

**BOE Curriculum Meeting**

**Monday, May 10, 2021 6:00 PM**

In Person - Central Office Conference Room, [Address], [City], CT [Zip]

1. Agenda

1. 2021-2022 Novels for Approval

2. New Textbook/Program for MBA ELA: Teacher's College of Reading and Writing

3. Summer Reading Update

4. Other

See attachments (3)

For book synopsis use: <https://www.goodreads.com/>

Title of Book	Author	For Course	Grade Level	
Tuck Everlasting	Natalie Babbitt	ELA	6	
Holes	Louis Sachar	ELA	6	
Stargirl	Jerry Spinelli	ELA	6	
Home of the Brave	Katherine Applegate	ELA	6	
Lost Trail (graphic novel)	Donn Fendler	ELA	6	
Out of the Dust	Karen Hesse	ELA	7	Poetry Links
Children of the Dust Bowl	Jerry Stanley	ELA	7	Maya Angelou- Caged Bird
Rose's Journal	Marissa Moss	ELA	7	Tupac Shakur- The Rose That Grew From Concrete
Unbroke	Laura Hillenbrand	ELA	7	Poetry Links*
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Sonnet 5)	Shakespeare	ELA	7	Li-Young Lee- From Blossoms
The Wednesday Wars	Gary D. Schmidt	ELA	7	Portia Nelson- Autobiography In Five Short Chapt
Poetry (various)*	Maya Angelou, Tupac Shukar, Sherman Alexie, Li-Young Lee, Portia Nelson	ELA	7	
Futuredaze Science Fiction	Various (33 short stories by various authors)	ELA	7	
Dark They Were Golden	Various (Sci-Fi short stories)	ELA	7	Sci-Fi Short Stories
Examination Day	Various (Sci-Fi short stories)	ELA	7	The Arrival by Shaun Tan
Autumn Time	Various (Sci-Fi short stories)	ELA	7	Autumn Time Plot Chart- flashback
Earth from Two Perspectives	Various (Sci-Fi Poetry)	ELA	7	Dark They Were and Golden Eyed- point of view Poem: 341; Earth From Two Perspectives
				Commonlit.org: Examination Day, Autumn Time, Dark They Were and Golden Eyed (540)
Endangered	Eliot Schrefer	ELA	8	
Woods Runner	Gary Paulsen	ELA	8	
Between Shades of Gray	Ruta Sepetys	ELA	8	
Call of the Wild	Jack London	ELA	8	
To Build a Fire and Other Short Stories	Jack London	ELA	8	
Hidden Roots	Joesph Bruchac	ELA	8	
Diary of Anne Frank (play)	Francis Goodrich, Albery Hackett	ELA	8	



# SOMERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1 Vision Boulevard, Somers, Connecticut 06071  
(860)749-2270 Fax (860)763-0748

**Somers Board of Education**  
**Bruce Devlin, Chairman**

**Committee:** Curriculum  
**Chairperson:** Kate Mclellan  
**Date:** May 10, 2021  
**Time:** 5:30 p.m.  
**Via:** ZOOM  
ID: 83252501758  
Passcode: 205612

## AGENDA

1. 2021-2022 Novels for Approval
2. New Textbook/Program for MBA ELA: Teacher's College of Reading and Writing
3. Summer Reading Update
4. Other

Here is a link to the document containing the 2021-2022 Novels for approval:  
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1vRCWHmQEx8TRzKKEY7ptIU7Q\\_vmoTqIn1M-cTrioCGQ/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1vRCWHmQEx8TRzKKEY7ptIU7Q_vmoTqIn1M-cTrioCGQ/edit?usp=sharing)

Here is the link to the District Wide Summer Reading Website (DRAFT Form):  
<https://sites.google.com/somers.k12.ct.us/summerreadinglists/home>

Attachments on EMeeting website

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**Vision:** *The Somers Public Schools strives to be an exceptional and innovative educational community.*

**Mission:** *Prepare each student to contribute and succeed in an ever-changing global society.*

## What Do Middle Grade Readers Need?

We want our middle grade students to become flexible, resilient readers who read for pleasure as well as for multiple academic purposes. We want them to have a toolkit of strategies for dealing with difficulty, and we want them to know when and how to use those strategies. Not least, we want students to read broadly and deeply, alert to the intricacies of texts and to the power of language.

### How Can We Best Meet Those Needs?

To accomplish the ambitious goals we have for students, we must reconsider how we think about English Language Arts classrooms and curricula. We can no longer conceive of the curriculum as a few books kids will master. Ambitious world-class standards require that we equip students with a repertoire of skills and strategies to help them be more powerful in any text, whether print, digital, or multi-modal.

As we adapt to new instructional priorities, we must also rethink the classroom structures that support our teaching. Reading workshop offers a powerful framework that allows the teacher to listen, to assess, and to teach complex reading strategies while also coaching into each student's zone of proximal development. During each day in the reading workshop, students read for the bulk of the time, and as they do, they draw upon an ever-growing repertoire of skills, tools, strategies, and habits.

The Units of Study for Teaching Reading series provides teachers with the tools and support they need to teach these vital skills and to move students quickly and efficiently toward and beyond grade-level expectations, while also helping them become proficient, passionate, lifelong learners.





### A Deep Study of Character

Mary Ehrenworth  
Lucy Calkins, Series Editor

This unit serves as a primer in what it means to participate in an intense reading workshop. It introduces students to a variety of instructional methods such as read-aloud, partner work, and minilessons, and coaches both teachers and students in how to harness those methods to increase reading expertise and independence.

Students will learn to consider more complex character traits, to investigate how setting shapes characters, and to analyze how characters are vehicles for themes. The unit also helps readers take charge of their reading lives and engages students with close reading, gathering text evidence, and weighing and evaluating multiple theories about complex characters.

This is an ideal unit for the beginning of the school year, offering extra support for organizing a classroom library, matching readers to books, organizing partnerships, and planning for reading workshops.



### Tapping the Power of Nonfiction

Katie Clements  
Lucy Calkins, Series Editor

Nonfiction reading skills are essential to students' achievement in virtually every academic discipline. To do science, students need to read science books and articles. To study history, they need to be skilled at reading all kinds of primary and secondary sources. When we help students become powerful readers of nonfiction, we help them become powerful learners.

Across this unit, students will develop a solid set of nonfiction reading skills: discerning central ideas, summarizing to create a concise version of a text, synthesizing within and across texts, building vocabulary, growing ideas, and reading critically to question the author's point of view and perspective. They'll also learn to develop flexibility as they read across text types, reading a variety of nonfiction chapter books, articles, trade books, and online resources, and transferring what they know from one text type to the next.



### Social Issues Book Clubs: Reading for Empathy and Advocacy

Audra Kirshbaum Robb & Emily Strang-Campbell  
Lucy Calkins & Mary Ehrenworth, Series Editors

The topic of social issues, the lens for reading in this unit, is one that matters greatly to the young human beings who enter our classrooms every day. In middle school, many kinds of issues start to weigh more heavily on students: relationship issues, school issues, and a growing awareness of larger societal pressures. There can be serious consequences to the spiraling troubles that surround middle school kids.

A recent *Washington Post* article titled "Does Reading Make You a Better Person?" concludes that the answer to the title question is "Yes!" Reading literature especially has proven to increase people's ability to empathize with others, and to be more socially aware. A driving force in this unit is the power of reading to transform how we see others and to show us new ways to be kind, to connect, and to stand up for what's right.

## READING UNITS: MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADES



### *Investigating Characterization: Author-Study Book Clubs*

Mary Ehrenworth & Katy Wischow  
Lucy Calkins, Series Editor

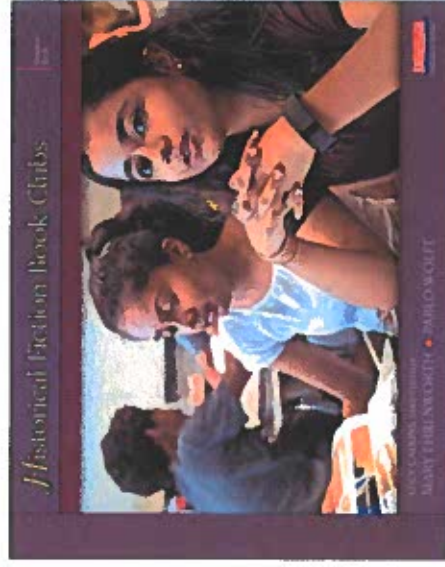
This unit of study focuses readers on studying not just characters, but characterization, or how authors create multifaceted characters replete with weakness and strengths, complex relationships with others, and life lessons they learn and teach. The unit strikes a delicate balance between encouraging readers to hold on to the magic of reading, allowing them to slip longingly into the pages of a compelling story, and presenting readers with opportunities to engage in meta-analysis, fostering an appreciation of the craft of the text as well as the story.



### *Essential Research Skills for Teens*

Mary Ehrenworth & Marc Todd  
Lucy Calkins, Series Editor

This unit is all about learning well in today's digital world and then sharing that knowledge with others—the most fundamental and joyous of intellectual experiences. Students will form study groups to research topics of contemporary, scientific, or historical significance. The first bend immerses readers into essential study habits that will serve them well throughout their research across the unit. Bend II focuses on developing ethical research practices and internet literacy skills as readers tackle the challenges of Internet research. Students will learn to check sources, discern “fake news,” and compensate for connotations and confirmation bias. As students gain expertise in their research topics, the third bend calls readers to study the disputes and arguments inside their topics, eventually coming to informed positions that they will present in a final project.



### *Historical Fiction Book Clubs*

Mary Ehrenworth & Pablo Wolfe  
Lucy Calkins, Series Editor

Historical fiction helps students see how history is not a collection of old, dead facts to be memorized, but is full of compelling stories that help us understand our present and, perhaps, what we need to do to shape a better future. We hope that the reading of historical fiction in this unit will kindle for your students an interest in the genre and generate awareness of how much we have yet to learn from history and the stories of people who struggled, suffered, and persevered as we do today.

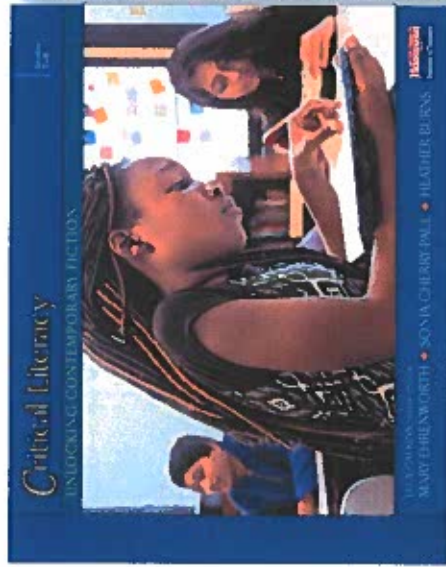
As students progress through these lessons, they will read stories from history that will expose them to hard truths about the world. They will cry out, “That’s not fair!” again and again, and the teacher will respond with “You’re right!” and then ask, “What kind of world do we want to live in? How do we get there?”



### Literary Nonfiction

Katie Clements & Audra Kirshbaum Robb  
Lucy Calkins & Mary Ehrenworth, Series Editors

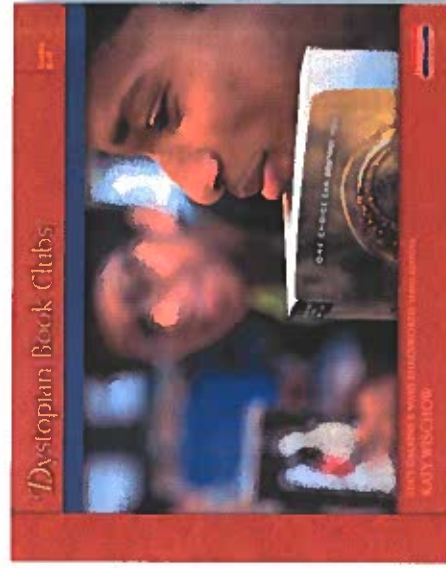
In this unit, you'll introduce students to nonfiction books and media they will love, and teach them how to make the most of these portals to fascinating times, places, and people—not to escape our world, but to better understand and address its issues. The book-length nonfiction that middle schoolers will read possesses a unique blend of heart-rendering storytelling, artful juxtaposition of subtopics, and challenging density. The skills of this unit are essential for students coming of age in an era of global collaboration and vital in the development of a truly informed, critical electorate.



### Critical Literacy: Unlocking Contemporary Fiction

Mary Ehrenworth, Sonja Cherry-Paul & Heather Burns  
Lucy Calkins, Series Editor

This unit is not like what most of us experienced in our English classes as teens. It's not an all-class novel unit, nor a canonical text unit, nor a classic interpretation unit. Like the novel at the heart of this unit—Ibi Zoboi's *Pride: A Pride and Prejudice Remix*—this unit offers a new take on an old classic. This unit is about cultural relevance and getting teens to fall in love with books that are deeply meaningful to the lives they are living right now. The unit will introduce young people to some of the great writers of their generation, the writers who are writing for them, and will create powerful opportunities for teens to share their voices, and find their places, in school and in the world.



### Dystopian Book Clubs

Katy Wischow  
Lucy Calkins & Mary Ehrenworth, Series Editors

This unit is for teachers whose classes could benefit from a deep study of an incredibly engaging genre. It will support classes who could learn to talk more deeply about their reading and push themselves to read with greater volume. It will also pay off for teachers who want to take advantage of the power of a popular genre to lure kids into studying complexity and symbolism and allusions.

During the unit, readers will develop skills in reading more complex fiction texts: analyzing symbolism, deepening character analysis, understanding story arcs, reading critically with questions in mind. Meanwhile, they will build on their work with reading notebooks, strengthening their ability to transfer their skills from one context to another, and supporting their increasing independence as readers and thinkers.

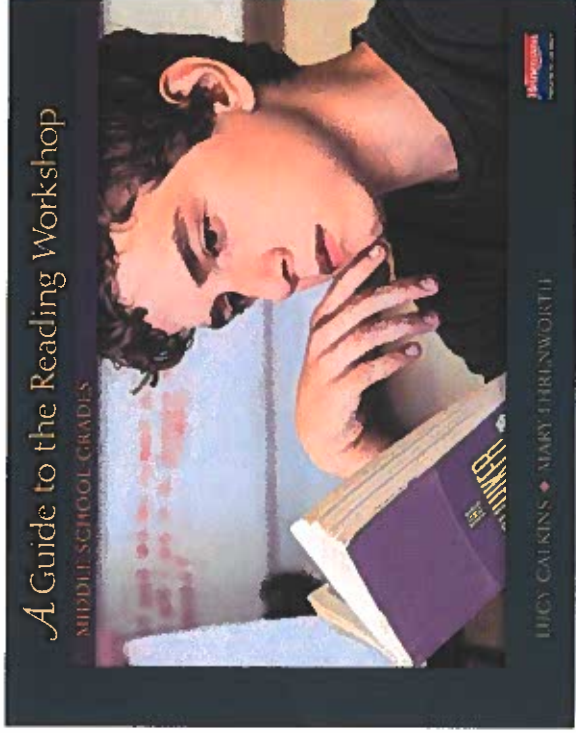
## *A Guide to the Reading Workshop: Middle School Grades*

Lucy Calkins & Mary Ehrenworth

The *Guide to the Reading Workshop* provides a comprehensive overview of the architecture of the minilessons, conferences, and small-group strategy sessions, and articulates the management techniques needed to support an effective reading workshop.

### CONTENTS INCLUDE

- What Does Research Say Adolescent Readers Need?
- Launching and Sustaining Independent Reading
- The Big Picture of a Reading Workshop
- The Architecture (and the Principles) that Inform Minilessons
- Management Systems
- Understanding Levels of Text Complexity
- Conferencing with Readers: Specific, Transferable Feedback
- Small-Group Work
- Resources to Draw upon When Conferencing and Leading Strategy Lessons
- Writing about Reading
- Practical Help with Book Clubs
- Instructional Read-Aloud
- The Special Importance of Nonfiction Reading
- Supporting English Learners in Reading Workshop



### ONE OPTION FOR SEQUENCING ACROSS GRADE LEVELS

GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8	GRADE 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A Deep Study of Character</i></li> <li>• <i>Tapping the Power of Nonfiction</i></li> <li>• <i>Social Issues Book Clubs</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Investigating Characterization: Author Studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Essential Research Skills for Teens</i></li> <li>• <i>Historical Fiction Book Clubs</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Literary Nonfiction</i></li> <li>• <i>Critical Literacy: Unlocking Contemporary Fiction</i></li> <li>• <i>Dystopian Book Clubs</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Critical Literacy: Unlocking Contemporary Fiction</i></li> <li>• <i>Essential Research Skills for Teens</i></li> <li>• <i>A Book Club Unit of Choice</i></li> </ul>

*Of course there are many other viable options for sequencing the units. Keep in mind that there is a layering of complexity across the units that you will want to consider as you plan.*



GRADE LEVEL	6–8 LIBRARY SHELVES
<b>Grades 6–8 Core Libraries (On-Level and Below-Benchmark collections)</b>	Adventure Biography Fantasy and Dystopia High-Interest Fiction Historical Fiction High-Interest Nonfiction Mystery Classics (gr. 8 On Level only)
<b>Additional Shelves (not included in the core Libraries)</b>	Westward Expansion, gr. 4–6 Argument and Advocacy, gr. 5–6 Interpretation Book Clubs, gr. 4–6 Nonfiction Book Clubs, gr. 6–8 Historical Fiction Book Clubs, gr. 6–8 Fantasy and Dystopian Book Clubs, gr. 6–8 Social Issues Book Clubs, gr. 6–8 Investigating Characterization Book Clubs, gr. 6–8 Literary Nonfiction Book Clubs, gr. 6–8 Critical Literacy Book Clubs, gr. 7–9

*Note: TCRWP Classroom Libraries are not available for sale or distribution outside of the U.S.*

## Classroom Libraries for Grades 6–8

A study by the American Library Association showed that when asked the day before graduating from high school, “Will you voluntarily pick up a book after graduation?” 85% of America’s kids said, “No way.” The mission of the Classroom Library Project curators has been to develop high-quality classroom libraries that put heart-stopping, gut-wrenching, glorious books into the hands of students—and that mission is critical. They believe that once these libraries reach students’ hands, nothing on earth can keep them from reading.

Remember that the complete libraries are designed as “starter” collections. Classrooms will need more books. But the good news is that, as they work with the libraries, teachers will develop the knowledge, the momentum, and the energy to build their collections based on what they learn from the ways the books in the libraries fit together to enhance students’ engagement, knowledge, and skills and move them up levels of complexity.

Richard Allington, past president of the International Reading Association, has written and spoken often about the three things that readers need to flourish: access to books they find fascinating, protected time to read, and expert instruction. The aim of these libraries is to provide students with the first of these, to inspire schools and districts to protect the second, and to allow teachers to focus on the third.

**Note:** The titles in all of the TCRWP Classroom Libraries were evaluated and recommended by educators and librarians from across the country and around the world, and reviewed and vetted by the country’s leading experts in children’s literacy and literature. Titles were chosen for their high-interest topics, rich literary qualities, and strong potential to develop critical thinking.

Because the upper-grades libraries include many contemporary YA titles, some of the fiction books contain very strong language; themes involving death, coming of age (including sexual themes), peer pressure; and similar mature content. We believe the literary merit of these titles warrants their inclusion in the libraries. To ensure your students are exploring content that matches what you understand to be their social and emotional development, we recommend that educators review titles before introducing them to students.

### Library Shelves Aligned with Specific Units of Study

The TCRWP Classroom Libraries were designed to serve as the bedrock of powerful classroom libraries—libraries that teachers will continue to build on year after year. The core libraries will help all kids develop powerful reading skills, support their deep learning, and inspire them to read up a storm, but, in addition to the complete on-level and below-benchmark collections, the curators also developed library shelves to support selected units of study. Use this chart to choose additional library shelves with content that is specifically aligned to reading and writing units.

UNITS OF STUDY	KINDERGARTEN	RECOMMENDED SHELVES
RUOS Unit 1: <i>We Are Readers</i>		Essentials
RUOS Unit 2: <i>Super Powers: Reading with Print Strategies and Sight Word Power</i>		Concept Books
	<b>GRADE 1</b>	
WUOS Unit 4: <i>From Scenes to Series: Writing Fiction</i>		Series Books
	<b>GRADE 2</b>	
RUOS Unit 4: <i>Series Book Clubs</i>		Series Clubs
	<b>GRADE 3</b>	
RUOS Unit 2: <i>Reading to Learn: Grasping Main Ideas and Text Structures</i>		Biography
RUOS Unit 3: <i>Character Studies</i>		Character Book Clubs
RUOS Unit 4: <i>Research Clubs: Elephants, Penguins, and Frogs, Oh My!</i>		Animals
<i>Mystery: Foundational Skills in Disguise</i> (additional reading unit)		Mystery
WUOS Unit 4: <i>Once Upon a Time: Adapting and Writing Fairy Tales</i>		Fairy Tales
	<b>GRADE 4</b>	
RUOS Unit 2: <i>Reading the Weather, Reading the World</i>		Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters
RUOS Unit 3: <i>Reading History: The American Revolution</i>		The American Revolution
RUOS Unit 4: <i>Historical Fiction Clubs</i>		Historical Fiction Book Clubs
	<b>GRADE 5</b>	
RUOS Unit 1: <i>Interpretation Book Clubs: Analyzing Themes</i>		Interpretation Book Clubs
RUOS Unit 3: <i>Argument and Advocacy: Researching Debatable Issues</i>		Argument and Advocacy
RUOS Unit 4: <i>Fantasy Book Clubs: The Magic of Themes and Symbols</i>		Fantasy Book Clubs
WUOS Unit 2: <i>The Lens of History: Research Reports</i>		Westward Expansion
	<b>GRADES 6–8</b>	
<i>Social Issues Book Clubs</i>		Social Issues Books Clubs
<i>Dystopian Book Clubs</i>		Fantasy and Dystopian Book Clubs
<i>Historical Fiction Book Clubs</i>		Historical Fiction Book Clubs
<i>Tapping the Power of Nonfiction</i>		Nonfiction Book Clubs
<i>Investigating Characterization: Author Study Book Clubs</i>		Investigating Characterization Book Clubs
<i>Literary Nonfiction</i>		Literary Nonfiction Book Clubs
<i>Critical Literary</i>		Critical Literary Book Clubs

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# Writing Unit Summaries: Grades 6–8

## GRADE 6



Lucy Colkins • Stacey Fell • *Alexandra Marron*



Lucy Colkins • Kate Roberts • *Kathleen Tolan*



Lucy Colkins • Maggie Beattie Roberts • *Emily Strang-Campbell*

**UNIT 1** *Personal Narrative: Crafting Powerful Life Stories:* This unit helps students draw on their lives, learning strategies to generate meaningful story ideas, manage pace, elaborate on important scenes, and deepen insights. This unit especially emphasizes the importance of setting goals, practicing strategically, and aiming for high productivity.

**UNIT 2** *The Literary Essay: From Character to Compare/Contrast:* In this unit, sixth graders learn ways essayists generate ideas based on close readings of a text, learning strategies essayists use to gather, analyze, and explain evidence from the text to support their claims.

**UNIT 3** *Research-Based Information Writing: Books, Websites, and Presentations:* This unit calls students to explore the broad topic of teen activism in order to teach their readers about a topic, asking them to use increasingly sophisticated ways to draw on and structure information to explain a position or make a call to action.

## GRADE 7



M. Colleen Cruz



Lucy Colkins • Audra Kirshbaum Robb



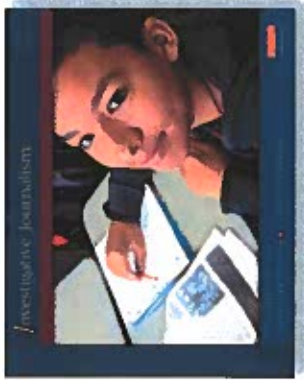
Lucy Colkins • Kelly Boland Hohne • Annie Taranto

**UNIT 1** *Writing Realistic Fiction: Symbolism, Syntax, and Truth:* In this unit, students compose engaging short fiction. They lift the sophistication of their writing through attention to individual scenes, symbols, and writing techniques they've discovered from close readings of powerful short fiction.

**UNIT 2** *Writing About Reading: From Reader's Notebooks to Companion Books:* This unit teaches students to analyze the craft and structure of the authors they admire and to write for real audiences about why that craft matters.

**UNIT 3** *The Art of Argument: Research-Based Essays:* This unit instructs students in writing essays that build convincing, nuanced arguments, balancing evidence and analysis to persuade readers to shift their beliefs or take action.

## GRADE 8



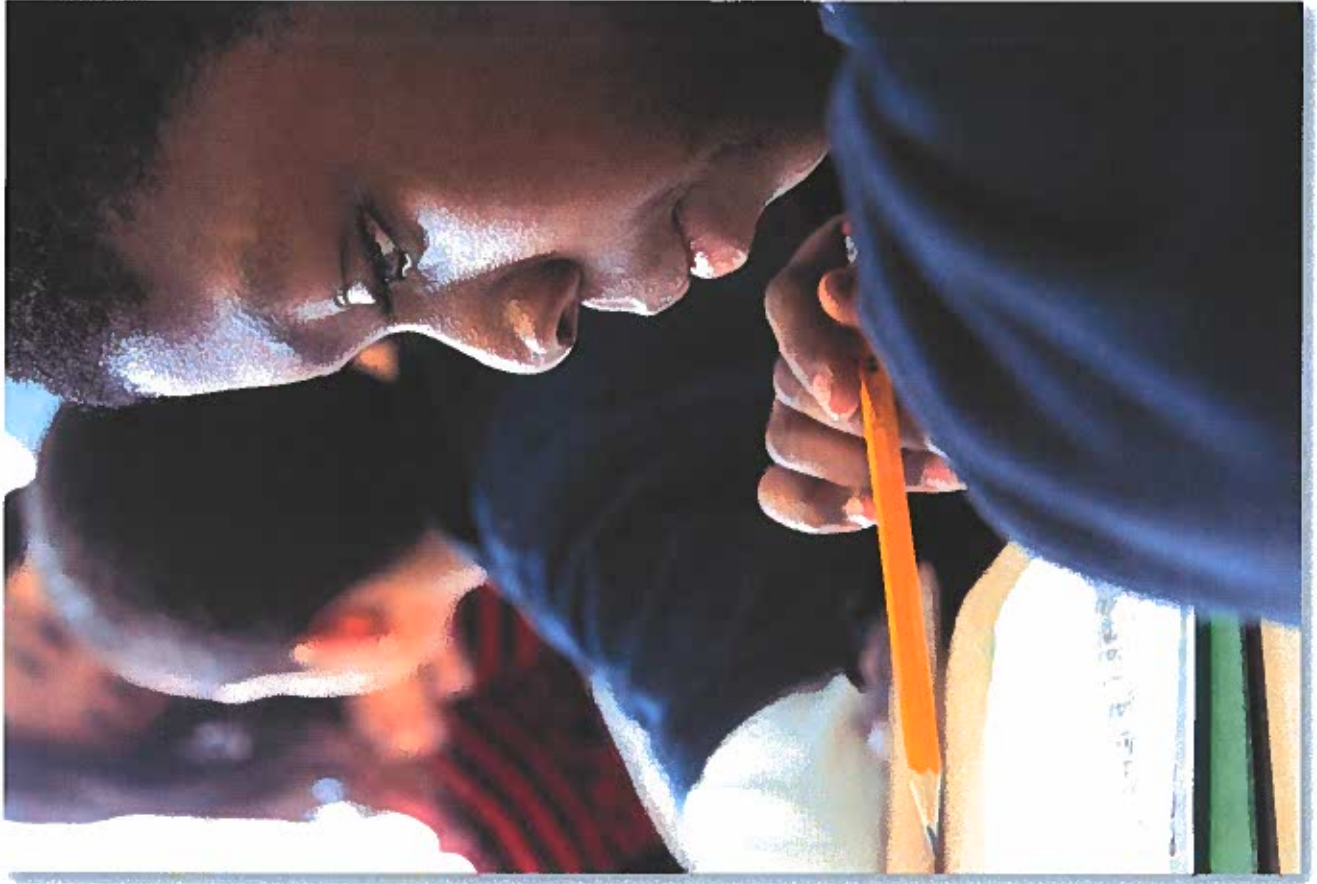
Mary Ehrenworth • Cornelius Minor



Kate Roberts • Katy Wischow



Mary Ehrenworth • Cornelius Minor • Julie Shepherd



**UNIT 1** *Investigative Journalism:* In this unit, students learn to use sharp observations of life to write news and investigative articles about meaningful topics, crafting vivid narratives and elaborating multiple perspectives. They'll write to shine a light on issues in their community and to actively stir their readers to take action.

**UNIT 2** *The Literary Essay: Analyzing Craft and Theme:* This unit returns students to literary essays, writing arguments and counterarguments about themes in texts, supporting their positions with details of plot, character, and author's craft.

**UNIT 3** *Position Papers: Research and Argument:* This unit encourages students to compose principled arguments by drawing on evidence, contextualizing their positions, and addressing multiple perspectives.