

# The Power of Words: Literacy Changes Lives

## Narrative

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

**How can we engage students with reading strategies and show them how to apply them to complex texts to improve reading comprehension?**

**How can we improve students' expository and argumentative essay writing skills?**

This power of literacy proposal aims to provide more reading and writing instructional practices to improve students' reading comprehension and to sharpen their writing skills. Many of our high school students and first year college students need intensive instruction in how to improve reading comprehension. In order to prepare them for college and careers they need more class time focusing on skills to nurture their reading and writing capacities.

For the students, the classes focus on engaging them in applying more reading strategies to complex non-fiction texts, developing a comparative thematic essay, analyzing rhetoric and in strengthening vocabulary development of academic language. In addition, it employs templates and small group processes to help students learn how to develop and organize essays and to revise them with their peers.

Students explore the power of language and literacy in memoirs and argumentative texts. They examine and interpret literary devices and rhetorical structures that work together to deliver the author's purpose. Students apply reading strategies, graphic organizers, literary responses, summaries and small group cooperative practices to discover the literal and deeper meaning in several texts.

For the ,“The Power of Words,” unit the students read short memoir essays that focus on how authors and leaders discover the power of reading and literacy in their young and adult lives. Three days

focus on reading workshops where students apply reading strategies, questioning, determining importance, inferring, context clues, visualizing and annotating as well as recognizing and interpreting point of view, author's purpose, literary elements and devices while during the other two days students focus on vocabulary development and/or writing and grammar skills.

This unit culminates in a written performance task that aims to sharpen their essay writing skills. For the "Power of Words" unit the students write and revise comparative thematic essays.

The double-block period scheduling allows for more time on task and deeper analysis of complex texts, small group processes, discussions and project-based learning. Students use Chromebooks, Google Classroom, SmartBoard technology and internet access in each classroom.

**Grades:** AP English, Freshman English Composition

Two classes taught daily, double-block scheduling

**Duration:** The Power of Words – 4-6 weeks

**Materials:** Memoirs for "The Power of Words" Unit

Chromebooks for Essay Drafting and Revising

Google Classroom

MS PowerPoint for group projects and presentations;

Internet access; selected educational flash sites and websites;

Smart Board technology

Video projector

Rubrics

Chart paper and markers

Student composition notebooks and portfolio folders

Students will read and interpret complex texts;

Students will learn how to cite evidence for a comparative thematic essay on

the "power of words";

Students will learn how to develop and to organize a comparative thematic essay;

Students will be able to prewrite, draft, revise and publish an argumentative essay;

Students will read and evaluate arguments in diverse media formats.

### **TEXTS:**

“The Power of Words” unit:

“Superman and Me” by Sherman Alexie

“Learning to Read” by Malcolm X

“Where are the People of Color in Children’s Literature” by Walter Dean Myers, New York Times

A memoir essay written by author Gary Paulsen

A news interview of Oprah Winfrey

President Obama’s Inauguration Speech (2008), “A More Perfect Union”

### **Teacher Texts:**

Beers, Kylene. When Kids Can’t Read, What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12.

Lattimer, Heather. Thinking Through Genre: Units of Study in Reading and Writing Workshops, 2003.

## **Common Core Standards**

### **Key Ideas and Details:**

#### **CCSSA.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1**

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences

from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions

drawn from the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2**

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize

the key supporting details and ideas.

#### **CCSA.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3**

Analyze how and why individuals, events or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

**Craft and Structure:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4**

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including interpreting technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

**CCSA.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6**

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

**CCSA.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA.R.7**

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively as well as in words. (ex. political cartoons and graphs)

**CCSA.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA.R9**

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build Knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

**CCSA.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA. R. 10**

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

**Standards for Writing:**

**CCSA.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA.W.4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

**CCSA.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA. W.5.**

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting or trying a new approach.

**CCSA.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA.W. 6**

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9**

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection and research.

**Range of Writing**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10**

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day).

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