



***The In Crowd, and Other Social Groups***

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
Middle School Language Arts or United States History

**Keywords:** Social Groups, Secret Societies, Illuminati, Social Media, Cliques, Social Class, Propaganda

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

**Synopsis:** Identifying groups within our society creates more knowledgeable students, and prepares them for future groups they may want to join. Within this unit students will begin by exploring the basics of cliques within their own school, identify characteristics that create these groups, and place themselves appropriately. Students will also examine symbols and rituals present in more organized groups they may want to join in the future, or are already a part of, such as the Boy Scouts. By analyzing pieces of literature, viewed as propaganda, students will be able to delineate between facts and persuasion. This unit also inspects several social media groups, and the ability to group thoughts, topics, beliefs, and interests into hashtags. The culminating activity for this unit is a research project on a self-chosen secret society. This activity comes after a close look at the supposed secret society, the Illuminati. Throughout this unit students are asked to read several genres of writing, view multiple media sources, and write in several modes. By comparing several pieces of literature students will be able to create their own opinions of the many facets that make up social groups within our society, past and present.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year in to 133 students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade language arts, honors and standard classes.*

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## **The In Crowd, and Other Social Groups**

**Nicki Kincaid**

*“Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead.” – Benjamin Franklin*

### **Introduction**

I was immediately taken with the topic of Human Social Groups, because social groups are a colossal component of middle school life, and my 8<sup>th</sup> graders want to talk about it! Informal discussions last year allowed my students to identify how clothing presents grouping aspects, more so than intellect, interests, or beliefs. Initially I was drawn to the idea of investigating secret societies and learning why they are formed and how people are chosen to participate. Integrating the life of a middle school child into this curriculum unit is a key component. Playing on past conversations from my students I would like to ensure that several social classes are examined closely, beginning with the cliques formed in their own school. Including discussions about how people are “accepted” into certain groups, and what those groups *do* to separate themselves from other circles will be the focus of this unit. This topic transitions smoothly into more organized selective groups, such as boy scouts and fraternities. Next, students will enter their wheel-houses by looking closely at social media groups, why and how they are formed, and the positive and negative aspects of using them as communication devices. From there we will look closely at secret societies, focusing first on the Illuminati.

With the likes of Jay Z, Justin Bieber, and Rihanna being supposed members of the Illuminati, it’s safe to say many of my students have a basic knowledge of the Secret Society world. It’s an interesting concept that a group of wealthy, often famous, people could one day “take over the world.” After a close look at the Illuminati, students will research a different secret society and write a research paper as their final product for this unit.

Before culminating the unit with research, I will ensure students are familiar with several types of groups, as well as components that create and sustain groups in several situations. To begin the unit we will examine basic social classes by reading the short story, “The Doll’s House” by Katherine Mansfield. To incorporate the language arts curriculum we will also examine character traits and stereotypes. From there we will progress into selective grouping in clubs and membership organizations by analyzing brochures from several of these groups, i.e. Boy Scouts. In these lessons I will also focus

our study of discerning bias facts from actual outcomes by citing specific information from the literature provided. Next, the unit will focus on social media groups, and how they function in our current society. Students will begin by tracking their own social media time, graphing what social media forums they spend the majority of their time. Finally, we will transition from social media groups into historical and current secret societies. To support me in this part of the unit, I will utilize my team history teacher to pull content about specific societies, such as the Freemasons.

### **Unit objectives**

In North Carolina we follow the Common Core State Standards. This unit covers all strands of the CCSS; reading literature, reading informational texts, writing, and speaking and listening.<sup>i</sup>

The largest portion of my unit will reside in CCSS 8.1, which states that students will “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.” This standard spans both fiction and informational texts, and falls inside the key ideas and details strand. Every piece of literature read in my class goes through analysis on a deeper level, where abstract can be defined through the connotation of words and phrases, in addition to the figurative meanings within a text. No inference or conclusion can be drawn without the support of strong textual evidence. For each lesson within this unit, this objective is employed.

CCSS 8.5 closely links to 8.1 for this unit. 8.5, within craft and structure, states “Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text relate to one another and the whole.” Lessons 11-15 within this unit focus strongly on this objective. The basic idea of this objective is to engage students in evaluating the structure of two or more texts. When reading literature students should be able to determine how structure contributes to the meaning of a piece of writing. When analyzing informational text students should be able to identify the fundamental idea of the text.

This unit also contains the informational text of 8.6 within the craft and structure strand. In this standard, students are expected to assess how the author’s purpose and point of view affects the text. They should also be able to identify why and how an author retorts differing evidence or perspectives. This objective is also tied to lessons 11-15.

CCSS 8.7 is also included in this unit. The standard states, “Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.” To meet this standard with informational texts students will view a video and take notes as to the subject of the film, after they also read articles on a similar subject they will then discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each medium. For the

literature strand of this objective students will compare a novel to the movie, depicting where the film departs from the movie.

Reading standard 8.9 leads students to analyze how two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. <sup>ii</sup> This is a major component within this unit, and is addressed in depth once Secret Societies are introduced.

Reading standard 8.10 is merely reading proficiently on an independent level. Since this unit uses several modes of reading, including short stories, novels, informational texts, media, and research with varying text complexities this standard is covered throughout.

Writing standard 8.4 simply states that students can, “produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. Writing is a daily routine, and is utilized everyday in this unit through evaluations written about social class, reflections on personal groups, arguments pertaining to social groups, and research.

Writing 8.5 This standard, in essence, is the practice of the writing process, paying close attention to how a paper can be better before a final product is produced. Throughout the research element of this unit students are asked to draft three papers using multiple strategies for revising and editing. They are also scored on the process of researching a topic and producing a coherent rational paper supporting their claims.

Writing 8.6 encompasses the use of technology, including the Internet, to research, produce, publish, and present information. This standard is also linked to the research paper.

Writing 8.7 and 8.8 go together to comprise the culminating research paper for this unit. 8.7 consists of the actual writing of the paper, including the writing process, and 8.8 is using relevant and reliable sources from a variety of resources, while avoiding plagiarism, and citing sources correctly.

Writing 8.9 is a crucial standard in this unit. Students must be able to delineate an argument or claim, and assess if the information is reliable, adequate, and reasonable. They must also be able to identify when information is extraneous.

Writing 8.10 is simply writing routinely, and is used daily.

Speaking and listening 8.1 is creating diverse situations and topics for students to communicate and collaborate. For example, when students are asked to communicate within a small group they are responsible for creating roles and rules for the group. Students also need to know how to contribute appropriately in different group settings. Since this unit is based around “social groups,” there should be ample opportunities for

students to converse in different settings. When I group students for this unit, I will be intentional in compiling them. For example, when we discuss the short story on social class I will ensure that my groups are equally dispersed with different social classes.

Speaking and Listening 8.2 corresponds with the culminating research paper as well. Students must be able to view several media formats and interpret the meaning. A good skill to use for this standard is paraphrasing.

Speaking and Listening 8.4 is the presentation of student generated findings, and it correlates with the presentation portion of the final research paper.

### **School background**

My middle school is nestled neatly between three small, fairly affluent, towns on the outskirts of Charlotte, North Carolina. The community and the parents within my school community are extremely helpful and involved in the education of the students in our school. Less than 10% of our population is not meeting state requirements at the end of the year, and an equally small percentage of students fall below the poverty level. Students at my school are expected to go to college, and many are taking classes that will ultimately count toward high school credit.

We are a large school, with over 1,700 students, three principals, two academic facilitators, and a dean of students. My class size ranges between 33 and 36, and I teach four periods a day, each 70 minutes. I teach Language Arts, and classes are leveled to their academic proficiency, however I still have a range of levels within each class. Working in a school with high performers is a definite advantage when teaching critical thinking skills and using higher level questioning and activities. However, there are disadvantages as well. One of the challenges I face is that my students are quite isolated when reacting to the real world, and have limited experiences that allow them to connect globally to the needs and challenges others face. Another challenge is being able to discuss topics that are controversial. Parents in my community want to shelter their children from outside controversy, and sometimes this keeps certain books and topics off limits at my school. Since most students are from similar backgrounds and upbringings are similar, anyone “different” is sometimes targeted by other students. We are vigilant about bullying, but have had several suicides in our feeder high school in the past few years because of bullying. I believe this outcome is due to the lack of cultural awareness in our community, and a lack of global awareness that is not being accurately portrayed in our system.

### **Rationale**

Communication, questions, and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) drove me to realize the course of this unit. My middle school students are inundated with pop culture, social media, and the social circles in their school. After 8 years of teaching at the middle

school level, I am still amazed at the overwhelming desire to belong to a group these kids feel. Several discussions in class last year lead to very heated, and very drama filled discussions about why certain people were not accepted as a part of a bigger group, and how others were accepted merely because of the name brand shirt they wore. It just feels natural to discuss and research social groups in middle school, and to delve deeper into the idea of secret societies, and the influence of social media just makes it that much more fun!

At the beginning of the year, I had my students complete a social media survey, and 90% of my students have included themselves in a social media group. With our world so closely linked by the social networks, little is kept secret, and reality becomes quickly distorted. Including lessons that take a rigorous look at social media and the venues they belong will hopefully increase awareness and discretion among my middle school students.

The CCSS is broad in the sense of literary strands, and doesn't require specific texts, but does require an extensive array of genres, so along with the core text, The Wave by Todd Strasser, this unit includes historical documents, short stories, poems, and research. This unit briefly investigates propaganda as an instrument used to create opinions about groups, and could easily incorporate more. Another major part of the CCSS is to implement a wide variety of text and media so students are able to create sound judgments based on cross referencing of several texts, as well as analyzing how different authors and genres of literature lead to a knowledgeable opinion about a subject.

### **Prior Knowledge**

For the teacher

The teacher should be fully knowledgeable of the CCSS.

This unit is intended to be used as an idea builder, it is not a unit that goes step by step though each day and lesson. Each classroom dynamics are different, and therefore topics and literature used should vary from state to state, classroom to classroom, and year to year. The idea is to encourage students to examine different types of groups within our society, identify trends, acknowledge fact from fiction, and increase awareness of groups around them, and groups they are a part of.

For the student

Students do not need a lot of background knowledge for this unit. This unit is designed with investigation in mind. Students should be able to build knowledge as they move throughout each lesson. They should be able to distinguish groups within their own school and community, as well as identify specific markings for these groups. For example they must be able to list several groups and the requirements, so to speak, to be part of said group.

## **Strategies**

### **Graffiti Posters**

Graffiti notes are notes that are not structured through traditional note taking, they allow students to interact with any form of text or media by creating their own visuals through pictures, words, and color. Graffiti notes should cover the entirety of the page, and can be added to later.

### **Venn diagram**

A Venn diagram is a graphic organizer that uses circles that overlap in the middle to represent, in this case, two texts or ideas with the overlapping portion citing the similarities, and the remaining of each circle indicating key ideas.

### **Gallery Walk**

A Gallery Walk is a cooperative learning strategy in which the teacher places several items (books, quotes, questions, photographs, documents, etc) around the room in gallery style. Groups are typically formed based on the number of stations. During each gallery exhibit students are asked to take notes as well as add to a class chart that shares ideas, asks questions, or makes connections. During the last gallery stop the students are asked to summarize their final station based on the information their classmates wrote on the gallery walls.<sup>iii</sup>

### **Anticipation Guide**

Anticipation guides are used to trigger prior knowledge and build excitement for a subject. They are created by the teacher for the specific lesson. They can be produced to agree/ disagree, a scale rating, or any other device that works for a particular lesson or subject.

### **Think pair share**

Think pair share is a strategy that first involves a question or problem posed by the teacher. Students are given a brief amount of time to ponder the question, about 3-5 minutes, on their own. I encourage my students to do this through writing. After an adequate amount of time, the teacher instructs the students to share their ideas with a partner. To the discretion of the teacher partners can then share with the whole class what their findings were, or they can share with a small group of about 5-6 students. Think pair shares often lead to other questions, and debates.

### **Close Reading**

During close read students should pay attention to the organization of a text, punctuation, and how the subject of the piece is portrayed. A successful close read shows a real understanding of the content.

### Critical Reading

Critical reading is deeper than a close read in that the reader not only understands the subject of a text, they grasp why the author created the piece. In critical reading students identify what the writer does not say, but implies. This is accomplished by carefully analyzing the author's choice of words through imagery, figurative and literal language, text structure and organization. The reader should also take note of the author's reliability when discussing the subject and the ability to create counter claims and personal opinions based on what and how the author writes.

### Concentric Reading

Concentric reading means students are reading across texts to make connections and generate other ideas that initiate the need for more cross reading of texts. Concentric reading builds on the teaching of how to appropriately research a topic. The focal goal of concentric reading is for the reader to see all that patterns and connections between texts, authors and content.<sup>iv</sup>

### Socratic Seminar

A Socratic seminar is a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions. During the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of their peers, think critically, and verbalize their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of their peers.

### Literature Circles

Literature circles are intended for student independence while reading a like piece of literature. Jobs are created and dealt with within the group, and the teacher is only the facilitator. Each group discussion should be flexible and vary from day to day. Groups are typically between 4-6 students, and should not be made up of leveled readers.<sup>v</sup>

## **Activities**

### Lesson One

To introduce the unit I will first have the students complete an anticipation guide that consists of preconceived notions of social groups, with an emphasis on social class. Next,

I will conduct a brain storming session that identifies groups that are present in most middle schools. I will begin by asking all students to write down as many words that come to mind in 30 seconds when they hear the word clique. Examples will probably consist of the typical groups, such as jocks, preps, popular, geeks, Goth, and so on. I will write those groups on separate pieces of chart paper, and place around room, next students will complete a gallery walk where they identify specific characteristics of each group and the people who “belong” to each group. Once back in a whole group situation we can discuss the similarities in the things that were on each group poster. In small groups, students will create a large Venn diagram to identify what separates one group from another, what patterns they can identify, and how they are similar. I will then give them a piece of adding tape, and have each group generate a topic sentence that adequately describes what produces a group. For homework students will write a one page paper on what group they feel they fit into, and why they fit into that group.

Lessons two and three

Social class remains a commanding influence in our society.<sup>vi</sup> It is also how the United States was formed. The lower class citizens of England were shunned to the new land, often they were people who did not or could not pay debts, and could offer little to the betterment of their own society. Today, class continues to be a status quo that puts one in the “in” group or the “out” group. Being from the “right” family promotes success and higher scores in school, being underprivileged, or poor, receive the opposite effects. Social class determines several factors about the way our society works, including how people vote, how they view education, and the overall attitude toward society. To emphasize and bring awareness to the concern the students will read in small groups (my groups will be made up of varying class and reading levels), “The Doll’s House” by Katherine Mansfield. This short story identifies obvious prejudices within social classes, and encompasses several symbols to drive home the point. To ensure students gain adequate knowledge within the theme they will use several highlighters to show a close read of the text by identifying each of the following elements with a different color:

- Social attitudes
- Symbols
- Social rituals
- Confusing vocabulary or statements
- Places of questions or connections

While reading in small groups, and highlighting appropriate materials the students will also create a graffiti poster focusing on one of the five areas above. Students will share their posters with the rest of the class, and add details from suggestions given by the rest of the class. Each group must then create a sentence that summarizes their topic. This is a great opportunity to begin working on creating thesis statements for the upcoming

research assignment. For example, if the group had social attitudes, they may create a sentence that includes both privileged and underprivileged school age children.

#### Lessons four-ten

Students will complete a novel study reading The Wave by Todd Strasser. The unit is fairly typical of any novel unit. To create cohesion between the content and the skills that need to be covered I created literature circle groups. On top of keeping up with reading and completing lit circle jobs students will keep character analysis sheets for each of the four main characters. Analyzing a character is an important part of the literature standards, and equally important in discovering how groups, and in extreme cases group movements occur. Whole group conversations on the actions of the main characters, and the impact those actions had on the group should be discussed in depth. My personal opinion of the book is that it is dry and lacks detail for visualization and connections. To alleviate this concern I suggest using it as a writing opportunity for students to “spruce” up some sections of the story with their own dialogue and sensory images. When the reading is complete students should have completed at least 5 literature circle jobs and 4 detailed character sketches.

#### Lessons 11-12

Social media is obviously a massive component of a middle school student’s everyday life, but do they really understand how these groups function? There are several avenues these lessons could take, and could comprise a whole unit, however this unit takes a closer look at hashtags. These lessons are a challenge to complete in school since our Internet filters all social media, but cell phones are one way around the filter. Another challenge are the students who either choose to, or are not allowed to take part in any social media group.

Students can create their own groups based on the social media they choose to explore. I will suggest Tumblr, Instagram, and Twitter. In the following lessons students will learn about secret societies, to increase background knowledge. Students will search hashtags for secret societies, and any specific secret societies they are already aware of. For instance, a hashtag search in Instagram brought 24,235 images that were tagged “secretsociety.” Students will then be able to start determining who posts their pictures under this tag, and identify the relevancy of the picture to the tag. They should also have discussions about the photographs, the groups of people using the hashtag, and they should be able to delineate what photographs are valid within this hashtag. Students in different social media groups can then compare notes on the types of ideas found within all the groups.

#### Lessons 13-15

Since I am fairly certain several students from each class will have heard of the Illuminati, I will check for back ground knowledge, and allow students to discuss what they know. According to G. Richard Fisher the Illuminati is so abstract it should only be considered an idea rather than a group.<sup>vii</sup> On the other hand, several people strongly believe the Illuminati is a real secret society, there are even accusations that Obama was selected, not elected.<sup>viii</sup> There are several documentary films on the Illuminati, so depending on time constraints this unit could be easily manipulated by changing the media and text I chose. For my class I will show them “Statue of Liberty” found through the History Channel. This particular video examines the history of the “truth” behind the Statue of Liberty. The speculation is that Lady Liberty has many secrets, including her shackled feet that cannot be seen by most tourists. Bartolli, the artist, wanted the statue to be seen by many, but it was actually a regift, first offered to Egypt. The video includes experts in history, engineers, and artists all agreeing that the Statue of Liberty has several hidden secrets that show evidence that she actually belongs to the Illuminati. Students should take notes on the guided note taking form. The guided notes also include questions to ponder, that may be used in a Socratic Seminar in upcoming lessons.

Since my classes are mostly multi-leveled several articles that vary in text complexity about the Illuminati will be used, and I will group students according to their ability in reading. My students are very versed in completing individual and group close reads, so I am able to jump right in to a group close read with my students. If you are new to close reading, it takes a lot of practice for students to become proficient. After completion of the group close read of their article students will create a three column organizer separate from their group. Students then finalize their analysis with a Think-pair-share.

#### Lessons 14-15

One element of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Language arts curriculum is research. Along with basic research skills, teaching the validity of sources will pose as a slight obstacle since secret societies are based in legend and hearsay. Before I assign the research paper I will talk to my students about what elements are most intriguing to them, and include those aspects as requirements in their paper. Giving slight ownership to major projects is important to the dynamics of my personal classroom. Ownership of requirements has proven very beneficial in the outcome for me. Of course, the paper will encompass the social grouping theme, including the how’s, why’s, and whose of their secret society.

Students will complete their research project in several stages. Students will first find 5 valid sources on their society from at least three different media and text types. They must show evidence of their sources and their validity. The second step is to outline their paper according to the guidelines and rubric. 8<sup>th</sup> grade is the first time students are asked to create a real research paper, so ensuring successful papers this process should be covered by the teacher intensively. Students will then write their first draft, and we will spend time in class peer editing. For this peer editing the teacher should lead students through a detailed process of looking for specific information. For instance, they should

identify the thesis statement, check for appropriate layout, pinpoint main ideas of paragraphs, and at least three supporting details for each, and find the counterclaims or naysayers in this unit. Students will complete two more drafts, and both must be typed. The second draft must also include correct citations, including footnotes and a bibliography. The teacher should review this draft to check for accuracy, and make any corrections to formatting, as well as make any necessary suggestions as to the actual writing within the paper. The final copy should be as close to perfect as possible on a writing assignment.

### Final Culmination

Speaking and listening is also a component of my curriculum, therefore I included a presentation element to their research paper. I am giving two formal grades; one for the paper, the other for their presentation. Again, I will allow students to give input on what should be expected when presenting. To keep the audience listening, they will complete informal reflection piece for each presenter, which will later be given to the presenter as constructive feedback for future presentations.

## **Appendix: Implementing Common Core Standards**

CCSS Reading Literature and Informational Literature 8.1 states that students will “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.”

CCSS RL 8.5’s basic idea is to engage students in evaluating the structure of two or more texts.

CCSS RL and RI 8.6, students are expected to assess how the author’s purpose and point of view affects the text. They should also be able to identify why and how an author retorts differing evidence or perspectives.

CCSS RL and RI 8.7 indicates that students should be able to connect, compare, and contrast information given from several different modes of print and non-print materials.

CCSS RL and RI 8.9 leads students to analyze how two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

CCSS RL and RI 8.10 is reading proficiently on an independent level.

CCSS Writing standard 8.4 states that students can, “produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS Writing 8.5 is the practice of the writing process, paying close attention to how a paper can be better before a final product is produced.

CCSS Writing 8.6 encompasses the use of technology, including the Internet, to research, produce, publish, and present information.

CCSS W 8.7 and 8.8, includes the writing process, using relevant and reliable sources from a variety of resources, while avoiding plagiarism, and citing sources correctly.

CCSS W 8.9 implies that students must be able to delineate an argument or claim, and assess if the information is reliable, adequate, and reasonable.

CCSS W 8.10 is simply writing routinely, and is used daily.

CCSS Speaking and listening 8.1 is creating diverse situations and topics for students to communicate and collaborate.

CCSS SL 8.2 states that students must be able to view several media formats and interpret the meaning.

CCSS SL 8.4 is the presentation of student generated findings.

## **Annotated Bibliography for Teachers**

"Mission Statement." *Common Core State Standards Initiative*. N.p., n.d. Web. 23 Oct. 2013. <<http://www.corestandards.org/>>. This website is the official site to the common core state standards, there is also an app.

Burk, Jim. *The common core companion, the standards decoded, grades 6-8: what they say, what they mean, how to teach them*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Literacy, 2013. I cannot say enough about this resource. Jim Burk does an amazing job breaking down the standards into teacher friendly language that includes real activities to use for each. He did not leave out any content when explaining how each reading, writing, and speaking and listening strand should be applied in the classroom.

Vogt, MaryEllen, and Jana Echevarria. *99 ideas and activities for teaching English learners with the SIOP model*. Boston: Pearson Education, 2008. SIOP is designed to help English Language Learners succeed in the regular classroom. However, their strategies are not specific to ELL learners. This particular book gives great ideas for activities for all learners with the added benefit of honing ELL skills.

Burk, Jim, and Mary Frances Claggett. *The English teachers' companion: a complete guide to classroom, curriculum, and the profession*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999. This is another great Jim Burk book. In this book Burk looks at research and the CCSS to create the how's of teaching, and incorporates the why's behind his activities. He also discusses different uses for activities for different types of learners, and students on different levels of reading.

Noe, Katherine L. Schlick, and Nancy J. Johnson. *Getting started with literature circles*. Norwood, Mass.: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 1999. This book has been on my bookshelf for 12 years, and I still refer to it when I teach literature circles. If you are new to teaching literature circles, or you would like a refresher this is the book for you.

Lareau, Annette, and Dalton Conley. *Social class: how does it work?*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008.

Fisher, G. Richard. "The Present-Day Illuminati Theory." PFO Home Page. [www.pfo.org/illumint.htm](http://www.pfo.org/illumint.htm). This is a great article written to showcase a little of the many facets of speculation surrounding the Illuminati. It is sufficient enough to give the reader a clear understanding of the origins of the Illuminati, when the Illuminati was accused of creating some sort of dominance, and major players associated with the group.

retval;}, e(a);return. "The Illuminati: conspiracy Theory or New World Order? | Cover Story | News and Opinion | Philadelphia Weekly." Philadelphia Weekly. <http://www.philadelphiaweekly.com/news-and-opinion/cover-story/The-illuminati-conspiracy-or-New-World-Order.html>. This article is an example of the type of article

that could be used during close readings leading up to the research paper at the end of the unit. It somewhat drones on and on, but has cited sources, and discusses Jay-Z's role in the Illuminati thoroughly which is of high interest to most of my middle school students.

Kline, Christina Baker. *Orphan train*. New York: HarperCollins, 2013. This book is not part of my unit, however it is a great read about the underground or secret movement of orphans across the country from 1854-1929. This book, and its suggestions could easily be transferred into this unit. It is fiction.

Strasser, Todd, and Morton Rhue. *The wave*. New York: Dell, 2005/1981. This is the novel I chose to use in this unit. *The Wave* is a written account of a classroom experiment that went too far. The story is written to depict an event that took place in California in 1969. The teacher, Ben Ross, tries, and succeeds to show his high school history students how Hitler came to be all powerful.

A&E Television Networks. "Brad Meltzer's Decoded: Statue of Liberty Full Episode." History.com. <http://www.history.com/shows/brad-meltzers-decoded/videos/brad-meltzers-decoded-statue-of-liberty> (accessed October 30, 2013). This History Channel film is a great example of how people, even educated people, can and do buy into theories, often creating their own. This particular video describes in detail, and with proof provided by on historians, scientists, and engineers, that the Illuminati owns the Statue of Liberty, and it was placed in New York strategically. The video also discusses the several symbols found on Lady Liberty. It is a great resource for discussing false information, propaganda, and bias.

### **Student Resources**

Strasser, Todd, and Morton Rhue. *The wave*. New York: Dell, 2005/1981. *The Wave* is a written account of a classroom experiment that went too far. The story is written to depict an event that took place in California in 1969. The teacher, Ben Ross, tries, and succeeds to show his high school history students how Hitler came to be all powerful.

retval;}, e(a);return. "The Illuminati: conspiracy Theory or New World Order? | Cover Story | News and Opinion | Philadelphia Weekly." Philadelphia Weekly. <http://www.philadelphiaweekly.com/news-and-opinion/cover-story/The-illuminati-conspiracy-or-New-World-Order.html>. This article examines the more recent "sightings" of the Illuminati, and spends a great deal of time discussing Jay-Z's role in the current "New World Order."

Steiger, Brad, and Sherry Hansen Steiger. *Conspiracies and secret societies: the complete dossier*. Canton, MI: Visible Ink, 2006. This is a helpful book, set up like an encyclopedia for students to use when researching secret societies.

Hodapp, Christopher, and Alice Kannon. *Conspiracy theories & secret societies for dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Pub., 2008. The "Dummy" books are written to help the

reader understand more complex topics, so this is a great book for students who may have lower reading and comprehension skills. It describes in enough detail the secret societies known, or speculated about, throughout history. Once students have settled on their topic for research there are also *Dummy* books for each of the more well discussed societies, such as The Freemasons, and The Templar Code.

Orwell, George. *1984: a novel*. New York, N.Y.: Published by Signet Classic :, 1977. *1984* This novel is a classic, and can be used as supplemental reading for students who would like to delve deeper into how secret governments could be established and progressed. The book identifies how secret meetings, procedures, systems, and symbols create a government that is allknowing. "Big Brother" is an allegory they will see and hear often, and therefore introducing them to the symbol will better their understanding of the phrase in future classes, readings, and discussions.

### **Materials for Classroom Use**

A&E Television Networks. "Brad Meltzer's Decoded: Statue of Liberty Full Episode." History.com. <http://www.history.com/shows/brad-meltzers-decoded/videos/brad-meltzers-decoded-statue-of-liberty> (accessed October 30, 2013). This History Channel film is a great example of how people, even educated people, can and do buy into theories, often creating their own. This particular video describes in detail, and with proof provided by historians, scientists, and engineers, that the Illuminati owns the Statue of Liberty, and it was placed in New York strategically. The video also discusses the several symbols found on Lady Liberty.

Strasser, Todd, and Morton Rhue. *The wave*. New York: Dell, 20051981. *The Wave* is a written account of a classroom experiment that went too far. The story is written to depict an event that took place in California in 1969. The teacher, Ben Ross, tries, and succeeds to show his high school history students how Hitler came to be all powerful.

Mansfield, Katherine. "The Doll's House." In *The doves' nest, and other stories*,. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1923. 2-14. This story is used to introduce the theme of social groups, and identifies stereotypes and assumptions within social class. One poor family is given a great doll house, and all the rich girls want to see, but they aren't allowed to socialize with the lesser class. This short story is filled with symbols, such as a lamp representing light to be shed on social class discrimination. It was written in 1922, but is still very relevant to today's teenagers. The same type of behavior is notwithstanding today's generation.

"Graphic Organizer Worksheets - EnchantedLearning.com." Graphic Organizer Worksheets - EnchantedLearning.com. <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/> (accessed October 30, 2013). This site contains graphic organizers that you can customize for any skill or lesson.

"RubiStar Home." RubiStar Home. <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/> (accessed October 30, 2013). This is a free resource for teachers to create their own, or download premade rubrics.

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<sup>i</sup> "Mission Statement." Common Core State Standards Initiative. <http://www.corestandards.org/>

<sup>ii</sup> Burk, Jim. *The common core companion, the standards decoded, grades 6-8: what they say, what the mean, how to teach them*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Literacy, 2013.

<sup>iii</sup> Vogt, MaryEllen, and Jana Echevarria. *99 ideas and activities for teaching English learners with the SIOP model*. Boston: Pearson Education, 2008.

<sup>iv</sup> Burk, Jim, and Mary Frances Claggett. *The English teachers' companion: a complete guide to classroom, curriculum, and the profession*. Portsmouth, NH: Boyton/Cook, 1999.

<sup>v</sup> Noe, Katherine L. Schlick, and Nancy J. Johnson. *Getting started with literature circles*. Norwood, Mass.: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 1999.

<sup>vi</sup> Lareau, Annette, and Dalton Conley. *Social class: how does it work?*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008.

<sup>vii</sup> Fisher, G. Richard. "The Present-Day Illuminati Theory." PFO Home Page. <http://www.pfo.org/illumint.htm> (accessed October 10, 2013).

<sup>viii</sup> retval;}, e(a);return. "The Illuminati: conspiracy Theory or New World Order? | Cover Story | News and Opinion | Philadelphia Weekly." Philadelphia Weekly | Local news, reviews, multimedia, music, real estate and more. <http://www.philadelphiaweekly.com/news-and-opinion/cover-story/The-illuminati-conspiracy-or-New-World-Order.html> (accessed September 23, 2013)