

Curriculum Rationale: Grade 9

***The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie (2007)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *The Diary of a True Part-Time Indian* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 9th grade curriculum.

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Sherman Alexie's *The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is a story about a fourteen-year-old Native American boy, Arnold Spirit, born with a disease that manifests itself in a variety of physical challenges. Arnold struggles with his identity as he moves from the reservation to an all white school. Junior, as he is known on the reservation, strongly wishes to escape the destitution of the reservation and believes his talents, as a cartoonist will assist in his dream. Throughout the text, the reader gains a deeper understanding of Junior through his cartoons. This complex text pushes the reader to a deeper analysis, identifying themes of poverty, racism, alcoholism, identity, tribalism, perseverance, and hope.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Living in a border town to a reservation, students deserve exposure to a contemporary voice from a Native American writer that confronts issues common to such a place. Students also deserve exposure to a voice that actively tries to connect to them through theme, language, and story, rather than be bogged down in academic translations or antiquated publications that reinforce a feeling of distance, separateness, or even irrelevance, whether directly or indirectly.

During this unit, we directly confront themes of identity and tribalism. We explore Alexie's claims of how community identity and sense of belonging shape who one becomes and how one acts in the world. Alexie also seems interested in raising the question of how perspective, knowledge, and community beliefs can dramatically change how we view an experience. And while tribal associations shape individuals in this novel, the protagonist also discovers that he is more than his tribal identity and that sometimes being Indian isn't enough to bind two Native people together. "Democracy needs her poets, in all their diversity, precisely because our hope for survival is in recognizing the reality of one another's lives," writes Bill Moyers in *The Language of Life: A Festival of Poets*. Examining the difficult issues raised by Alexie in ways that allow his words to change our hearts about the negative effects of tribalism and the sorry outcomes of violence and rage helps give both our students and us spaces and opportunities to speak and to hear a more commodious language, language that makes room for our students' anecdotal, personal, and cultural reflections as well as the reflections of those different from themselves.

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.

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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).
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
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 *The Diary of a True Part-Time Indian*: profanity, sexuality, derogatory references to homosexuality. 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 his/her concerns.

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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
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.

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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.

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***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (1947)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Fahrenheit 451* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 9th grade curriculum

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Ray Bradbury's dystopian novel, *Fahrenheit 451* presents the struggles of fireman, Guy Montag. Guy struggles with his government and the control they have over him, as well as his job of burning books. Guy begins to question his government and is faced with the decision to keep his newly acquired collection of books or burn them. Bradbury pushes the reader to contrast modern freedoms with the lack of them in his futuristic society. The student will explore the idea of censorship and conformity as s/he critically analyzes this complex text.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Rosenblatt (1983) states that the study of literature offers the reader many opportunities, among them "an emotional outlet" (p. 36) and the opportunity to "sympathize or to identify with the experiences of others" (Rosenblatt, p. 37). Since *Fahrenheit 451* is written in a third-person, limited omniscient point of view, and follows Montag's point of view along with interior monologues, the students are able to see within Montag's head. They can relate to his feelings and get a better understanding of the situations he is experiencing. Literature serves as a valuable escape to adolescents and adults. Rosenblatt states, "There are useful and harmful forms of escape. Anything that offers refreshment and a lessening of tension may have its value in helping us to resume our practical lives with renewed vigor" (p. 39).

Rosenblatt suggests that students must be taught to think independently so they will not fall back on easier solutions to problems and on relying on others to make their decisions (p. 131). In *Fahrenheit 451* this idea is illustrated through Montag's character. Through the course of the novel, Montag realizes that he must think independently. The society in which he lives has embraced a number of distractions that deter people from thinking independently. The majority of the society has accepted these distractions as solutions, but Montag slowly discovers the problems in doing so. The students will see through Montag's eyes the troubles in relying on others to make your decisions.

"Youth need the knowledge and the intellectual tools required for objective appraisal of ideals and social mechanisms—new and old" (Rosenblatt, p. 180). *Fahrenheit 451* will expose students to ideas of a different society than that they live in. They will be able to compare the world in which they live to the world in which Montag lives. Although this society is fiction, the idea was for the text to serve as a warning to illustrate the importance of literature to a society.

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.

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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
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 *Fahrenheit 451*: suicide, violence, sexual references, and mild profanity. 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 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.

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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.
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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.	<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>

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.

Curriculum Rationale: Grade 9

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).

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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 *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.

Curriculum Rationale: Grade 9

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller (1949)

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

I.PLOT SUMMARY

Arthur Miller's award winning play, *Death of a Salesman*, tells the story of Willy Lowman and his plight to achieve the American Dream. The play challenges the reader to explore family relationships, identity, and perseverance. The student will examine the relationship between ethics and the American Dream, as well as modern interpretations of the classic hero.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Death of a Salesman is particularly important as it directly confronts ethical dilemmas deeply ingrained within the American Dream which are still poignantly relevant to this day. The high school student is constantly bombarded by expectations of success, often leading to confusion as to whether the end justifies the means. This play allows for the student to critically examine inherent contradictions and moral quagmires deeply rooted within our society's drive for success. The play also challenges the student in his ability and willingness for empathy due to a controversial hero, a challenge that is particularly relevant to their navigation through complex characters and interpretations of ethics in the world at large.

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.
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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

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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 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.	<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>

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

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Death of a Salesman*: sexuality and suicide. 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.

Curriculum Rationale: Grade 9

***Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya**

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

I. PLOT SUMMARY

Published in 1995, *Bless Me, Ultima*, though not a complete autobiography, is based on Rudolfo Anaya's memories of his childhood in Pastura, New Mexico. The story is of Antonio Marez, his coming of age, and his experiences with his family, with his aunt Ultima, who is a *curandera*—a healer—and with his friends and teachers. The narrative unfolds with Antonio witnessing the vigilante slaying of a crazed WWII veteran, Lupito, by townspeople. Antonio is traumatized by this event and does not understand such violence against a man who is so clearly not in full possession of his faculties.

Readers also witness Antonio's initially difficult transition into school and then his ultimate success. Paralleling Antonio's experiences in school is a feud between Ultima and the local, evil *brujo*, or witch, Tenorio, whose daughters have put a curse on Antonio's uncle Lucas. Of course Ultima, who has healed members of Antonio's family before, determines to heal Lucas, but not before apprising Tenorio of the situation and allowing him time to ask his daughters to lift the curse. He does not. He does, however, seek revenge upon Ultima, whom he blames for the subsequent deaths of his three daughters.

What emerges as ironic for Antonio lies in the townspeople's reactions to Ultima, many of whom she has healed; they fail to come to her defense. In one of his efforts to save Ultima, Antonio becomes seriously ill, and it is Ultima with her knowledge of healing who saves him. In his delirium Antonio repeatedly tells of his witnessing Narcisco's death at the hands of an enraged Tenorio. Narcisco is the town drunk who tries in vain to save Ultima and who respects the old ways. It is in Antonio's delirium that we see the emerging artist/writer and not the priest Antonio's mother so hopes he will become.

Although Tenorio does kill Ultima, he himself is killed by Antonio's uncle, Pedro. Tenorio not only kills Ultima but also her familiar, the owl. Antonio must bury the owl in the place and in the manner Ultima requested. The novel concludes with Antonio's emerging consciousness as to who and what Ultima and her owl were and who he is becoming.

II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This novel possesses a number of important themes and explores issues in Latino culture that no other novel during this time period does. In one way, *Bless Me, Ultima* is a coming-of-age novel: we follow Antonio as he is becoming aware of himself and his heritage. Interestingly, we also follow Antonio's older brothers who have returned from war. In this way, Anaya provides readers with a dual perspective of young people—the very young, emerging boy-child and the more experienced, war-weary, older brothers. Into this dichotomy Anaya places Antonio's Mother, Maria Marez, who sees one path for her young son, Antonio's father, Gabriel Marez, who sees another path, and finally Ultima, Antonio's surrogate grandmother, who actually impacts the boy's life path.

The novel is an anatomy of a family and an analysis of family dynamics that can ultimately influence and shape the character and identity of children. It is also a journey into Mexican-American folklore and religion. Again, no other American novel during the mid-late 20th century actually addresses these themes so expertly and compassionately. That the novel's voice comes from young Antonio himself echoes a master of the past—Mark Twain.

Curriculum Rationale: Grade 9

The most fascinating and engaging facet of the novel is Anaya’s exploration of the role of the curandera both in the Latino culture and within Antonio’s family. Ultima introduces Antonio to his heritage and, indeed, his legacy. She shows him their connection and bond with nature and the natural elements. She shows him her power and begins to teach him in these ways as well. What is important for Ultima is the universal truth that humans often forego the power and strength contained within the cultural beliefs and lore to embrace instead codified, social systems. In essence, this is a novel about transitions—transition from the rural to the urban, transition from folk traditions and beliefs to codified, social beliefs, transitions from voicelessness to an emerging voice.

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).
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: Grade 9

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

Often, those who challenge this novel do so because of the elements of perceived witchcraft. However, Ultima and her ways and beliefs are representative of the Mexican American culture and folk history. That the curandera is a cultural fact is undeniable, and Anaya expertly chisels out the character and nature of this healer and surrogate grandmother. To deny or challenge this representation is to challenge the efficacy of a culture's past.

That some may view Anaya's rendering of Ultima as a challenge to Catholicism is an incorrect reading of the text. What Anaya does through the religious Lunas and Ultima is to present to young Antonio the culture of his past and the beliefs of his present. Of course, it will be he, Antonio, as he continues to mature, who makes the ultimate decision as to how he will proceed in life; he will, however, be aware of both facets of his heritage.

As for the violence in the work, which critics have cited, the war and its lifetime impact for veterans also is undeniable. That some people suffer from alcoholism is yet another reality. That individuals can often commit horrible acts toward other human beings is another, regrettable, truth. Anaya takes his time to create a variety of very human, very real, and emotionally wrenching acts which play out in front of Antonio and which will have profound impacts on the young boy. This novel is indeed a coming-of-age narrative in which the main character must confront the harsh realities of life, even at his tender age. Teachers must remember to help students understand that for every violent act in this novel there is an equal reaction—a reaction that speaks to the verisimilitude of the piece.