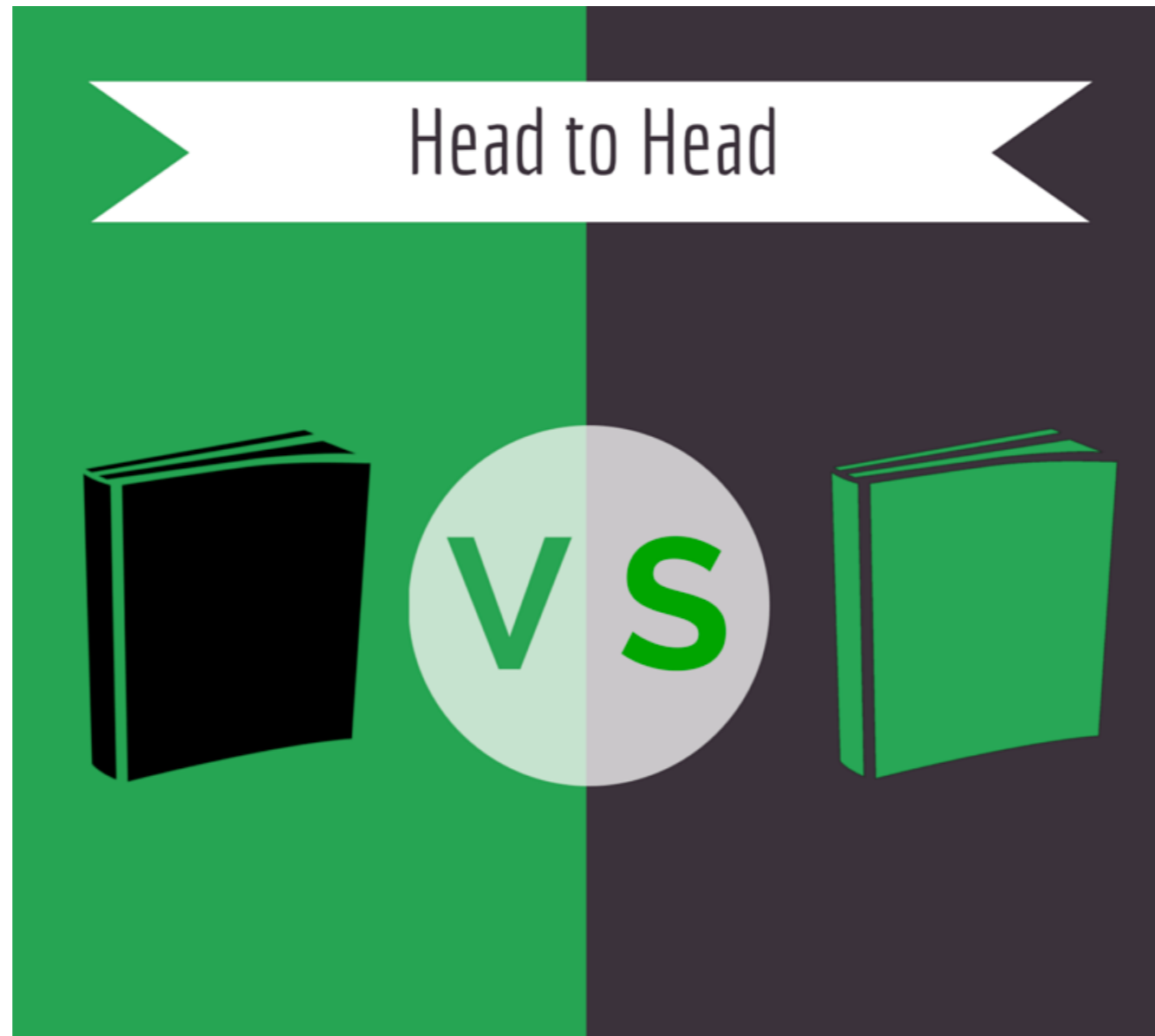
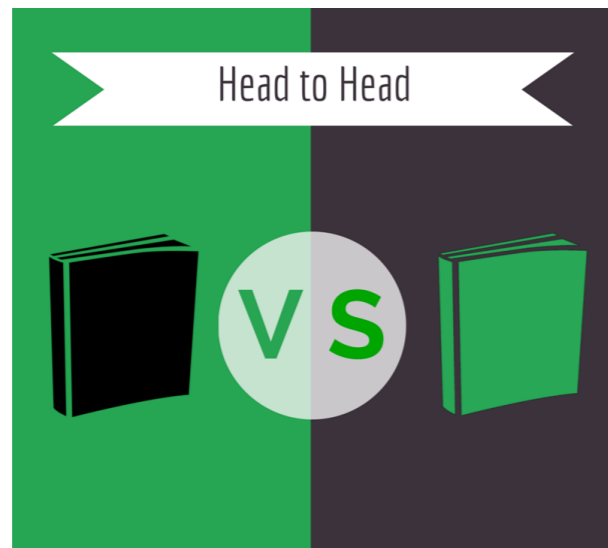


# Head to Head

## What's New in Literature for Grades 6-8



# How It Works



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We understand. You don't have the time to read all these new books and figure out how they will address your standards. But it would be a shame for students to miss out on all the wealth of literature being published! We've tried to make it as easy as possible for you to take a great new novel and still teach from your standards.

For each book, you'll see how ideas from the book can be used to address specific ELA/R, social studies, and technology standards. More general lessons are linked throughout each chapter and are also collected at the end for reference.

**Want more?** We know how time consuming it is to pick through books for the perfect inference or the perfect example of figurative language, so let us help! This only a taste of our Head to Head session and we would love to come provide the full experience at your school, including ideas and activities for several more books in various genres. Visit our website to find out more and for more ideas on our blog!

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POETRY

# The Crossover

by Kwame Alexander

Suggested Age: 10-16

Disclaimers: Suggestive

"With a bolt of lightning on my kicks . . .The court is SIZ-ZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. Cuz tonight I'm delivering," announces dread-locked, 12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood from Kwame Alexander (He Said, She Said 2013).

Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

*From Amazon.com*

"BOLD! EXPLOSIVE! YET STILL GENTLY POETIC. I LOVE THE CROSSOVER. EVERYONE WILL."  
—NIKKI GIOVANNI



# Vocabulary

See appendix for **vocabulary activities!**

crossover - 29

calamity - 39

patella Tendinitis - 48

pulchritudinous - 55

hypertension - 76

ironic - 104

tipping point - 118/119

churlish - 142

profusely - 154

estranged - 187

myocardial infarction - 201

starless - 229

# Theme and Guiding Questions

1. Dealing with Loss
  - What is the meaning of life and how does that shape our beliefs regarding death?
  - In the face of adversity ,what causes a person to succeed?
2. Identity - Growing and Changing
  - How is my identity shaped by others around me?
  - How do events shape my identity?
  - What does it mean to ‘grow up’?

See [Poetry: Making Thematic Connections](#) lesson ideas.

# Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Poetry

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

6.4, 7.4, 8.4

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the **structure** and **elements of poetry** and provide evidence from text to support their understanding.

**Concrete Poetry** (see [Concrete Poetry](#) lesson ideas)

Examples: 3, 10, 30/31, 36, 59, 94, 149, 181, 221/222

**What inferences can be made by the following statements?**

See [Poetry: Inference](#) lesson ideas.

- “When I shoot, I inspire. The hoop’s for sale, and I’m the buyer.” (5)
- “ever since I watched the clip of Dad posterizing that seven-foot Croatian center on ESPN’s Best Dunks Ever; soaring through the air - his long twisted hair like wings carrying him high above the rim - I knew one day I’d need my own wings to fly.” (15)
- “Now you see why they call me Filthy.” (28)
- “Trouble owns our faces but Coach isn’t worried.” (32)
- “I know what he really wants is Pollard’s Chicken and BBQ, but Mom has banned us from that place.” (41) “Mom removes the salt from the table.” (42)
- “And so each time I count the locks of hair beneath my pillow I end up with thirty-seven plus one tear, which never adds up.” (43)
- The letters (47)

- “Some girl who we’ve never seen before, in tight jeans and pink Reeboks, comes up to the table. JB’s eyes are ocean wide, his mouth swimming on the floor, his clownish grin, embarrassing. (52)
- “Why do you think Dad never had knee surgery ... why can’t Dad eat -” (58)
- “He just stands there, looking silly, smiling on the other court at the pink Reeboks-wearing girl.” (62)
- “You had a bottle in one hand and a ball in the other, and your mom thought I was crazy.” (63)
- “He claims he’s listening to French classical, that it helps him concentrate. Yea, right! Sounds more like Jay-Z and Kanye in Paris. Which is why when Mom and Dad start arguing, he doesn’t hear them, either.” (73)
- “I sit in Mom’s office for an hour, reading brochures and pamphlets about the Air Force and the Marines.” (82)
- “Now I’m laughing too, but only on the outside.” (102)
- “Boy walks into a room with a girl. They come over. He says, Hey, Filthy McNasty like he’s said forever, but it sounds different this time, and when he snickers, she does too, like it’s some inside joke, and my nickname, some dirty punch line.” (112)
- “... six feet under at forty-five.” (123)

- “JB, bandaged and hurt, leans against his back-seat window and with less than two feet between us I feel miles away from all of them.” (137)
- “Like a strong wind, Dad rises from the clouds, strikes down the stairs, swift and sharp and mad as lightning.” “His hands pulsing through the air. His mouth, loud as thunder.” (151)
- “Mom take a tissue from her purse to wipe her tears, and the sudden onset of blood from Dad’s nose.” (152)
- “But his eyes, empty as fired cannons, shoot way past me. Sometimes it’s the things that aren’t said that kill you.” (156)
- “Boys, your talent will help you win games, Dad says, but your intelligence, that will help you win at life.” (188)
- “Yeah, Dad, can we? JB echoes. And the word we never sounded sweeter.” (189)
- “If we make it to the finals, I will not miss the big game for a small maybe.” (203)
- “He’s no longer listening to music, but his tears are loud enough to dance to.” (215)
- “I wish the ref could stop the clock of my life.” (219)
- “I am unprepared for death. This is a game I cannot play. It has no rules, no referees. You cannot win.” (227)

- “I listen to my father’s teammates tell funny stories about love and basketball. I hear the choir’s comfort songs. They almost drown out Mom’s sobs.” (227)
- “On the forty-ninth shot, I am only slightly aware that I am moments from fifty. The only thing that really matters is that out here in the driveway shooting free throws I feel closer to Dad.” (235)



# Figurative Language

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

6.4(A) explain how figurative language (e.g., personification, metaphors, similes, hyperbole) contributes to the meaning of the poem.

7.4(A) analyze the importance of graphical elements (e.g., capital letters, line length, word position) on the meaning of a poem.

8.4(A) compare and contrast the relationship between the purpose and characteristics of different poetic forms (e.g., epic poetry, lyric poetry).

See **Figurative/Sensory Language Poetry** lesson ideas

## Examples:

- JB's a shooter, but I'm sneaky and silky as a snake ... (27)
- Sure, I say, as serious as a heart attack. (34)
- Vondie and the rest of the fellas laugh like hyenas. (35)
- JB cackles like a crow. (37)
- I love this game like winter loves snow. (37)
- Time to pay up, Filthy, JB says, laughing and waving the scissors in the air like a flag. My teammates gather around to salute. (38)
- JB's eyes are ocean wide, his mouth swimming on the floor, his clownish grin, embarrassing. (52)
- You did. And it was musical. Like the opening of Beethoven's Fifth. (65)
- "He looked at me like he'd missed the train. (65)
- "The game is like Ping-Pong, with all the back-and-forth." (67)
- "...your arms as heavy as sea anchors" (72)
- "A cold breeze whistles. Her hair dances to its own song." (80)

- “Even though I know he hears me, the only thing JB is listening to is the sound of his heart bouncing on the court of love.” (90)
- “Filthy, talking to your brother right now would be like pushing water uphill with a rake, son.” (91)
- “Filthy, your brother is putting on a free-throw clinic.” (101)
- “... like bugs are breakdancing on it,” (120)
- “I see JB’s still wide open. McDonald’s drive-thru open. But I got my own plans. The double-team is still on me like feathers on a bird. Ever seen an eagle soar?” (131)
- “He’s on fire, blazing from baseline to baseline.” (147)
- “Like a strong wind, Dad rises from the clouds, strikes down the stairs, swift and sharp and mad as lightning.” (151)
- “Now he’s hail and blizzard. His face, cold and hard as ice.” (151)
- “But his eyes, empty as fired cannons, shoot way past me.” (156)
- “He passes the ball to number twenty-nine on the right wing and tries to dribble out, but the defense is suffocating.” (177)
- “Sliding and Gliding into rare air, lighting up the sky and the scoreboard.” (182)

- “He’s no longer listening to music, but his tears are loud enough to dance to.” (215)
- “I am unprepared for death. This is a game I cannot play. It has no rules, no referees. You cannot win.” (227)

# Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Sensory Language

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about how an author's sensory language creates imagery in literary text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding.

6.8(A) explain how authors create meaning through stylistic elements and figurative language emphasizing the use of personification, hyperbole, and refrains.

7.8(A) determine the figurative meaning of phrases and analyze how an author's use of language creates imagery, appeals to the senses, and suggests mood.

8.8(A) explain the effect of similes and extended metaphors in literary text.

## See **Figurative/Sensory Language Poetry** lesson ideas

Phrases that lend themselves to visualizing and determining meaning:

- Ode to My Hair (33)
- In the Locker Room (37)
- Cut (38)
- Sunday's After Church (50)
- Josh's Play-by-Play (67 - 68)
- How Do You Spell Trouble? (80)
- I'm on Free Throw Number Twenty-Seven (101) -- this is a pivotal point.
- Second-Person (114)
- Josh's Play-by-Play (130 - 132)
- Storm (151/152)
- Dear Jordan (159)
- When we get to the court (192/193)
- I don't think I'll ever get used to (213)
- As we're about to leave for the final game (215/216)

# Making Connections

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

Figure 19 (F) - Make connections (thematic links and author analysis) between and across multiple texts of various genres, and provide textual evidence.

Throughout the story, Josh provides basketball rules. These rules are running his life both on and off the court. The rules provide opportunities for students to discuss the intertextual connections and foreshadowing. How are these rules connecting within the book?

**Basketball Rule #1** In this game of life your family is the court and the ball is your heart. No matter how good you are, no matter how down you get, always leave your heart on the court. (20)

**Basketball Rule #2** Hustle dig Grind push Run fast Change pivot Chase pull Aim shoot Work smart Live smarter Play hard Practice harder. (51)

**Basketball Rule #3** Never let anyone lower your goals. Others' expectations of you are determined by their limitations of life. The sky is your limit, sons. Always shoot for the sun and you will shine. (66)

**Basketball Rule #4** If you miss enough of life's free throws you will pay in the end. (71)

**Basketball Rule #5** When you stop playing your game you've already lost. (93)

**Basketball Rule #6** A great team has a good scorer with a teammate who's on point and ready to assist. (129)

**Basketball Rule #7** Rebounding is the art of anticipating, of always being prepared to grab it. But you can't drop the ball. (146)

**Basketball Rule #8** Sometimes you have to lean back a little and fade away to get the best shot. (191)

**Basketball Rule #9** When the game is on the line, don't fear. Grab the ball. Take it to the hoop. (214)

**Basketball Rule #10** A loss is inevitable, like snow in winter. True champions learn to dance through the storm. (230)

See [Poetry: Making Thematic Connections](#) lesson ideas.

### Other books dealing with loss

- *The Fault in our Stars* by John Green
- *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie* by Jordan Sonnenblick
- *We Were Liars* by E. Lockhart
- *Counting by 7s* by Holly Goldberg Sloan

# Writing Literary Texts

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

6.15(B) Write poems using: poetic techniques (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia); figurative language (e.g., similes, metaphors); graphic elements (e.g., capital letters, line length).

7.15(B) Write a poem using: poetic techniques (e.g., rhyme scheme, meter); figurative language (e.g., personification, idioms, hyperbole); graphic elements (e.g., word position).

8.15(B) Write a poem using: poetic techniques (e.g., rhyme scheme, meter); figurative language (e.g., personification, idioms, hyperbole); graphic elements (e.g., word position).

## Alliteration

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/about-alliteration-responding-literature-825.html?tab=1#tabs>

## Writing Tongue Twisters

<http://www.gigglepoetry.com/poetryclassdetail.aspx?LessonPlanID=21>

## Onomatopoeia

In journals have students brainstorm sound representation for different scenarios. Possible scenarios are: parade, car crash, eating soup, cafeteria, football tackle, concert, etc.

Once students have their “sound wordbank,” begin to discuss tone. Choose one scenario and think about the tone

## Line breaks and other

Have students take a personal narrative they have already written. Take a small piece of that and change it into a poem. Experiment with line breaks, rhyme scheme, meter, figurative language, and other elements.

# Technology Applications

Students can exhibit creativity and innovation as they solidify vocabulary words from the book by creating a product to provide a visual definition.

See **Vocabulary Technology** lesson ideas.

## FROM THE STANDARDS

**Creativity and innovation.** The student uses creative thinking and innovative processes to construct knowledge, generate new ideas, and create products. (6.1, 7.1, 8.1)

**Research and information fluency.** The student acquires, analyzes, and manages content from digital resources. (6.3, 7.3, 8.3)

(D) process data and communicate results.

**Technology operations and concepts.** The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations. (6.6, 7.6, 8.6)

(D) understand and use software applications, including selecting and using software for a defined task;

(N) integrate two or more technology tools to create a new digital product.

POETRY

# Prince Puggly of Spud and the Kingdom of Spiff

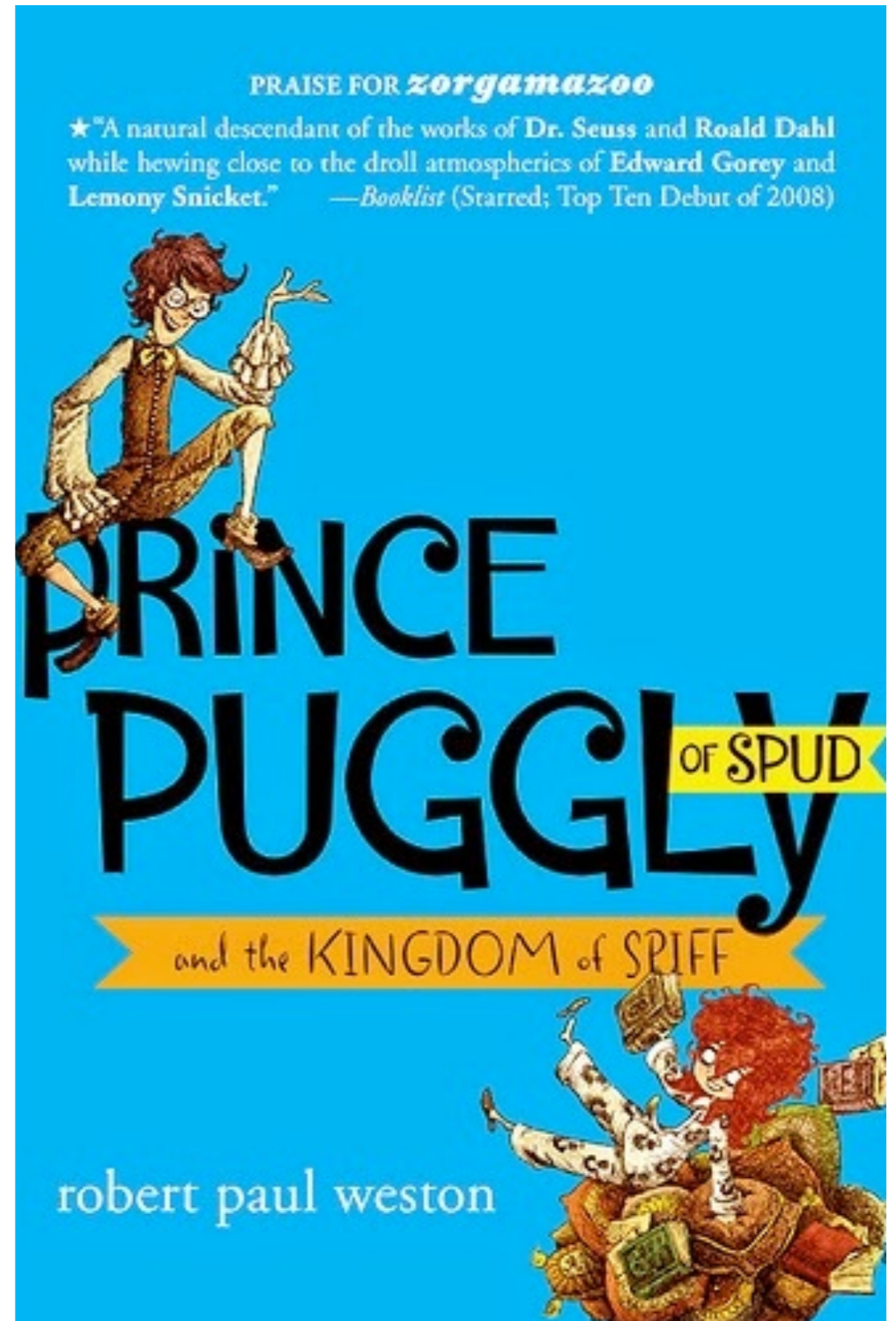
by Robert Paul Weston

Suggested Age: 8-14

Disclaimers: Bathroom humor

Prince Puggly of the muddy, terminally unfashionable Kingdom of Spud is surprised when he receives an invitation to a lavish ball in the far more chic Kingdom of Spiff. Puggly is sure that the Spiffs will take one look at him and laugh him out of their kingdom. And that's exactly what they do. . . . But then Puggly meets Francesca, the bookish Princess of Spiff, and together the two set out to teach Francesca's Spiffian countrymen an absurd lesson in style. Award-winning author Robert Paul Weston once again delivers a humorous fantasy in rhyming verse that just begs to be read aloud. And this time, it comes with a message that's sure to impress: There's more to a person than how they are dressed.

*From Amazon.com*





SECTION 1

---

# Vocabulary

See appendix for **vocabulary activities!**

gilt - 2

mirth - 10

simpering - 38

congenial - 58

teeming - 59

garish - 59

cassock - 59

meticulous - 60

urbane - 66

inane - 66

disparage - 68

replete - 74

vociferously - 75

magisterial - 92

superlative - 96

vanguard - 99

uncouth - 100

irrefutable - 106

queue - 110

malingering laggards - 110

daubed - 115

unequivocally - 119

derision - 128

berate - 132

“on the lam” - 134

jovial - 140

stoical - 144

delectable - 147

sumptuous - 147

dour - 156

abdicate - 158

beguiled - 166

bereft - 167

concurrent - 171

hoary - 172

prolific - 172

vexed - 174

contrite - 176

aplomb - 176

harpy - 179

malaise - 181

virulent - 182

magnanimous - 185

revered - 194

bouffant - 198

coif - 198

pithy - 204

# Theme and Guiding Questions

## 1. Identity

- How is my identity shaped by those around me?
- How do you form an identity that is true to yourself, even if it isn't what the culture around you says you should be?
- When should an individual take a stand in opposition to another individual or larger group?

## 2. Relationships - Family/Friendship

- How are people transformed by their relationship with others?
- How do relationships (family or friends) play a role in shaping our values and beliefs?

See [Poetry: Making Thematic Connections](#) lesson ideas.

# Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Poetry

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

6.4, 7.4, 8.4

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of poetry and provide evidence from text to support their understanding.

Concrete Poetry (see [Concrete Poetry](#) lesson ideas)

Examples: 2, 16\*, 29, 55, 56, 65, 74, 77, 91, 102, 114, 126\*, 130, 166, 168, 192

**What inferences can be made by the following statements?**

See [Poetry: Inference](#) lesson ideas.

- “What they want is to mingle, to see and be seen. This is Spiff, after all. Do you see what I mean?” (11)
- “Puggly said nothing. His face had gone pale. His sense of surprise? It was right off the scale.” (26)
- “Everywhere that you went, you would notice her face - in commercials, on billboards, all over the place, simpering down with her powdering mug, looking larger than life, and exceedingly smug.” (38)
- “He picked up the paper as if it were cursed, as if it were moldy, and ready to burst.” (41)
- “Francesca said nothing. Her only reply was to open her book and shrug with a sigh.” (47)
- “And be certain the fabric is deeply perfumed. If I breathe in that Spudlian air, I’ll be doomed.” (50)
- “She was just about ready to say something more, when a butler arrived, to darken the door.” (58, 96, 194)

- “Puggly sat and unfolded the invite once more. He looked down at the Spudlian clothes that he wore.” (113)
- “‘But my name,’ Puggly whispered. ‘On the envelope, see? Prince Puggly,’ it says. That really is me.” (119)
- “I think someone else should be prince for a while.” (123)
- “I won’t be slave to that wig anymore!” (143)
- “‘This is unpleasant,’ she said, with a sigh, when she noticed the creature, just under her eye. It clung to her cheek like a silvery drip. It crawled down her nose to the top of her lip.” (177 - actually describing a slug, but could also be a tear!)
- “But if Miss Ruby likes it, they think it’s all chic!” (180)
- “There he was in the midst of a Spudlian ball. For a moment, he sat there, just watching it all.” (190)

# Figurative Language

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

6.4(A) explain how figurative language (e.g., personification, metaphors, similes, hyperbole) contributes to the meaning of the poem.

7.4(A) analyze the importance of graphical elements (e.g., capital letters, line length, word position) on the meaning of a poem.

8.4(A) compare and contrast the relationship between the purpose and characteristics of different poetic forms (e.g., epic poetry, lyric poetry).

See **Figurative/Sensory Language Poetry** lesson ideas

## Examples:

- ...like violent volcanic eruptions of fluff. (16)
- And the colors! So many had come to collide, it looked like a beautiful rainbow - had died. (25)
- ...with skin like a prune, or perhaps like a withered, deflated balloon [...] and eyeballs so foggy they looked like antiques. (30)
- If she were a drink, she'd be down to the dregs. If she were a car, she'd be covered in rust. (31)
- ...and everywhere polka-dots -- big as the moon (56)
- ...the air fell silent and still as a tomb. (59)
- It had slowly emerged from the shadows above like an angel, a spirit! Like a heavenly dove! (62)
- It was massive, as well, with buckles and straps. A bit like a golden sombrero, perhaps... (63)
- ...you dress like a slow-witted, nearsighted mule. (68)
- I've got all the style of a festering wart! (78)
- She sagged like a willow tree over her desk (80)
- ...all lit from below, with the turrets like twelve giant candles, aglow. (85)

- Hanging and flailing, like a fish on a hook (93)
- Its pillows had ruptured all over the floor. Thankfully spilling their cottony guts... (95)
- That looks like an outfit a monkey would wear! (99)
- They look more like shredded-up grocery bags! (100)
- He looked like a lizard, half-moulting its skin. (101)
- He resembled a creature dredged up from a swamp. (102)
- She felt like a bug, or a bump on a log. She felt like a wart on the back of a frog. (103)
- As bare and exposed as a worm in the rain. (112)
- ...her jewelry twinkled like stars in the sky. (115)
- It looks like a frisbee from space! (120)
- Puggly just wandered away, like a ship gone adrift, or a dog gone astray... (123)
- She was flopped on a log, like a rag, or a sloth, or some miserable frog. (128)
- It would seem he had vanished, as if like a ghost! (140)
- It looked like a room full of woozy baboons! (143)
- ...careening around like a rudderless ship. (143)

- ...like the squeak of a mouse -- with a mouthful of cheese. (158)
- How it made him feel worthless, like over-chewed gum, like a big, bursting boil on an elephant's bum. (159)
- "Perfect," of course, in a Spudlian mode: like a bomb full of color had come to explode. (165)
- It was more like a crypt, to tell you the truth. (167)
- It clung to her cheek like a silvery drip. (177)
- He went limp as a noodle and fell flat on his back... (187)
- To top it all off, a balloon had come loose, floating down like a feather plucked out of a goose. (192)
- There were all sorts of people, coming out of the night. They staggered like zombies, stumbling over the ground... (202)
- We're gonna party, right now, like it's 1602! (203)

## Meter

The story is written primarily in rhyming couplets. This seems to lend itself very well to the regal nature of the story. Or does it? How does the author's choice of rhyme scheme juxtapose against the topic of the story?

See [Poetry: Rhyming Couplets](#) lesson ideas.

At one point in the story, the rhyme scheme changes - p 42. What kind of rhyme scheme is it? Why does the author do this?



# Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Sensory Language

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about how an author's sensory language creates imagery in literary text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding.

6.8(A) explain how authors create meaning through stylistic elements and figurative language emphasizing the use of personification, hyperbole, and refrains.

7.8(A) determine the figurative meaning of phrases and analyze how an author's use of language creates imagery, appeals to the senses, and suggests mood.

8.8(A) explain the effect of similes and extended metaphors in literary text.

## See **Figurative/Sensory Language Poetry** lesson ideas

Phrases that lend themselves to visualizing and determining meaning:

- Description of Frolicsome Hall - 5 (3rd stanza)
- Description of shed - 23
- Spiffian Palace - 77
- King Dandy's fall - 93 (4th stanza)
- Reaction to Frannie's statement - 99 (in brackets)
- Puggly's carriage - 108
- The forest between Spiff and Spud - 125/126
- King Dandy's party - 143 (after page break)
- Description of Puggly in disguise - 145 (4th -5th stanzas)
- Puggly wakes up (190)

# Making Connections

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

Figure 19 (F) - Make connections (thematic links and author analysis) between and across multiple texts of various genres, and provide textual evidence.

## Similar books:

- *The Butter Battle Book* by Dr. Seuss
- *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss
- The Story of Flibber-o-loo (Veggie Tales)
- *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton
- *Romeo/Juliet*
- <http://www.notimeforflashcards.com/2012/04/booksaboutbeingyourself.html>

Have students write their own parable about two opposing groups.

See [Poetry: Making Thematic Connections](#) lesson ideas.

# Writing Literary Texts

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

6.15(B) Write poems using: poetic techniques (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia); figurative language (e.g., similes, metaphors); graphic elements (e.g., capital letters, line length).

7.15(B) Write a poem using: poetic techniques (e.g., rhyme scheme, meter); figurative language (e.g., personification, idioms, hyperbole); graphic elements (e.g., word position).

8.15(B) Write a poem using: poetic techniques (e.g., rhyme scheme, meter); figurative language (e.g., personification, idioms, hyperbole); graphic elements (e.g., word position).

Several paragraphs in the story are full of description, yet lacking in embellishment! Though it might have been on purpose, they beg for creativity. Take one of the following paragraphs and, using appropriate poetic techniques, construct a poem that would fit with the rest of the book.

- Description of the Shaman of Spud - 18
- Shaman's answer to Puggly's question - 64 (3rd stanza: "Next...")
- Description of the party - 140
- Granny's answer - 170 (4th stanza: "The old woman smiled...")
- "A kingdom like this" - 194 (4th stanza)

Or, take one of the examples of concrete poetry and give another interpretation.

## Rebus Puzzles

Practice, or get some ideas, by looking at some rebus puzzles:

- [http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/riddles/rebus\\_puzzle.htm](http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/riddles/rebus_puzzle.htm)
- [http://printables.scholastic.com/printables/detail/?id=36071&query=rebus&N=0&Ntk=printables\\_minibooks&Ntt=rebus&\\_fq=fff&No=0&spellcheck=false](http://printables.scholastic.com/printables/detail/?id=36071&query=rebus&N=0&Ntk=printables_minibooks&Ntt=rebus&_fq=fff&No=0&spellcheck=false)

# Technology Applications

Students can exhibit creativity and innovation as they solidify vocabulary words from the book by creating a product to provide a visual definition.

See **Vocabulary Technology** lesson ideas.

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(D) understand and use software applications, including selecting and using software for a defined task;

(N) integrate two or more technology tools to create a new digital product.

# Noah Webster & His Words

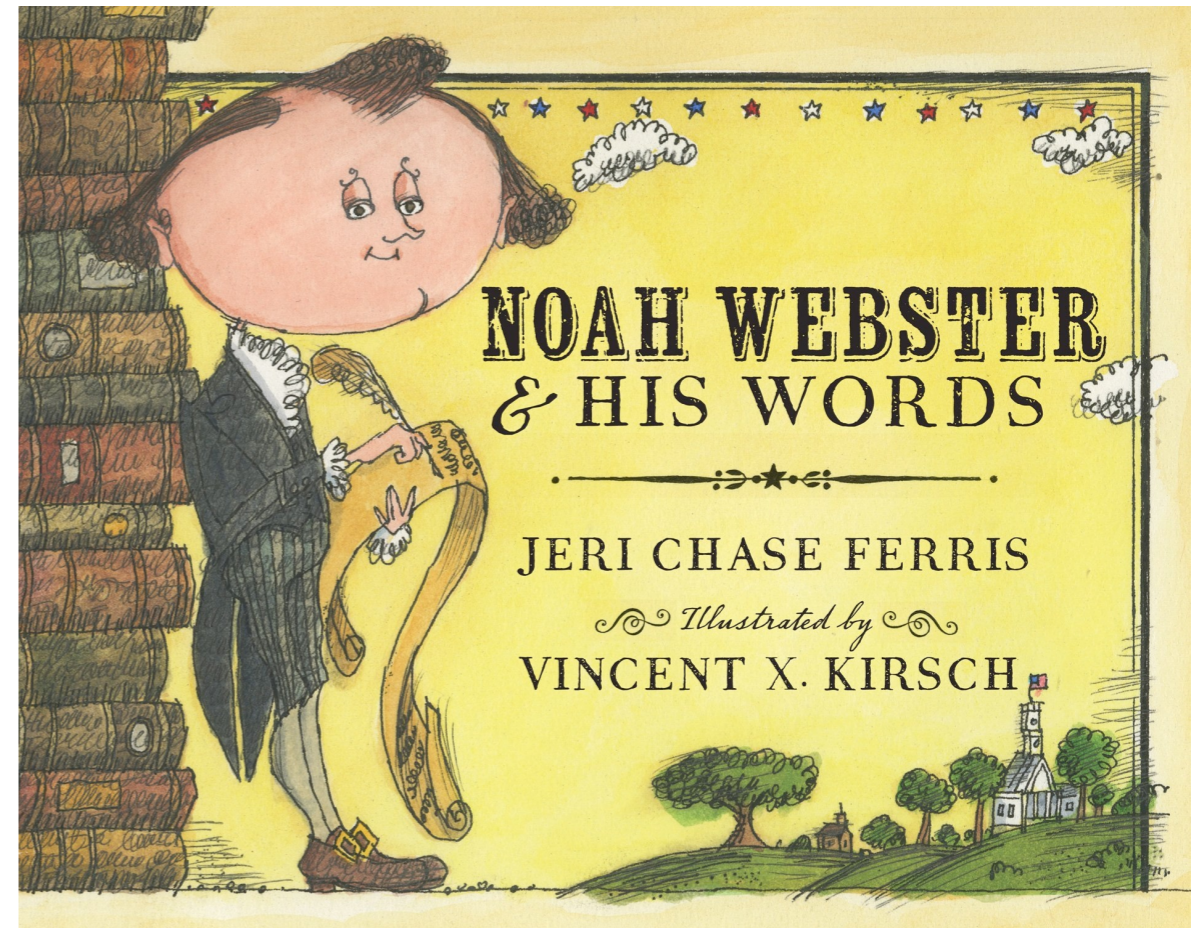
by Jeri Chase Ferris

Suggested Age: all!

Disclaimers: none!

Webster's American Dictionary is the second most popular book ever printed in English. But who was that Webster? Noah Webster (1758–1843) was a bookish Connecticut farm boy who became obsessed with uniting America through language. He spent twenty years writing two thousand pages to accomplish that, and the first 100 percent American dictionary was published in 1828 when he was seventy years old. This clever, hilariously illustrated account shines a light on early American history and the life of a man who could not rest until he'd achieved his dream. An illustrated chronology of Webster's life makes this a picture perfect biography [noun: a written history of a person's life].

*from Amazon.com*



# Vocabulary

See appendix for **vocabulary activities!**

**confidence** [noun: belief that one is right]

**scholar** [noun: one who goes to school; a person who knows a lot]

**embarrassment** [noun: shame; confusion]

**convinced** [verb: overcame by argument]

**expensive** [adj.: having a high price; costly]

**surrendered** [verb: gave up]

**independent** [adj.: not controlled by others]

**unite** [verb: make one]

**publisher** [noun: one who prints an author's work]

**soared** [verb: flew]

**grammar** [noun: study of words; rules for using words]

**lectures** [noun: a talk to an audience]

**dictionary** [noun: a book listing words in ABC order]

**tomahawk** [noun: an Indian hatchet]

**zygomatic** [adj.: related to the cheekbone]

**ecstatic** [adj.: filled with pleasure; delighted; thrilled]

**colonists** [noun: people in one country ruled by another country]

**minutemen** [noun: men ready to fight on a minute's notice]

**ratified** [verb: approved]

**constitution** [noun: basic laws of a nation]

**copyright law** [noun: legal right to copy and sell an author's work]

**pivotal** [adj.: vitally important]

**revolutionary** [noun: one who calls for radical change]

**celebrates** [verb: to honor]

**biographer** [noun: one who writes, composes, or produces biography]

**significant** [adj.: having or likely to have influence or effect]

**jack-of-all-trades** [noun: a handy, versatile person]

**bibliophile** [noun: a lover of books]

# Key Message and Guiding Questions

## Identity/Language

- What role does language play in shaping our identity as a country?
- It is possible to have culture without language?
- How does literature/language reveal the values of a given culture or time period?

See [Biography: Making Connections](#) lesson ideas.

# Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Nonfiction

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

6.7, 7.7, 8.7

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the varied structural patterns and features of literary nonfiction and respond by providing evidence from text to support their understanding.

Use the following excerpts from the book, along with the **Biography: Making Inferences** lesson ideas, to help students make inferences about the book.

- Noah Webster always knew he was right
- But Noah did not want to be in that long line.
- ...he wanted American schoolbooks.
- “I will write the second Declaration of Independence”
- Noah was afraid America would fall into thirteen pieces.
- He read almost every book in the Yale University library.
- Noah Webster’s words did unite America.



# Making Connections

## Figure 19c

### FROM THE STANDARDS...

#### Figure 19 C

reflect on understanding to monitor comprehension (e.g., summarizing and synthesizing; making textual, personal, and world connections; creating sensory images)

#### Social Studies:

6.18(A) explain the relationships that exist between societies and their architecture, art, music, and literature

7.19(A) explain how the diversity of Texas is reflected in a variety of cultural activities, celebrations, and performances

8.26 The student understands the relationship between the arts and the times during which they were created.

### Text to World Connection:



The “Word of the Year” is a word, or expression, that we can see has attracted a great deal of interest during the year to date. Every year, candidates for Word of the Year are debated and one is eventually chosen that is judged to reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of that particular year and to have lasting potential as a word of cultural significance.

Give students time to browse through the one of the Merriam-Webster “Year in Words” pages:

- 2012:  
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/the-year-in-words/index.htm>
- 2013:  
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/the-year-in-words/2013-entries.htm>
- Trend Watch:  
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/trend-watch/archive.html>

These pages chronologically list words that had spikes in look-ups on particular days, and gives a synopsis of what was happening in the world on that day. Talk about how the word relates to the event and why it might have spiked on that particular day.

Once students begin to understand the relationship between words and events, look at the Word of the Year archives.

[http://www.merriam-webster.com/info/woy\\_archive.htm](http://www.merriam-webster.com/info/woy_archive.htm)

Students might have to look up the meanings of some of the words. Based on the meanings, have students infer why this word might have been chosen as Word of the Year. (Note: This might involve some **research** into current events of the particular year.)

### Compare Across the Pond

England had dictionaries, but Noah Webster wanted his dictionary to be 100% American. Extend the discussion of language and culture by comparing Words of the Year from both the Merriam-Webster (M-W) Dictionary and the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). Note: The OED has both a British and an American staff, each responsible for selecting their own Word of the Year.

|      | M-W       | OED US  | OED UK |
|------|-----------|---------|--------|
| 2005 | integrity | podcast | sudoku |
| 2013 | science   | --      | selfie |

In the book, “new American” words are mentioned: skunk, dime, tomahawk.

Example:

Resources:

M-W Word of the Year archive:

[http://www.merriam-webster.com/info/woy\\_archive.htm](http://www.merriam-webster.com/info/woy_archive.htm)

OED Word of the Year FAQ:

<http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year-faq/>

OED Word of the Year archive:

<http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/press-releases/oxford-dictionaries-word-of-the-year-2013/> (scroll way down)

For seventh grade Texas History, use a Texas dictionary!

Texas Dictionary: <http://www.qsl.net/w5www/textalk.html>

**Speak Texan in 30 Minutes or Less**

### Text to Self

Have students decide on their own personal Word of the Year. As the teacher, you can decide how you want to define “year” - this school year, last school year, this calendar year, last calendar year.

What word captures the general events, feelings, or interests of the year so far? Be sure to have students write a brief description of why they chose their word!



Collect all the students' words to create a class book with a tool like FlipSnack: <http://www.flipsnack.com/>

# Technology

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

### Technology: Creativity and Innovation

The student uses creative thinking and innovative processes to construct knowledge, generate new ideas, and create products.

### Social Studies: 6.21b, 7.21b, 8.29b

The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology.

Create a timeline that shows the history of both dictionaries. Given what you know about the history between England and the US, what conclusions can you draw?

History of Merriam-Webster:

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/info/reform-timeline.htm>

History of OED: <http://public.oed.com/history-of-the-oed/>

See the timeline section of the **Technology: Report Alternatives** lesson ideas.

Also, check out the **Technology: Research Ideas**.

# More Information!

See also the **Technology: Research lesson ideas!**

**Noah Webster House:**

<https://www.noahwebsterhouse.org/>

particularly:

<https://www.noahwebsterhouse.org/discover/kids-corner/>

**An Exhibit Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of Noah Webster's Birth:**

<https://www.amherst.edu/library/archives/exhibitions/webster>

**Images of Documents written by Noah Webster (Primary Source!)**

[https://openlibrary.org/search?q=webster&author\\_key=OL6821920A](https://openlibrary.org/search?q=webster&author_key=OL6821920A)

**The American Spelling Book**

text only:

<http://digital.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/t/text/text-idx?c=nietz;cc=nietz;view=toc;idno=00acf7166m>

with a few images and more info:

<http://www.english.illinois.edu/-people-/faculty/debaron/402/402files/noahspell.html>

digitized by Google:

[http://books.google.com/books?id=x7EqAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=x7EqAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

# Nelson Mandela

by Kadir Nelson

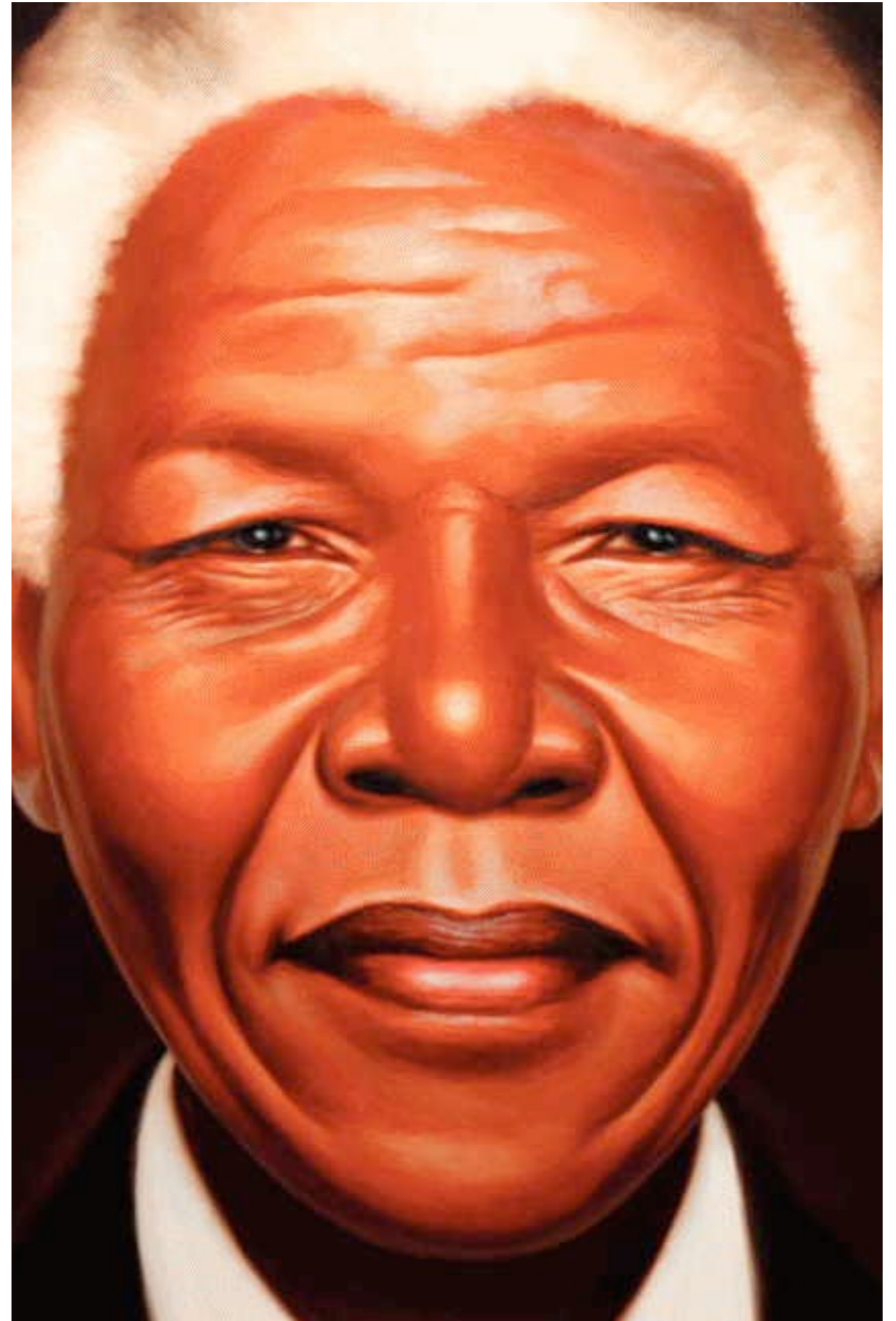
Suggested Age: 9+

Disclaimers: none!

In this picture book biography, award-winning author and illustrator Kadir Nelson tells the story of Mandela, a global icon, in poignant free verse and glorious illustrations. It is the story of a young boy's determination to change South Africa, and of the struggles of a man who eventually became the president of his country by believing in equality for all people, no matter the color of their skin. Readers will be inspired by Mandela's triumph and his lifelong quest to create a more just world.

An author's note at the back retells the story of Mandela's fight against apartheid in simple prose, and takes the story further, including Mandela's Nobel Peace Prize. A short bibliography lists additional sources for readers who want to find out more.

*From Amazon.com*



# Vocabulary

See appendix for **vocabulary activities!**

Qunu

fertile

dimmed

apartheid

European

fortnight

flats

rallies

protests

conversed

justice

# Key Message and Guiding Questions

Mandela fought for justice and equality in a peaceful fashion.

- When does government have the right to restrict the freedoms of people?
- Is it ever necessary for government to restrict freedom?



# Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Nonfiction

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the varied structural patterns and features of literary nonfiction and respond by providing evidence from text to support their understanding.

Use the following excerpts from the book, along with the **Biography: Making Inferences** lesson ideas, to help students make inferences about the book.

- ... he was the only one chosen for school
- Nelson was nine when his father joined the ancestors in the sky
- The settlers' weapons were stronger and breathed fire.
- Nelson became a lawyer and defend those who could not defend themselves
- It was called apartheid. The people were set apart.
- ... a glimpse of freedom for life at home
- South Africa began to fall apart.
- Nelson looked into the sky and smiled at the ancestors.

# Making Connections

## Figure 19c

### FROM THE STANDARDS...

#### Figure 19 C

reflect on understanding to monitor comprehension (e.g., summarizing and synthesizing; making textual, personal, and world connections; creating sensory images)

While this true event is set in Africa and students might have little connection, most are familiar with the stories here in America. Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela have many similarities. (See [Dual Timeline](#) lesson idea.)

#### Some books on MLK Jr.

- *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Doreen Rappaport
- *Who was Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Bonnie Bader
- *I Have a Dream* by Martin Luther King, Jr. and Kadir Nelson

Both Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela lived their life by principals laid out by Mahatma Gandhi.

#### Some books on Gandhi

- *DK Biography: Gandhi* by Primo Levi and Amy Pastan
- *World History Biographies: Gandhi: The Young Protester Who Founded a Nation* by Philip Wilkinson

#### Poems and Articles about Nelson Mandela

- Maya Angelou - [His Day is Done](#)
- Thabiso Mohare - [An Ordinary Man](#)
- Article about [Mandela's death](#).
- Article from [Time for Kids](#)

- The [Nelson Mandela Foundation](#) page

### **Text-to-World Connections**

Have students discuss freedom, prejudice, and discrimination. Use the guiding question from above to discuss government's role. Students could be researching and discussing what these words mean in different countries. What are the expectations in different countries? How does freedom, prejudice, and discrimination affect us? When are we face-to-face with these ideas in our everyday life?



See also the [Biography: Making Connections](#) lesson ideas.

# Technology

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

### Technology: Creativity and Innovation

The student uses creative thinking and innovative processes to construct knowledge, generate new ideas, and create products.

### Social Studies: 6.21b, 7.21b, 8.29b

The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology.

Create a timeline that chronicles Mandela's life in conjunction with other major world events.

See the **Technology: Report Alternatives** lesson ideas for more information.

See also the **Technology: Research** lesson ideas!

# Lesson Ideas!

**These lesson ideas are just that - ideas!** They are activities that will help address your standards. We don't believe in lesson plans because we believe in your professional knowledge. Only you can tell what your students will need, and with a list of activities before you, can choose which ideas will best support your students' learning.

**Don't do all of the activities for every book.** Our main goal is for students to be engaged in and actively enjoy reading, so don't overwhelm them! Whether you're in a classroom or a library, you can adjust any of the activities here to fit any situation.

These lesson ideas stand on their own, and **can be used along with any book you might be reading in class.** For the books we've selected, we've pulled out all the information and examples you will need (with page numbers!) to work through the activities with your students and these lessons are embedded and linked throughout the specific chapter on each book.

**Want more?** We know how time consuming it is to pick through books for the perfect inference or the perfect example of figurative language, so let us help! This is only a taste of our Head to Head session and we would love to come provide the full experience at your school, including ideas and activities for several more books in various genres. Visit [our website](#) to find out more and for more ideas on our blog!



**Literary Fusions**

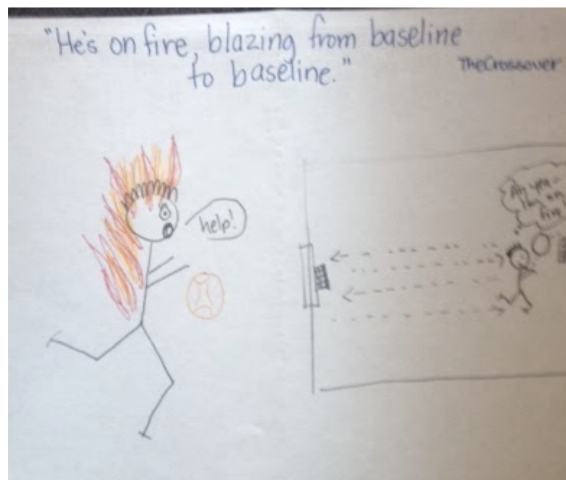
# Poetry: Figurative & Sensory Language

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Language not intended to be taken literally but layered with meaning through the use of imagery, metaphors, and other literary devices.

From the Texas Education Agency glossary

### Lesson Ideas:



**Figurative VS Literal Meanings.** Students should pull out different pieces of figurative language from the book they are reading, or the teacher could have already pulled different sentences from the reading. Working alone or in pairs, students

should fold a piece of paper in half and write the sentence at the top of the page. Students will illustrate with words and pictures the literal meaning on the left side and the figurative meaning on the right. On the back of the paper, students will

reference the page number on which the author used the sentence and explain how using figurative language enhanced the meaning and intent for the reader. Was the figurative language necessary? Why or why not?

**Visualizing Figurative Language.** Ask students to define any necessary vocabulary prior to beginning this activity. Especially if you need them to address both denotative and connotative meanings of a word or idea. Then read aloud a passage from the text. As you read, have students draw (quick sketch) their images as you read. You may have to reread the selection quite a few times. Have students share their visualization with a partner. Now provide students with the text that was read aloud. Students should add words, phrases, and figurative language that evoked the image they created. Once again, allow students time to share what they are thinking. At the bottom or on the back of the paper, students should write how the figurative language enhanced the meaning of the poem (text).

**Metaphors and Similes.** Metaphors and similes compare two unlike things. Most of our students are aware of this, but are they aware of why authors write using metaphors and similes? These devices really illustrate the speaker's point. They help to create a very vivid and distinct visual in the reader's head - a visual that will live within the reader forever (or at least for a long time). Have students find a metaphor or simile in their text, or provide one for them. Have the students write what two unlike things are being compared. Then have the students write or draw the picture that creates. Underneath, or somewhere, the students should write what emotions that

evokes. Does this figurative language help the author make a point and what memorable picture did it create?

**The Five Senses.** As students read and visualize the figurative language, they should be addressing all five senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, sound). Students can use graphic organizers or write which words attach to which sense. How do these images help to make the point of the main message of the text?

# Poetry: Concrete Poetry

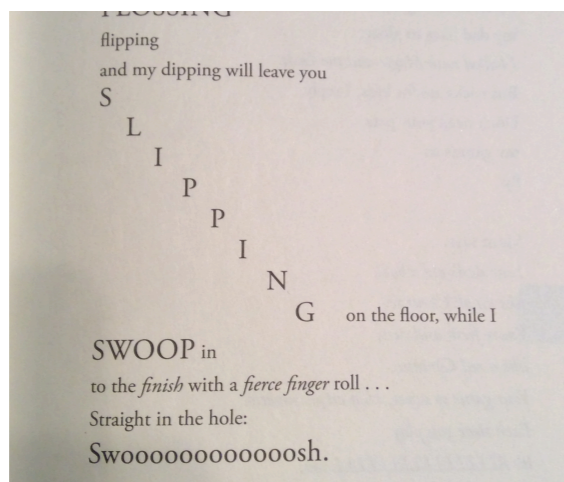
DEFINITION:

Verse that emphasizes nonlinguistic elements in its meaning, such as a typeface that creates a visual image of the topic.

“Concrete Poetry” from [The Poetry Foundation](#)

Concrete poems must be visual. If a concrete poem is effective and is read aloud without the vision of the poem, much of the content would be lost.

Many parts of the book have shape or concrete poetry. For example, look at page 3 in *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander. The first page of the story has a shape that makes you feel as though you are playing basketball as you read the page. There is movement in the words, literally and figuratively.



1. Choose a page that is an example of concrete poetry and read it aloud to the students without them being able to see the page. Discuss what they are thinking and visualizing as you read. Have students make inferences and draw conclusion based on the reading. Then provide a visual of the page and reread the poem.
  - How does the position of the lines and words help with the interpretation of the text?
  - Was it easier to visualize or did it change your visualization when you were able to see the text?
  - Why did the author choose to use concrete poetry on this page?
  - Why is the author only choosing certain pages to use concrete poetry?
  
2. Have students discuss the word placement on the page help with the meaning of the poem. In journals, have students write how the placement of words help the meaning of the poem.
  
3. Have students close their eyes and visualize different scenarios provided by the instructor. Examples might be: thunderstorm (or other extreme weather), car crash, sacking a quarterback). Have students think of sounds and movements that the scenario provides. Have students share how the layout of the text and even onomatopoeia would help the poet express the moment.



# Poetry: Rhyming Couplets

## COUPLET

A couplet is a literary device which can be defined as having two successive rhyming lines in a verse and has the same meter to form a complete thought.

### Lesson Ideas:

**Introducing and Defining.** Show students examples of couplets, but don't say what it is. Ask students to discuss what they see in the two lines provided. What do you notice about these two lines? Show two more lines and ask the same questions. Continue this for a third time. Ask students what they noticed about all three examples. Lead students to the discovery that they are all two lines and each of the two lines have the same meter and rhyme. Ask if it is a complete thought. Now explain that these are couplets and explain what a couplet is. Create an anchor chart for students with the examples used in the lesson.

**Exploring and Processing.** Provide examples from the novel-in-verse you are reading or other couplet poems and have students, in partners, find couplets. They must be able to

defend that what they found is, in fact, a couplet. They will have to explain how the rhyme and meter of the two lines are the same and what is the complete thought of the lines. Have these examples laminated or in sheet protectors, to save the planet, but also so that students can use overhead markers to document their thinking.

**Discussion and Writing.** Provide time for students to discuss why they think the author chose to use couplets in the text. Is the couplet providing rhythmical enjoyment? Is the couplet helping to deliver a message? Why did the author choose to use this device?

Have students choose a topic to write their own poem. Once a topic is chosen, have students brainstorm important vocabulary or words for their topic. (Example: If I chose to write about Gymnastics, I might choose words such as athlete, beam, bars, vault, floor, tumble, compete). Have students discuss what one complete thought they would like to share. Then work on making the rhythm and the rhyme work. I would have students brainstorm possible rhymes before they begin.

# Poetry: Making Thematic Connections

## Ideas

**Book Choice.** Allow students to decide on which book they would like to read. All the books should be chosen, because they have similar theme.

**Guiding Questions.** Provide each group (groups are created by book choice) a guiding question. Guiding questions are open-ended, thought provoking, and not text dependent. Have students discuss their personal answers as a group. Then allow time for students to write their personal answers in their journal using examples from their own life and experiences.

Example: For the theme of Loss: In the face of adversity what causes a person to succeed?

**Read and Answer.** As students read manageable chunks of the text, they should return back to the guiding question. Now students should be answering that question based off of the character they are reading about. Their answers should be shared both in group conversation and in journal responses. In the journal, students should answer the guiding questions

based on evidence from the text. Using the example above, students will be analyzing what is causing their character to succeed.

**Cross-Book Discussion.** Each group should be discussing their answers together and with other groups. Students will be able to make connections to the other books characters. How do their characters handle situations the same or differently? How is the theme of loss handled differently or similarly by different authors and characters?

# Poetry: Making Inferences

## INFERENCE

A logical guess made by connecting bits of information.

*From the Texas Education Agency glossary*

**Background Information.** Students must observe and think about facts, details, and information provided in the text. An author will not tell the reader everything verbatim. The reader will need to connect the dots, or infer, what the writer isn't saying. Students must take information from the text (text evidence) and think about what they know about this information (background knowledge). This could be past experiences, knowledge from other texts and media, or general assumptions on the information. Using both text evidence and background knowledge the student will come up with an inference. Students should always evaluate their inferences and adjust as necessary.

## Ideas

**Inference Preview.** Prior to a section students are about to read in the text, pull out a sentence that warrants an inference. Ask a question that will require the students to come up with an inference. Even if students automatically jump to the inference, have them work backwards explaining what text evidence they used and what their background knowledge is on the subject.

## EXAMPLE:

Question: Does he really find it funny?

“Now I’m laughing too, but only on the outside.”

*~ The Crossover by Alexander*

By having students make inferences over one or two sentences, you are making the text more manageable. It is also setting the students up to understand the next part of the text a little bit better, helps them establish a purpose for reading, and increases engagement in the next reading assignment.

To differentiate keep the same sentence, but change the level of the question.

EXAMPLE:

Question: Why does he feel this way?

“Now I’m laughing too, but only on the outside.”

~ *The Crossover by Alexander*

**Figurative Language Inferencing.** Poetry is full of figurative language. There is not enough hours in the day to teach students every single piece of figurative language they will come in contact with in reading. Therefore, we must teach students to make inferences about the sentences.

EXAMPLE:

What does this expression/metaphor mean?

“...your arms as heavy as sea anchors”

~ *The Crossover by Alexander*

Have students explain the meaning, the inference, but then have them return to the sentence itself. What text evidence made you infer that? What word? What do you already know about that word? This is something the students could be keeping record of in their journals. At the end of each class pe-

riod, have students return to the book and make inferences about two different pieces of figurative language.

**Draw Conclusions and Make Predictions.** Students should draw conclusions at the end of each chapter. Pull text evidence from throughout the chapter and make inferences about the plot and characters. Students should also predict at the end of each chapter what will happen in the next chapter. It is not enough that they predict. Students must have evidence from the text as to why they believe their prediction is correct. Furthermore, they should be continually monitoring that prediction as they continue to read. Adjustments to the prediction should be made and show what good readers do.

# Biography: Making Connections

## Lesson Ideas

Use this [Graphic Organizer](#) to help students make connections.

### Literary Non Fiction & Nonfiction.

After reading aloud a biography and discussing features in the literary non-fiction text, have students choose a nonfiction text on the same person. Through discussion have students explain the differences in the genres. How were the two texts written the same and how were they different. Which text is better to read in which situations?



### Person to Person Connections.

It is important that our students understand the underlying message of this person's life. How does this person's message connect with someone else's message? Students can draw similarities and differences between a few people. Make sure that the students also focus on time periods.



Did the two people live during the same time periods? What was going on during that time? How would their lives have been different if they were alive earlier or later? What if they switched lives? How were their impacts similar or different?

(See [Dual Timeline Technology Idea](#).)

### Text to Self Connections.

How has this person impacted your life? What events have you experienced that mirror what happened in this person's life? Example: if the historical person fought peacefully, how have you fought peacefully for something you believe in?



# Biography: Making Inferences

## INFERENCE

A logical guess made by connecting bits of information.

*From the Texas Education Agency glossary*

**Background Information.** Students must observe and think about facts, details, and information provided in the text. An author will not tell the reader everything verbatim. The reader will need to connect the dots, or infer, what the writer isn't saying. Students must take information from the text (text evidence) and think about what they know about this information (background knowledge). This could be past experiences, knowledge from other texts and media, or general assumptions on the information. Using both text evidence and background knowledge the student will come up with an inference. Students should always evaluate their inferences and adjust as necessary.

## Ideas

**Inference Preview.** Prior to a section students are about to read in the text, pull out a sentence that warrants an inference. Ask a question that will require the students to come up with an inference. Even if students automatically jump to the inference, have them work backwards explaining what text evidence they used and what their background knowledge is on the subject.

### EXAMPLE:

What does this say about Nelson Mandela?

“... he was the only one chosen for school”

*~ Nelson Mandela by Nelson*

By having students make inferences over one or two sentences you are make the text more manageable. It is also setting the students up to understand the next part of the text a little bit better, helps them establish a purpose for reading, and increases engagement in the next reading assignment.

To differentiate, keep the same sentence, but change the level of the question.

EXAMPLE:

How does this community view education?

“... he was the only one chosen for school”

~ *Nelson Mandela by Nelson*

**Draw Conclusions and Make Predictions.** Students should draw conclusions at the end of each chapter. Pull text evidence from throughout the chapter and make inferences about the plot and characters. Students should also predict at the end of each chapter what will happen in the next chapter. It is not enough that they predict. Students must have evidence from the text as to why they believe their prediction is correct. Furthermore, they should be continually monitoring that prediction as they continue to read. Adjustments to the prediction should be made and show what good readers do.

**Organization and Message.** Have students explain how the biography is written. What type of expository pattern was used. While students read, have them make inferences and draw conclusions about why the book was written the way it was. Discuss the tone of the story. How do the illustrations and text create the mood and help the reader to understand the story and message? Most biographies are written because the famous person had a strong message to deliver. While

some might be obvious to the skilled reader, students must make inferences about the message of the story. Make sure the students use text evidence to support their inference about what the message is.

# Technology: Vocabulary

## FROM THE STANDARDS...

**Creativity and innovation.** The student uses creative thinking and innovative processes to construct knowledge, generate new ideas, and create products. (6.1, 7.1, 8.1)

**Research and information fluency.** The student acquires, analyzes, and manages content from digital resources. (6.3, 7.3, 8.3)

(D) process data and communicate results.

**Technology operations and concepts.** The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations. (6.6, 7.6, 8.6)

(D) understand and use software applications, including selecting and using software for a defined task;

(N) integrate two or more technology tools to create a new digital product.

## Ideas:

### APP SMASH

The process of using multiple apps in conjunction with one another to complete a final task or project. For more info, visit our blog post on [app smashing](#).

Greg Kulowiec - <http://kulowiectech.blogspot.com/2013/02/app-smashing-part-i.html>

Choose a vocabulary word. Ensure you have a good understanding of what it means!

Create an image to define your word using one of the following apps:

- **Haiku Deck**
- **Pic Collage**
- **Skitch**
- **Strip Designer** (\$2.99)

Save your image.

Import your image to one of the following apps to create a video with your image as the background and record the word used in a sentence.

- **Tellagami**
- **Touchcast**
- **EduCreations**
- **Explain Everything** (\$2.99)

### App Smash Example



This app smash was created using Haiku Deck and Tellagami.





# Technology: Report Alternatives

## FROM THE STANDARDS

**Creativity and innovation.** The student uses creative thinking and innovative processes to construct knowledge, generate new ideas, and create products. (6.1, 7.1, 8.1)

**Research and information fluency.** The student acquires, analyzes, and manages content from digital resources. (6.3, 7.3, 8.3)

(D) process data and communicate results.

**Technology operations and concepts.** The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations. (6.6, 7.6, 8.6)

(D) understand and use software applications, including selecting and using software for a defined task;

(N) integrate two or more technology tools to create a new digital product.

## Ideas

### APP SMASH

The process of using multiple apps in conjunction with one another to complete a final task or project. For more info, visit our blog post on [app smashing](#).

Greg Kulowiec - <http://kulowiectech.blogspot.com/2013/02/app-smashing-part-i.html>

### Biography App Smash

When we say “biography,” often images of social studies classes come to mind, but there are people to learn about in all of our subjects! Biographies are also not limited to real people – this app smash applies to fictional characters as well.

Whether real or fictional, people’s lives are often hard to capture in 2D. With an app smash, we can bring these people to life by adding a layer of multimedia and interactivity.

- Find images that represent the person, or important moments in the person’s life, and create a **Pic Collage** or another collage tool. Save the image.
- Use the image as the background to create a new **ThingLink**. Add a layer of interactivity by adding links to videos, websites with more information, audio recordings, etc.

Example:

Abraham Lincoln:

<https://www.thinglink.com/scene/520292650339794946>

## Timelines

After students have read and researched the life of their historical figure, have students create a dual timeline depicting the events of the figure's life and more global events occurring at the same time - showing where the two story lines overlap.

Examples:

<http://prezi.com/k2opnj5duupu/forrest-gump-historical-events/>

[http://prezi.com/qge4zcmko67\\_/dual-timeline-assignment/](http://prezi.com/qge4zcmko67_/dual-timeline-assignment/)

Timeline Tools:

- **Prezi:** <http://prezi.com>
- **Tiki-Toki:** <http://www.tiki-toki.com/>
- **ReadWriteThink:**  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline\\_2/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline_2/)
- **Dipity:** <http://dipity.com>
- **Popplet:** <http://popplet.com/>

## Personal Interaction

Utilize the familiarity and fun of the Google Docs commercials to have students create their own video showing interaction between two or more historical figures:

Example: Hall and Oates:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DohHaQgdypI>

(Other examples on tool page)

Tool: <http://docsstorybuilder.appspot.com/>

## Current (Historical) Events

Use one of the following tools to help students understand the historical context for a person or event.

- Create a newspaper headline:  
<http://www.fodey.com/generators/newspaper/snippet.asp>
- Create a magazine: <http://bighugelabs.com/magazine.php>
- Create a museum box:  
<http://museumbox.e2bn.org/index.php>

## More Tools:

- Bio Cube:  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/cube\\_creator/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/cube_creator/)
- Trading Cards: <http://bighugelabs.com/deck.php>
- Tombstone: <http://www.jjchandler.com/tombstone/>

# Technology: Research

## FROM THE STANDARDS

**Research and information fluency.** The student acquires, analyzes, and manages content from digital resources. (6.3, 7.3, 8.3)

- (A) create a research plan to guide inquiry;
- (B) use and evaluate various search strategies, including keyword(s) and Boolean operators;
- (C) select and evaluate various types of digital resources for accuracy and validity.

Research doesn't have to be hard or scary! At its core, research is looking for reliable, relevant information about a specific topic. It stems from curiosity. "I wonder why this person did that." "I wonder what else was happening at that time?" "I wonder why..." Those three words are the prelude to research! It doesn't always have to be a six-week project resulting in a formal report, it might just be looking for the information to answer the question before moving on. However you decide to incorporate research, it is important to practice this skill, and encourage curiosity in your students all year long!

## Ideas

### Mini Research Opportunities

A Google a Day: <http://agoogleaday.com/>

Put your research skills to the test by finding the answer to the question of the day. This tool uses an archived version of Google from the previous day (so you don't accidentally just Google the answer!). It also provides hints if you get stuck. This is a great way to get the research juices flowing and have students start learning how to brainstorm keywords and appropriate searches to find the information they need, rather than just typing the question into Google.

Additionally, you could provide a short question of your own related to your current topic of study as a warm up activity. It would be easy to type questions into Google, but students

would need to show you the search terms they used, as well as the site on which they found the answer.

Examples from *Noah Webster and His Words*:

- When is the best time to plant peas?
- What was the name of the magazine Noah Webster started?
- What is the last word currently in the American Dictionary of the English Language?

## Search Engines

Introduce the idea of a search engine and explain how it works. Students might not know that that's what Google is! Then, demonstrate how keywords can be used in conjunction with search operators to refine queries. Students can practice searching individually or in small groups.

Guiding Questions:

- What is a search engine? What does a search engine search?
- How do we tell a search engine to show results that we want to receive?
- What is search refinement?
- How do we retrieve the most accurate results possible using refinement?

**This lesson** from the Public Learning Media Laboratory is excellent and can be done in a 50 minute class period! Activity 2 is especially great for teaching Boolean operators (OR, NOT).

Boolify: <http://www.boolify.org/>

Note: Site Closing Oct 1. This tool helps students see how those often-confusing Boolean search operators work with a great visual representation. Though this tool is not going to be around long, you could incorporate the idea into hands-on manipulatives (like Activity 2 in the lesson) or using the regular Google search engine.

## Evaluating Sources

There is a great deal of reliable information about historical figures available online. From primary documents to virtual tours, you just have to know where to look. A few great places to start:

- Museum websites - historical homes, national museums
- University libraries, especially in the area where the person grew up or the event took place
- National archives

Help students notice the URL extensions as you visit these sites. Most are .org, .edu, or .gov. Help students recognize what those extensions mean and that information found on

those sites can generally be trusted. They will start looking for those extensions when they are choosing from a list of results after a Google search!

Also, before doing too much research on a site, help students locate the “About Us” section. Even though a site has an approved extension (.org, .edu, .gov), it is still important to find out about the people bringing you the information. Ask students questions like: Who is responsible for this information? Could there be any bias to this information? Would these people be likely to leave anything out? Why or why not?

## More Tools

### Search Engines

- \*\*Sweet Search: <http://www.sweetsearch.com/>
  - Sweet Search Biographies: <http://www.sweetsearch.com/biographies>
  - Sweet Search Social Studies: <http://www.sweetsearch.com/socialstudies>
- BIO Classroom: <http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom>
- Internet Public Library: <http://www.ipl.org/>
- Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/index.html>
- Open Library: <https://openlibrary.org/>

- American Memory Project: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>
- Federal Resources for Educational Excellence: <http://free.ed.gov/index.cfm>
- World Digital Library: <http://www.wdl.org/en/>
- Duck Duck Go: <http://duckduckgo.com/>
- Quintara Kids: <http://quinturakids.com/>
- History Today Dictionary: <http://www.historytoday.com/dictionary>

### Establishing Context

- Newseum - <http://www1.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/>
- Newspaper Map - <http://newspapermap.com/>