse neighborhood where I wrote several of my novels. I was in Istanbul when the earthquake hit in 1999. When I ran out of the building at three in the morning, I saw something that stopped my in my tracks. There was the local grocer there -- a grumpy, old man who didn't sell alcohol and didn't talk to marginals. He was sitting next to a transvestite with a long black wig and mascara running down her cheeks. I watched the man open a pack of cigarettes with trembling hands and offer one to her. And that is the image of the night of the earthquake in my mind today -- a conservative grocer and a crying transvestite smoking together on the sidewalk. In the face of death and destruction our mundane differences evaporated, and we all became one even if for a few hours. But I've always believed that stories too have a similar effect on us. I'm not saying that fiction has the magnitude of an earthquake. But when we are reading a good novel, we leave our small, cozy apartments behind, go out into the night alone and start getting to know people we had never met before and perhaps had even been biased against.

Shortly after, I went to a women's college in Boston then Michigan. I experienced this, not so much as a geographical shift, as a linguistic one. I started writing fiction in English. I'm not an immigrant, refugee or exile. They ask me why I do this. But the commute between languages gives me the chance to recreate myself. I love writing in Turkish, which to me is very poetic and very emotional. And I love writing in English, which to me is very mathematical and cerebral. So I feel connected to each language in a different way. For me, like millions of other people around the world today, English is an acquired language. When you're a late-comer to a language, what happens is you live there with a continuous and perpetual frustration. As late-comers, we always want to say more, you know, crack better jokes, say better things. But we end up saying less because there's a gap between the mind and the tongue. And that gap is very intimidating. But if we manage not to be frightened by it, it's also stimulating. And this is what I discovered in Boston -- that frustration was very stimulating.

At this stage, my grandmother, who had been watching the course of my life with increasing anxiety, started to include in her daily prayers that I urgently get married so that I could settle down once and for all. And because God loves her, I did get married. (Laughter) But instead of settling down, I went to Arizona. And since my husband is in Istanbul, I started commuting between Arizona and Istanbul. The two places on the surface of earth that couldn't be more different. I guess one part of me has always been a nomad, physically and spiritually. Stories accompany me, keeping my pieces and memories together, like an existential glue.

Yet as much as I love stories, recently, I've also begun to think that they lose their magic if and when a story is seen as more than a story. And this is a subject that I would love to think about together. When my first novel written in English came out in America, I heard an interesting remark from a literary critic. "I liked your book," he said, "but I wish you had written it differently." (Laughter) I asked him what he meant by that. He said, "Well, look at it. There's so many Spanish, American, Hispanic characters in it, but there's only one Turkish character and it's a man." Now the novel took place on a University campus in Boston. So to me, it was normal that there be more international
characters in it than Turkish characters. But I understood what my critic was looking for. And I also understood that I would keep disappointing him. He wanted to see the manifestation of my identity. He was looking for a Turkish woman in the book because I happened to be one.

We often talk about how stories change the world. But we should also see how the world of identity politics effects the way stories are being circulated, read and reviewed. Many authors feel this pressure, but non-Western authors feel it more heavily. If you're a woman writer from the Muslim world, like me, then you are expected to write the stories of Muslim women and, preferably, the unhappy stories of unhappy Muslim women. You're expected to write informative, poignant and characteristic stories and leave the experimental and avant-garde to your Western colleagues. What I experienced as a child in that school in Madrid is happening in the literary world today. Writers are not seen as creative individuals on their own, but as the representatives of their respective cultures. A few authors from China, a few from Turkey, a few from Nigeria. We're all thought to have something very distinctive, if not peculiar.

The writer and commuter, James Baldwin, gave an interview in 1984 in which he was repeatedly asked about his homosexuality. When the interviewer tried to pigeonhole him as a gay writer, Baldwin stopped and said, "But don't you see? There's nothing in me that is not in everybody else, and nothing in everybody else that is not in me." When identity politics tries to put labels on us, it is our freedom of imagination that is in danger. There's a fuzzy category called multicultural literature in which all authors from outside the Western world are lumped together. I never forget my first multicultural reading, in Harvard Square about 10 years ago. We were three writers, one from the Philippines, one Turkish and one Indonesian -- like a joke, you know. (Laughter) And the reason why we were brought together was not because we shared an artistic style or a literary taste. It was only because of our passports. Multicultural writers are expected to tell real stories, not so much the imaginary. A function is attributed to fiction. in this way, not only the writers themselves, but also their fictional characters become the representatives of something larger.

But I must quickly add that this tendency to see a story as more than a story does not solely come from the West. It comes from everywhere. And I experienced this firsthand when I was put on trial in 2005 for the words my fictional characters uttered in a novel. I had intended to write a constructive, multi-layered novel about an Armenian and a Turkish family through the eyes of women. My micro story became a macro issue when I was prosecuted. Some people criticized, others praised me for writing about the Turkish, Armenian conflict. But there were times when I wanted to remind both sides that this was fiction. It was just a story. And when I say, "just a story," I'm not trying to belittle my work. I want to love and celebrate fiction for what it is, not as a means to an end. Writers are entitled to their political opinions, and there are good political novels out there, but the language of fiction is not the language of daily politics. Chekhov said, "The solution to a problem and the correct way of posing the question are two completely separate things. And only the latter is an artist's responsibility." Identity politics divides us. Fiction connects. One is interested in sweeping generalizations. The other, in nuances.
One draws boundaries. The other recognizes no frontiers. Identity politics is made of solid bricks. Fiction is flowing water.

In the Ottoman times, there were itinerant storytellers called "meddah." They would go to coffee houses, where they would tell a story in front of an audience, often improvising. With each new person in the story, the meddah would change his voice, impersonating that character. Everybody could go and listen, you know -- ordinary people, even the sultan, Muslims and non-Muslims. Stories cut across all boundaries. Like "The Tales of Nasreddin Hodja," which were very popular throughout the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans and Asia. Today, stories continue to transcend borders. When Palestinian and Israeli politicians talk, they usually don't listen to each other. But a Palestinian reader still reads a novel by a Jewish author, and vice versa, connecting and empathizing with the narrator. Literature has to take us beyond. If it cannot take us there, it is not good literature.

Books have saved the introverted, timid child that I was -- that I once was. But I'm also aware of the danger of fetishizing them. When the poet and mystic, Rumi, met his spiritual companion, Shams of Tabriz, one of the first things the latter did was to toss Rumi's books into water and watch the letters dissolve. The Sufis say, "Knowledge that takes you, not beyond yourself is far worse than ignorance." The problem with today's cultural ghettos is not lack of knowledge. We know a lot about each other, or so we think. But knowledge that takes us not beyond ourselves, it makes us elitist, distant and disconnected. There's a metaphor which I love: living like a drawing compass. As you know, one leg of the compass is static, rooted in a place. Meanwhile, the other leg draws a wide circle, constantly moving. Like that, my fiction as well. One part of it is rooted in Istanbul with strong Turkish roots. But the other part travels the world, connecting to different cultures. In that sense, I like to think of my fiction as both local and universal, both from here and everywhere.

Now those of you who have been to Istanbul have probably seen Topkapi Palace, which was the residence of Ottoman sultans for more than 400 years. In the palace, just outside the quarters of the favorite concubines, there's a called The Gathering Place of Djinn. It's between buildings. I'm intrigued by this concept. We usually distrust those areas that fall in between things. We see them as the domain of supernatural creatures like the djinn, who are made of smokeless fire and are the symbol of elusiveness. But my point is perhaps that elusive space is what writers and artists need most. When I write fiction I cherish elusiveness and changeability. I like not knowing what will happen 10 pages later. I like it when my characters surprise me. I might write about a Muslim woman in one novel. And perhaps it will be a very happy story. And in my next book, I might write about a handsome, gay professor in Norway. As long as is comes from our hearts, we can write about anything and everything.

Audre Lorde once said, "The white fathers taught us to say, 'I think, therefore I am.'” She suggested, "I feel, therefore I am free." I think it was a wonderful paradigm shift. And yet, why is it that, in creative writing courses today, the very first thing we teach students is write what you know? Perhaps that's not the right way to start at all. Imaginative
literature is not necessarily about writing who we are or what we know or what our identity is about. We should teach young people and ourselves to expand our hearts and write what we can feel. We should get out of our cultural ghetto and go visit the next one and the next.

In the end, stories move like whirling dervishes, drawing circles beyond circles. They connect all humanity, regardless of identity politics. And that is the good news. And I would like to finish with an old Sufi poem. "Come, let us be friends for once; let us make life easy on us; let us be lovers and loved ones; the earth shall be left to no one."

Thank you.

(Applause)
Lesson #6: The Language of Cultural Studies

Duration: 50 minutes
Priority standards: 10.07

Brief overview of lesson: Students define and illustrate vocabulary words related to a study of culture and create a classroom word wall.

Materials needed:
- Reference materials
- Chart paper
- Construction paper
- Markers

Addressing Essential Question(s):
- What is culture?
- How do cultures attempt to assert their values on another culture?
- How does point of view and personal perspective affect meaning?

Steps/Procedures:
1. This activity introduces students to words they will likely encounter when researching or discussing culture. In addition, this activity serves to create a word wall that will enable students to have a visual display of words to use in their writing and discussions throughout the remainder of the unit.
2. Begin by forming small groups of students. Each group should work together to determine the meanings of the vocabulary words listed on the Student Page. Students may use their own knowledge, dictionaries, or social studies textbooks to help them. It is most important for students to collaborate in order to decide on the most succinct, yet descriptive, definition possible.
3. Visualizing vocabulary: After defining the words, each group will produce an illustration to represent each word. These illustrations should represent the word creatively.
4. When each group has finished its definitions and illustration, hold a Vocabulary Gallery Walk. Each group displays its illustration on top of its desk or table. As a group, students view each display — starting at their own table and rotating to the next table when given a signal. The walk concludes when each group has seen each set of illustrations.
5. Next, create a word wall display in the classroom. Using colorful paper, post the class definition of culture on the wall. Then, post the vocabulary words from this activity. Throughout the remainder of the year, new words should be added to the word wall as they are encountered in the various texts and activities.
6. Last, create a place in your room (on a wall or bulletin board) to display meaningful quotations that students encounter throughout their yearlong study of culture. Each time a quote is added, include the author’s name and the corresponding text. As the year progresses, the wall should become a source of assistance for students as well as a tribute to the cultures and authors they have studied. You might want to consider giving this display a creative title, perhaps brainstorming ideas as a class. One suggestion would be “Statements of Significance.”
The Language of Cultures

ACTIVITY

With your group, determine definitions for each of the following words. Perhaps someone in your group already knows the definition and he or she can explain it to the rest of the group. Or, you might need a dictionary to look up the definition of the word. Make sure you have a thorough understanding of each word and are ready to use the words in a visual activity that your teacher will describe to you.

Cultural Vocabulary Words

customs:

ethnocentrism:

morality:

assimilation:

cultural acquisition:

cultural codes:

hegemony:
Lesson #7: Pre-assessment Part Two -- Looking at Culture from the Outside with “By the Waters of Babylon”

Duration: 50 minutes

Priority standards: 10.07, 10.09, 10.11, 10.18.09, 10.18.11

Brief overview of lesson:
Students identify and discuss aspects of setting and first-person point of view as they read a short story with one foot in the genre of mystery, the other in fantasy. After reading the story and discussing the techniques, explore the idea that the protagonist allows us an opportunity to look at artifacts of our culture as an outsider. Explore this idea further with one of the creative writing prompts at the end of the lesson.

Materials needed:
- A class set of the *Holt Elements of Literature: Fourth Course*

Key vocabulary: setting, first-person point of view

Addressing Essential Question(s):
- What is culture?
- What is the role of the short story (or literature) in culture?
- What makes a story work?
- How does point of view and personal perspective affect meaning?

Hook/Anticipatory Set:
- Quickwrite: In Stephen Vincent Benet’s fantasy you’ll accompany John, the narrator, as he catches glimpses of a past civilization. Using what you know of world history, jot down some of the reasons why civilizations might disappear. What role do people play in their destruction?

Or

- Can you think of a time someone told you that the world is going to end or that our civilization is collapsing? As a class make a list of these grave dangers to our way of life. You might ask students to put the concerns in order from least to most likely to happen after the list is made. Explore why. Ask also if they know anything about civilizations that have disappeared? Why did they disappear? Explain that today we are going to read a fantasy/mystery where the narrator, John, catches glimpses of a past civilization.
Steps/Procedures:

1. Ask students to read the “Before You Read” section on “First-Person Point of View” and “Setting: Where and When.” Ask clarifying questions about the meaning of each. Answer clarifying questions.

2. Read the story in a fashion that suits the needs of your classroom. Stop to check understanding and for students to ask clarifying questions.

3. Select questions from the “after you read” section, narrowing the discussion to focus on our learning goals. Questions 3, 4, and 5 allow you to address setting and first person point of view. You may easily transition to the next step of the activity by asking question 7. Consider having students think-pair-share responses to the question as they finish the story. Direct students by identifying a time for writing then a time for quiet sharing and finally come together for whole-class discussion.

4. Make a T-Chart with “Right” and “Wrong.” Ask students to create a list of what the story gets right about our culture and what it gets wrong. Share lists. Ask if there is any truth to the way the narrator got our culture “wrong?”

Pre-Assessment – Closure: Babylon II
What happened to the city that John calls the Place of Gods? Write a prequel, a story of the events that led up to “By the Waters of Babylon.”

- You might write your story from the first-person-point of view of the man John finds “sitting looking out over the city.”
- You might write the story in the form of the man’s last journal entries.
- A third option is to select some representative moment of the destruction of our civilization, as you see it, and write it with your own characters and setting.
- A fourth option would be to take the idea of the story, a stranger in a strange land of some long forgotten and wrecked civilization, and write what about what you found and what you imagine this place to have been. You’d be writing a sci-fi mystery.

Strategies for TAG students:
Ask students to read “The Nacerima” and continue the discussion of what this culture looks like from the outside. Ask students to reflect on what they felt reading this text.

Strategies for ELL students:
Students might want to plot ideas on a plot map or other organizer, rather than writing out full paragraphs. Students could create a visual storyboard of their ideas.

Strategies for students with special needs:
Students might want to plot ideas on a plot map or other organizer, rather than writing out full paragraphs.
Students could create a visual storyboard of their ideas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Standard</th>
<th>Exceeds (6-5)</th>
<th>Meets (4-3)</th>
<th>Does Not Yet Meet (2-1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.16.1 Establish a situation, point of view, conflict, and setting</td>
<td>The setting, conflict and situation have been skillfully established. The story maintains a consistent POV, and the POV chosen enhances the story.</td>
<td>The setting, conflict and situation have been established, although there may be some confusion. The story maintains a consistent POV</td>
<td>The setting, conflict and situation are unclear. The story may not use a consistent POV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.16.2 Create an organizing structure</td>
<td>The story’s organizational structure fits with the plot. The writer may have successfully experimented with non-liner structures.</td>
<td>The story’s organizational structure fits with the plot, and only occasionally jumps or leaves the reader confused.</td>
<td>The story lacks an organizational structure to aid the reader and plot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.18.9 Develop characters of appropriate complexity</td>
<td>The protagonist’s character is well developed and holds the reader’s interest. The writer has used multiple methods of characterization. Characters are appropriately “round” and “flat”.</td>
<td>The protagonist’s character is developed. The writer has used multiple methods of characterization.</td>
<td>The protagonist’s character is underdeveloped. The writer has used few methods of characterization, and “tells” us facts about the characters instead of “showing”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.13.6 Include sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character.</td>
<td>There is a balance of thoughtfully chosen sensory details that enhance the imagery and plot. The reader can envision most of the story.</td>
<td>There is a balance of sensory details that enhance the imagery and the plot.</td>
<td>The story includes some sensory details, but will benefit from using multiple senses and “showing”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.13.6 Use a range of appropriate strategies, such as dialogue, interior monologue, suspense, and the naming of specific narrative actions (blocking).</td>
<td>Dialogue and blocking have been included and are engaging. We get a sense of the characters and story through techniques like interior monologue. The reader can envision the scenes and is hooked and caught in the action.</td>
<td>Dialogue and blocking have been included and are engaging, but may contain minor errors or flatness. The reader can envision the scenes and is usually caught in the action.</td>
<td>Attempts have been made to include dialogue, blocking, and/or interior monologue. The story is not yet “hooking” the reader with these techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.18.10 Exclude extraneous details and inconsistencies.</td>
<td>The story contains no inconsistencies or unneeded details.</td>
<td>The story contains few inconsistencies or unneeded details.</td>
<td>The story contains several inconsistencies and unneeded details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After your pre-assessment has been returned by your teacher:

1. What do you think you are doing well so far?

2. What are you going to focus on improving?

3. What are you looking forward to in this unit? What are you concerned about? Why?
Lesson #8: The Local vs. The Universal

Duration: 75 minutes

Priority Standards: 10.07

Overview:

In her speech, “The Politics of Fiction”, Elif Shafak says:

There’s a metaphor which I love: living like a drawing compass. As you know, one leg of the compass is static, rooted in a place. Meanwhile, the other leg draws a wide circle, constantly moving. Like that, my fiction as well. One part of it is rooted in Istanbul with strong Turkish roots. But the other part travels the world, connecting to different cultures. In that sense, I like to think of my fiction as both local and universal, both from here and everywhere.... In the end, stories move like whirling dervishes, drawing circles beyond circles. They connect all humanity, regardless of identity politics.

As Shafak thinks of fiction as “both local and universal, both from here and everywhere”, we will look at a story to find the local and the individual and also the universal – that which is part of humanity. Consider returning to this idea several times during the unit as you work with literature from authors of different cultures, especially when you think students might gravitate toward stereotype and assumptions.

Materials:
- Local/Universal T-Chart, included,
- Copies of “Paths Upon Water” by Tahira Naqvi, (Hear My Voice p.12, or included in the resource packet)

Steps:
1. Introduce the idea from the speech that is excerpted in the overview. Introduce the T-Chart and review the examples to clarify the difference between local and universal.
2. Read “Paths Upon Water” by Tahira Naqvi, (Hear My Voice p.12, or included here) while students take notes on the local and universal elements. List the first few together as further support. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local/Individual</th>
<th>Universal/Humanity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p.13 Movie Beach Scene – Very little of female skin should be shown</td>
<td>Some expectations of public dress &amp; “decency”, but vary in degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.13 preparations for guests – tea</td>
<td>Notions of hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.15 “…such a chore for a man if he must make his own tea.” Men to be served by the women.</td>
<td>Gender roles in the home and society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. In small groups, have students discuss their findings.
4. Share out whole class and clarify this concept of local vs. universal.
5. Individually, have students scan their lists and privately place a symbol next to those items on the local/individual side that caused a stronger reaction: discomfort, disbelief, argument, positive association, memory, etc. Discuss with students that our own perspectives inform how we receive ideas and information. Have them scan, individually, the items they marked, and think about what they are reacting to. If they are uncomfortable with the local column, are they also uncomfortable with the universal column? Usually, one can see a connection on the broader, universal side. For instance, for the above example of men being served by women, while I might disagree with that, I can connect to common gender roles I know of in our society (women – mother, cook, clean; men- father, fix things, mow lawn, etc.).

6. Inform students that they should continue to think of the unit texts in this way – What is local? What is universal? How is my perspective shaping my reactions?

7. Writing: Write a narrative or a fictional piece about a character who lives by a different norm than you. Put your character in that person’s shoes. Be careful to avoid judgment, and try to write from that character’s perspective. Begin by listing some situations: first daughter must not marry in order to take care of parents in old age, young married couples live with husband’s parents, arranged marriage is expected, etc. Then, choose one and write.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local/Individual</th>
<th>Universal/Humanity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shafak:</strong> Her grandmother “read coffee grounds to see the future and melted lead into mysterious shapes to fend off the evil eye” (par. 2).</td>
<td>Superstitions and manners of “seeing” one’s future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covering mirrors with velvet or hang them with backs facing out because a person shouldn’t spend too much time looking at himself.</td>
<td>Cautions against self-absorption and vanity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson# 9: Direct and indirect Characterization and Interior Monologue: “Orbiting”

Duration: 130 minutes

Priority Standards: 10.07; 10.09; 10.10; 10.18.9; 10.18.11; 10.21

Addressing Essential Question(s):
- What is culture?
- What is the role of the short story (or literature) in culture?
- How do cultures attempt to assert their values on another culture?
- What makes a story work?
- How does point of view and personal perspective affect meaning?
- How do we recognize what is individual and what is universal in everything?

Materials List:
- “Orbiting” included in the resource packet
- Character Retrieval Chart

Academic Vocabulary: Direct Characterization, Indirect Characterization

Hook:
Ask students to make a list of family traditions involving food. Share the traditions and what people eat. An interesting digression would be to explore the politics of food at these meetings. Are there rules about what is eaten, who makes it? Once you have a representative list, ask students to brainstorm another list of times when a family tradition was changed or disrupted. Provide an example from your own experience, a time when an “outsider” joined the family event would be most relevant. Ask students to select one and write about that tradition, what/who disrupted it, and how people responded to it. Share. The content may not be appropriate for all classes/students.

Steps:
1. Distribute “Orbiting” and give brief background on the writer, point out that she is writing about cultures other than her own. Reference Elif Shafak’s “The Politics of Fiction.” Present the story as a character driven exploration of family and culture.
2. Introduce one of the essential questions for the reading, “How do writers develop character?”
3. Have students brainstorm a list of ways that character might be revealed, or presented. Identify those ways that are examples of Direct Characterization and Indirect Characterization. (This is one of those places where you will want to check the pre-assessment data for the terms before you plan the class. Teach the terms as needed). Return to this list at the very end of this activity to reflect on those ways we say used and add any new techniques observed in this story.
4. Distribute the character retrieval chart. Assign students a character to keep track of as we read. (Renata “Rindy”, Dad, Mom, Vic, Cindy, Franny and Roashan “Ro”). You can do this quickly by putting each character's name on the board with a number by it. Count off by seven. Have students find their character and
write it in the chart. These assignments will form groups in day 2.

5. Read the text out loud and stop to ask comprehension questions and to point out examples that would end up in the character retrieval chart. Ask what the details tell us. Student's will likely have lots of questions at the start of the story. It might help them to know that Vic is an ex-boyfriend.

6. Stop to look closely at the way the family talks about their heritage in the paragraph, “Grumbling and scolding are how we deMarco's express love.” Look at how the father uses cultural identities to justifies who he is and how he identifies an opposing cultural identity, the broad generalizations and such. Have students predict how Dad's perspective on culture and character may be important to this story.

7. **Homework:** Have students complete the reading and the character retrieval chart on their own.

8. Introduce the activity, “Hot Seat.” Students groups will take the hot seat, one character at a time. They will comment on the Thanksgiving Dinner as the character and then students have the opportunity to interview the character on the hot seat. They must use the information collected on their character retrieval charts to inform their responses.

9. There should be a group for each character and students are assigned to the character they tracked for homework. First, have students compare notes on their character retrieval chart. Who is our character? Second, they create a list of questions they think people might ask their character, discussing the answers they want to give as they go along. Third, they make notes about what the character wants to say about the Thanksgiving Dinner and the other characters there.

10. Facilitate the hot seat. Set the ground rules and invite groups up one at a time. Have the whole group sit at the front of the room to answer questions. You may need to teach appropriate questions. Help the class ask questions about the culture, family, and love. Make a list of questions that you would like to see asked.

11. Reflect on the activity: Of all the characters on the hot seat today, who seemed the most believable. Ask them to identify how and why.

12. Possible extensions/closure activities:
   - Evaluate the last paragraph of the story where Renata expresses her desire to Americanize Ro. Why does she want to do this? Will she be successful? Should she do this?
   - Ask students to write an interior monologue for their character after the activity. They should write about what the character was thinking and feeling during the dinner.
   - Take a critical eye to one of the characters you've created in your writing in this unit. Highlight all the direct characterization in one color and all of the indirect characterization in another. If looking at multiple characters, use a different color set for each character. Do your characters need more development? (Could be used later in the unit.
   - Have the students write about the next Thanksgiving. Or the marriage of Ro and Rindy. Has the family changed?
   - Think outside yourself and develop a story about a family from another
culture. Do your research.
Lesson #10: Second Person Point of View with “Girl”

Duration: 50 minutes on day one about 15 on the next.

Priority Standards: 10.10; 10.11; 10.18.9; 10.14

Materials:

• "Girl" by Jamaica Kinkaid, *Hear My Voice* p. 200, or included in resource section
• Copies of “When to Use You in Fiction”, included in resource section

Academic Vocabulary: limited or unlimited narration, second person point of view

Hook:

• Have students write for two or three minutes on the following: Recall an occasion when you and someone else (a friend, family member, co-worker, classmate) disagreed about the details or specifics of an incident. What is your version of the story? What is theirs?

Steps:

1. Reconnect with the previous lesson, "Orbiting", but on the topic of point of view. Check what they know and add any of these details that don't come up. Make shorter notes for students and give examples from what we've already read.
   • Point of view is the position from which an author chooses to relate a story.
   • It affects the way we (the audience/readers) perceive the story.
   • It also provides access into the thoughts and feelings of some of the characters.
   • Some authors select one character to tell the story firsthand, but these first-person narrators can play quite different roles and sometimes provide a distorted lens through which we view the action.
   • Sometimes the first person narrator is creating a sense of believability by presenting the thoughts running through the character's mind.
   • When the focus centers on a single individual in the story, or relies on that character's voice or thoughts, the point of view is **limited**. When stories have several focal characters, the point of view is **unlimited**.

2. **Write the following questions on the board:** When you read a story, one of the first questions you should ask yourself is "**Who is telling this?**" and "**Who sees and knows what?**" This is what makes each story unique. The events in the characters' lives could be presented in a variety of ways. A different narrator or point of view would change the story entirely.

3. Demonstrate this by having students share the stories they wrote in the hook.

5. Ask students to identify the point of view and to explain how the point of view influences their understanding and the effectiveness of the story. Although the girl seems to be narrating this story as a collection of memories, the instructions and admonitions are the mother's.

6. Then have students (in groups of four) rewrite different sections of the story from the girl's point of view, showing her reactions to her mother's words. Groups will share their rewrites with the class. How does this change influence our perception of the characters? How is the story affected? Which point of view is more effective? Why?

7. **Homework:** Read “When to Use You in Fiction” and – Make a list of compelling reasons for using second person – situations or goals.

8. Next Day, ask if students had questions about the article. Students share their list of compelling reasons for using You. As a class brainstorm specific circumstances where this would be very effective.

9. **Quickwrite:** “You? You! You.” Students write a piece in second person using an idea from our list.

10. Share and discuss their success. Ask students to talk about what was difficult about writing like this.
Lesson #11: A Craft Lesson on Objective Third Person: “Why Don't You Dance”

Duration: 50 minutes

Priority Standards: 10.07; 10.10; 10.11; 10.14; 10.18.09;

Overview
Students describe the function and effect of Objective Third Person point of view and explore how writers deliver the reality of an experience. The activity closes with creative writing.

Materials
- Copies of “Why Don't You Dance” by Raymond Carver, see resource packet

Addressing Essential Question(s)
- What makes a story work?
- How does point of view and personal perspective affect meaning?

Hook: I guess you had to be there... Have you found yourself incapable of relating an important experience to friends and family members. You were just about out of breath when you finished telling about what happened and then respond, unmoved with, “Well, I guess you had to be there?” Discuss. Why does that happen? Is it because you felt like you didn't have time to tell that story? Or didn't know how to relate the details to make it significant? Is it because meaning is sometimes just too personal and unique?

Steps:
2. Ask, why does the man suggest that the boy and the girl dance?
3. The last paragraph of the story reads:
   - “She kept talking. She told everyone. There was more to it, and she was trying to get it talked out. After a time, she quit trying.”
   - What might have been the meaning that she wanted her friends to take from her experience? What details in the story suggest this meaning?
   - Ask students to read it again and find evidence to answer this.
   - Given the title of the book this short story comes from, --does this story have something to say about love?
4. Ask, is there any place where you feel like the narrator is presenting their opinion of the event?
5. No, the narrator doesn't even vary the dialogue tags. This is objective third person omniscient narration and this is frugal writing. Notice how all of the dialogue tags are “said.” That is the most neutral tag. Everything is simply shown to us. When you're writing, you can make a conscious choice about the narrator’s distance from the subject. In this case, I think the narrator's distance is an effort
to put us in the place to see for ourselves, to get over the “I guess you had to be there,” problem. As a writer, you really have to find the right way to put your reader “THERE” and choose for them the details that will do that.

6. Option: extend the activity by reading “Scribbles” by Pedro Juan Soto (*Hear My Voice*). Discuss the use of omniscient narration and ask students to describe the effect. Compare it to Carver’s use.

**Closure:**

7. Writing Exercise: Third Person Objective narration. I want you to use Third Person Objective in this writing exercise, and I am going to suggest that you go with a first line similar to this one, which just simply identifies the setting, a stage for the drama, and then follows from there...
   - so IN THE KITCHEN,
   - IN THE HALLWAY,
   - AT The Park,
   - ON THE MOON...

8. Follow it from there, but try to relate events, simply show what people and things do. Don't draw judgments.

9. After students write, share, praise narration and other features studied at the moment.
Lesson #12: Generation Gaps with “Two Kinds”

Duration: 100 minutes
Priority standards: 10.07; 10.09; 10.10; 10.11; 10.18.09; 10.18.11

Brief overview of lesson:
Students learn about character and conflict as they read a story that features a particular cultural encounter, the generation gap. This traditional mother-daughter conflict is presented in a Chinese-American context, a word that may mean different things to each character. After reading, students make personal connections to the text by writing about a time when someone expected them to do something they did not want to do.

Addressing Essential Question(s):
- What is culture?
- What is the role of the short story (or literature) in culture?
- How do cultures attempt to assert their values on another culture?
- What makes a story work?
- How does point of view and personal perspective affect meaning?
- How do we recognize what is individual and what is universal in everything?

Materials needed:
- Graphic Organizer
- Holt Anthology

Key vocabulary: Protagonist, Antagonist, conflict, external conflict, internal conflict, subordinate characters, dynamic characters, static characters, motivation.

Addressing Essential Question(s):

Steps/Procedures:
1. Ask students to read the “Character Interactions” section on pages 122 and 123 of the Holt. List the following terms on the board:
   - Protagonist
   - Antagonist
   - Conflict
   - External Conflict
   - Internal Conflict
   - Subordinate Characters
   - Dynamic Characters
   - Static Characters
   - Motivation.
2. Have them work with a partner to create a concept web for these terms. First model the web with protagonist and antagonist. Draw a line between the terms expressing the connection. After students have had a chance to organize the concepts, come together as class to complete a concept web. Add one term at a time. Each student that offers a connection will come to the board and write the connection as the class moves to the next concept. Address questions, problems.

3. **Quickwrite:** Conflicts sometimes arise between generations because cultural codes shift. One generation sometimes becomes a response or counter-point to the last. List some differences of opinion or belief that have arisen between you and a parent, grandparent, aunt/uncle or other member of your community of a different generation. Have students share. Then ask them if a generation can be a culture? Refer back to the class definition of culture. Does it fit?

4. Read the story in a fashion that suits the needs of your classroom. You might use some of the “Reading Check Questions” as you read as a class. Prior to reading, have students make a T-chart in their journals where they record their thoughts for 1) I sympathize with Jing-Mei when... 2) I sympathize with the mother when...

5. After reading ask students to review their notes. To which character are they most sympathetic? Ask students to support their answers. After their discussion ask them question #12 from “Extending and Evaluating” on page 135, “How much do you think parents' own missed opportunities affect their expectations for their children? Do you think it is fair for the hopes of one generation to be passed on to the next?”

6. Before you move on to the writing activity, ask students to apply some of the vocabulary terms studied at the beginning of the class. Assign a task to each group. Provide them with about five minutes to determine an answer and support it with the text and organize for a short presentation (1 minute). Each group will present their answer to the class and respond to questions, challenges, affirmations.

- Identify the **protagonist**. Support your choice with the text.
- Identify the **antagonist**. Support your choice with the text.
- Identify a **static character**. Support your choice with the text.
- Identify a **dynamic character**. Support your choice with the text.
- Identify an **external conflict**. Support your choice with the text.
- Identify an **internal conflict**. Support your choice with the text.
- What inferences can you make about the mother's **motivation** for pushing Jing-mei to be a prodigy? Support your inferences with the text.
- What inferences can you make about Jing-mei's **character traits** from her response to her mother's pressure? Support your inferences with the text.

**Closure:**

- Has anyone ever expected you to do something you really didn’t want to do? Write a story about a cultural conflict where the motivations of a protagonist and antagonist clash. Consider times when someone has expected you to do something you really did not want to do. How did you feel before, during, and after that event.

If this is what students wrote about in the earlier section, they can continue with the
previous writing.
Lesson #13: Elements of Plot: Flash Fiction

Duration: 100 minutes

Priority standards: 10.09; 10.11

Brief overview of lesson:
Students visualize plot structure with plot pyramids. First, they encounter the traditional structure and then they look at several pieces of flash fiction that present alternative structures. After discussing why these structures change, students review their own work to think critically about effectively structuring a story.

Addressing Essential Question(s):
• What makes a story work?

Materials needed:
• Highlighters
• Flash Fiction Packet starting with “Crossing Spider Creek”, in resources section

Key vocabulary: flash fiction, exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, denouement

Addressing Essential Question(s):
• What makes a story work?

Hook/Anticipatory Set:
1. Prior to class, draw Freytag’s pyramid on the board. Introduce students to the plot structure elements and ask them to take notes. Explain that this is a common structure, but not the only structure. It is just a way of visualizing what is happening in a story.

2. Explain that plot structure is used for more than just the literature that they read in class. It is used in oral storytelling, television, movies, and more. Give examples of how this plot structure is present in many aspects of human life: birth to death, the progression of a day or a life, a sports game or season, etc.

3. Choose a story that all students are familiar with and ask the class to brainstorm the significant events in the story. As students make suggestions, write the events on the board.

4. When students finish making suggestions, review the list. Ask students to look for any items which have been omitted or items which should be combined.

5. Discuss the difference between significant events and the other events in the story.

6. Label the events using the language of plot structure.
7. Answer any questions that students have about the process.

8. Distribute the packet of flash fiction pieces to students with enough stories for groups of four to have a different story. Assign each group a story and ask them to read the story and draw a plot diagram on their own. Then ask each group to come to a consensus and create a poster expressing their plot structure. Distinctive shifts should be clearly labeled.

9. To guide students' discussion, you can share key questions that they must negotiate as they complete their pyramids, such as the following:
   1. What did the author need to explain to readers in the exposition section?
   2. What inciting event causes the action to begin to "rise"?
   3. Where does the story peak? Is there a clear climax?
   4. Which events lead up to the conclusion?
   5. How is the story resolved?

10. As students work, you will likely overhear them arguing over where the story turns, where its climax is. Encourage students to point to evidence from the story to support their choices. They will share later.

11. For homework, ask that students read each of the stories in the packet.

12. The next day, allow students to review their work and ask groups to share the plot diagrams with the class.

13. Draw comparisons among the different diagrams. In particular, point out how the plot structure compares to the text--are the plot sections of equal length? how and when are they different? Talk about how Freytag's structure would be very limiting for flash fiction, which is essentially what they will be writing, because there isn't time for all of these movements. Explore how each writer resolves this. And how each structure is appropriate for the story.

14. Explain that the shape of the Freytag's pyramid suggests that the climax always occurs in the middle of the story. This is often not the case. Particularly in short stories and situation comedies, the climax can occur relatively close to the end. Falling action leads swiftly to a resolution.

**Closure:** Have students create a plot pyramid for one of their drafts or have them color mark the various features in their own writing. Provide them with time to revise their pieces. Their guiding question should be, “Do I pay enough attention to each feature?”

**Support for ELL students**
Provide the plot pyramid organizer.
Plot elements might not be a review for these students, and you may wish to have them do more basic work here: define the elements as a resource, and have them label another plot map from a movie they have seen recently.
Support for TAG students
Students might research other visual representations of plot structure.

Support for Students with Special Needs
Provide the plot pyramid organizer.
Plot elements might not be a review for these students, and you may wish to have them do more basic work here: define the elements as a resource, and have them label another plot map from a movie they have seen recently.
Lesson #14: “American Horse”

Duration: 100 minutes

Priority Standards: 10.07; 10.09; 10.10; 10.11; 10.14; 10.18.09; 10.18.11

Overview: This short story explores Native American Culture in conflict with Western Authorities. The whole narrative is structured around the protagonist’s different ways of seeing, with vision and dream sequences. Some of these visions function as images which are going to enable the readers to see/read the short story in a different light, the light of another world view or of a certain type of knowledge. The unit attempts to interpret the real and “magical” through a study of symbolism. Students will see how the narrator first creates a plurality of perspectives and then establish a hierarchy between them. Students will learn to see the story as a “visible fragment” of an ongoing narrative.

Materials List
- graphic organizer
- Copies of “American Horse”, see resources section

Addressing Essential Question(s):

Academic Vocabulary: Cultural Code, Internal Focalization, Character, Symbol, Symbolism

Hook: Here are three possible quickwrites to start the story.

Quickwrite ideas:

1) Students write a five minute story for “They were on the hunt” share and discuss how different story telling perspectives revealed interpretations of the line. Their opening line should be an exact quote. One interesting outcome will be the way people identify with the hunter or the hunted.

2) Students could write to the lines where Albertine perceives harmony as a web. It should be presented out of context. This would allow them to explore the idea of networks and interconnections.

Each heard the human sound of air going in and out of the other person’s lungs. Each read the face of the other as if deciphering letters carved into softly eroding veins of stone. Albertine saw the pattern of tiny arteries that age, drink, and hard living had blown to the surface of the man’s face. She saw the spoked wheels of his iris and the arteries like tangled threads that sewed him up. She saw the living net of springs and tissue that held him together, and trapped him. She saw the random, intimate plan of his
person.

a. Have students write the circumstance of this vision, is this a moment of love? Conflict? The misguided assumption that it was about love would prove very valuable later

b. Students could try to express what this says. You might ask them to explain what Albertine is saying about human life. This could lead into a discussion of webs or ways of seeing, both are important to the study of cultural codes.

3) Students could write about dreams and visions.

**STEPS:**

1. Prior to reading, it would be a good idea to make students familiar with the writer, her background, breadth of her work, and the idea that she is a multi-cultural writer with a foot in each of the communities. You could accomplish this by asking students to do some research before class, finding a quick bio to read or introducing the writer in a brief lecture.

2. Ask students to make predictions based on the title, “American Horse.” Write their predictions on the board and their question.

3. Explain that all readers have cultural codes that allow them to understand the meaningful gestures that writers make with symbols and allusions. Some symbols are part of a general human consciousness, while most symbols have culturally specific meaning. For example, all humans will share certain assumptions about the setting of the sun (universal), but for a culture where the sun is recognized as a deity (local), there may be more significance.

4. Define symbol: A symbol is what it is and then something more.
   1. Find something in the room or on your person. What is it? What else is it? Pair share and then discuss as a class.
   2. Identify key symbols. Point out the flag in the room – is this a symbol? What does it mean? Does it mean something different to different people? This is the case with cultures. Identify these important symbols from the story we are about to read and explain what they may mean in the writer’s cultural code:
      - Raven (sometimes responsible for the abduction of women and children in NA lit).
      - Turquoise
      - American Horse
3. Distribute the symbol tracking chart. Introduce the idea that there are two distinct groups in this story. We’re going to keep track of symbols from the story and how each group sees (or doesn't) the symbol. It could be anything that apparently is what it is and something more.

5. Read the opening paragraph and ask the students to discuss ways the writer is establishing a focus point. What is made important? If students don’t bring it up, point out that the writer brings our attention immediately to visions. Dreams and visions will be instrumental to the story. Ask if there are opportunities to add symbols to the chart here? You may not always be able to add information to all parts of the chart.

6. Before you continue to read, ask students to think about how they feel about the narrator in the opening. After a few pages, elicit student thoughts about the narrator again. Ask them how and why these feelings are created? Do they feel like we are on equal footing with the narrator? Point out that the way we feel about the narrator changes our perception of the entire story. The narrator is going to determine how you look at the action and characters, they relay the story.

7. As you encounter them, point out the characters that comprise the two groups in this story. Ask for student's first impressions of the characters. (Western: Vicki Koob, Officer Brackett, Officer Harmony and the Native Americans: Uncle Lawrence, Albertine, Buddy American Horse). Students read quietly and use the symbol tracking chart, recording observations about each. Students may have to complete this as homework.

8. The next day the symbol charts are due. Students meet in groups to discuss observations.

9. To avoid unnecessary redundancy, have the groups sign up to present different symbols. Ask them to choose symbols important to the text and with multiple meanings. You may asks the groups to form a small poster for the symbol. The poster should be self-explanatory, visible from a distance, and it should present the image how each group sees it. The group should be prepared to share quotes from the text about the symbol. Present to class. Some topics that might be explored in this discussion:

   a. If students touch on pages 22 – 23 where Vicki draws judgments of the family, consider stopping and reviewing that paragraph with students. Ask: how does her vision of the family compare with the one created for the reader? They might point out that in the first two sections there are examples of filial and maternal love that would serve to undermine the assumptions that they might need to be separated. Whereas Viki’s observations hint at fragmentation and dissociation through the evocation of physical and mental degradation, utter poverty and neglect. This tension is essential to the story and the idea that the character’s aren’t as
important as how they see.

b. Or, after sharing, synthesize the groups’ awareness of the clashing cultural codes. Ask them to summarize or draw conclusions about the values of the Western group. If they need help in this task, ask students to look at how the western authorities judge Albertine and her environment. How does this compare with the feelings created by reading about this family? Students will be sympathetic to the Native American group, but ask them if there is any place where they were sympathetic to the Western Authorities. Explore why.

c. Option: Introduce **Internal Focalization** (internal focalization describes the sort of **focalization** which emphasizes the description of the thoughts and feelings of characters and analysis and interpretation of their actions. These aspects are typically conveyed from the point of view of one character who interprets all events through his or her perspective. In addition to the method of internal focalization which utilizes only one character as this type of focalizer, using several internal focalizers to form a composite representation of a story is also common.) and discuss the use of dreams. Ask students to compare and contrast the dreams and visions in the story. This begins with making a list of the visions with page numbers. Instruct them to look at what makes the dream important. (It coincides with the “real plot” and therefore provides it with something like the weight of prophecy).

10. **Homework:** A written response to the conclusion of the story – List the numerous reasons for the scream. Select at least one and explain it in a five sentence paragraph of analysis supporting the reason. (This paragraph can be retained as a pre-assessment for a later literary essay).

11. Next day, discuss student findings. Read the section and hear the reasons.

12. Writing exercise: Write a story about abduction or separation. Discuss what students know about separation or abduction or (un)lawful intrusion of the law into family life. They can share issues from films, news, or personal experience. Ask students to write/share. Option: expand the writing exercise with activity 8c. Return to the drafts and work with a partner to find a place to expand the piece with a new internal focalization.
"American Horse"

Symbols and Cultural Codes

| What the symbol means to the Native American Characters | Identify the symbol and then quickly draw or describe it. | What the symbol means to the Western Authorities in the text |
Lesson # 15: “Sonny's Blues”

Duration: 170 minutes

Priority Standards: 10.07; 10.09; 10.10; 10.18.09

Overview: Students compare and contrast the main characters as well as the text to a poem from the same period. They will also examine the characters in context. This lesson may provide you with some informal data about what your students will need to know when you get to a compare and contrast essay later this year. In each class period, students are given another opportunity to develop a story.

Materials:
- MP3 of Bertha Chippie Hill's “Some Cold Rainy Day”
- MP3 of Billie Holiday's “Am I Blue”
- An overhead of song lyrics
- Small Group Discussion Questions
- Transparency: Lyrics of “Am I Blue”
- Transparency: Lyrics of “Some Cold Rainy Day”
- “The Weary Blues” by Langston Hughes
- *Braided Lives* or photocopies of the short story, “Sonny's Blues”, included in the resource section

Addressing Essential Questions:
- *What is culture?*
- *What is the role of the short story (or literature) in culture?*
- *What makes a story work?*
- *How does point of view and personal perspective affect meaning?*
- *How do we recognize what is individual and what is universal in everything?*

Academic Vocabulary:
- Setting
- Character
- Atmosphere
- Tone
- Flashback

Hook

1. 1928 Recording of Bertha 'Chippie' Hill called “Some Cold Rainy Day” plays as students enter. Have the lyrics on the overhead. The song is 3:20 seconds long.

2. When the song is done. Ask: what is the singer feeling, in a word? List responses. Give the instructions for the first line prompt (below). Write with students. Play
the song again as you write. Continue writing to other songs by the artist. Have
the prompt on the board:

FIRST LINE EXERCISE:
Take one of the lines, or even part of the line and use it for your first line.
It might be spoken by a character... sung... it might be narration.
Option: use the first song lyric that comes to mind from another song.

Write and don't stop.

3. About ten minutes into the class period, ask for people to share their starts. Praise
students for their creative use of the first line: Did they have a character sing it?
Did they change the line slightly to make it their own? Did it come second?
Encourage a dialogue about student work. Allow sharing to last up to five or ten
minutes.

4. Explain how the song relates to our activities today.
   ○ Similar to an important line in our story sung by the narrator: “You going to
     need me, baby, one of these cold, rainy days” (The song was written and
     performed decades before the story. It is possible that Baldwin was
     referencing a popular adaptation of the song).
   ○ The story we are about to read, “Sonny's Blues,” is about music, among other
     things. The writer will use songs, performances and lyrics to develop
     character, atmosphere and theme.

Steps:
Day 1

1. Open Braided Lives to page 145 – ask students to make predictions and
   observations about the title as everyone gets to the page. Record observations on
   the board.

2. Teacher reads the first two paragraphs to the students. Discuss the opening:
   ○ Look at that first sentence again, what does it suggest?
     ○ Some possible responses: unpleasant circumstance,
     ○ unemotional space with emotional subject,
     ○ surprise
     ○ suspense from the undisclosed antecedent.
     ○ The narrator seems out of sorts; he doesn't know what to reveal
       to the listener
     ○ We have been dropped into the conversation late and need to
       catch up.
     ○ There's no place of peace for exposition.
   ○ What is the narrator feeling when he reads the newspaper story?
     What details tell you this?
Many of the same answers from above, the second question may just help you get there, but it may also lead to some of this observation from the PPS 12th grade unit containing this story: “he is trapped in darkness. Literally, he sees his reflection in the subway window against the dark background of the underground and his face seems trapped in darkness. Symbolically, he is trapped in darkness and the story is about his redemption through Sonny and his blues. The symbolism of light and dark plays out throughout the story.”

3. Distribute the student handout on characters and setting. On the board create a Venn Diagram for SONNY and the NARRATOR. Tell students that all of the space on the board represents the context they live in. Instruct them to record important words, sentence, quotes, and descriptions of the characters and setting. Ask students, what do we know about each so far? Record observations and have students take similar notes on the handout. Include observations about the setting.

4. Teacher reads paragraph #3. Transition to reading by pointing out that we are going to get some of the back story or exposition. After the paragraph, check for understanding: how are the characters related? This may be a good time to ask if the narrator has a name? And why not?

5. Students start reading with paragraph #4. Everyone reads as much as they are comfortable with at the moment. The class reads until the end of paragraph #7 “Isabel.” Update chart: What do we know about setting? How do we know it? Etc. Elicit clarifying questions from students.

6. Students read aloud to the end of the letter.

7. Update the chart as you discuss. Ask students to comment on what the letter provides the reader. If they don’t, point out that the letter is an important strategy—it is a way for Baldwin to reveal the internal life of Sonny and allow us to hear Sonny entirely on his own terms and very directly. This makes him more real.

8. The “Boy in the shadow of the doorway” is very interesting. What does he add to the story? Why is he “in the shadow of the doorway?”

9. For the remainder of the period, students read silently.

10. HOMEWORK – Read to page 164 and complete the chart. Tell them to stop at: “You going to need me, baby, one of these cold, rainy days”

Day 2

1. Billie Holiday's version of the song “Am I Blue” plays as students enter (lyrics on
2. Reconnect with the homework. Ask students to report about the setting—what were some of the most important setting details revealed in last night's reading? Remind them that a work's setting refers to both the time (historical and also time of day or year) and the place (geographical, as in New York, Harlem, Greenwich Village, and also local, as in setting certain scenes in subways, apartments, dark roads, etc.) in which the actions of the story occur. Follow up with, how do Baldwin's choices about setting help you understand the theme or meaning of the story? Ask students to explain the connection between the characters and the setting. How do they feel about where they are? In their response to the setting, how are the same and how are they different?

3. Break for a creative writing exercise on setting. List emotions and ideas on the board prior to the lesson. Ask students to write a setting that represents the feeling or the idea. Remind them to be aware of their senses as they imagine this place. Tell students: this could be for one of your stories or completely independent. You may want to take one of your characters and put them in a setting so that you can write about it with them in the scene. You may want to just describe it. Students write. Option: ask students to start with this structure: <emotion/idea> is <setting details> ex: “Sadness is an old cedar shack.”

4. Students share and listeners popcorn with what emotion or idea comes to mind.

5. Form small discussion groups and distribute the discussion questions. Establish ground rules / procedure for the activity to fit your classroom (address issues of participation (are there readers and recorders and text specialists?), rules about listening, etc.) Prior to proceeding with the activity, check for understanding of the term “Flashback” and review the concept as needed.

6. Monitor student discussion, encourage them to look back through the text.

7. Finish class by sharing the new discussion questions and allow students to facilitate as you would in a Socratic seminar. Review the first four questions as needed.

8. For homework, students finish the story.

Day 3

1. As students enter, have anything by John Coltrane playing.

2. Read page 172 about music:

   All I know about music is that not many people ever really hear it. And even then, on the rare occasions when something opens within, and the music enters, what we mainly hear, or hear corroborated, are
personal, private, vanishing evocations. But the man who creates the music is hearing something else, is dealing with the roar rising from the void and imposing order on it as it hits the air. What is evoked in him, then, is of another order, more terrible because it has no words, and triumphant, too, for that same reason. And his triumph, when he triumphs, is ours...

3. Check for understanding by asking students to put this in their own words. Then ask students to tell about an important experience with music, perhaps a time when they really “heard” it. Ask someone to summarize the role of music in our culture (and other cultures, possibly) based on what students have shared.

4. Talk briefly about the way music helps to develop a sense of atmosphere in businesses, restaurants, films. Explain the concept in terms of literature. Ask students to write about the atmosphere of that important musical event. Allow students time to share what they’ve written.

3. Distribute “The Weary Blues” and introduce it as a poem that some critics believe Baldwin was responding to or commenting on with this story. Read “The Weary Blues” several times. You might ask for different voices for the singer and the listener. Using a Venn Diagram, ask students to draw comparisons between the poem and the story, make sure they compare and contrast the singer and Sonny. Students work first in pairs, then in small groups, and finish by sharing their ideas with the class.

Closure: To wrap up this activity, present students with these last two questions and then reread the conclusion, out loud (as much text as time permits and as little as the last paragraph) Make sure there is time for students to Think-Pair-Share before the discussion. In some cases, you will need to assign this as homework.

(Note: You may want to review the biblical allusion to the cup of trembling prior to class. Some teachers may want to include an overhead of the passages from Isaiah 51: 17-23)

1. How would you describe the tone of the ending? What sort of resolution (if any) does the story or the narrator come to? Does the narrator express optimism? Pessimism? Something in between?

2. What might be some reasons for why the narrator buys Sonny a drink at the end of the story?
The Cup of Trembling

Cup of trembling is a biblical allusion to Isaiah 51: 17-23:

17

Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.

18

There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.

19

These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?

20

Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.

21

Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:

22

Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:

23

But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.
Lyrics for overhead:

You'll come back some rainy day
When your head is turning gray,
You'll come back some rainy day.

Baby, look where the sun's done gone,
Now you're gonna leave your home,
You'll come back some cold, rainy day.

Hmmmm,
Hmmmm,
You'll come back some cold, rainy day.

When your stomach hangs like an empty sack,
And it feels like its lower in your back,
You'll come back some cold, rainy day.

When you can't get out on your run,
and you need to have your lovin' done,
You'll come back some cold, rainy day.

When you get down, sick in your bed,
And you need someone to hold your achin' head,
You'll come back some cold, rainy day.

Now, when your good man turns you down,
And your feet is out on the ground,
You'll come back some cold, rainy day.

“You going to need me, baby, one of these cold, rainy days”
Characters and Context in “Sonny's Blues”

“You going to need me, baby, one of these cold, rainy days”

Use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast Sonny and the Narrator. Outside the circles, record important and defining details of the setting.
“Sonny's Blues” Small Group Discussion Questions

Directions: When you are done discussing these questions, come up with a question of your own to pose to the class. It may be related to one of the questions posed. Perhaps there are assumptions in one of the questions that you would like to explore? Or maybe the discussion in your group led to a deeper level of inquiry. Be ready to pose it to the class.

1. Explain the significance of the line, “You going to need me, baby, one of these cold, rainy days” in the context of the story? What does this story say about the importance of music?

2. What does the narrator's mother want him to do?

3. How do events in the past, presented as flashbacks or as the narrator's recollections, help to develop the plot and characterization in "Sonny's Blues"? Consider the narrator's description of his childhood with Sonny, their lives on the Harlem streets, the Sunday dinners at home, the death of their uncle, the narrator's last conversation with their mother, etc.

4. Baldwin uses a flashback to a conversation in the kitchen to show a rift forming between the brothers. The narrator's young self rejects the idea that Sonny will be a musician, “well, Sonny, [. . .] You know people can't always do exactly what they want to do--” to which Sonny replies, “No, I don't know that, [. . .] I think people ought to do what they want to do, what else are they alive for?” To which perspective are you most sympathetic and why? Try to explain why each character believes what they do?
The Weary Blues (1926)

By Langston Hughes

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,
    I heard a Negro play.
Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light
    He did a lazy sway....
    He did a lazy sway....
To the tune o' those Weary
With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.
    O Blues!
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
    Sweet Blues!
Coming from a black man's soul.
    O Blues!
In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan-
    "Ain't got nobody in all this world,
    Ain't got nobody but ma self.
    I's gwine to quit ma frownin'
    And put ma troubles on the shelf."
Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more-
    "I got the Weary Blues
    And I can't be satisfied-
    Got the Weary Blues
    And can't be satisfied-
    I ain't happy no mo'
    And I wish that I had died."
And far into the night he crooned that tune.
The stars went out and so did the moon.
The singer stopped playing and went to bed
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.
Am I blue?

Am I blue?
Ain't these tears
In my eyes
Tellin' you
Am I blue?
You'd be too
If each plan
With your man
Done fell through
Was a time
I was his only one
But now I'm
The sad and lonely one,
Lawdy
Was I gay
'Til today
Now he's gone
And we're through
Am I blue?
(bridge)

Was I gay
'Til today
Now he's gone
And we're trough
Am I blue?
Oh he's gone
He left me
Am I blue?

Duration: 100 minutes

Priority standards: 10.07; 10.09; 10.11; 10.18.9, 10.18.11

Brief overview of lesson:
Students read "The Circuit" and use it as a model for creative writing, and a craft lesson for dialogue and dialogue tags.

Materials needed:
Copies of "The Circuit", see resources section.

Key vocabulary: Dialogue, Dialogue Tags, Blocking

Addressing Essential Question(s):

Hook/Anticipatory Set:
- Quickwrite: how important is school in your life?

Steps/Procedures:
1. Distribute and read “The Circuit” by Francisco Jimenez

2. When students are done reading, ask them to continue the journal entry by answering the following questions.
   - How do you think the boy feels when he sees the family is packed and ready to move?
   - What might the boy say to his father or mother?
   - What are five possible alternatives that might happen from where the life story stops.

3. Pair-share responses and discuss as a class.

4. Ask students to form a group of three or a pair. Their task is to create a dialogue between the boy and either his mama or papa or both. Have at least 8 exchanges (each person has eight lines.) Write it. Practice it. Instruct students to add dialogue tags to the script. (Teach the term by modeling). Ask them to practice it again. Add blocking to your scene and on your script. Deliver it to the class.

5. Reflect on the effectiveness of the performances. Which group made the best use of dialogue tags and blocking? Which dialogue seemed most true to the characters? Which dialogue was the most thematically relevant?

Closure: Creative writing activity: It's senior year. April. You can begin to smell the end like cattle on trail smell water. You come home. Everything is packed and ready to
go. Your room included. What do you say? Carry on the conversation and use all of the elements of fiction studied with an emphasis on dialogue, dialogue tags, blocking.

**Strategies for ELL students:**
For the dialogues writing activity, provide students with one side of the dialogue and have them write the other, or, shorten the assignment.
Have them highlight dialogue and dialogue tags in the story.

**Strategies for TAG students:**

**Modifications for students with special needs:**
For the dialogues writing activity, provide students with one side of the dialogue and have them write the other, or, shorten the assignment.
Have them highlight/color mark dialogue and dialogue tags in the story.
Lesson #17 : Reading Groups Choice Text

Duration: 75 minutes, or split: assign the initial steps to be completed outside of class during the next few craft lessons, and return to the results later.

Overview: In this hybrid of reading groups and literature circles, students choose a text and then contribute to a group by practicing the skills addressed so far in the unit.

Priority Standards: 10.07, 10.09, 10.10, 10.11

Materials:
- Student Instructions
- Selected Texts to Offer. For ease of access, the list below includes a variety of texts that appear in the HOLT and the Hear My Voice anthology (also found in the Resource Packet for the unit). This lesson can accommodate any texts you find relevant to the unit and your students.

Fable-like – cultural norms, morals
“The Rat Trap” – Selma Lagerlof, Holt 463
“The First Seven Years” – Bernard Malmud, Holt 267

Namelessness Other, Victimization
“Geraldo No Last Name” – Sandra Cisneros, Holt 651
“Evacuation Order No. 19” – Julie Otsuka, Holt 713

Cultural and Generational differences
“Doors” – Chitra Divakaruni, Hear My Voice 65
“In the American Society” – Gish Jen, Hear My Voice 174
“House Painting” – Lan Samantha Chang, Holt 639
“Everyday Use” – Alice Walker, Holt 103

Marginalization, Conflict, Omniscient Narrator
“Scribbles” – Pedro Juan Soto, Hear My Voice 153

Ways of Seeing – Ways of Being
“Tony’s Story” – Leslie Marmon Silko, Hear My Voice 265
“Deer Woman” – Paula Gunn Allen, Hear My Voice 351

Steps:

1. Choose your optional texts and assign or help the students choose texts. You might give a brief synopsis of each story and have students select texts, which will then determine the group members. You may wish for groups to select first, or be assigned first, and then text choice follows. Ideal group size is 5.
2. Provide the student instructions and review the roles and directions.
3. Inform students when their role must be completed for a group meeting.
4. Hold the group meeting, at which each member presents his/her information (these may be gathered together and turned in, if the teacher chooses) while the teacher circulates and facilitates.
5. Decide if you want any whole-class sharing of some of the elements, and if so, proceed with whole class sharing. (Anything new? Contradictory? Uncertainties? Poignancies?)
6. Students should think about how these elements will work together in the short story they are being asked to write for the culminating assessment.
Short Story and Culture Reading Group Activity

Read over the following role descriptions. Decide who is responsible for which role. Then, read the story individually, complete your role, and be prepared to share your findings with the whole group. As a group, you will be responsible for completing all roles, regardless of the number of people in your group.

Plot
Record the main plot elements on a plot pyramid and share them with the group. This role will also serve as a summary. Be prepared to discuss the choices the author made for plot structure (ie. Linear or non, flashbacks, flash forwards, etc.)

Point Of View
This person focuses on the POV of the story. What POV is it? Because of this, what information does the reader get and not get? Why is this an appropriate POV for this story?

Characterization
Describe the round and flat characters and the methods used to characterize. Why has the writer made these choices (ie. flat vs. round)? Provide examples from the text of the different methods of characterization used.

Symbolism
What symbols might exist in the story? What do you think it/they stand for? What is the symbol’s significance to the text as a whole?

Local vs. Universal
Create a T-Chart like the ones used earlier in the unit to chart the local vs. universal elements of the story. Was there anything included that differs from your perspective? If so, how does that then impact your reading of this story?
Lesson #18: Craft Lesson -- Openings

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Priority standards:** 10.16.1; 10.18.8

**Brief overview of lesson:** After students have been informed about the culminating assessment, this lesson offers a collection of story openings, as a workshop for writing openings. Students will identify the strategies used in these openings, for example, “starts with dialogue,” “Starts with action,” etc. After that work, they will try to revise the opening to their story applying some of these strategies.

**Materials needed:**
- Imaginative Openings handout

**Steps/Procedures:**
1. Remind students that the culminating assessment for this unit is a piece of narrative or fictional writing that employs the techniques they have learned throughout this unit.
2. Hand out the Imaginative Openings document.
3. Follow the instructions on the sheet.
4. Review whole class ideas about what is happening (en medias res, character description, dialogue, conflict, and setting a scene, etc.)
5. Provide time for students to work or rework the opening of the story they are working on.

**Closure:**
1. Share openings in a small group or with a partner.
Imaginative Openings

Well-written fiction captures our attention within the first few sentences. It is sometimes difficult to know where to begin our stories – at the chronological beginning?, in the middle of the action?, with dialogue?, with conflict? – and different stories call for different types of beginnings. Look at the following introductions from this unit and notice what the opening is “doing.” Write some notes to yourself in the margins. What information do you have? What questions does the opening create for you as a reader? We will discuss them afterward.

From “American Horse”, by Louise Erdrich:

The woman sleeping on the cot in the woodshed was Albertine American Horse. The name was left over from her mother’s short marriage. The boy was the son of the man she had loved and let go. Buddy was on the cot too, sitting on the edge because he’d been awake three hours watching out for his mother and besides, she took up the whole cot. Her feet hung over the edge, limp and brown as two trout. Her long arms reached out and slapped at things she saw in her dreams.

From “Crossing Spider Creek” by Dan O’Brien:

Here is a seriously injured man on a frightened horse. They are high in the Rocky Mountains at the junction of the Roosevelt Trail and Spider Creek. Tom has tried to coax the horse into the freezing water twice before. Both times the horse started to cross then lost its nerve, swung around violently, and lunged back up the bank. The pivot and surge of power had been nearly too much for Tom. Both times he almost lost his grip on the saddlehorn and fell into the boulders of the creek bank. Both times, when it seemed his hold would fail, he had thought of his wife, Carol. He will try the crossing once more. It will take all the strength he has left.

From “Doors” by Chitra Divakaruni:

It all started when Raj came to live with them.
Not that there hadn’t been signs of it earlier. Asha’s mother, for one, had warned of it right at the time of the wedding.
“It’ll never work, I tell you. Here you are, living in the U.S. since you were twelve. And Deepak – he’s straight out of India. Just because you took a few classes together at the University, and you liked how he talks, doesn’t mean that you can live with him. What do you really know about how Indian men think? About what they expect from their women?”

over
From “Scribbles” by Pedro Juan Soto:

The clock said seven and he woke up for a moment. His wife wasn’t in bed and the children weren’t on their cot. He buried his head under the pillow to close out the racket coming from the kitchen. He didn’t open his eyes again until ten, forced to by Graciela’s shaking.

From “The Wig” by Brady Udall:

My eight-year-old son found a wig in the garbage dumpster this morning. I walked unto the kitchen, highly irritated that I couldn’t make a respectable knot in my green paisley tie, and there he was at the table, eating cereal and reading the funnies, the wig pulled tightly over his head like a football helmet. The wig was a dirty bush of curly blond hair, the kind you might see on a prostitute or someone who is trying to imitate Marilyn Monroe.

Notes to yourself for use in your writing. What do you want to try?: 
Lesson #19: Craft Lesson – Stretching

Duration: 50 minutes

Priority standards: 10.9; 10.18.9; 10.18.11

Brief overview of lesson:
This activity helps students think about how they can expand on moments in their stories. Students first look at a paragraph that is too brief and then develop it in more detail. After students discuss the changes that they’ve made, they move on to revise their own work. This is a good activity to give to students after they have a rough draft. It can be combined with other activities in a tiered day of instruction.

Materials needed:
- Student handout “Stretching”
- Student drafts.

Addressing Essential Question(s):
- What makes a story work?

Hook/Anticipatory Set:
- Explain to students, “Good writers include many details in their writing. Even within a single sentence, good writers include details.”

Steps/Procedures:
1. Distribute the handout, “Stretching.”
2. Ask students to read through the paragraph from Joeterricka Grant.
3. Have students write down their questions about the story.
4. Ask a student to read the paragraph aloud.
5. Elicit questions about the paragraph and list them on the board.
6. Ask students to use these questions to take one of Joeterricka’s sentences and stretch it to be more detailed.
7. Here, you can have students share their sentences and discuss how they fixed the paragraph.
8. A possible extension of this activity would be to give students sentence strips and put them in small groups. Have each group write one stretched sentence for the story. Post the sentences and then discuss how you would organize them into a paragraph.
9. Some may skip step eight and ask students to return to their rough drafts. Pairs exchange drafts, read and record questions that they have about the story. Students return drafts with questions and writers attempt to address these questions by stretching sentences and even paragraphs.

10. A final option would be to go in the opposite direction. Look at a sample of student writing that is too wordy or too slow. Ask students about how they can compact it and still get the same idea across.
Stretching

Good writers include many good details in their writing. Even within a single sentence, good writers include details.

Read through this paragraph.

Football was always on in my grandpa’s room, even on the day he died. My grandpa was watching football. He fell asleep. My auntie brought my grandpa’s food up to him. He was asleep. We patted his back but he didn’t wake up. The next thing you know, my grandpa was dead.
-Joeterricka Grant

What questions do you have about this story?

Use these questions to take one of Joeterricka’s sentences and stretch to be more detailed.
Lesson #20: Craft Lesson – Sensory Images and Active verbs

Duration: 50 minutes

Priority standards: 10.07; 10.09; 10.11; 10.18.09; 10.18.11

Brief overview of lesson:
To scaffold your students' editing process by asking them to pay close attention to how imagery and active verbs can improve their own writing. As a result, your students' work will become more sophisticated and mature. This activity was taken from pages 38 – 40 of the PPS Of Mice and Men curriculum. It may be combined with other craft lessons in a day of tiered instruction.

Materials needed:
- Student handout on Imagery and Active Verbs
- Excerpt from Francisco Jimenez's book, Breaking Through
- Highlighters
- Student papers

Key vocabulary: active verbs, imagery, word choice

Addressing Essential Question(s):
- What makes a story work?

Steps/Procedures:
- Pass out the student handout on word choice.
- Read over the explanations of sensory imagery and active verbs with your students. Clarify any questions about these definitions.
- When you get to section C, pass out the excerpt from Breaking Through. Give the students two highlighters each: one for imagery and one for verbs.
- Ask the students to read the marked parts of the excerpt on their own. Have them highlight where in the piece the author uses sensory images and active verbs.
- After giving time for them to work, ask for volunteers to share what imagery they found. Ask them to detail which sense this imagery appeals to, and to explain how this adds vibrancy to the writing.
- What verbs did the students find? They may, for instance, note the use of the word “trembled” in the first paragraph. How does this verb develop a specific reaction from the reader? What is a less specific verb the author might have used? (examples: “I was scared.” In the author's version, he employs both sensory images and an active verb to convey his fear. “I was scared” uses a static verb, 'was,' and employs no sensory imagery. How does the author's version better develop the writing?)

Closure:
- Now ask the students to go back to their own writing sample. Have them highlight their imagery and verbs. In doing this, do they find that there is little imagery? Where might they add some for better detail? Which verbs could they revise for more developed action?
Using Sensory Imagery to Enhance Writing

As you continue to edit your written work, it is important to consider the use of crafted word choice. This means you should focus on choosing words that are specifically tailored to add developed imagery and motion to your piece.

A. Sensory Imagery

Imagery is the ability to call forth mental pictures and sensations in your reader. This is best done by relying on our senses. We do have five of them you know...you should make use of at least a couple to enhance your language...particularly if you are writing a narrative. Note the difference between the following sentences:

- Jim fell from the plane and hit the ground.
- Whistling through the air as he plummeted to earth, Jim struck the soil with an ear-shattering thud.

Both of these sentences convey essentially the same idea; a man from a plane then hits the ground. How does the second sentence differ? Which of our senses does it appeal to? What difference does this make in terms of the reading?

B. Active Verbs

Verbs convey action. That is a simple fact of writing. However, choosing verbs that best elicit a reaction from the reader can make a difference in the quality of your writing. Some verbs are more dynamic than others. Choosing the right verb is a matter of editing and revision. Look at the two sentences below as an example:

- Hank sat down on the cozy chair.
- Hank plopped down into the cozy chair.

While both sentences express the same idea, there is a difference between the verbs “sit” and “plopped”. The word “plopped” carries more specific meanings. It might suggest that Hank is very tired. Or it might indicate how quickly Hank lowered his body into the chair. Either way, you should note that “plopped” is a more telling verb than “sit”.

C. Examples

Read the excerpt from Francisco Jimenez’s book Breaking Through. In the reading that is marked, highlight all the sensory imagery that the author utilizes to express the developments in the story. Also, highlight any active verbs that clarify the action in the story. What do you notice about the imagery? How does it reveal what is happening to the characters? How do the verbs develop and express vivid action?
I was ready.

After the bell rang, Miss Ehli, my English and social studies teacher, began to take roll. She was interrupted by a knock on the door. When she opened it, I saw the school principal and a man behind him. As soon as I saw the green uniform, I panicked. I felt like running, but my legs would not move. I trembled and could feel my heart pounding against my chest as though it too wanted to escape. My eyes blurred. Miss Ehli and the officer walked up to me. "This is him," she said softly, placing her right hand on my shoulder.

"Are you Francisco Jiménez?" he asked firmly. His deep voice echoed in my ears.

"Yes," I responded, wiping my tears and looking down at his large, black shiny boots. At that point I wished I were someone else, someone with a different name. My teacher had a sad and pained look in her eyes. I followed the immigration officer out of the classroom and into his marked BORDER PATROL. I climbed in the front seat, and we drove down Broadway to Santa Maria High School to pick up Roberto, who was in his sophomore year. As cars passed by, I slid lower in the seat and kept my head down. The officer parked the car in front of the school and asked me to wait for him while he went inside the administration building.

A few minutes later, the officer returned with Roberto following him. My brother's face was as white as a sheet. The officer asked me to climb into the back seat with Roberto. "Nos agarraron, hermanito," Roberto said, quivering and putting his arm around my shoulder.

"Yes, they caught us," I repeated. I had never seen my brother so sad. Angry, I added in a whisper, "But it took them ten years." Roberto quickly directed my attention to the officer with a shift of his eyes and put his index finger to his lips, hushing me. The officer turned right on Main Street and headed toward Bonetti Ranch, passing familiar sites I figured I would never see again: Main Street Elementary School; Kress, the five-and-dime store; the Texaco gas station where we got our drinking water. I wondered if my friends at El Camino Junior High would miss me as much as I would miss them.
Lesson #21: Proof Reading and Peer Review

Duration: 50 minutes

Priority standards: 10.07; 10.09; 10.11; 10.18.9; 10.18.11;

Brief overview of lesson: Students swap drafts of their essays and write a two-page letter response to a partner’s paper. Taken from Christensen, Linda. *Teaching for Joy and Justice*, 2009 Rethinking Schools, p. 146

Materials needed:
- Each student will have a completed draft of the writing assignment to share
- Class set of Peer Response: A Letter handout.

Key vocabulary:

Addressing Essential Question(s):
- What make a short story work?

Steps/Procedures:
1. Have students come to class prepared with a completed and legible draft of their essay. Prepare students to share a peer response in a letter format explain how the format encourages more personalized feedback.

2. Give students Peer Response: A letter handout and have a model essay to review together as a class. Discuss with students how they might craft a letter about the model essay.

3. Focus the discussion on giving specific feedback and using direct comments from the writing.

4. Now have students swap with a partner and write the peer response letter
Peer Response: A Letter

Your name: ____________________________________________________________

In order to keep writing, writers need to know what they are doing right, as well as what they need to revise. What is delightful, memorable, outstanding about this piece? What can you say to keep this writer writing? Make this your first paragraph.

Partner’s name: _________________________________________________________

Today, find a partner. Swap papers. You will write at least a two-page letter in response to your partner’s story.

Help your partner keep what’s working:

- What elements of fiction—characterization, setting, dialogue and blocking, figurative language, narration, etc.—are included in this essay?

- Discuss each one. Tell what worked in the essay.

- You might include the effect the story had on you. What feelings or ideas did your partner discuss? How did they connect this story to the cultural issues encountered in our unit?

- Also point out specific sentences you liked, what got you thinking. For example, you might say, “I really like your statement about how a person’s appearance should not determine the content of their character. It made me stop and think.” OR: “I love how you use the word ‘revel’ when discussing the source of your character’s clothes and the cost of his shoes.” In other words: Be specific.

Help your partner revise:

- You might note if you got confused anywhere and needed more information. Sometimes writers leave out important information. Again, be specific about what confused you.

- What was missing from the story? For example, “The opening statement is very general. Consider adding something more livelily to hook the reader.”

- What needs to be added? For example, you might say, “Including blocking and dialogue tags could help us understand the mother and daughter and the tension in their relationship. I found myself wondering how the mother said the line, ‘I’m so proud of you.’ Was she sincere?”

Adapted from Linda Christensen’s Teaching for Joy and Justice
**Culminating Assessment**: SHORT STORY AND CULTURE

**Assignment**
Working with the idea of a cultural encounter, write a piece of flash fiction of less than 1,000 words and more than 500, demonstrating your understanding of the elements of storytelling studied in this unit.

**Steps**

**Developing an Idea to Start Your Story**
A short story is a work of fiction that usually has a single idea as its starting point. The idea may arise from any source. From that point, the story evolves from the writer’s imagination. If you are struggling for an idea for a story, brainstorm your personal experiences, dreams, ambitions, and interests. Throughout the unit we will have a variety of opportunities to develop different story ideas.

**Drafting**
As we read short stories, we’ll identify different elements of storytelling and discuss their use. As you are writing your story, you need to be mindful of the features we are studying and do your best to incorporate them into your story. Below is a list of some of the elements of storytelling that we will explore:

- **Dialogue**: Give the characters in the story unique voices and use dialogue to move the story along rather than just tell about events.
- **Blocking**: Where are the characters and what are they doing while they are speaking.
- **Interior Monologue**: What are the characters thoughts and feelings while the dialogue and action are happening?
- **Setting Description**: Use many 5 sense details to make the place and time seem real.
- **Character Description**: Bodies, faces, clothes, actions, habits, backgrounds
- **Figurative Language-metaphors and similes and symbolism**: These are familiar in poetry but can also strengthen narrative and essay writing.
- **Flashback**: This is not necessary in every piece, but can help give background on a character.
- **Narrator**: Who is telling the story and why?
- **Point of View**: The vantage point from which the story is told.

**Revising**
After we’ve read a number of models and developed rough drafts, you will participate in some craft lessons where you focus on a particular element of the story and revise your draft.

**Proofreading**
Near the end of the process, you will have opportunities to proofread and edit your draft for matters of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar and usage prior to publication. You will also participate in peer review session to get feedback for final revisions.

At the end of the unit, we’ll have two days to share the stories and celebrate our success!
## Scoring Guide Culminating Assessment: Imaginative Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Standard</th>
<th>Exceeds (6-5)</th>
<th>Meets (4-3)</th>
<th>Does Not Yet Meet (2-1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.16.1 Establish a situation, point of view, conflict, and setting</td>
<td>The setting, conflict and situation have been skillfully established. The story maintains a consistent POV, and the POV chosen enhances the story.</td>
<td>The setting, conflict and situation have been established, although there may be some confusion. The story maintains a consistent POV.</td>
<td>The setting, conflict and situation are unclear. The story may not use a consistent POV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.16.2 Create an organizing structure</td>
<td>The story’s organizational structure fits with the plot. The writer may have successfully experimented with non-liner structures.</td>
<td>The story’s organizational structure fits with the plot, and only occasionally jumps or leaves the reader confused.</td>
<td>The story lacks an organizational structure to aid the reader and plot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.18.9 Develop characters of appropriate complexity</td>
<td>The protagonist’s character is well developed and holds the reader’s interest. The writer has used multiple methods of characterization. Characters are appropriately “round” and “flat”.</td>
<td>The protagonist’s character is developed. The writer has used multiple methods of characterization.</td>
<td>The protagonist’s character is underdeveloped. The writer has used few methods of characterization, and “tells” us facts about the characters instead of “showing”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.13.6 Include sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character.</td>
<td>There is a balance of thoughtfully chosen sensory details that enhance the imagery and plot. The reader can envision most of the story.</td>
<td>There is a balance of sensory details that enhance the imagery and the plot.</td>
<td>The story includes some sensory details, but will benefit from using multiple senses and “showing”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.13.6 Use a range of appropriate strategies, such as dialogue, interior monologue, suspense, and the naming of specific narrative actions (blocking).</td>
<td>Dialogue and blocking have been included and are engaging. We get a sense of the characters and story through techniques like interior monologue. The reader can envision the scenes and is hooked and caught in the action.</td>
<td>Dialogue and blocking have been included and are engaging, but may contain minor errors or flatness. The reader can envision the scenes and is usually caught in the action.</td>
<td>Attempts have been made to include dialogue, blocking, and/or interior monologue. The story is not yet “hooking” the reader with these techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.18.10 Exclude extraneous details and inconsistencies.</td>
<td>The story contains no inconsistencies or unneeded details.</td>
<td>The story contains few inconsistencies or unneeded details.</td>
<td>The story contains several inconsistencies and unneeded details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson #22: Unit Reflection
**Duration:** 20 minutes or as homework.

**Brief overview of lesson:**
Students reflect on their growth during the unit, and on the learning from the essential questions.

**Materials needed:**
- Student Instructions Handout

**Addressing Essential Question(s):**
- What is culture?
- What is the role of the short story (or literature) in culture?
- How do cultures attempt to assert their values on another culture?
- What makes a story work?
- How does point of view and personal perspective affect meaning?
- How do we recognize what is individual and what is universal in everything?

**Steps/Procedures:**
1. Provide students with instructions and give them time to complete or assign as homework.
2. Collect the reflections.

**Strategies for ELL students:**
Modify the student directions to align with the adjustments that have been made throughout the unit.

**Strategies for TAG students:**
Modify the student directions to align with the adjustments that have been made throughout the unit.

**Modifications for students with special needs:**
Modify the student directions to align with the adjustments that have been made throughout the unit.
Short Story and Culture

TEACHER REFLECTION

1. Which activities provided the most meaningful learning opportunities for your students?

2. Which activities did your students enjoy the most? Why? Were these also meaningful learning opportunities for them?

3. Identify the skills where you saw the greatest improvement during this unit. Which skills have you identified that your students need to improve for the next unit?

4. Which reading strategies were the most effective for your students in this unit?

5. Which writing strategies were the most effective for your students in this unit?

6. Which oral language and/or collaborative strategies were the most effective for your students in this unit?

7. What changes will you make to this unit the next time that you work with these activities?
Short Story and Culture

STUDENT REFLECTION

Look back through your portfolio or folder of work to answer these questions.

1. Which activities did you enjoy most in this unit? Why? Which activities were the most challenging for you? Why?

2. What did you enjoy reading or viewing in this unit? Why? Which texts were the most challenging or difficult for you? Why?

3. Which imaginative writing skills do you think you improved?

4. Reflect on your ability to recognize how your own perspective impacts how you receive and process information. Has this ability changed at all throughout the unit?

5. Reflect on your ability to recognize the local and universal in stories and life. How might this skill help you to interact with texts and people in the future?
Resources for Cultural Encounters through the Short Story

Publishing the Culminating Assessment: See the goals and procedures for the “Read Around” on page 111 of the Grade Nine General Section or Linda Christensen’s Reading, Writing and Rising Up.