



Writing Your Story: Narrative Storytelling from the Heart
*Examining how identity is reflected in southern children's literature novel The Watson's
Go To Birmingham*

by Franchone Bey, 2021 CTI Fellow
West Charlotte High School

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

Keywords: (media, minorities, stereotypes, racism)

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 3](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis:

This unit will focus on how identity is reflected in southern children's literature. Students will be able to identify how identity is reflected in southern children's literature through critical analysis of children's novels, short stories, folklore tales, poems, and children's books. And students will also be introduced to the various types of folklore. Folklore is defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as traditional customs, tales, sayings, dances, or art forms preserved among a people. In many families, traditions are passed down through the generations in many forms. After reading excerpts from the novel, *The Watson's Go To Birmingham*, students will examine stories within their families. The objective is to take these stories and create a children's storybook of their own that reflects that story. They will also have the opportunity to create other art forms as well including, song, dance, and visual art.

I plan to teach this unit in the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters to approximately 50 students in Creative Writing 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:

My father is from Jamaica and my mother is from low country South Carolina. They both share similar stories from their childhood that connect in various ways. It could be a childhood song that has similar lessons, or phrases and sayings that elders would share with them that reflects values and customs that have been passed down through the generations.

In college, I had the opportunity to take a British Literature course. I was intrigued by *Beowulf* because it was a story passed down over time. Although it was written and translated, it changed over time. I teach *Beowulf* in my British Literature senior high school course. In the African oral tradition, stories traditionally held by the griot, would be passed down through the generations. The griot would be the keeper of the stories and lineage of the family. It was the responsibility of the griot to pass this on to the next one in line. My students may be able to identify the stories in their family or choose one story that they connect to and create their own story.

Many of my students struggle with expressing themselves orally and in written works. In an effort to strengthen their language and speaking skills, students will have the opportunity to utilize skills in research, reading literature, writing, and speaking. These would support students with the English core standards in reading, writing, speaking, and language. This unit will be designed to be used with the Creative Writing English elective course. The unit can be adapted to work with the other courses in the English elective course catalog which includes journalism, film and literature, and speech and debate. 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, this curriculum can support English common core standards. This unit will focus on southern African American folklore. *This unit will also include lessons on stereotypes.* It will be a 10 day unit that will focus on research, writing, and developing a final product. Students will be able to understand folklore and create their own stories.

Rationale

It wasn't until I was in college that I was introduced to African-American studies. Since then it 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. This unit could provide students with connections that they never realized existed. It may open up new avenues of thought and help guide them on the path to stronger critical thinking as well as higher achievement in English courses.

When I started teaching at West Charlotte High School, I realized that I would be teaching the British Literature course for senior students as well as the English elective courses. I

was surprised that the curriculum did not include those cultural connections vital for a demographic of 81% African Americans to be able to connect to their African culture. I was able to use the novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chenua Achebe to bridge a connection of African culture and British Literature. I plan to use children's literature with as exemplars of texts. I am always looking to incorporate ways to connect students to material in a personal way. I believe this would be a great way to support students in the English Department as a whole.

As an alumna 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 critical connections from themselves to the material.

This unit is important for my students because it will help them build reading and writing skills while engaging in a fun activity. They will read folklore stories and then create their own. In the past students have always enjoyed creating children's books, so this is an opportunity for them to focus on their own stories. This is an important unit for students because it will allow them to identify folklore, understand how folklore and identity are related, and provide a context for critically analyzing folklore tales.

I am always trying to find ways to engage the students in the classroom. 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 are making 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 is to make similar connections, for example – I would have students look at a book and critically analyze the choices of the author – taking a look at the images as well as the text. The hope 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 to help the people around them make more informed choices about the media they consume.

School / Student Demographics:

The student population at West Charlotte High School is 1,329. The district average is 818. Over the course of the school year I will teach roughly 180-200 students. Our school is comprised of 81% African-American, 11% Hispanic, 3% Asian, 1% White, 1% Two or More Races. The school is comprised of about 57.7% economically challenged students. My English elective classrooms are almost 100% African-American. Many of my 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. Many students rely on teachers to introduce engaging materials that go beyond their textbooks to enhance the curriculum and activate interest in a subject. I believe that this extension or addition of materials is extremely vital for their success in the classroom and helps students make real life connections to the materials.

This is my seventh year teaching English in the high school classroom environment. One of the biggest challenges at West Charlotte High School is finding the balance between finding books to support the lessons that connect to the standard course of study prescribed by the district. My students are also at varying levels of development. Some have challenges with learning or other obstacles that impede their ability to fully comprehend the lesson. It is imperative that I differentiate rigor within the lesson to accommodate the varied levels of scholars in the classroom. 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.

The graduation rate at West Charlotte is about 70%. However, many of our scholars are in need of tools to successfully compete in the current tech environment. I help support them through cultural enrichment activities beyond the classroom like field trips to museums and other hands-on technological activities that support 21st century skill learning. I also always incorporate some kind of skills where they must utilize online platforms. They are introduced to new programs, applications, and techniques that can be used long after they leave my classroom. Some are graduating with weak writing skills, poor critical thinking skills and ineffective persuasive skills to compete in the global marketplace. This extension in the curriculum can be a very helpful way to support their success.

Objective

This unit will be designed for High School English Language Arts (ELA) elective Creative Writing course. Although, it can be adapted for Journalism, and Literature and Film Course. It is designed to help support students' writing and analytical skills. Students will be able to identify folklore and create their own stories. 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 media.

This unit will be a stand alone unit with a focus on developing student critical analysis skills. Students will be encouraged to strengthen their reading and writing skills. They will also be able to make connections with the materials and monitor their reactions. Then students will begin to

critically analyze the influence of identity on folklore through evaluation of various texts. At the end of the unit students will present a final project which could be a children's book, for Creative Writing.

Students will also be able to examine the author's motivation for writing. In the current course, students examine children's books in general to gain an understanding and appreciation of how they are crafted. In the past I have included information that explores the influence of the author's background on the text. We look at how a time period can influence the writings I believe it's important for students to understand the author's point of view and apply it to understanding the message an author presents in the text. So, students will be encouraged to research the author of a novel and see how their background influenced the text.

As students connect with the materials, through nonfiction and fiction texts, they will analyze the works of Christopher Paul Curtis, with a focus on the anchor text *The Watsons Go To Birmingham*. The overall goal is to examine the author's influence and to be able to cite textual evidence to support responses to the reflections. Students will analyze the style and how it contributes to the effectiveness of the author's message. They will examine how the author's choice of words affect the tone of the text. Comparison of his themes in other written material will be explored in reference to the cultural context and what is happening in the time period in which he writes his works. There will be connections and/or relationships between and among ideas, concepts, characters and/or experiences of the authors. This will support students' understanding of how to evaluate multiple sources of information and write about it.

The unit will engage students writing reflections, strengthening vocabulary and participating in activities and lessons that support common core standards. Students will create their narrative essays and reflections based on observations of an economic, social, or political issue that is happening in their own lives to help build a foundation for the short story they will write. They will review essays to understand how to craft this essay. I believe the style in which they write the essay should be free-flowing and without the constraints of a "typical" essay. Because many of my students are still writing at grade levels below their grade expectation, the focus for this narrative essay is how they use the social, economic or political context to tell their own stories and not focused on the technical components of grammatical writing. It will reinforce the complete writing process which is very specific according to the current common core standards.

The objective of writing the narrative will be to compose a text that gives the audience an understanding of complex thoughts and feelings. It will provide a sense of significance with social, political or philosophical implications. It will also provide a sense of encouragement for students to reflect on their own ideas. Students create an essay using a self-reflective lens and the world around them to help support their understanding of how to use details and event sequences. An example of this exercise in self-reflection would begin with their creation of a vision board. This board will include images, words and symbols that represent how they see themselves in the world.

Students will also complete an expository text analysis essay analyzing excerpts from *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* because students may not have time in the 10 day unit to complete the entire novel. This essay will be designed to help students with critical thinking skills and understanding how authors use their experiences to inform their writing. They will evaluate how the authors' structure, word choice and tone contribute to the meaning and intent.

This essay will build upon skills from the first essay and throughout the semester. Emphasis will be placed on the writing standard that includes producing clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (W.4). Students will also have the opportunity to strengthen writing through planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying new approach focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience (W.5). Although a strong focus will not be on grammar, the application of literary terms, understanding grammar, and rhetoric in order to write clearly, succinctly, and accurately will be addressed in this proposed assignment.

Students will use a variety of resources including technology to produce and publish work. For my students, understanding how to use the computer to create finished products is very challenging in itself. So this assignment would extend their current foundation and motivate them to stretch and understand how to utilize basic computer skills to create a published product. This will align with the standard focused in the area for students need to have effective 21st Century Skills.

Content Research

Students will need to have a strong foundation in understanding the writing process prior to diving into this project, so this could be an extension or follow the unit on writing fiction in a creative writing curriculum. In "A Sense of Place or a Sense of Self: Personal Narratives and the Construction of Personal and Regional Identity," William A Wilson examines how he started to collect the stories of his mother. She told him about her youth and how she homesteaded. Their homesteading eventually failed, and she died at the age of 89. Wilson said that he listened to her tell stories of human nature which included joys and sorrows of the people who lived with her and those in the town. Originally, he said he started collecting the stories because he wanted to have that history of her life to share with future generations, but the experience became much more than collecting stories. He discovered that people could learn from the stories, so he started sharing them with others. He discusses oral history and folklore in this article and how stories are rooted in facts surrounded by customs, communal beliefs, social norms, and values. He believes those things help shape understanding of who she is.

In *Roots of a Region*, by John Burrison, he explores the importance of folklore in shaping and expressing the culture of the American South. This text examines how folklore is learned informally. Traditions are passed down through the generations and preserved in memories. He further examples how acquisition of these memories and practice throughout the years solidifies bonds and links generation to generation because of the connections. And although he does propose that things change through the generations in terms of traditions may shift, there is some inherent need – and that is what remains constant. This resource sets a foundation of understanding the history of the south in reference to folklore and why it's so different. Burrison

examines the economy, history, politics, and the mindset as a way of understanding the intersection of folklore of today and what's change from the past. He also talks about the components that make folklore southern and how food plays a role in its identity. The influence of Africa also plays a strong role in southern folklore.

Zora Neale Hurston is an author that students in the English curriculum become familiar with through small excerpts from her writings and I believe that *Zora Neale Hurston And a History of Southern Life* by Tiffany Patterson, may be a good resource for teachers to discover the south through her lens. It may provide context for the text, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, and how the African-American experience in the south is presented in text. It can serve as a backdrop for understanding how authors are influenced by their surroundings, the context of what is happening in their world and what they have been exposed to. The plan is to have students bring in aspects of their own experiences to complete their essays and children's book. This text takes readers on a journey through her life in the south and explores experiences and challenges that took place during her everyday life as a writer. It also takes a look at her depiction of the south through her folklore as well as her novel, *Their Eyes were Watching God*.

Expanding literacy in the classrooms is very important in the English curriculum. The creative writing course allows for extending students writing and speaking skills through texts that are outside of the regular curriculum. The article "Using Young Adult Literature in the 21st Century Classroom -The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963" supports using the text to deepen students understanding of other cultures. It can be used as a bridge to help students connect text to personal experiences. In the text, Tonya Perry discusses how using a cultural studies approach will allow students to examine the text using a cultural lens. The novel is about a family, the Watsons who live in Flint, Michigan and they decide to take a trip to Birmingham, Alabama because one of the children, Byron keeps getting into trouble. When they arrive in Birmingham, they experience different things that greatly impact the characters in the story. One is the bombing of a church. Along with the story of the every day human experience, the time period has a big effect on their movement. This could be used as a catalyst for students completing their storybooks. They can look around at the economic, political, and social climate and use it to propel their own stories.

Teaching Strategies:

In this unit, students are introduced to the essay, so this extension of the unit would build upon their writing skills. They have to read required texts to support them in this unit. *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* would be the text they would have to read, either in excerpts or as assigned. In this part of the unit students need a working knowledge of how to construct an essay; how to identify the many types and functions of the essay; and the foundation of how to analyze essay components. The narrative essay is just one step toward writing the children's book. They will need this foundation to have the resources to extract information they can use for their storytelling.

In this unit, students will use prior knowledge to evaluate and analyze texts to create an essay of their own, and a children's picture book. After reading *The Watsons Go To Birmingham*, students

will engage in creating a graphic organizer and a Venn diagram and chart to organize content for essays.

Lesson Plan

<i>Day</i>	<i>Objective</i>
3 Days	Students will create a vision board.
2 Days	Students will write a narrative essay
3 Days	Students will explore personal and cultural identity through examination of the text and their own lives.
3 Days	Students will create a storybook using storyjumper.com
1 Day	Students will present their children's books and write a reflection on the experience.

1. *Vision Board- Who are you?(Reflecting on Personal & Cultural Identity Awareness)(3 days)*

Students will use a blank canvas in the form of a large white poster board (22" x 28") as a way to explore the images that shape their perception of themselves and the world around them. They will arrange materials on the board using individual creativity. The vision will serve as an inspiration for brainstorming ideas. It will also help them develop a vision for their personal goals. Student vision boards are not limited, but should serve as a brainstorming project.

Students will use at least 20 different images, symbols, or words that will include the following:

- a. A family tree- or family connections
- b. Map or location where your family is from
- c. Emotions (How do you feel or *want* to feel?)
- d. Foods you eat
- e. Special moments in your past (whether you experienced them or not)
- f. Relationships (Who do you have or *want* to have close relationships with? – mom/dad/cousins, etc...)
- g. Education (What education do you see yourself pursuing? Is education important? How do you see education in your life?)
- h. Location (Where do you see yourself living – both city/town, type of dwelling? Where do you live?)
- i. Recreational Activities (What do you do or *would like* to do in your spare time?)
- j. Holidays (What do you celebrate? How? Do you celebrate?)
- k. Lifestyle (How do you live? How do you want to live?)

2. *Brainstorming (Pre-Essay writing Assignment)*

Students will use various brainstorming techniques to help them narrow down their subject for their first essay. Using items from the vision board can also help craft this essay.

- a. Students will write down everything they can think of about themselves in an allotted amount of time. They can use their vision boards for inspiration. (Use brainstorming techniques)
- b. The next step, students are encouraged to pull out their top five choices and write those on the back of the paper.
- c. For each of those five, they will develop full sentences.
- d. From these five sentences, students will discuss with a partner what they believe is the best and most interesting three to develop further for their essay.
- e. Students can also use a Brainstorming Cluster to help them identify a topic relating to themselves.

3. *Scaffolding the Essay (2 days)*

Students will model teacher each day 2 days to develop the first draft of their essay. Each student will complete a section of the essay writing template. *In the narrative essay:* 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 tone, voice and organization. In this writing course students will work through the writing process to complete the assignments. [Appendix 1](#)

- a. Developing the thesis and introduction. Students will create an introduction with an attention grabber topic sentence and thesis statement. to developing the topic sentence for the first paragraph using the thesis statement, and five to seven sentences of supporting evidence to create the paragraph. Then students will develop the topic sentence for the second paragraph using the thesis statement, and five to seven sentences of supporting evidence to create the paragraph.
- b. Developing the topic sentences for the body paragraphs using the thesis statement, and five to seven sentences of supporting evidence to create the paragraph, along with the conclusion using the thesis statement with five to seven sentences of supporting evidence to create the paragraph. It will also include writing an interesting closing for the essay.
- c. Students will peer review the essay. [Appendix 2](#)

4. *Storybook Creation & Presentation(5 days)* Students will use StorybookJumper.com to create a children's book based on their essay and vision board.

- a. Students will review excerpts from the text and examine the themes from individual chapters. Students will examine the social and historical context of the story, as well as explore the social and historical context of their own stories. Students will be encouraged to make connections with their own personal experiences to the issues raised in the book.
- b. Students will write a children's book that reflects their understanding of the writing, reflection and personal narratives.

- c. Students will move through the storybook creation using character, plot, point of view, setting, style, and theme.
- d. Students will move through the storybook creation using the stages of plot. (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution)

5. *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 words will be discovered as they read and determine the context clues that helped them understand word meaning.

6. *Socratic Seminar*

Students will conduct a Socratic Seminar. As students explore personal cultural identity they will engage in Socratic seminar to support speaking standards aligned with the curriculum.

7. *Speeches*

Students will be introduced to writing for oral presentation techniques including supporting your position with factual evidence. Students will write 5-7 sentences for an introduction their topic.

8. *Research & Presentation*

Students will use technology to research history of some aspect of southern life (ie.- food, music, politics, etc...) to develop an understanding of culture and influence. This will culminate into a museum gallery wall to be displayed in the school.

9. *Read Aloud*

Students will read excerpts from the book aloud to understand the flow of the author's prose and examine how the author uses language in the text. Open-ended questions will be used to check for understanding.

10. *Close Reading*

Students will engage in close reading of the text. Students will examine excerpts from the text to gain better understanding of the objectives. They will analyze portions of the text to support their interpretation. Each excerpt will have a set of questions students will answer as they read and annotate.

11. *Reading/ Response Journal*

Students will keep a journal reflection of what they read from the text. This will be a guided journal with prompts for entries based on the objectives from the reading. Student will write a reflection upon completion of the storybook.

Appendix. 1

Appendix 2. 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. This supports the stages in the writing process.

PEER REVIEW FORM

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, 12 pt Times New Roman, indented paragraphs) Identify what needs to change.	
What changes do you suggest?	
Comments/ Suggestions	

Appendix 3 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.

Bibliography

Burrison, John A. *Roots of a Region: Southern Folk Culture*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007. muse.jhu.edu/book/9947.

Explores the importance of folk traditions in shaping and expressing the American South. It explores the entire region and all forms of expression. This is a great resource for students and teachers to discover artifacts of their own that connect them to the region where they live or where they have come from. It could be used to support the students when creating their vision boards.

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Watsons Go to Birmingham--1963*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1995. Print.

This text is about an African-American family from Flint, Michigan who go to Birmingham, Alabama to visit their family in the summer of 1963. The political and social climate of the time have a profound effect on their lives and they are forever changed as a result. This will serve as the anchor text for the unit.

Patterson, Tiffany Ruby. *Zora Neale Hurston : And a History of Southern Life*. Temple University Press, 2005. Accessed November 6, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Examines the life of Zora Neale Hurston and the influence of the cultural climate on her writing. It helps provide context for teachers about writers who incorporated southern themes in their writing.

Perry, Tonya. "Teaching Students to Think Critically: Using Young Adult Literature in the 21st Century Classroom – The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963." *Teaching Towards Democracy with Postmodern and Popular Culture Texts*. Rotterdam: SensePublishers. 59–75. Web.

This resource for teachers supports examining why this text is important for students to read. It examines how inclusion of different types of texts helps students develop an expanded knowledge of their world. It also provides some context for how representation of varying cultural perspectives expands literacy.

Wilson, William A. "A Sense of Place Or a Sense of Self: Personal Narratives and the Construction of Personal and Regional Identity." *Southern Folklore* 57, no. 1 (Jan 01, 2000): 3.
<https://librarylink.uncc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/sense-place-self-personal-narratives-construction/docview/1311664101/se-2?accountid=14605>.

Discusses how Wilson collected stories that his mother told him about her youth and homesteading. He started gathering the stories so that his family would have a history of her life and future generations could experience the pleasure of hearing the stories. It would be a great resource for teachers to understand the power of storytelling and emphasize how their own stories can be used as a family artifact for generations to come.