

***Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell (1949)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 12th grade English curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Orwell's dystopian masterpiece is at its core an exploration of how philosophic ideology becomes tyranny in its transformation to political ideology. The novel follows Winston Smith in his attempt to overthrow the collectivist government that rules the world. At first Winston's transgressions are tied to his desire for a private intellectual life, but he ultimately confronts the despotism of his world head-on with his attempts to join the Brotherhood, an anti-government resistance group.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1984 provides a unique parallel and counterpoint to the previous study of literature and philosophy in the course. Both a direct critique of applications of Marxism and a study of the limitations of collectivism in general, the novel is a continuation of our conversation about social contract theory and individual rights. Orwell's use of literary technique is masterful and provides an unparalleled opportunity for students to examine the interaction of fiction and philosophy.

This novel is a distillation of philosophical examination. Orwell demands the reader draw upon knowledge of military theory and historical precedent while accessing philosophical understanding of deontology, teleology, utilitarianism, and political ideology. Orwell's dystopian world is a direct relative of Rand's as both were inspired by the same Russian novel, and the comparisons of the novels provides students critical access to the standards for reading literature.

As with the study of Rand, this novel allows students to formulate their own conceptions and understandings of the social contract and political ideology prior to becoming active members of the American political system. Study of this novel provides context for becoming citizens of the nation, the world, and the human race as it asks each reader to delineate and define what rights should be granted to each citizen.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Nineteen Eighty Four*: war violence, torture, and sexual relationships. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

The violence and sexuality contained in the novel are directly connected to the totalitarian control exerted by the INGSOC regime. Personal connections between parent and child, husband and wife, and citizen and government are all tightly controlled to ensure that no alliance or affection can exist.

Orwell once declared that, “The best books... are those that tell you what you know already.” No other novel provides students the opportunity to draw together their understanding of philosophical concepts and literary traits covered in this course. While Winston’s journey demands maturity from the reader, the progression of study prior to this novel is designed to build both the literary competence and mature sensibility needed to grapple with the difficult world Orwell presents.

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

***Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley (1932)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Brave New World* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 12th grade English curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Huxley's novel follows Bernard Marx as he struggles against the dystopian society for which he was improperly conditioned. Reproduction has been carefully managed in this futuristic society to ensure that each member of society is perfectly prepared to serve society. Genetically altered and carefully hatched, all of Bernard's peers and fellow citizens are happy. But Bernard is discontented, and seeks to exceed the carefully defined social and intellectual confinement demanded of him. His search leads him to the edges of society, where he interacts with the last natural humans in the world.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The intersection of government, philosophy, and science lies at the core of this novel. Huxley imagined the extension of Transhumanist philosophy and the Eugenics movement coupled with scientific techniques we now associate with genetic engineering. Students are asked to imagine and evaluate a world where each citizen is genetically designed and altered in utero to fit a prescribed niche in society. Students naturally respond to these questions and concerns and these issues dovetail with previous discussion of utopian designs and philosophical constructs.

Huxley's novel is consistently ranked as one of the most influential novels of the modern period. Sci-fi aspects of the novel make this an important addition to the course curriculum, which has previously focused on more realistic settings and plots. The dangers of technology, first studied with Orwell's look at totalitarian oligarchy, feature heavily in the novel allowing students the opportunity to critically compare literary approaches on this theme.

In preceding units of study students have encountered various depictions of social contract theory and philosophical tenants in fiction. Huxley's novel provides both a continuation of that study as well as an expansion because students must grapple with Rawl's Veil of Ignorance in light of the social conditioning and stratification they see in the novel.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Brave New World*: sexual promiscuity, birth control, acceptable use of pornography, and euthanasia. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

Sexuality in the novel is channeled carefully to maintain social stability. Personal relationships are governed by social expectations that may challenge some students. This aspect of the novel is essential to understanding the utopian constructs of the society. By raising the fundamental importance of personal relationships and

privacy, the book helps students to explore their own emerging sense of virtue and integrity as it relates to this topic.

Students must be forewarned about the potentially upsetting nature of sexuality imagined in the novel. The conversation about sexuality without consequence that naturally arises from this novel is as essential now as it was at publication. Huxley warned that, “All that happens means something; nothing you do is ever insignificant.” Students preparing to exit high school and embark on young adulthood must grapple with the significance of personal relationships and come to their own conclusions about society without morality.

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
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9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Oedipus Rex by Sophocles

Rationale by Lauren A. Jacobs

Grade Level and Audience

9th grade English (Advanced Placement); 10th grade English (Advanced Placement and Standard Level); Greek, World, or Ancient Literature; Language Arts and Humanities courses

I. PLOT SUMMARY

In this play by Sophocles, hailed by Aristotle as "the most brilliant example of theatrical plot," by Francis Fergusson as "a great Athenian mystery play," and by Jean Cocteau as "a compelling vision of man's place in a strange and haunted universe," Oedipus' determination to be "the investigator, prosecutor and judge of a murderer" leads to the condemnation of his own character and the exile of his own body from the land of Thebes. (Knox in Fagles 1982, p.131–134, 141)

Oedipus Rex is a story about understanding fate and also about taking responsibility for our actions. The most influential events in this Greek drama have taken place in the past, and the most shocking ones take place offstage. Even so, the audience watches the title character's demise as he chooses to pursue the truth about his past, and that truth transforms his understanding of his life irreparably.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The teachability of this play is aided by its form, its thematic content, and its context as part of a Theban trilogy.

Oedipus Rex is an excellent example of classical Greek text. It follows Aristotle's rules for tragedy, most importantly the unity of time, place, and action. This draws the readers in and enables them to follow the progression of events easily and with full understanding. The play also provides a good model for students by developing plots, themes, and characters fully and sequentially. It is truly a mystery play, with a revealing climax, filled with dramatic irony. The action is exciting, and the characters consistently interact in a deep manner while using quick wit and clever turns of phrase.

This drama speaks to the struggle of a man as he explores his failings and strengths and proceeds on his journey toward accepting the worst in himself. Oedipus is strong-willed, dedicated to his position as ruler, and interested in seeking the truth. He is also obstinate, prideful, quick to make rash judgment, and slow to figure out the implications of the very truth he seeks. Thus, the play deals with important issues of identity—Who is Oedipus? Polybus' son? Laius' son? The savior of Thebes? The killer of a king? The play tackles these complicated issues effectively and with clever wit.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Some have said that *Oedipus Rex* contains excessive violence, incest, and supernatural events. The following is an explanation of "objectionable" material. (All quotes are from the Fagles translation.)

Oedipus Rex contains numerous descriptions of violent actions. This includes events that happened before the opening of the play, such as the stake stuck through Oedipus' feet when he was a baby, and the murder of King Laius at the crossroads, "...where the three roads join...[the road] drank my father's blood, my own blood spilled by my own hands..." (p.244, ln. 133–135)

It also includes the events that take place offstage during the play's climax, such as the hanging of Jocasta, and the blinding of Oedipus, as he "...rips off her brooches... and...digs them down the sockets of his eyes...raking them down his eyes. And at each stroke blood spurts from the roots, splashing his beard...black hail of blood pulsing, gushing down." (p.237, ln. 1402–1414)

However, all of this violence appears in the play by report only. None of the violent actions happen onstage. Thus, while the violent actions are discussed, they are at no point acted out or, for that matter, condoned. In this way, the violence itself is deemphasized, and the ramifications of Oedipus' actions become the focus of the drama.

It is worth noting that Oedipus does return to the stage at the end of the play with his eyes bloodied. This section is often performed with a mask, which makes the violence less upsetting to witness.

This play also contains language about the action of incest. Oedipus has unwittingly married and coupled with his mother, having four children by her, two daughters and two sons, "...monsters—husband by her husband, children by her child" (p. 236, ln.1380–1381) Others say of him, "Where can he find the mother earth that cropped two crops at once, himself and all his children?" (p.236, ln.1388–1389) Oedipus himself says he was "spawning lives in the loins that spawned my wretched life" (p.242, ln.1495) and he even says, "Marriage, you gave me birth, and once you brought me into the world you brought my sperm rising back, springing to light fathers, brothers, sons..." (p.244, ln.138–140)

Once again, although the language is indeed somewhat disturbing, there is no actual sexual action onstage; additionally, the act of incest is most definitely condemned as a sin and an abomination, so there is little likelihood of a student feeling as though the behavior is at all acceptable.

Oedipus Rex also contains references to the supernatural that are clearly based on non- Judeo-Christian theology. One clear example is that of the five oracles: The one that Jocasta consulted when Oedipus was born; the one that Oedipus consulted who told him that he would kill his father and marry his mother; the one that Laius was going to consult when he was killed at the crossroads; the one that Creon consulted to see how to solve the problems of Thebes; and the one that Oedipus consulted to find out who committed the murder of Laius. The tradition of the oracle was deeply entrenched in Greek culture; the fact that the main characters in the play speak to oracles is simply in keeping with the traditions of the time. While the oracles are capable of predicting events, nowhere in the play does Sophocles suggest that the oracles are a replacement for the power of the gods themselves.

Other supernatural events in this work include the riddle of the Sphinx, portentous weather, and plagues with man's behavior as their cause. Similarly to the plays of Shakespeare, these happenings are symbolic of the issues that the author's country was facing during the time in which the play was written. In this case, the play explores the repercussions of an unsolved murder and other negative behaviors gone unpunished; through supernatural events, the gods were letting the citizens of Thebes know that their behavior was unacceptable.

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

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Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
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6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
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9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Othello by William Shakespeare

This reading is selected from a list of works that have previously been on the AP English exams. The readings are selected by their cultural, historical and/or social context, their genre (or uniqueness of writing style), student engagement, teacher expertise, and their appearance on previous AP exams (College Board).

Using the above stated criteria, the English Department has carefully evaluated *Othello* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Literature and Composition curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

William Shakespeare's tragedy, *Othello*, is a play about love, hate, jealousy, envy, and lust. In the opening scene, Iago announces his intention to avenge the wrong done him by Othello and Cassio. He devises elaborate schemes to turn Othello against Cassio by implicating Cassio in tryst with Desdemona, Othello's bride. The play concludes with the revelations of Iago's deceptions, but not in time to stop the murder of Desdemona and the subsequent suicide of Othello. (Williams, Janice)

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This classic Shakespearean play will serve as a focal point for the study of drama and, in particular, tragedy. The play will be read aloud in class, with frequent pauses to analyze both plot and the literary devices employed by Shakespeare to communicate his complex message. In addition, audio of key scenes will be shared (from the Sourcebook Shakespeare series) to enhance the student experience. Through a focused written response, the student will critically analyze Shakespeare's complex plot, particularly his depiction of the Modern Man through the characterization of Iago and his intricate use of language, comparing the written text to the recorded performance.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Othello*: suicide racism, murder, and sexual desires

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the novel. The English department feels that the literary merit of this novel more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Omkara

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Director: Vishal Bhardwaj

Adapted from: Othello

Screenplay: Vishal Bhardwaj, Abhishek Chaubey, Robin Bhatt

In this adaptation of Shakespeare's "Othello" set in India, half-caste bandit Omkara Shukla (Ajay Devgan) abducts his lady love, Dolly Mishra (Kareena Kapoor), from her family. Thanks to his cleverness, he gets away with the kidnapping. A conspiracy, however, forms against him when he denies his right-hand man, Langda Tyagi (Saif Ali Khan), a promotion. Ultimately, this plot threatens not only his relationship with Dolly, but their lives and those of their associates as well (IMDB)

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Many popular Hindi films include elements of Elizabethan drama, but only a handful use them as a base to build more profound perspectives of Shakespearean texts. Some incorporate the story, themes, and even specific sequences of Shakespeare's plays.

[In the movie Omkara], Bhaisahib, a political chief, often caught up in strife relies on his faithful lieutenant, Omkara, to handle his rivals. Omkara (Ajay Devgan) has a brooding presence that one does not often expect of an Othello. Race and sexuality play a vital role in the Shakespearean text. Instead of a racial other (the Moor of Venice), Bharadwaj makes Omkara a half-caste. By doing so, he brings in the Indian preoccupation with caste.

Omkara relocates Othello to India and therefore can be used as an example of the ease of cultural borrowings in the twenty first century. With its cast of major Bollywood stars Omkara indicates that Shakespeare no longer

functions as a colonial text for transculturation or just as a cultural icon but as a universal resource in global entertainment.

Source: <http://learningandcreativity.com/silhouette/the-moor-recontextualized-othello-to-omkara/>

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Omkara*: suicide, prejudice, murder, and sexual desires

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the novel. The English department feels that the cultural merit of this movie more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Informational Texts

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
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7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

***Our Town* by Thornton Wilder**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Our Town* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 12th grade English curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

First produced and published in 1938, this Pulitzer Prize–winning drama of life in the small village of Grover’s Corners has become an American classic and is Thornton Wilder’s most renowned and most frequently performed play.

“No curtain. No scenery.” A minimalist theatrical style sets apart the 1938 recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama: Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*. Wilder’s greatest and best-known work as a playwright, *Our Town* opens with the Stage Manager’s introduction to Grover’s Corners, a fictional town based on Peterborough, New Hampshire where Wilder often spent his summers. The sparse and symbolic qualities of the set suggest Wilder’s intention to make Grover’s Corners represent all towns. The Stage Manager, played by Wilder himself for two weeks in the 1938 Broadway production, breaks the fourth wall by directly addressing the audience. The Stage Manager also assumes control over the onstage action through such unconventional, metatheatrical devices as prompting actors and cueing scene changes. Once the actors have been set in motion by the Stage Manager in Act I, entitled, “Daily Life,” the allegorical world of Grover’s Corners unfolds. The audience is introduced to the Gibbs and Webb families who symbolize “ordinary people who make the human race seem worth preserving and represent the universality of human existence.” Wilder explores the families’ inter-relationships, specifically between George Gibbs and Emily Webb. The audience watches George and Emily talk through their second story bedroom windows, represented by ladders: their simple actions complemented by the simple set. Act II, “Love and Marriage,” takes place three years later on George and Emily’s wedding day. After listening to Dr. and Mrs. Gibbs talk about their own wedding day, the Stage Manager transports the audience back to the days of George and Emily’s high school courtship. In this scene, Emily expresses her disdain for George’s conceited behavior. To make amends, George buys Emily an ice cream soda presented in an imaginary glass by Mr. Morgan, played by the Stage Manager. As this glimpse into George and Emily’s past comes to an end, George decides not to go to agriculture school so he can remain in Grover’s Corners, close to Emily. Then, the audience again finds itself at George and Emily’s wedding. The Stage Manager, now playing a minister, focuses the audience’s attention on the tearful and anxious families before George and Emily blissfully run up the aisle, ending Act II. In Act III, Wilder focuses on the end of the life cycle. Nine more years have gone by and Emily has died in childbirth. As the funeral procession crosses the stage, Emily, dressed in white, emerges from behind the mourners’ umbrellas and sits next to the deceased Mrs. Gibbs in the graveyard. Emily begins to question what it means to live and die, and, although warned against it, chooses to relive her twelfth birthday. Deeply saddened by everything she failed to notice while alive, Emily asks the Stage Manager to take her back to her grave but hesitates a moment to say good-bye to the world. As Emily accepts her death, George falls at her feet in grief. While watching George, Emily asks Mrs. Gibbs, “They don’t understand, do they?” to which Mrs. Gibbs

responds, “No, dear. They don’t understand.”³ As Emily settles in with the dead of Grover’s Corners, the Stage Manager bids the audience a good night.

(Plot Summary by Ashley Gallagher of The Thornton Wilder Society)

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Thornton Wilder’s 1938 Pulitzer Prize-winning play made its debut at Princeton, New Jersey’s McCarter Theater before ultimately moving to the Henry Miller Theatre in New York City. In the New York Times review, Brooks Atkinson called *Our Town* “one of the finest achievements of the current stage...a hauntingly beautiful play.” Despite the myriad of interpretations of *Our Town*, most critics agree that the play is a microcosm of the life cycle. As Haberman writes, “[Wilder] is reminding the audience of how precious daily life is, because it determines our true reality...our enduring identity is not derived from the things and the events because they are familiar and repeated, but from our ever-new, ever-fresh relation to them.” Wilder also demonstrates that these aspects of daily life and their constant renewal are universal to all generations and cultures. While Act I covers “Daily Life,” Act II explores “Love and Marriage.” Once the audience is transported back to George and Emily’s wedding day, they hear various characters’ opinions about marriage, which compels them to make their own judgment and promotes the idea that while marriage may be another part of daily life, “each marriage is different from all the others, and no definition could satisfy everybody.” *Our Town*’s emphasis on the universality of daily life, conscious audience engagement, and minimalist theatrical style are a few of the signature techniques which have qualified Wilder’s work both at home and abroad as the “most representative and significant product of the modern American theater.” *Our Town* has been praised by scholars, such as Rex Burbank, for its simplicity and tragic vision(The Thornton Wilder Society).

Students reading the play will be able to analyze their own “daily life” and the universality of their existence. In comparison with the Greek tragedy *Oedipus* students will continue to analyze the struggle of a man as he explores his failings and strengths, this time in a more relatable setting. The form of the play allows for ease of teachability in the areas of plot, character development, story arch and rhetoric.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Our Town*: None. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston

Rationale by Elizabeth Rewey

Bibliographic Information: Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers. 1937.

Intended Audience

Students in eleventh or twelfth grade would be able to best comprehend, discuss, and enjoy Zora Neale Hurston's most popular novel. Although the plot is simple, *Their Eyes* is complex in its carefully-woven plot presentation. Because stories within stories weave together to create a multi-layered narrative, *Their Eyes* would be appropriate for students who have read several novels. Also important would be experience with a variety of narrative styles, so that students could appreciate Hurston's masterful use of dialects in *Their Eyes*.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

As a sixteen-year-old girl living with her elderly grandmother, Janie finds herself yearning for escape, love, adventure, or at least a good kiss. The kiss behind her, Janie's other desires are fulfilled only after years of

search and struggle. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* follows Janie through these years as she experiences life as a black woman in the early 20th-century South.

With the death of her grandmother, Janie enters into the world of male-domination, at least on economic and social levels. Her first marriage to an abusive, arrogant man dissolves Janie's adolescent dreams and "she [becomes] a woman" (*Their Eyes* 24). Such trial by fire and survival/growth into womanhood repeats throughout the novel, which leaves Janie a strong-voiced and independent black woman. A master of her art, Zora Neale Hurston writes with dialect and register variations to imbue her characters' voices with life.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Potential contexts for teaching *Their Eyes Were Watching God* are American literature classes, multicultural units, thematic units, such as "voice" or "coming of age," Black History Month units, or women's literature units. As a component of such units, *Their Eyes* contributes a multitude of historical, cultural, and literary learning topics. Therefore, teachers could use this novel in partial completion of Content Standard for Reading and Writing 6, which states that "students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience." Benchmarks that could be specifically addressed include: students "read literature to understand places, people, events, and vocabulary, both familiar and unfamiliar; read literature that reflects the uniqueness and integrity of the American experience; read classic and contemporary literature, representing various cultural and ethnic traditions from throughout the world; and read classic and contemporary literature of the United States about the experiences and traditions of diverse ethnic groups." This rationale addresses the potential for students to gain an appreciation of a variety of American voices.

Teachers could assess students' understanding and appreciation of the variety of voices in *Their Eyes* by assigning and evaluating a final demonstration task, such as a paper that requires students to examine how Hurston creates voices for her characters, or a biopoem assessment that allows students to demonstrate their interpretations of character voices in a poetic form.

While readers of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* will undoubtedly be impressed by Hurston's vibrant characters and dramatic plot developments, the most powerful impact is made by echoing voices of the characters. Hurston's use of black English vernacular, as it is called by critic Henry Louis Gates, Jr., combines with her ability to convey that vernacular through the conduit of the written word to create voices that ring in the reader's head long after the last page is turned. The resulting authenticity of her characters creates a lasting impact on readers. With this book as a tool, teachers should be able to foster an understanding of and respect for a variety of voices, dialects, and experiences; they should be able to enhance their students' appreciation of diverse voices.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

As some students embark on their reading of *Their Eyes*, they may experience difficulty understanding the written form of black English vernacular. Some students may not be familiar with reading anything other than standard English, they may not be able to "hear" the words of Hurston's very oral narrative, or they may not even be able to understand the voice shifts. To address these issues, teachers could utilize group reading activities in which students read and actually hear the text. Classes could also utilize dramatic activities to bring the characters and their voices to life.

A second set of issues could arise from students' lack of exposure to literature from cultures other than their own. If students are unfamiliar with black English vernacular, if they approach the book with biases, or even prejudices about black people, then there will be issues that need to be addressed as the class reads *Their Eyes*. However, such a case would be all the more reason to read the book. Students need to learn in an open-

mindful, respectful atmosphere; therefore problematic attitudes and/or statements must be addressed by the teacher. *Their Eyes* could provide teachers with the chance to foster respect for people from backgrounds different from their students'. Discussions about the historical and cultural contexts of the novel, as well as those of Hurston, would thus be highly fruitful. Perhaps empathy exercises, thought-provoking journal prompts, and guest speakers could help open students' minds to reading the novel from a neutral, even empathetic standpoint.

A final issue in teaching *Their Eyes* is the potential for parental objection to teaching a non-standard piece of English writing. Students need to learn about a wide variety of voices, experiences, and people, especially those who have been kept silent by omission from traditional literary canons. Unfortunately, many students have not had the opportunity to read literature written by black women, or literature written in black English vernacular. As Henry Louis Gates, Jr. explains in *The Signifying Monkey*: "I believe that black writers, both explicitly and implicitly, turn to the vernacular . . . to inform their creation of fiction" (xix).

Thus, in order to understand and appreciate literature from many black American writers, students will need to read non-standard English. Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* answers such needs through her use of many kinds of English. In Gates' opinion, "*Their Eyes* resolves [the] implicit tension between standard English and black dialect" with Hurston's unique free indirect discourse (192). Furthermore, "the diction of both the characters' discourse and the free indirect discourse are replete with the three types of adornment that Hurston argued were fundamental to black oral narration" (199).

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

***My Antonia* by Willa Cather**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *My Antonia* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 12th grade English curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

My Antonia evokes the Nebraska prairie life of Willa Cather's childhood, and commemorates the spirit and courage of immigrant pioneers in America. One of Cather's earliest novels, written in 1918, it is the story of Antonia Shimerda, who arrives on the Nebraska frontier as part of a family of Bohemian emigrants. Her story is told through the eyes of Jim Burden, a neighbor who will befriend Antonia, teach her English, and follow the remarkable story of her life.

Working in the fields of waving grass and tall corn that dot the Great Plains, Antonia forges the durable spirit that will carry her through the challenges she faces when she moves to the city. But only when she returns to the prairie does she recover her strength and regain a sense of purpose in life. In the quiet, probing depth of Willa Cather's art, Antonia's story becomes a mobbing elegy to those whose persistence and strength helped build the American frontier (Dover).

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This great American novel tells the story of several immigrant families who move to rural Nebraska. Antonia is the eldest daughter of the Shimerdas and is a bold and free-hearted young woman who becomes the center of narrator Jim Burden's attention. The story has many elements but clearly documents the struggles of the hard-working immigrants that homesteaded the prairies, and does a particularly fine job covering the hardships that women faced in that difficult environment. *My Antonia* also provides Willa Cather with a platform to make some comments on women's rights while weaving a story where romantic interests are ultimately bandied about by the uncontrolled changes that occur in people's lives (americanliterature.com).

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Tie That Binds*: None. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Tie That Binds* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 12th grade English curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

In his critically acclaimed first novel, Kent Haruf delivers the sweeping tale of a woman of the American High Plains, as told by her neighbor, Sanders Roscoe. As Roscoe shares what he knows, Edith's tragedies unfold: a childhood of pre-dawn chores, a mother's death, a violence that leaves a father dependent on his children, forever enraged. Here is the story of a woman who sacrifices her happiness in the name of family--and then, in one gesture, reclaims her freedom. Breathtaking, determinedly truthful, *The Tie That Binds* is a powerfully eloquent tribute to the arduous demands of rural America, and of the tenacity of the human spirit.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Willa Cather once said, "The history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman," and nowhere is this truer than in Haruf's work. Holt, Colorado, is the perfect stage for Haruf to highlight themes of courage, passion, generosity and duty. The fact that they are Western characters speaking simple, unadorned, rusticated language in a lonesome Western setting does not in any way confine them to regional themes. The hard moral and ethical choices they face are undeniably universal and timeless. Set apart out in the middle of the prairies of Colorado, they are outlined and magnified by the enormous, windswept emptiness around them, so that who they are, what they believe in and how they survive becomes suddenly not just another Western story that can delight the reader and dumbfound the starry-eyed neophyte writer who lives for invention, but a story of mythic proportion, and not just a story about a small town in the American West, but a story of universal concern. Our story.

Haruf shows us heroism in its most amplified and yet paradoxical form, that is, as acts of goodness that are possible for any of us to choose (or not choose) at any time, acts of kindness and bravery that are so commonplace they are usually overlooked and forgotten.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Tie That Binds*: None. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Reading Standards for Literature

The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1892)

This reading was selected from a list of works that have previously been on the AP English exams. The readings are selected by their cultural, historical and/or social context, their genre (or uniqueness of writing style), student engagement, teacher expertise, and their appearance on previous AP exams (College Board).

Using the above stated criteria, the English Department has carefully evaluated *The Yellow Wallpaper* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Literature and Composition curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

The Yellow Wallpaper is written as the secret journal of a woman who suffers from what we now know as post-partum depression. Though she longs to write, her husband and doctor forbid it, prescribing instead complete passivity and the rest cure. In the involuntary confinement of her bedroom, the unnamed narrator creates a reality of her own within the hypnotic pattern of the faded yellow wallpaper, a pattern that symbolizes her imprisonment.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Literature and Composition

Rationales - Tucker

The student will analyze the role of women in the 19th century and use this work as a point of reference in the study of many other works of literature, especially those involving the role of women. In addition, the student will identify character, setting, plot, theme, and especially point of view, demonstrating deeper understanding through both personal and focused written responses.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *The Yellow Wallpaper*: none

The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.
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The Reduced Shakespeare Company: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) directed by Paul Kafno (2003)

This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the *AP English Course Description*. As such, the readings are primarily selected from a list of works that have previously been on the AP English exams. The readings are selected by their cultural, historical and/or social context, their genre (or uniqueness of writing style), student engagement, teacher expertise, and their appearance on previous AP exams (College Board).

Using the above stated criteria, the English Department has carefully evaluated *The Reduced Shakespeare Company: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Language and Composition curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Life is short. The complete works of Shakespeare are long. To the rescue: *The Reduced Shakespeare Company: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, the three-man comedy troupe known for fast, funny, physical condensations of real serious stuff. They wrap up the Bard's outsize oeuvre in 90 roller-coaster, rib-tickling minutes. (Back cover synopsis)

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This rendition of the Complete Works of Shakespeare is highly entertaining and a student favorite and serves as both a review and a reward for the completion of AP exams.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *The Reduced Shakespeare Company: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*: mild sexual innuendo

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the documentary. The English department feels that the literary merit of this video more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

Reading Standards for Informational Texts

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

No Impact Man directed by Laura Gabbert and Justin Schein (2009)

This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the *AP English Course Description*. As such, the readings are primarily selected from a list of works that have previously been on the AP English exams. The readings are selected by their cultural, historical and/or social context, their genre (or uniqueness of writing style), student engagement, teacher expertise, and their appearance on previous AP exams (College Board).

Using the above stated criteria, the English Department has carefully evaluated *No Impact Man* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Language and Composition curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

No Impact Man is an unrated documentary that traces one family's endeavor to leave no carbon footprint while living in New York City. In the course of the year, they give up electricity, television, cars, toilet paper,

elevators and newspapers, to name a few. They also agree to make no purchases, except for food and recycled items (no shopping sprees).

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

No Impact Man accompanies a thematic unit centered on arguments about the environment over three primary time periods: 1) early warnings (represented by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*), 2) the voices get louder, a focus on Glen Canyon Dam (represented by John McPhee's *Encounters with the Archdruid* and Edward Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang*), and 3) current debates, with a focus on arguments around food (represented by Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle and No Impact Man*). As part of this study, the student will analyze how this family makes the argument for their very clear agenda.

In addition, students will be introduced to a number of nature writers. Over the course of this extensive unit, the student will analyze the arguments of others, as well as create his/her own, both in writing and through oral presentations.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *No Impact Man*: profanity

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the documentary. The English department feels that the literary merit of this video more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

IV. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Informational Texts

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Food Fight: A Story of Culinary Revolt directed by Chris Taylor (2008)

This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the *AP English Course Description*. As such, the readings are primarily selected from a list of works that have previously been on the AP English exams. The readings are selected by their cultural, historical and/or social context, their genre (or uniqueness of writing style), student engagement, teacher expertise, and their appearance on previous AP exams (College Board).

Using the above stated criteria, the English Department has carefully evaluated *Food Fight* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Language and Composition curriculum.

II. PLOT SUMMARY

This documentary, starring Alice Waters and Michael Pollan, provides a fascinating look at how American agricultural policy and food culture developed in the 20th century, and how the California food movement rebelled against big agribusiness to launch the local organic food movement.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Food Fight accompanies a thematic unit centered on arguments about the environment over three primary time periods: 1) early warnings (represented by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*), 2) the voices get louder, a focus on Glen Canyon Dam (represented by John McPhee's *Encounters with the Archdruid* and Edward Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang*), and 3) current debates, with a focus on arguments around food (represented by Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, *No Impact Man* and *Food Fight*). As part of this study, the student will analyze how this documentary makes the argument for its very clear agenda.

In addition, students will be introduced to a number of nature writers. Over the course of this extensive unit, the student will analyze the arguments of others, as well as create his/her own, both in writing and through oral presentations.

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Food Fight*: none

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the documentary. The English department feels that the literary merit of this video more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

A Place at the Table directed by Kristi Jacobson and Lori Silverbush (2013)

This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the *AP English Course Description*. As such, the readings are primarily selected from a list of works that have previously been on the AP English exams. The readings are selected by their cultural, historical and/or social context, their genre (or uniqueness of writing style), student engagement, teacher expertise, and their appearance on previous AP exams (College Board).

Using the above stated criteria, the English Department has carefully evaluated *A Place at the Table* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Language and Composition curriculum.

III. PLOT SUMMARY

This documentary, starring Jeff Bridges, provides a fascinating look at how American food policy and practice fails some individuals, leaving them struggling to find healthy and sufficient food. According to the website:

“50 Million Americans—1 in 4 children—don’t know where their next meal is coming from. *A Place at the Table* tells the powerful stories of three such Americans, who maintain their dignity even as they struggle just to eat. In a riveting journey that will change forever how you think about the hungry, *A Place at the Table* shows how the issue could be solved forever, once the American public decides—as they have in the past—that ending hunger is in the best interests of us all.” (Magnolia Films)

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A Place at the Table accompanies a thematic unit on poverty and homelessness, during which students are introduced to a number of fictional and informational sources. This documentary is intended to round out the reading, humanize it by providing individual faces to different facets of the argument. As a final assessment, the student will create a synthesis essay on poverty.

III. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *A Place at the Table*: none

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the documentary. The English department feels that the literary merit of this video more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

