



***Intersection of African-Americans, Civil Religion and Media Influence:
Defining American Values, How American Social
Values are Constructed, Creating Social Values***

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
High School English core curriculum classes as well as English Elective courses

Keywords: (media, American Values, stereotypes, racism, social values)

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: This unit will focus on understanding the origins of the idea of American values and how they are constructed. Through critical analysis of films, literature and mass media (television shows, news programs), students will be able to recognize how social values influence our perception. Students will also recognize how American social values are used to determine strength of citizenship.

I plan to teach this unit in the Spring 2019 semester to 26 students in Journalism class, 45 students in Creative Writing class, 45 students in Speech & Debate class and 28 students in Film as Literature class.

I give permission for Charlotte Teachers Institute to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.

Introduction

American History is consistently scrutinized for omissions of African-Americans from history books, more often leaving out great achievements or highlighting them with less fan fare than many believe they should be afforded. After viewing movies like *Hidden Figures* and attending an African-American summit in Atlanta focused on educating youth on those omissions, I've been interested in bringing a unit like this one to my classroom.

Today, many students are not informed about the history of African-Americans in society and very often the story of African-American go untold in classroom textbooks. I incorporate African-American history in every elective class I teach. This curriculum is designed to help students understand why representation of American values in media are varied. Looking at this topic through journalism, students would ask questions and critically analyze articles written in the newspapers about events like Hurricane Katrina, where very often white reporters characterized people of color differently than those who were white. In film class student inquiry would revolve around two movies, *A Soldier's Story* and *Saving Private Ryan*. The focus would be on the director's differences and similarities in treatment of values of American society during WWII. Creative writing class would look at two texts, *Notes of a Native Son*, by James Baldwin, and *Indian Education* by Sherman Alexie. The two writings provide context on how your perspective shapes your vision of America. Students will then write a reflective autobiography of their own in similar fashion with a focus on an American value they hold close or believe in. The speech and debate students will be charged with identifying a political figure and creating either a dual oral interpretation of a speech or a persuasive speech based on their research.

This unit will be designed for English elective courses. This would include journalism, creative writing, and film as literature and speech and debate. All students will start with the same foundation for understanding the topic. Students in these electives are a mix of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

The curriculum for the English electives is flexible enough to be able to add additional units and explore variations on teaching current lessons. Although the emphasis in the electives is on content knowledge, I've built curriculum that supports English common core standards. This "American Values" unit will incorporate a focus on student-led inquiry. It will be a three-week unit that will focus on research, writing, and developing a final product. It can be used for creative writing, journalism, and film as literature and speech and debate courses.

Rationale

It wasn't until I was in college that I was introduced to African-American studies and I don't recall taking many history classes. Since then inquiry has been an important aspect of my personal growth. I believe connecting to your history is very important. My elementary and secondary schools did not incorporate fiction that reflected my heritage. My parents and family filled in the gaps and provided a strong foundation that helped me make sense of the world.

When I started teaching at West Charlotte High School, I realized that I would be teaching the British Literature course for senior students. I was surprised that the curriculum did not include those cultural connections vital for a demographic of 85 % African-Americans to be

able to connect to their African culture. I was able to use the novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe to bridge a connection of African culture and British Literature.

I am always looking to incorporate ways to connect students to material in a personal way so therefore I have chosen to include an American Values Unit that includes a focus on those values that are considered American. Students will identify these values, research, write, and present their findings. I believe this would be a great way to support students in the English Department as a whole.

As an alumnus of Teach for America, I participated in an array of professional development designed to address many of those gaps in educational equity and cultural relevant pedagogy that supports student learning. So, when I arrived in the classroom I immediately started to develop ways to incorporate ways for students to make connections between the materials and their own lives. My professional development with PEAK learning systems also introduced strategies for engaging unmotivated students in the classroom using connections. This year I've had the opportunity to participate in implicit bias seminars and presentations. It has been interestingly engaging to recognize that everyone has bias in some form and that bias is informed by some experience or connection. So, for example if you've fought in a war or have family in the military and are positively connected to the ideas surrounding the United States flag, you would probably hold a negative disposition toward someone who you feel is disrespecting the flag. Additionally, if you have a bias against people of color because of constant media reinforcements of stereotypes, then bias could be reflected in your writing, knowingly or unknowingly. This is what I want all of my English elective classes to explore.

This unit is important for my students because media has a tremendous influence on our decisions and how we view the world. This is why I use media as a foundation for infusing other concepts into a lesson plan. Walter Lippmann introduces the idea of stereotype in his book, *Public Opinion*. In the introduction of the book, he tells the story of French men and English men living on an island together for several weeks who had no idea that back on the mainland, their prospective countries were at war. They received their messages through a trusted source who delivered messages in 60-day intervals. When the messenger was late, they relied on the last information they'd received and stayed in that space of knowledge until the messenger arrived again. So, it wasn't until they heard the news of the turmoil on the mainland that they realized they were in fact, enemies. Lippmann describes the men as "trusting" the picture in their heads. Lippmann also goes on to explain how we fill in the picture in our heads through stereotypes because we have attributed a trait to a person because we are told about things before we experience them.

This is an important unit for students because it will allow them to recognize how stereotypes are formed, understand how media consumption influences public opinion, and provide a context for critically analyzing the media they consume. When students analyze movies, essays, and stories, they will use this foundation of understanding how images are formed in one's mind that can shape mindset. Applying American values to this understanding will allow students to recognize how these values are reflected in various mediums.

One of my goals is to give students more ownership of their assignments and how they are assessed. Many students enjoy hands-on assignments, while others want to use technology. Some students are motivated by getting good grades, while others may need different stimulation for engaging in the material. Students in the past have expressed excitement when I showed an interactive video of the Transatlantic slave trade and we discuss how the authors who wrote during those times were influenced by what was happening. They made connections with the material relating to today's authors, poets, and musicians are writing through the lens of social justice. My plan for this unit on American Values is that the students will make compassionate connections that they would want to explore beyond the classroom and that they would want to share with others.

School / Student Demographics

The student population at West Charlotte High School is 1,696. The district average is 1,486. Over the course of the school year I will teach roughly 180-200 students. Our school is comprised of over 88% African-American, 1% White, 5% Asian, 5% Hispanic, 1% other. The school is comprised of about 82.2% economically disadvantaged students. My English elective classrooms are almost 100% African-American. Many of students deal with exceptional challenges on and off campus which interferes with their interest, motivation and desire to much more than just pass the class. So, engaging my students beyond the physical text is extremely vital for their success in the classroom. They need to be able to make real life connections to the materials.

This is my fourth-year teaching English in the high school classroom environment. One of the biggest challenges at West Charlotte High School is classroom behavior. Behavior management in the classroom can sometimes trump the learning that a teacher would like to take place. Through the many professional development opportunities I have taken advantage of, I have been able to apply many strategies to pull students back into the fold and engage them in exciting ways. My students are also at varying levels of development. Some have learning disabilities, or other obstacles that don't allow them to fully comprehend the lesson. Some of my students struggle with rigor so it is imperative that I differentiate within the lesson to accommodate the varies levels of scholars in the classroom. The graduation rate at West Charlotte has risen to almost 90%. However, many of our senior scholars are graduating ill equipped to be successful in the technologically advanced 21st century. They are graduating with weak writing skills, poor critical thinking skills and ineffective persuasive skills to compete in the global marketplace.

Objective

This unit will be designed for High School English Language Arts (ELA) elective classes; Creative Writing, Journalism, Film as Literature and Speech & Debate. It is designed to help support students' writing and analytical skills. Students will be able to define American Values, understand how they are constructed, and recognize the influence of these values across different media mediums. Students will utilize research, writing, and presentation skills. Incorporating projects that require technology will enhance 21st century learning skills as well.

The 9th-12th grade students are enrolled in the high school ELA classes together. So, this unit will have a centralized objective; however, it may need to be differentiated within it to accommodate for the varying levels of student skill and ability. Each elective has a different focus, but this unit will be incorporated into each class' curriculum to support student growth in areas of writing, presentation skills, and critical analysis of books, films, and short essays.

This unit will be under the umbrella of "Media & Society," with a focus on developing student critical analysis skills. Students will be encouraged to review their views on American values. This will allow them to make connections with the materials and monitor their reactions to the films, literature and content that they encounter with during the course of the unit. Students will be able to determine components identified as American values and analyze how they are used in mass mediated areas as a tool for socialization in our society. They will then apply those concepts to movies, books, advertisements, news, etc.

Then students will begin to critically analyze American values through evaluation of those media sources. At the end of the unit students will present a final project with a variety of options. Film class students could write a blog review comparison of the two movies. Creative writing students would write a reflective autobiography in vignette style. Journalism students would engage in data-driven journalism to write a story based on their analysis of articles reflecting American Values. And Speech & Debate students will create oratory presentations.

The overall plan for the unit will be for students to actively engage in learning about American Values through readings, writings, viewing various mediums, Socratic seminars, and interactive activities. It is a 3 week unit. The unit is divided into three parts. Section 1 would focus on media influence. Section 2 would focus on defining American values. Section 3 would focus on identifying these values in media. Section 4 would focus on creating a product that demonstrates understanding of the power that using American values in the media has on our own consciousness.

Content Research

Students will need to acquire a broad understanding of American history prior to diving into understanding the concept of American Values. Before they are able to fully appreciate the complexity of how these American values influence attitudes and behavior in the society, it is important for them to look at how it evolved. Introducing sociological theories to students will reinforce concepts they are learning in this unit.

Students will start with reading excerpts from Robert N. Bellah's essays on religion and Civil Religion in America to help get an understanding of how this ideology has been constructed. Critically analyzing the Kennedy inaugural is one example of a text students will use to understand American civil religion. It is a great case study to introduce students to the topic. Students would also be introduced to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* (Book IV, chapter 8) because this is where the term "civil religion" originates. Although we won't be able to dive into all of the details of the text, students will engage in dialogue surrounding political philosophies of the past and of the today. Students can gain perspective on how the republic was founded on a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals.

Walter Lippmann's book *Public Opinion* introduces the concept of the stereotype and explains how public opinion is formed and manipulated because of what we trust as an "authentic messenger." Our authentic messenger today is in the form of various types media. Students spend so much of their time on social media. The messages they consume through this medium are powerful. When you look at the impact that the ALS Ice Bucket challenge had on fundraising for the ALS foundation as well as global awareness, it's hard to deny the effects of social media. Today, many people get their information from second-hand sources, and Lippmann talks about how people are aroused by a mental image of the event. Their indirect experience is trustworthy enough for them to believe what they see or hear through the medium. Opinion leaders play a large part in helping to construct and reinforce messages, thereby becoming an authentic messenger. NBC Newsreader Brian Williams delivered news daily to viewers as a trusted source of information. When viewers became aware of his telling untrue stories about his personal experience, they were surprised and even the media outlet removed him from the airwaves. However, he has since returned to his post as a messenger of information. What does this say about the people who are in power to present the public with authentic messengers?

Students will also be introduced to the major negative stereotype images for African-Americans. Donald Bogle's book *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks; An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*, explores the concept of these images used in the past and today in modern films. Recognizing stereotypes still exist in various forms, students will be asked to record reflections in their own journals about their own experience with these stereotypes. The plan is to connect stereotypes to American values as a foundation for understanding media influence and inference of the author, creator, or director. All courses will use this text as foundational support to understand how repetition of ideas and messages can affect the lens in which an artist creates materials for public consumption. Students are exposed to so many messages from a variety of sources they may not be in tune to critically analyze the media around them. However, as they become more alert and aware of the power of the messages, they will begin to apply critical analysis of these messages regardless of the medium. This book will serve as context for critical analysis of media.

As a high school educator, I see the direct effects of students taking on a persona of something they have experienced through the media. Very often they comment on how their choice of dress is something they decided to do on their own. They believe they are in charge of their own thoughts void of interference or influence, not realizing the power that the media has had on them from the moment they became aware of themselves. It's important for students to develop critical thinking skills and understand how media messages shape our culture and society.

Students will gain a critical understanding of how application of messages have been set through agenda-setting from the people in power. Through research of American values, they will develop an intimate relationship with identifying, understanding, analyzing, and evaluating these American values and the role they play in influencing mindsets. Students will understand that the combination of symbols, rituals, values, all function to keep people connected and give a sense of unity. They will examine this concept in various media.

In *From Civil to Political Religion: The Intersection of Culture, Religion and Politics*, Marcela Cristi gives background information on Rousseau and civil religion. She analyzes his claims of a “good society,” and puts in context the time in which he was formulating his ideologies. Cristi states Rousseau’s solution to the incompatibility of Christianity and the state is not to go back to Roman paganism, but to create instead a civic creed (Cristi, 21). Cristi includes that we must understand the time in which he is writing and that it is during an age when the feudal order is rapidly decaying. The Christian faith has been, to a large extent, shattered by the forces of the Enlightenment. The modern nation-state is beginning to emerge, and religion appears to be losing its legitimating capacity (Christi, 21). Today you can see how people are challenging society’s expectations of what is acceptable evidenced by football players kneeling for during the national anthem. Government leaders have chimed in, as well as the National Football League’s team owners on belief. They are essentially telling the players they must believe. They must stand. And, the ramifications if they don’t have been spelled out as anarchy in the eyes of the “real patriots” of the country. Both sides believe their position is valid. Although the debate is ongoing, it is something that our class will explore in the area of ethically right or wrong.

Looking at Shelley Eversley’s critical analysis of Zora Neale Hurston’s views on the differences between blacks and whites, you can see that there is a belief that black and white expression is different. I plan to use both Hurston and W.E.B. Dubois’ “The Soul of Black Folks” to illuminate a duality in mindset that must take place for people of the African diaspora to embrace American values at the core. Exploration of the works will help give students a foundation on how American Values intersects with African-American identity and how that identity is often constructed through the mediated messages.

It’s important for students to develop critical thinking skills and understand how media messages shape our culture and society. According to Jim Macnamara, author of “Journalism and PR: unpacking ‘spin’, stereotypes and media myths,” he states that 50-80 per cent of the content of mass media is significantly shaped by PR. And as social media continues to grow, new opportunities to influence the public emerge. Farhad Manjoo’s *New York Times* article, “Tech’s Frightful Five” explores the power that Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Microsoft and Alphabet, the parent company of Google has over culture and information. They are collectively worth trillions of dollars and continue to grow. So, whereas students believe that their vision of the world remains autonomous, they will soon learn through research about the power of constructed images. They will recognize how public opinion is informed through media and how the mediated messages can embed images that represent an imagined or perceived concept.

Teaching Strategies

The overall plan for the unit will be for students to actively engage in learning about American values through readings, writings, viewing various mediums, Socratic seminars, and interactive activities. It is designed to be a 15-day unit. The unit is divided into four sections. Section 1 will focus on defining media literacy. Section 2 would focus on defining American values. Section 3 would focus on identifying American values in films and recognizing the influence of these values. Section 4 would focus on creating a product that demonstrates understanding of the power that using American values in the media has on our own consciousness.

Section 1:

I. *Defining Media Literacy* -Students will be able to define media literacy.

Over the course of two days, students will watch Media Literacy in the 21st Century Classroom(© Carmelina Films) through Films of Demand and respond to questions to check for understanding. ([Appendix 2. Defining Media Literacy Worksheet](#))

- a. Students will participate in discussion groups to discuss the topic of media literacy.
- b. Students will complete the worksheet in response to the video

Section 2:

I. *Defining American Values*- Students will be able to define American values.

Over the course of three days, students will learn about American values. Using films and books, students will create a brainstorming chart that will include American values they hold dear.

- a. Students will participate in turn-and talk discussions about American values. They will complete a guided notes worksheet ([Appendix 3](#)) Video Response Sheet to accompany video through Films on Demand, *The Big Picture: America on the Move*.
- b. Students will create visual representations of their brainstorm. They will use various materials like newspapers, magazines, construction paper, paint, and other items to construct a picture that represents their most cherished American value. This will be a colorful hands-on-project that helps student tap into their creativity. The final project is to be displayed around the classroom.
- c. Students will define: democracy, freedom, value, independence
- d. Students will identify the significance of the symbols: the U.S. flag, the bald eagle, the Statue of Liberty, the Liberty Bell
- e. Students will do a close read exercise using Joe Biden’s editorial in the *New York Times* & respond to questions on the worksheet ([Appendix 4](#)). Biden American Values Worksheet).
- f. Assessment: 10 Question Check for Understanding Quiz focusing on definition of four words, significance of the symbols and short answer response to Biden’s editorial. ([Appendix 5](#))

Section 3:

II. *Identifying American Values in Film*- Over the course of four days, students will analyze how the concept of the American Dream is portrayed in films.

- a. Students will look at their own ideas of what the American Dream represents for them and their families and provide a definition.
- b. Students will research online five different representations of the American Dream looking at historical photographs articles, and videos. They will present a 5-slide Google Slide presentation of their findings. It will include a photo and an explanation of why it is considered a representation of the American Dream.
- c. Students will read introduction of *Chasing the American Dream: understanding what shapes our fortunes* and take Cornell Notes ([Appendix 6](#)) on the excerpt.
- d. Students will view *The Pursuit of Happyness* and complete: A big question map graphic organizer ([Appendix 7](#)):

- i. Topic: American Dream. Questions: What are the factors that led to Christopher Gardner’s pursuit of the American Dream? When did the problem begin for Mr. Gardner? Who is affected by his pursuit? Where does he go to find a solution? Why is he struggling to find a solution? What obstacles are in the way? How does he accomplish his goal?
 - e. Students will view PBS Documentary Against All Odds: The Fight for a Black Middle Class from the PBS series- Chasing the Dream, Poverty & Opportunity in America &
 - i. Complete Against All Odds Video Response Worksheet ([Appendix 3](#))
 - f. Film Class students will watch *Saving Private Ryan* and *A Soldier’s Story* and compare and contrast the filmmakers treatment of American values during WWII. (Socratic Seminar)
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- III. *Essay Reflection of Research on American Values* -Over the course of three days, students will research an American Value. They will write a 5-paragraph essay on that American Value. Essay Writing Template ([Appendix 8](#))
 - a. Students will research their chosen American value using at least three different sources. They will write a five-paragraph essay using topic sentences, evidence, and transition phrases. It will have an introduction and conclusion.
 - b. The essay writing will be scaffolded over the course of 4 days.
 - i. Day 1 -Develop the thesis and introduction. Students will create an introduction with an attention grabber topic sentence and thesis statement. Develop the topic sentence for the first paragraph using the thesis statement, and five to seven sentences of supporting evidence to create the paragraph.
 - ii. Day 2: Develop the topic sentence for the three body paragraphs using the thesis statement, and five to seven sentences of supporting evidence to create the paragraph.
 - iii. Day 3: Develop the topic sentence and conclusion paragraph using the thesis statement, and five to seven sentences of supporting evidence to create the paragraph.
 - iv. Day 4: Peer Edit – students will engage in peer editing according to the rubric and questions. Peer Edit Template ([Appendix 9](#))

Section 4:

Over the course of three days, students will create a product that represents their knowledge acquisition of American values in the media.

- a. Creative writing student options:
 - a. Students will create and present free-verse poems exploring negative values attributed to African Americans. They can perform live or they can record their poems with music and/or video images.
 - b. Students will create a storybook for children
 - c. Students will produce an oral presentation of famous speeches rewritten as slam poems
- b. Film as Literature & Journalism student options:

- a. Students will produce a mini-documentary (3-5 minutes) exploring an American Value
- b. Students can create informational slideshow exploring American values
- c. Speech & Debate student options:
 - a. Students will produce an oral interpretation of a speech of choice from a former president
 - b. Students will produce an original persuasive speech encouraging or discouraging listeners to embrace or disavow American values

Activities to Support Lesson Plan

Students are introduced to media literacy & American values in this unit at the end of the course.

1. Students will be able to define American values. Using films, movies, television, and text students will be introduced to these concepts.
2. Students will be provided with the vocabulary to support their understanding of media literacy and American values. They will interact with the vocabulary through shared activities and project-based assessments.
3. Students will monitor their viewing so they can make connections, predictions, inferences, and compare and contrast different works. Students can use news, television programs and movies to explore their media consumption.
4. Gallery Walk: I will place blank chart paper on the walls with different American values identified at the top. Students will walk around to each poster and write the ideas associated with them, or groups of students will be at a poster that has four different American values written on them and that group has to identify concept for each group then organize them most to least popular representations. This activity is dependent on class size.
5. Check for understanding: Students will take a quiz on vocabulary, content knowledge and the readings in class.

Recognizing American Values in Media

1. Students will analyze images in current media for American values – students will watch various media including newspapers, magazines, movies, and television programs from the past to compare them to what we see today.
2. Students will read excerpts from suggested books and articles to get a broader understanding of the influence of American values on author's perspective.
3. I will have students compare and contrast books by different authors and movies by different directors. This activity explores the author's or director's purpose.
4. Using a short film or movie, students will engage in a Socratic seminar which will support their skills in listening, speaking, and vocabulary acquisition.
5. Check for understanding: I will use a rubric to evaluate critical analysis skills.

Research and Presentation

Research – Students will choose an American value and research that subject. Students will write a 5-paragraph essay with an introduction, conclusion and three body paragraphs. Each paragraph will have a topic sentence with support structure. A guided worksheet will help support students. They will also have a peer review session where they will share their essay with a partner and discuss strengths and areas where they need to grow. Emphasis for this essay is content and organization.

Peer Edit/Revise Essay

Students will share their essay on Google Drive Platform where they can make comments, suggest changes and edit work where appropriate. Each student will complete a peer review form for the essay. Students will switch essays with another student and complete a peer review form.

Socratic Seminar

Students will conduct a Socratic Seminar

Vocabulary Support Practice:

Students will also create Frayer models using Google Slides or PowerPoint with their vocabulary words. Each student will illustrate their word, write a sentence for the word, and explain a connection they have with that word. The slides will resource of information that will be located in their google classroom.

Appendix 1. Teaching Standards

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction sets the common core standards for English. Although the English electives do not participate in common core curriculum testing, I've aligned standards to the unit to support students overall. The objective is to produce college and career ready students who are prepared to enter college and workforce training programs. Critical analysis is an essential part of their foundation. This unit will continue to build on the foundational reading, and writing skills students have acquired throughout their grade levels. According to the curriculum, writing logical arguments based on substantive claims, sound reasoning, and relevant evidence is the base construct for the common core writing standards. Reading informational texts and being able to extract relevant information to support your response to a question is also a key component of the English common core curriculum. The unit will however focus on the standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2

Determine two or more 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 provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3

Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.5

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.8

Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., *The Federalist*, presidential addresses).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.9

Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.10

By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Appendix 2. Defining Media Literacy Worksheet

Defining Media Literacy- Worksheet

Respond to the following questions based on our viewing of “Defining Media Literacy”

1. What is media literacy?	
2. How do we access media?	
3. What is a benefit of analyzing media?	
4. How do you evaluate media messages?	
5. What is the benefit to creating your own media?	
6. Why is media literacy important?	
7. What is the head fake?	
8. Why is it important to evaluate information you get from online sources?	
9. What are examples of media that have obvious bias?	
10. What are examples of media that have non-obvious bias?	
11. How can you analyze media?	
12. What does it mean to say “all media messages are constructed?”	
13. What techniques are used to attract our attention to the message?	
14. Explain how all media have a purpose.	

15. All media messages contain at least two types of values and two types of point of view. Explain what they are.	
16. How might people understand the message differently from me?	
17. How do messages influence my perspective on the world?	
18. Why would continuous exposure to media messages influence our perspective?	
19. How does the media teach us about our own culture without us even knowing?	
20. What kind of media do you use on a daily basis?	

Appendix 3 Video Response Sheet

Video Response Worksheet

Name of the video: _____

List 5 interesting facts you learned from this video.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

List 3 new vocabulary words you learned from this video.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

What do you think is the most insightful part of this video?

Why do you think it is the most insightful part of this video?

Do you think this video was worth viewing for our topic? Why or why not? Explain your answer.

Joe Biden: Reclaiming America's Values

By Joe Biden

- Sept. 14, 2017

In over 45 years of working in global affairs, I've observed a simple truth: America's ability to lead the world depends not just on the example of our power, but on the power of our example.

American democracy is rooted in the belief that every man, woman and child has equal rights to freedom and dignity. While the United States is far from perfect, we have never given up the struggle to grow closer to the ideals in our founding documents.

The constant American endeavor to live by our values is a great strength that has drawn generations of strivers and dreamers to the United States, enriching our population. Around the world, other nations follow our lead because they know that America does not simply protect its own interests, but tries to advance the aspirations of all.

This has stood as the foundation of American foreign policy throughout my political career — until recently.

Around the world, including in the United States, we are seeing the resurgence of a worldview that is closed off and clannish. President Trump keeps longstanding allies such as Germany at arm's length, while expressing admiration for autocrats like Vladimir V. Putin who thwart democratic institutions.

Rather than building from a narrative of freedom and democracy that inspires nations to rally together, this White House casts global affairs as a zero-sum competition — for the United States to succeed, others must lose. Among the many problems that plague the Trump administration's foreign policy, this line of thinking is perhaps the most disturbing.

During [a speech](#) in July, Mr. Trump said, "The fundamental question of our time is whether the West has the will to survive." This statement divides the world into "us" and "them." No American political figure has so narrowly defined our interests since the period between the world wars.

Mr. Trump's shameful [defense](#) of the white nationalists and neo-Nazis who unleashed hatred and violence in [Charlottesville, Va.](#), further abnegated America's moral

leadership. Not since the Jim Crow era has an American president so misunderstood and misrepresented our values.

Most recently, the Trump administration's order to rescind Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals — punishing young people brought to this country by their parents, many of whom know no home but the United States — betrays an unnecessary cruelty that further undermines America's standing in the world.

When [Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson](#) said that it was important to “understand the difference between policy and values,” he wrote off the very thing that makes the United States exceptional. And at a time when democratic values are under siege around the globe — from populist attacks that undermine confidence in democratic institutions to leaders who try to bolster their power by closing the space for civil society and rolling back citizens' rights — the world cannot afford to have America cede the field to illiberalism and intolerance.

Placing American democratic values back at the center of our foreign policy does not mean we should impose our principles abroad or refuse to talk with nations whose policies run counter to them. There will always be times when keeping Americans safe requires working with those whom we find distasteful. But even when we must make those hard choices, we can never forget who we are and the future we seek.

Reclaiming our values starts with standing up for them at home — inclusivity, tolerance, diversity, respect for the rule of law, freedom of speech, freedom of the press. If these are the democratic principles we wish to see around the world, America must be the first to model them.

These are also the values that tie us to our closest allies — the friends we depend on to address major global challenges. They must believe that the United States will continue to support them and to stand up for democracy.

Leading with our values also means that we speak out when nations violate their citizens' rights. If leaders repress their own people, we must make clear that it constrains our ability to cooperate with them. We can meet our security imperatives without giving a green light to dictators who abuse universal human rights.

Finally, a foreign policy built on our values must stand firm against foreign powers that celebrate a perceived withdrawal of American leadership as an opportunity to increase their influence. Without the United States standing as a bulwark for global democracy, illiberal powers like Russia will take increasingly aggressive steps to disrupt the international order, bully their neighbors and return to a more divided world.

From the Marshall Plan after World War II to our alliances in East Asia, both Republican and Democratic officials have long embraced a vision of American leadership that fosters a more secure, inclusive and generous planet. That ideal made the world safer and more prosperous — for Americans and everyone else.

The international community still needs a strong, democratic America leading the way. And the good news is that the United States remains better positioned than any other country to shape the direction of the 21st century. But to succeed, we cannot abandon the tenets that we fought so hard to defend over the past seven decades — ideals that magnified American leadership and produced the greatest increase in global prosperity in history.

You cannot define Americans by what they look like, where they come from, whom they love or how they worship. Only our democratic values define us. And if we lose sight of this in our conduct at home or abroad, we jeopardize the respect that has made the United States the greatest nation on earth.

Follow The New York Times Opinion section on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and sign up for the [Opinion Today newsletter](#).

This is an article from [World Review: The State of Democracy](#), a special section that examines global policy and affairs through the perspectives of thought leaders and commentators.

Respond to questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. What does Biden mean when he states that “our ability to lead the world depends not just on the example of our power, but on the power of our example?”
2. In the second paragraph, how does Biden appeal to American’s value of the American Dream?
3. What does Biden consider America’s great strength?
4. What are two criticisms of Trump that Biden offers as detrimental for the nation?
5. How does Biden suggest we reclaim our values?
6. Do you agree or disagree with Biden? Explain why or why not.

Appendix 5 - QUIZ: Check for Understanding

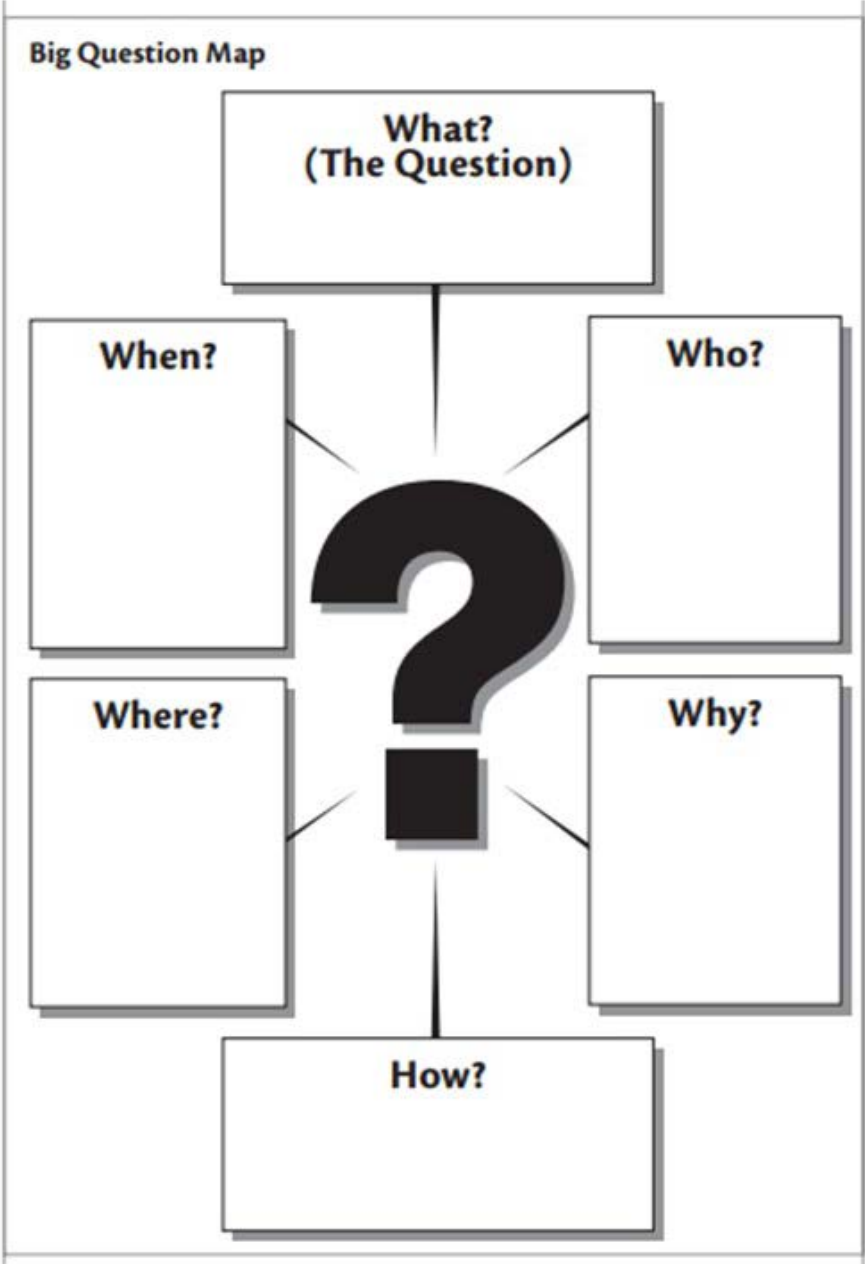
Provide a definition for each of the following words:

Word/ Definition	Picture	Your Relationship to the word
democracy		
freedom		
value		
independence		

Explain why these symbols are significant in America.

The U.S. Flag	
The Bald Eagle	
The Statue of Liberty	
The Liberty Bell	

Appendix 7: Big Question Map Graphic Organizer



Appendix 8. Essay Writing Template

Name _____

Five Paragraph Essay Template

Topic _____
(What my Essay is about)

Paragraph #1

Attention Grabber (question, or interesting statement) _____

Thesis statement / Your claim(What you want to prove) _____

Three topics about your thesis statement (paragraph topic sentences)

#1 _____
#2 _____
#3 _____

Paragraph #2

Details, facts, examples, quotes, story or personal experience to support topic #1 above.

Paragraph #3

Details, facts, examples, quotes, story or personal experience to support topic #2 above.

Paragraph #4

Details, facts, examples, quotes, story or personal experience to Support topic #3 above.

Paragraph #5

Conclusion

This paragraph ties up any loose ends. It restates of your thesis and closes essay.

Appendix 9. Peer Edit/Revise Essay

Students will share their essay on Google Drive Platform where they can make comments, suggest changes and edit work where appropriate. Each student will complete a peer review form for the essay. Students will switch essays with another student and complete a peer review form.

PEER REVIEW FORM on Google Classroom

Directions: You must answer in complete sentences and answer every part of the question. Make sure you provide explanations for evaluations. You can also provide suggestions and constructive criticism, if you are confused about elements of their essay. The boxes expand as you type into them. You are not limited in your space.

Your Name	
Student You Reviewed	
Introduction:	
Introduction has attention-grabbing opening.	
Introduction has a thesis statement. (debatable)	
Introduction Previews Main Points	
Introduction paragraph includes transition into the body of the essay.	
What are the strongest elements of the introduction?	
What are the weakest elements of the introduction?	
Paragraph 1:	
Paragraph has clear topic sentence that relates to thesis.	
Paragraph contains sentences that support the topic sentence.	
Body Paragraph 2:	

Paragraph has clear topic sentence that relates to thesis.	
Paragraph contains sentences that support the topic sentence.	
Body Paragraph 3:	
Paragraph has clear topic sentence that relates to thesis.	
Paragraph contains sentences that support the topic sentence.	
Conclusion Paragraph:	
Conclusion has attention-grabbing closing.	
Conclusion restates the thesis statement. (debatable)	
Conclusion ties up loose ends that brings main points to a close.	
What are the strongest elements of the conclusion?	
What are the weakest elements of the conclusion?	
ORGANIZATION: Is the essay organized and follows a flow of ideas? Provide two examples from the essay that demonstrates clear transitions between ideas.	
Example 1:	
Example 2:	
CREATIVITY: Does the essay contain creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment? Provide an example of creativity from the essay.	

What examples of figurative language does the writer use in this essay? Provide two examples from this essay.	
Example 1:	
Example 2:	
MECHANICS: Does the story contain errors in grammar, usage or mechanics? Identify at least three (3) examples and how to fix them.	
Example 1:	
Example 2:	
Example 3:	
REQUIREMENTS: Does the essay follow the requirements: (typed, double-spaced, 3-6 pages, 12 pt Times New Roman, indented paragraphs) Identify what needs to change.	
What changes do you suggest?	
Comments/ Suggestions	

Bibliography

Adams, James Truslow, and Adams, James Truslow. *The Epic of America*. New York: Blue ribbon Books, 1941.

Against All Odds, Chasing the Dream -PBS.

Beiner, Ronald. *Civil Religion : A Dialogue in the History of Political Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

This resource introduces students to the idea of civil religion which is considered the appropriation of religion by politics for its own purposes.

Bellah, Robert N. "Civil Religion in America." *Daedalus* 134, no. 4 (Fall, 2005): 40-55.
Students will come to understand the origin of the phrase "civil religion," and the influence on America.

Biden, Joe. "Joe Biden: Reclaiming America's Values." *The New York Times*. September 14, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/14/opinion/joe-biden-more-perfect-union.html>.

Students can use this article to identify how American values and the American dream are used in persuasive speech arguments.

Bogle, Donald. 1973. *Toms, coons, mulattoes, mammies, and bucks; an interpretive history of Blacks in American films*. New York: Viking Press.

This resource will be used to identify the dominant negative stereotypes used in media to depict African-Americans. It also follows the evolution of the stereotypes as they have undergone various treatments to be updated or altered as the cultural climate has changed.

Cristi, Marcela. *From Civil to Political Religion : The Intersection of Culture, Religion and Politics*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006.

This resource can help provide a foundation for understanding the connection between culture, religion, and politics.

Eversley, Shelly. *The Real Negro : The Question of Authenticity in Twentieth-Century African American Literature*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004.

Students will look at racial authenticity.

Rank, Mark R., Hirschl, Thomas A., and Foster, Kirk A. *Chasing the American Dream : Understanding What Shapes Our Fortunes* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, n.d.

Students will read the introduction to this book and understand how the American Dream is structured.

The Big Picture: America on the Move. 2008. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://digital.films.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=242461&xtid=45323>.

This video resource will be used to help set the foundation for understanding the spirit of American progress, how America is defined, American values and the idea of the American Dream.