

***Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (1884)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 9th grade curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Mark Twain introduces the reader to two young runaways, Huck Finn and Jim, who encounter many exciting adventures as they travel down the Mississippi river. Throughout their travels, the boys will confront issues of racism and treatment of slaves, deception, and violence. Twain's complex text challenges the student to critically analyze the historical and sociological context of the novel, researching the accuracy; culminating in a piece of expository writing. The student will identify literary techniques used and develop a written analysis demonstrating his/her understanding. The student will also critically analyze the use of satire, particularly his use of irony.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

For its humanism--the idea that every person is worthy of respect and compassion, for its suggestion of regional differences and the need for understanding others unlike ourselves, for its satirical attack against complacency regarding the evils in our world, for its use of original literary techniques, and for its profound insight into human nature and human foibles, *Huckleberry Finn* is one of the most teachable books. It is especially suited for the study of American literature in high school. This is the time when young adults are making decisions about their lives--moral, social, emotional, academic decisions. They are making choices of jobs and friends, choices that will affect directly their behaviors away from adult supervision, away from the confines of school and home. Since Huck has to undergo the very same initiations, the book serves as a model for young people everywhere who must be initiated into the world in which they are expected to function as active, contributing adults. The choices they make, like Huck's, are ones which will determine their characters and especially their moral lives.

Above all, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a moral book. Twain brings to the fore in Huck's simplistic dialect the universal questions of quests of youth: the search for meaning, the search for the self that can stand alone under pressure, the search for significant others who offer worthy models of behavior and thought. *Huck Finn* is a moral, ethical book dealing with racial bigotry and human decadence, things our world offers its youth too much of today. That Huck can decide for himself to save Jim from the slave catchers is the turning point in his moral development. Here, he shows independent moral courage. Going against all the precepts of his small, religious but prejudiced community, Huck's innocence and candid observations show us the cruelty and sham in his society, and by example, in ours. Students today can learn from his experiences.

Not only will students evaluate the moral grounding in their own lives through this novel. They will also practice in crafting an argument about Twain's moral and satirical intentions with this novel and how well they play out in the text. They will need to confront the pressures of the controversy surrounding the text, and reach a sound and justified reasoning about their own opinion of the text's relevance and appropriateness. In a way, they will practice in critical thought in the face of societal pressures, much like our protagonist in the novel.

III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

Grades 9-10

Curriculum Rationale: 9th Grade Honors

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.
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 how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
Craft and Structure	Grades 9-10
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 cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
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 a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 9-10
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*	7. Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus)
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.	8. (Not applicable to literature)
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 9-10
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

IV. SENSITIVE SUBJECTS IN THE TEXT AND HOW POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS WILL BE HANDLED

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: profanity and vulgar language, violence, and child abuse. In the classroom, sensitive topics are dealt with in a mature fashion toward an understanding of why this material is included in the novel. In particular, the word *nigger* is not allowed to be spoken in class in an effort to be sensitive to potentially painful baggage this word may carry for students. 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 their 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 their concerns.

***Encounters with the Archdruid* by John McPhee (1971)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Flight Behavior* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 9th grade Honors curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Encounters with the Archdruid is a very interesting and important book for anyone passionate about environmental and land-use issues. Originally articles in the *New Yorker Magazine*, the novel records the travels and arguments of Dave Brower, renowned fighter for the protection of the ecology, with three opponents: a real estate developer, a copper miner and a dam builder. By fleshing out each person so that we sympathetically see their humanity and point of view, Mr. McPhee deftly keeps the book from becoming a good versus evil while maintaining a "this versus that" examination of the issues. Students will critically analyze this text, identifying themes of tolerance and empathy.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In 2001, the University of Texas picked *Encounters with the Archdruid* as the one book that all freshmen had to read. Patty Limerick, who helped found the Center for the American West, noted that it served as a "sounding book" for creating the center, which examines dilemmas and issues faced in the Western states. For us, it serves as an exemplary example of combining the artistic storytelling flair of the narrative genre with the objective and fair portrayal of subject through journalistic non-fiction. McPhee shows us how an author can still be the objective observer while showing remarkable men who hold great differences of opinion with integrity on all sides. It helps us to understand issues of the environmental crisis, but perhaps more importantly, it shows us how to view the issues of a contentious topic through a lens of unbiased sincerity. Through McPhee's patient observation, we see that we can't reduce the world to simple black and white conclusions. Every side has a story, and each story deserves an ear. Through this discovery, we return to meaningful reminders about the importance of reflection, tolerance, and empathy.

III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 9-10
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.
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 how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
Craft and Structure	Grades 9-10
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 cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 9-10

Curriculum Rationale: 9th Grade Honors

<p>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.</p>	<p>8. (Not applicable to literature)</p>
<p>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</p>	<p>Grades 9-10</p>
<p>10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.</p>	<p>10. By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p>

IV. SENSITIVE SUBJECTS IN THE TEXT AND HOW POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS WILL BE HANDLED

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Encounters with the Archdruid*: brief 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 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.

***Flight Behavior* by Barbara Kingsolver (2012)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Flight Behavior* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 9th grade Honors curriculum.

II. PLOT SUMMARY

Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* is set in rural Appalachia. In fictional Feathertown, Tennessee, Dellarobia Turnbow – on the run from her stifling life – charges up the mountain above her husband's family farm and stumbles onto a "valley of fire" filled with millions of monarch butterflies. She can only understand it as a cautionary miracle, but it sparks a raft of other explanations from scientists, religious leaders, and the media. The bewildering emergency draws rural farmers into unexpected acquaintance with urbane journalists, opportunists, sightseers, and a striking biologist with his own stake in the outcome. As the community lines up to judge the woman and her miracle, Dellarobia confronts her family, her church, her town, and a larger world, in a flight toward truth that could undo all she has ever believed. Students will critically analyze this complex text, identifying themes of tension in the areas of religion and science, poverty and wealth, education and instinct or faith, intolerance and acceptance.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The most important reason to teach *Flight Behavior* is that it presents a literary theme that resonates well with the teenage generation: question the world around you. Dellarobia soon realizes that she can no longer passively accept her assumptions about her life, her family, her neighbors, the small and large events manifesting themselves around her. Guiding this new questioning are many conflict tensions. There are the novel's main twin strands of tension: Will the butterflies, in their precarious perch, survive to continue the species? Will Dellarobia locate the will and the means to wrest herself and her children into a habitat where they can thrive? There are other tensions, too: religion vs. science, education vs. ignorance, husband vs. wife, affluent vs. impoverished, urban vs. rural, red state vs. blue. Kingsolver gives fair exposure to each perspective allowing us to see many of the emotions, pressures, and various influences that guide people toward a spectrum of conclusions ranging from the knee-jerkingly simple to the conflicted and resoundingly complex. But through this exposure, students are reminded that every conflict deserves a deeper look before writing it off with a common judgement.

A second strength of the work is its choice of setting and character. Teenagers will be drawn to Taylor's straightforward and sometimes humorous view of life. *Flight Behavior* is not about large, dramatic conflicts in faraway lands or about bitter, alienated young people in New York or Chicago. It is about small town people in small towns. These are real people. There is no elevated language, no plot twists that are difficult to follow. Kingsolver is obviously interested in writing about common people and she wants to assert that their concerns and struggles matter in a world we all share.

Finally, a gift of Kingsolver's novel is the resplendence of her prose. She takes palpable pleasure in the craft of writing, creating images that stay with the reader long after her story is done. The church choir sings a hymn, "dragging it like a plow through heavy clay"; the pastor uses "his hands to push and pull his congregants as if kneading dough and making grace rise." Dellarobia walks under "this mess of dirty white sky like a lousy drywall job." Her husband's gentleness is "merely the stuff he was made of, like the fiber content of a garment." Kingsolver provides a rich model of creative prose that captures and captivates the reader.

III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 9-10
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Curriculum Rationale: 9th Grade Honors

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.
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 how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
Craft and Structure	Grades 9-10
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 cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
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 a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 9-10
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.	8. (Not applicable to literature)
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 9-10
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

IV. SENSITIVE SUBJECTS IN THE TEXT AND HOW POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS WILL BE HANDLED

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Flight Behavior*: sexual language and profanity. Readers who bristle at politics made personal may be turned off by the strength of Kingsolver’s convictions around climate change and other issues, but she never reduces her characters to mouthpieces, giving equal weight to climate science and human need, to forces both biological and biblical. Her concept of family encompasses all living beings, however ephemeral, and *Flight Behavior* gracefully, urgently contributes to the dialogue of survival on this swiftly tilting planet. 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.

***Catch-22* by Joseph Heller (1961)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Catch-22* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 9th grade Honors curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Set in World War II, Heller introduces the reader to Yossarian, a bomber pilot who will do anything to get out of fighting the war, including claiming to be insane. Utilizing literary devices of allusion and archetypes and satire, Heller challenges the reader's concept of right and wrong allowing for the student to delve into a deeper critical analysis as he/she navigate a more complex text.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Set during World war II, on Pianosa, a mythical island eight miles south of Rome, *Catch-22* is wildly satirical, comic, and dark. It posits a central question: How does an individual survive in an insane situation? Consider the lives of slaves before America's Civil War, the plight of teachers in Cambodia during the heyday of the Khmer Rouge, and the rules for black South Africans under apartheid. Consider being an Untouchable in India. Consider the life of an Afghan woman under Taliban rule.

Critics sometimes challenge Joseph Heller's sensitivity; most consider World War II to be a righteous war. The men and women who fought are often called American's greatest generation. The Jews of Europe faced the most insane situation possible. Yet Heller chooses to set his satire during World War II.

In spite of its irreverence, *Catch-22* works because Heller bases his satirical exaggerations and absurdities on experience. As a bombardier during World War II's Italian campaign, Heller, like his protagonist, experiences an epiphanal moment during a mission over Avignon. And war, any war, contains in its mix governments focused inhumanely on politics, people who care only about power and profit, and inane systemic situations from which there is no escape.

However, teaching *Catch-22* as an antiwar novel limits its power. *Catch-22* is about morality, philosophy, and human nature. In spite of a time-bound setting, its themes are timeless. Always, thoughtful people question the nature of authority and the moral avenues they choose as societies and individuals. Published in 1955, *Catch-22* speaks meaningfully to today's readers.

III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 9-10
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.
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 how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Curriculum Rationale: 9th Grade Honors

Craft and Structure	Grades 9-10
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 cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
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 a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 9-10
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus
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.	8. (Not applicable to literature)
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. Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 9-10
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

IV. SENSITIVE SUBJECTS IN THE TEXT AND HOW POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS WILL BE HANDLED

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Catch-22*: prostitution, graphic violence related to war, and 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 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.

***Life of Pi* by Yann Martel**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Life of Pi* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 9th grade Honors curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

In an Author's Note, an anonymous author figure explains that he traveled from his home in Canada to India because he was feeling restless. There, while sipping coffee in a café in the town of Pondicherry, he met an elderly man named Francis Adirubasamy who offered to tell him a story fantastic enough to give him faith in God. This story is that of Pi Patel. The author then shifts into the story itself, but not before telling his reader that the account will come across more naturally if he tells it in Pi's own voice.

Part One is narrated in the first person by Pi. Pi narrates from an advanced age, looking back at his earlier life as a high school and college student in Toronto, then even further back to his boyhood in Pondicherry. He explains that he has suffered intensely and found solace in religion and zoology. He describes how Francis Adirubasamy, a close business associate of his father's and a competitive swimming champion, taught him to swim and bestowed upon him his unusual name. Pi is named after the Piscine Molitor, a Parisian swimming club with two pools that Adirubasamy used to frequent. We learn that Pi's father once ran the Pondicherry Zoo, teaching Pi and his brother, Ravi, about the dangerous nature of animals by feeding a live goat to a tiger before their young eyes. Pi, brought up as a Hindu, discovers Christianity, then Islam, choosing to practice all three religions simultaneously. Motivated by India's political strife, Pi's parents decide to move the family to Canada; on June 21, 1977, they set sail in a cargo ship, along with a crew and many cages full of zoo creatures.

At the beginning of Part Two, the ship is beginning to sink. Pi clings to a lifeboat and encourages a tiger, Richard Parker, to join him. Then, realizing his mistake in bringing a wild animal aboard, Pi leaps into the ocean. The narrative jumps back in time as Pi describes the explosive noise and chaos of the sinking: crewmembers throw him into a lifeboat, where he soon finds himself alone with a zebra, an orangutan, and a hyena, all seemingly in shock. His family is gone. The storm subsides and Pi contemplates his difficult situation. The hyena kills the zebra and the orangutan, and then—to Pi's intense surprise—Richard Parker reveals himself: the tiger has been in the bottom of the lifeboat all along. Soon the tiger kills the hyena, and Pi and Richard Parker are alone together at sea. Pi subsists on canned water and filtered seawater, emergency rations, and freshly caught sea life. He also provides for the tiger, whom he masters and trains.

The days pass slowly and the lifeboat's passengers coexist warily. During a bout of temporary blindness brought on by dehydration, Pi has a run-in with another blind castaway. The two discuss food and tether their boats to one another. When the blind man attacks Pi, intending to eat him, Richard Parker kills him. Not long after, the boat pulls up to a strange island of trees that grow directly out of vegetation, without any soil. Pi and Richard Parker stay here for a time, sleeping in their boat and exploring the island during the day. Pi discovers a huge colony of meerkats who sleep in the trees and freshwater ponds. One day, Pi finds human teeth in a tree's fruit and comes to the conclusion that the island eats people. He and Richard Parker head back out to sea, finally washing ashore on a Mexican beach. Richard Parker runs off, and villagers take Pi to a hospital.

In Part Three, two officials from the Japanese Ministry of Transport interview Pi about his time at sea, hoping to shed light on the fate of the doomed ship. Pi tells the story as above, but it does not fully satisfy the skeptical men. So he tells it again, this time replacing the animals with humans: a ravenous cook instead of a hyena, a sailor instead of a zebra, and his mother instead of the orangutan. The officials note that the two stories match and that the second is far likelier. In their final report, they commend Pi for living so long with an adult tiger.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Life of Pi is a novel that gives itself over very nicely to the required of the Common Core. It is rich in new vocabulary, confronts many subtle issues for discussion, and is a combination of a fiction and an informational text. The novel is not an easy book to read, but it is not so difficult that students will give up trying to read it. This novel has a strong cultural setting, strong character development, many didactical themes that can be analyzed and argued against, and provides a large base for student inquiry projects.

III. LEARNING OBJECTIVES BASED ON COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 9-10
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.
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 how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
Craft and Structure	Grades 9-10
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 cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
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 a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 9-10
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus)
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.	8. (Not applicable to literature)
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 9-10

Curriculum Rationale: 9th Grade Honors

<p>10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.</p>	<p>10. By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</p> <p>By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p> <p>By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p>
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IV. SENSITIVE SUBJECTS IN THE TEXT AND HOW POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS WILL BE HANDLED

Life of Pi contains some mild profanity and graphic violence. Some readers might find uncomfortable the tension between reason, logic, and argument, on one hand, and simple religious faith and the desire to love God, on the other hand, which lies at the novel's core. The human capacity for reason is contrasted to religious faith repeatedly. The novel also explores another meaning of faith—the human capacity to believe what is unbelievable. Pi's story challenges readers with plot twists that sound impossible.

Film. *Vertigo*, Alfred Hitchcock, 1958.

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Vertigo* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 9th grade curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Vertigo portrays the story of a detective who falls in love with the woman he has been hired to follow. True to Hitchcock form, suspense and drama are presented throughout the film. The student will examine the language of film and question whether or not film can be considered literature. Through this process, the student will examine purpose through language and literary terms, identifying supporting evidence for the claim. The student will also compare themes evaluated in other texts, focusing on American Dream, discrimination, identity, role of family, and conformity.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Critically viewing *Vertigo* allows the class to adequately consider the question “What constitutes literature?” Students are asked to confront societies assumptions of what defines literature, including genre, and to develop and defend a definition of their own. The film returns to many themes already considered throughout the year (American Dream, identity, conformity, etc.) and pushes the student to consider them through another lens. The film offers an excellent opportunity for the study of comparative literature (thus pushing the student further in their ideas of literature) as well as providing an important segue into the critical analysis of media in society. Is purpose and credibility affected by choice of genre, by the language of popular media? The unit further pushes the student in the questioning of the role and power of genre, and how the tools of each can be harnessed to further message and purpose. *Vertigo*, in particular through its themes, examines the issue of manipulation and control of other genders, of our concept of success, and of audience.

III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 9-10
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.
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 how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
Craft and Structure	Grades 9-10
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 cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

Curriculum Rationale: 9th Grade Honors

<p>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.</p>	<p>5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.</p>
<p>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</p>	<p>Grades 9-10</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>8. (Not applicable to literature)</p>
<p>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</p>	<p>Grades 9-10</p>
<p>10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.</p>	<p>10. By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p>

IV. SENSITIVE SUBJECTS IN THE TEXT AND HOW POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS WILL BE HANDLED

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Vertigo*: some physical violence. In the classroom, sensitive topics are 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 their concerns.

Film. *Rebel Without a Cause*, Nicholas Ray, 1955.

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Rebel Without a Cause* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 9th grade curriculum.

I.PLOT SUMMARY

The film tells the story of a teenager struggling with identity and acceptance. The viewer will be presented with a middle class teenage world that includes peer pressure, teenage romance, and tragic consequences. The student will examine the language of film and question whether or not film can be considered literature. Through this process, the student will examine purpose through language and literary terms, identifying supporting evidence for the claim. The student will also compare themes evaluated in other texts, focusing on American Dream, discrimination, identity, role of family, and conformity.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Critically viewing *Rebel without a Cause* allows the class to adequately consider the question “ What constitutes literature?” Students are asked to confront societies assumptions of what defines literature, including genre, and to develop and defend a definition of their own. The film returns to many themes already considered throughout the year (American Dream, identity, conformity, etc.) and pushes the student to consider them through another lens. The film offers an excellent opportunity for the study of comparative literature (thus pushing the student further in their ideas of literature) as well as providing an important segue into the critical analysis of media in society. Is purpose and credibility affected by choice of genre, by the language of popular media? The unit further pushes the student in the questioning of the role and power of genre, and how the tools of each can be harnessed to further message and purpose. *Rebel without a Cause*, in particular through its themes, examines the issue of manipulation of youth, family, and audience.

III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 9-10
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.
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 how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
Craft and Structure	Grades 9-10
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 cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

Curriculum Rationale: 9th Grade Honors

<p>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.</p>	<p>5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.</p>
<p>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</p>	<p>Grades 9-10</p>
<p>7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</p>	<p>7. Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus)</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>8. (Not applicable to literature)</p>
<p>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</p>	<p>Grades 9-10</p>
<p>10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.</p>	<p>10. By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p>

IV. SENSITIVE SUBJECTS IN THE TEXT AND HOW POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS WILL BE HANDLED

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Rebel Without a Cause*: some mild violence. In the classroom, sensitive topics are 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 their concerns.

Hamlet by William Shakespeare (1603)

AND

Film Adaptation. Franco Zeffirelli, 1990.

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Hamlet* and the Branagh film adaptation—each in its entirety, and deemed them worthy for the 9th grade English/Humanities curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

William Shakespeare's tragedy, *Hamlet*, is a story of murder, revenge, and power. The students will follow the plight of Prince Hamlet as he tries to uncover how and why his father, the King, has died. Hamlet struggles with his own identity as well as his relationships with his mother and uncle, who is the new King. When Hamlet uncovers the truth, a series of tragic events unfold leaving the reader with a plethora of thoughts and emotions. The students will examine the art of drama in literature by performing various scenes throughout the play and engage in discussions about the many ways Shakespeare can be interpreted. The student will also critically evaluate Shakespeare's complex use of plot and language and compare the written text with the film.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Just as each unit begins with inquiry into the historical and cultural contexts out of which a work emerges; *Hamlet* is introduced with an overview of Elizabethan England and Shakespeare's literary significance. Study of this play is driven by class performance as students work in committees to interpret, plan, prepare costumes, and present specific scenes to the class. Student performances are evaluated on their effort, creativity, and oral presentation skills. In addition, students work to engage Shakespeare's complex language and translate his work into modern English. Finally, students prepare an analytical essay in which they examine a chosen character's significance, development, and relationship to Hamlet throughout the play.

The film adaptation is used at the end of the unit and show in its entirety. Students are asked to examine how different performances of the play can influence interpretation.

III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 9-10
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.
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 how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
Craft and Structure	Grades 9-10

Curriculum Rationale: 9th Grade Honors

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 cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
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 a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 9-10
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus)
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. Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 9-10
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

IV. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Hamlet* and its film adaptation: violence and sexual content.

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the play and its film adaptation. The English department feels that the literary merit of the play and its film adaptation more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable in 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.