

Grade: 6-8	ESL/ELA Units of Study Quarter 1 English Language Arts	Unit 1
Understanding the Central Idea Through Informational Text Recommended Number of Instructional Days: 20 days		
Overview		
<p><i>Focus Standards that have been mastered or addressed in previous units will need to be reinforced in upcoming units and may show up in future assessments</i></p> <p><i>Red text in standards for grades 6 and 8 indicate a difference from grade 7 standards and recommend differentiation of instruction.</i></p> <p>In this unit, students will understand the central ideas and themes of informational text. Students will write arguments using valid reasoning and cite textual evidence to support what the text infers and says explicitly. Students determine a main idea and provide a summary to support their claims. By using words, phrases and clauses, students write their own informative and explanatory texts by transitioning their ideas and concepts.</p> <p>Students will participate in guided conversations in both small and whole group settings using productive talk strategies. Students will read and analyze a variety of complex informational texts in order to determine central ideas and themes. The implementation of mini-lessons can be used to model these essential concepts. The use of graphic organizers, structured small group practice, and front-loading can be used to make text more accessible.</p> <p>This unit is taught at the beginning of the school year because the skills are foundational and will be built upon. By understanding central idea and themes students will develop the foundation to build upon more complex concepts such as analysis and argumentative writing.</p> <p>As with all units aligned to the Common Core State Standards, English Learners should read and be exposed to texts with an appropriate range of complexity. Teachers maintain high expectations by engaging students in tasks that provide high challenge with appropriate support. Activities are robust but flexible enough to allow multiple entry points for all students regardless of where they start. Teachers should continually integrate the WIDA model performance indicators to support instruction of English Learners. Additionally, when writing and speaking in discussions, students will use academically challenging vocabulary.</p>		
Reading Anchor Standard		
<p><u>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.</u></p>		
Writing Anchor Standard		

CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Speaking and Listening Anchor Standard

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Language Anchor Standard

CCRA.L.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCRA.L.6 Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Concepts to Be Learned and Skills to Be Used

- CITE **textual evidence** to SUPPORT what text says **explicitly**
- CITE **textual evidence** to SUPPORT what text **infers**
- DETERMINE **theme** or **central idea** and PROVIDE **objective summary**
- INTRODUCE **claim(s)** and ORGANIZE **reasons and evidence** logically
- USE **words, phrases, and clauses** to create cohesion and CLARIFY **relationships** among claims
- WRITE **informative/explanatory texts** to EXAMINE a **topic**
- USE **transitions** and CLARIFY **ideas/concepts**
- DEMONSTRATE **command of English Grammar**
- EXPLAIN the function of **phrases** and **clauses**
- USE **precise language/vocabulary**
- ENGAGE in **collaborative discussions**

Essential Questions

- How does a theme help a reader understand an idea? How does a theme help an author express an idea? ("author" can refer to students' written work or the author of a published work.)
- Why do writers examine a topic and organize their information?
- How does having a clear main idea help the reader with the author's information?
- When reading informational texts, how does a reader distinguish between main ideas and supporting details?

Assessment

Task Name:

Written Curriculum

Standards that are the **FOCUS** in the Unit of Study:

Reading Standards: Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

RI.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (A focus in unit 1 and supporting standard in units 2 through 8)

- RI.6.1 Cite **textual evidence** to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.8.1 Standard is identical to grade 7

RI.7.2 Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

- RI.6.2 Determine **a central idea** of a text and **how it is conveyed through particular details**; provide **a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments**.
- RI.8.2 Determine **a central idea** of a text and **analyze its development** over the course of the text, **including its relationship to supporting ideas**; provide an objective summary of the text.

Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes

W.7.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

- W.6.1a **Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.**
- W.8.1 Standard is identical to grade 7

c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.

- This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7

W.7.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

- This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7
- c. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. (A focus in unit 1 and

supporting standard in units 2 through 8)

- This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7

Language Standards

Conventions of Standard English

L.7.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7
 - a. Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences.
- L.6.1a Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).
- L.8.1a Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.

Language Standards

Conventions of Standard English

* There is no corresponding standard in grade 7

L.8.1d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.*

- L.6.1d. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).*

Language Standards

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

L.7.6 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

(A focus in unit 1 and supporting standard in units 2 through 8)

- This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.7.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (A focus in unit 1 and supporting standard in units 2 through 8)

- This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7

Standards that **Reinforce/Support** the Unit of Study Focus Standards:

Standards that are **Continuous** for the entire school year:

Continuous standards are a selection of standards which should be integrated into instruction throughout the school year.

Reading Standards: Literature

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

[RL.7.10](#) [By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.](#)

- This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7

Reading Standards: Informational Text

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

[RI.7.10](#) [By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.](#)

- This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7

Writing Standards

Range of Writing

[W.7.10](#) [Write routinely over extended time frames \(time for research, reflection, and revision\) and shorter time frames \(a single sitting or a day or two\) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.](#)

- This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7

Production and Distribution of Writing

[W.7.5](#) [With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. \(Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 7 on page 52 \[of the full ELA Common Core State Standards document\].\)](#)

- o This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7

Language Standards

Conventions of Standard English

L.7.2b. Spell correctly.

- o L.6.2b Standard is identical to grade 7
- o L.6.2b Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.

Language Standards

Knowledge of Language

L.7.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

- o This standard in grades 6 and 8 are identical to grade 7

Clarifying the Standards

Key =

RL	Reading Standards for Literature	W	Writing Standards
RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	SL	Speaking & Listening Standards
RF	Foundational Skills	L	Language Standards

RI In grade 6, students are asked to cite textual evidence to support their analysis of the informational text. Students determined the central idea of a text and how it is presented using details, and they will also summarize the text without bias. **As they move to grade 7, they build on this by using several pieces of evidence to support their analysis of informational text. Students will determine two or more central ideas and analyze their development over the course of the text. They will continue to provide an objective summary of the text.** In grade 8, they begin choosing the strongest available evidence to support their analysis of informational text. Students will identify one central idea and analyze its development while including the relationship of the supporting ideas. They will provide an objective text summary.

W Students in grade 6 are expected to write arguments to support their claims by introducing claims and reasons clearly, supporting with relevant evidence, using clarifying words and phrases. **As they move to grade 7, they build on this by acknowledging alternate or opposing claims, organizing evidence and reasoning logically, create cohesion through relationships among evidence.** In grade 8, they begin to distinguish between opposing claims and clarify relationships among counterclaims.

SL Students in grades sixth through eighth are expected to engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions for a variety of purposes in order to build on ideas and express themselves clearly.

L In grade six, students are asked to demonstrate a command of standard English grammar and ensure proper use of pronouns. Students use grade-appropriate vocabulary and phrases to ensure comprehension. **As they move to grade 7, they continue to demonstrate a command of standard English grammar and accurate use of grade-appropriate vocabulary and phrases to ensure comprehension. Additionally, students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the functions of phrases and clauses in sentences.** In grade 8, they begin to explain the function of verbals in sentences.

**Resources:
References to Appendices A, B, and C and Other
Resources**

[Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards and Glossary of Key Terms](#)

Informational/Explanatory Writing, pg. 23

Informational/explanatory writing conveys information accurately. This kind of writing serves one or more closely related purposes: to increase readers' knowledge of a subject, to help readers better understand a procedure or process, or to provide readers with an enhanced comprehension of a concept. Informational/explanatory writing addresses matters such as types (What are the different types of poetry?) and components (What are the parts of a motor?); size, function, or behavior (How big is the United States? What is an X-ray used for? How do penguins find food?); how things work (How does the legislative branch of government function?); and why things happen (Why do some authors blend genres?). To produce this kind of writing, students draw from what they already know and from primary and secondary sources. With practice, students become better able to develop a controlling idea and a coherent focus on a topic and more skilled at selecting and incorporating relevant examples, facts, and details into their writing. They are also able to use a variety of techniques to convey information, such as naming, defining, describing, or differentiating different types or parts; comparing or contrasting ideas or concepts; and citing an anecdote or a scenario to illustrate a point.

Informational/explanatory writing includes a wide array of genres, including academic genres such as literary analyses, scientific and historical reports, summaries, and précis writing as well as forms of workplace and functional writing such as instructions, manuals, memos, reports, applications, and résumés. As students advance through the grades, they expand their repertoire of informational/explanatory genres and use them effectively in a variety of disciplines and domains.

Although information is provided in both arguments and explanations, the two types of writing have different aims. Arguments seek to make people believe that something is true or to persuade people to change their beliefs or behavior. Explanations, on the other hand, start with the assumption of truthfulness and answer questions about why or how. Their aim is to make the reader understand rather than to persuade him or her to accept a certain point of view. In short, arguments are used for persuasion and explanations for clarification.

Like arguments, explanations provide information about causes, contexts, and consequences of processes, phenomena, states of affairs, objects, terminology, and so on. However, in an argument, the writer not only gives information but also presents a case with the “pros” (supporting ideas) and “cons” (opposing ideas) on a debatable issue. Because an argument deals with whether the main claim is true, it demands empirical descriptive evidence, statistics, or definitions for support. When writing an argument, the writer supports his or her claim(s) with sound reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Three Tiers of Words

Isabel L. Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan (2002, 2008) have outlined a useful model for conceptualizing categories of words readers encounter in texts and for understanding the instructional and learning challenges that words in each category present. They describe three levels, or tiers, of words in terms of the words’ commonality (more to less frequently occurring) and applicability (broader to narrower).

While the term tier may connote a hierarchy, a ranking of words from least to most important, the reality is that all three tiers of words are vital to comprehension and vocabulary development, although learning tier two and three words typically requires more deliberate effort (at least for students whose first language is English) than does learning tier one words.

- Tier One words are the words of everyday speech usually learned in the early grades, albeit not at the same rate by all children. They are not considered a challenge to the average native speaker, though English language learners of any age will have to attend carefully to them. While Tier One words are important, they are not the focus of this discussion.
- Tier Two words (what the Standards refer to as general academic words) are far more likely to appear in written texts than in speech. They appear in all sorts of texts: informational texts (words such as relative, vary, formulate, specificity, and accumulate), technical texts (calibrate, itemize, periphery), and literary texts (misfortune, dignified, faltered, unabashedly). Tier Two words often represent subtle or precise ways to say relatively simple things—saunter instead of walk, for example. Because Tier Two words are found across many types of texts, they are highly generalizable.
- Tier Three words (what the Standards refer to as domain-specific words) are specific to a domain or field of study (lava, carburetor, legislature, circumference, aorta) and key to understanding a new concept within a text. Because of their specificity and close ties to content knowledge, Tier Three words are far more common in informational texts than in literature. Recognized as new and “hard” words for most readers (particularly student readers), they are often explicitly defined by the author of a text, repeatedly used, and otherwise heavily scaffolded (e.g., made a part of a glossary).

Literature and Thought Series Unit 1 Resources

To Be a Hero

Flying in the Face of the Führer, (article) pg. 39

Excerpt from *Great Plains* (essay) pg. 54

The Man in the Water (editorial essay) pg. 22

And Justice for All

Crossing the Line (article) pg. 24

This Isn't Kiddy Court (commentary) pg. 102

High Point Level C may be used for text resources

[Appendix B: Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Task](#)

Informational Texts: English Language Arts

Adams, John. "Letter on Thomas Jefferson." , pg. 90

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave, Written by Himself* , pg. 91

Churchill, Winston. "Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: Address to Parliament on May 13th, 1940." , pg. 91

Petry, Ann. *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad*, pg. 92

Steinbeck, John. *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*, pg. 92

Informational Texts: History/Social Studies

United States. Preamble and First Amendment to the United States Constitution. (1787, 1791) , pg. 93

Lord, Walter. *A Night to Remember*, pg. 93

Isaacson, Phillip. *A Short Walk through the Pyramids and through the World of Art*, pg. 93

Murphy, Jim. *The Great Fire*, pg. 94

Greenberg, Jan, and Sandra Jordan. *Vincent Van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist*, pg. 94

Partridge, Elizabeth. *This Land Was Made for You and Me: The Life and Songs of Woody Guthrie*, pg. 94

Monk, Linda R. *Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*, pg. 95

Freedman, Russell. *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*, pg. 95

Informational Texts: Science, Mathematics, and Technical Subjects

Macaulay, David. *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction*, pg. 96

Mackay, Donald. *The Building of Manhattan*, pg. 96

Enzensberger, Hans Magnus. *The Number Devil: A Mathematical Adventure*, pg. 96

Peterson, Ivars and Nancy Henderson. *Math Trek: Adventures in the Math Zone*, pg. 97

Katz, John. *Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet out of Idaho*, pg. 97

Petroski, Henry. "The Evolution of the Grocery Bag.", pg. 98

"Geology." *U*X*L Encyclopedia of Science*, pg. 98

"Space Probe." *Astronomy & Space: From the Big Bang to the Big Crunch*, pg. 98

"Elementary Particles." *New Book of Popular Science*, pg. 99

California Invasive Plant Council. *Invasive Plant Inventor*, pg. 99

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts: English Language Arts, pg. 93

- Students trace the line of argument in Winston Churchill's "Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat" address to Parliament and evaluate his specific claims and opinions in the text, distinguishing which claims are supported by facts, reasons, and evidence, and which are not. [RI.6.8]
- Students analyze in detail how the early years of Harriet Tubman (as related by author Ann Petry) contributed to her later becoming a conductor on the Underground Railroad, attending to how the author introduces, illustrates, and elaborates upon the events in Tubman's life. [RI.6.3]

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts:

History/Social Studies & Science, Mathematics, and Technical Subjects, pg. 100

- Students analyze the governmental structure of the United States and support their analysis by citing specific textual evidence from primary sources such as the Preamble and First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as well as secondary sources such as Linda R. Monk's *Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*. [RH.6–8.1]
- Students evaluate Jim Murphy's *The Great Fire* to identify which aspects of the text (e.g., loaded language and the inclusion of particular facts) reveal his purpose; presenting Chicago as a city that was "ready to burn." [RH.6–8.6]
- Students describe how Russell Freedman in his book *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott* integrates and presents information both sequentially and causally to explain how the civil rights movement began. [RH.6–8.5]
- Students integrate the quantitative or technical information expressed in the text of David Macaulay's *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction* with the information conveyed by the diagrams and models Macaulay provides, developing a deeper understanding of Gothic architecture. [RST.6–8.7]
- Students construct a holistic picture of the history of Manhattan by comparing and contrasting the information gained from Donald Mackay's *The Building of Manhattan* with the multimedia sources available on the "Manhattan on the Web" portal hosted by the New York Public Library (<http://legacy.www.nypl.org/branch/manhattan/index2.cfm?Trg=1&d1=865>). [RST.6–8.9]

Students learn about fractal geometry by reading Ivars Peterson and Nancy

Henderson's Math Trek: Adventures in the Math Zone and then generate their own fractal geometric structure by following the multistep procedure for creating a Koch's curve. [RST.6–8.3]

Appendix C: Samples of Student Writing

No student writing samples available.

Challenging Concepts

Challenging Concepts

1. Students have a difficult time citing evidence to support analysis citing evidence. Teachers can have mini lessons to demonstrate how to cite but also how to identify citations that support analysis. One reading strategy is for teachers to pose a text-based question to help students identify the central idea as they are reading. Students should highlight evidence that answers the question. This will help them with the citation process once they are writing because they will only need to choose from the sentences that have been highlighted.
2. One strategy to create a written response is the RACE strategy. RACE stands for Restate the questions, Answer the question, Cite evidence from the text, Expand/ Explain how your citation supports your answer.
3. Students have a difficult time knowing how to cite evidence versus plagiarizing an author's work. The best way to avoid this is to practice proper citation punctuation.
4. Students often have a difficult time organizing their work in a way that flows, makes sense and supports their analysis. Students should plan in stages and develop drafts using the writing process. Graphic organizers and rubrics can be used to aid the planning process in the early stages of their writing.

Online Resources:

- Multicultural Resources <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural>
- Dual Language: <http://www.dlenm.org/>
- <http://www.aps.edu/academics/common-core-state-standards/ccss-resources-1>
- WiDA: <http://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx>
- NM PED: <http://newmexicocommoncore.org/>
- Achieve the Core: <http://www.achievethecore.org/>
- Engage NY: <http://engageny.org/common-core-curriculum-assessments>
- North Carolina CCSS Support Tools: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/common-core-tools/>
- The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- APS' Discovery Education Log-in: <http://aps.discoveryeducation.com/>
- Poetry Soup: <http://www.poetrysoup.com/>
- National Council of Teachers of English: <http://www.ncte.org/>
- Story Starters: <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/story-starters/>
- Scholastic: <http://www.scholastic.com/home/>
- Rubistar (Rubric development support): <http://rubistar.com/>
- Sheppard Software Language Arts Games: http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/web_games_vocab.htm
- Fun Brain- Language Arts Games: <http://www.funbrain.com/cgi->

- [bin/getskill_s.cgi?A1=selects&A2=la&A4=0&A7=0](#)
- School Time Games- Language Arts World:
http://www.schooltimegames.com/language_arts.html
- Online stopwatch: <http://www.online-stopwatch.com/>
- BBC Bitesize: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/>
- International Reading Association: www.readwritethink.org

Additional Resources

GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) Strategies Training through APS/LCE and DLeNM

Word Q is a Universal Tool that can be used by all students. (Regular education, special education and ESL students) Word Q works with all applications. Word Q is ready to help with any reading and writing assignments that involve electronic text applications such as:

- Web browsers (i.e. Internet explorer, Safari, Chrome)
- Word Processing applications (i.e. MS Word, iWorks, Notepad, PDF's saved as text files)
- Graphic Organizers (i.e. Inspiration, Wespiration, Kidspiration)

Email clients (i.e. Outlook, Gmail, Hotmail)

Terminology:

Appendix A – p.42-43

Evidence – Facts, figures, details, quotations, or other sources of data and information that provide support for claims or an analysis and that can be evaluated by others; should appear in a form and be derived from a source widely accepted as appropriate to a particular discipline, as in details or quotations from a text in the study of literature and experimental results in the study of science.

Standard English – In the Standards, the most widely accepted and understood form of expression in English in the United States; used in the Standards to refer to formal English writing and speaking; the particular focus of Language standards 1 and 2 (CCSS, pp. 26, 28, 52, 54)

Text Complexity – The inherent difficulty of reading and comprehending a text combined with consideration of reader and task variables; in the Standards, a three-part assessment of text difficulty that pairs qualitative and quantitative measures with reader-task considerations (CCSS, pp. 31, 57; Reading, pp. 4–16)

Analyze

Cite

Claims

Command of formal English

Compare

Comprehend

Contrast

Demonstrating understanding

Explicitly

Textual evidence

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The standards listed below include all the CCSS linked to this Unit of Study. The list does not distinguish among FOCUS, SUPPORTING and RECURRING standards in this Unit of Study.