



## **PSA: Aging isn't Bad, But Ageism is!**

by Elizabeth Cochrane, 2024 CTI Fellow  
East Mecklenburg High School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
English Language Development Courses for Intermediate Multilingual Learners in  
Grade Nine

**Keywords:** Ageism, Beliefs, Stereotypes, Older Adults, Centenarians, Multilingual Learner, English Language Development

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

**Synopsis:** In this unit, students develop their reading, writing, and speaking skills while exploring their beliefs about older adults. Students discover that many of their beliefs are oversimplified stereotypes that can lead to ageism or the unfair treatment of a person solely due to their age. Students study ageism and its effects on society, but more importantly, they adopt more positive beliefs and attitudes towards older adults and aging through exploring diverse cultures' perspectives and reading nonfiction texts about centenarians that have positively impacted society. Students will widen the impact of their study by creating public service announcements to be shared with the school community about ageism and its effects and how others can play a part in shifting the narrative about aging and older adults.

***I plan to teach 21 English Language Development 9 students this unit during the fall semester.***

*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.*

## PSA: Aging isn't bad, But Ageism is!

*Elizabeth Cochrane*

### Introduction

I am a teacher at East Mecklenburg High School (EMHS), where I teach Multilingual Learners. East Mecklenburg has a strong multilingual learner program. Most classes use a sheltered or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) approach. Sheltered instruction is a research-based framework that provides clear and accessible grade-level content and academic language for Pre-K through 12th-grade English Language Learner (ELL) students. Research shows that in ELL content teaching, the curriculum can be a hands-on, motivating way to learn English<sup>1</sup>.

I teach English Language Development (ELD) to ninth- and tenth-grade intermediate emergent bilingual students during the fall semester. In ELD, we focus on growing language proficiency through reading, writing, listening, and speaking by addressing the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) for English Language Arts (ELA) and the WIDA English Language Standards. English Language Development is a precursor to the students' regular English Language Arts (ELA) course that they will be enrolled in the spring. I am also the students' ELA teacher. With this setup, teachers can frontload content-specific vocabulary and develop the necessary skills for success in ELA while improving students' English proficiency through project-based learning and providing consistency for the students by remaining with the same teacher.

English Language Learners are a growing part of the public school population. ELL enrollment in K-12 schools increased by twenty-eight percent between 2000-2001 and 2016-2017. The US Department of Education estimates that five million English language learners are enrolled in public schools in the United States.<sup>2</sup> English language learners in the United States represent over 400 languages and cultures. Approximately seventy-five percent are Spanish speakers.<sup>2</sup> As of 2019, North Carolina's schools were home to more than 122,000 English language learners. ELLs in North Carolina speak the five most common languages:

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<sup>1</sup> Carlos Julio Ovando, Mary Carol Combs, Terrence G. Wiley, and Eugene E. García. *Bilingual and ESL classrooms: Teaching in multicultural contexts*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Larry Ferlazzo and Katie Hull-Sypniewski, *The ESL/ELL Teacher's Survival Guide: Ready-to-Use Strategies, Tools, & Activities for Teaching All Levels* (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2022).

Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Hmong.<sup>3</sup> In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, nearly 25,000 students are classified as English language learners. Those learners represent 184 countries and 204 different languages.

#### Rationale

“She looks good for her age,” “She’s too young for that position.” “Only old people play bingo.” “You don’t look seventy”. People of all ages say these comments daily that, at first glance, seem harmless. Go to the greeting card aisle of any major retailer, and it would be challenging to find a card that celebrates rather than mocks or belittles the person, adding another year to their life. These actions are ageist. Ageism is “prejudice or discrimination based on a person’s age”<sup>4</sup> according to the Oxford English Dictionary. Ageism is everywhere: in the media, schools, the workplace, healthcare, and Hollywood. Ageism affects everyone. If a person is living, they are aging. Around the world, one in two people hold ageist beliefs.<sup>5</sup> and can start forming them as young as four years old.<sup>6</sup> From that age on, children become aware of their culture’s age stereotypes and use them to create their beliefs and behaviors towards people of different ages.

As a result, almost everyone will experience ageism at some point. Ageism has far-reaching negative health impacts for all people, such as increased unhealthy health habits like smoking and unhealthy dieting, premature death, and overall lower quality of life leading to feelings of social isolation and loneliness.<sup>7</sup> However, the World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledges that the narrative around age and aging can be changed through education and positive messaging.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, this curriculum unit explores students’ beliefs about aging and older adults to develop more optimistic perspectives so that they can stop perpetuating ageist thoughts and actions, promoting a better quality of life for all now and in the future.

#### Background and Educational Setting

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<sup>3</sup> “Digest of Education Statistics, 2021,” National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Home Page, a part of the U.S. Department of Education, accessed September 21, 2023, [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21\\_204.20.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_204.20.asp).

<sup>4</sup> “Ageism.” Oxford English Dictionary. Accessed November 2, 2024. <https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=ageism>.

<sup>5</sup> “Ageism.” World Health Organization. Accessed November 3, 2024. [https://www.who.int/health-topics/ageism#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/ageism#tab=tab_1).

<sup>6</sup> “Ageing: Ageism.” World Health Organization. Accessed November 4, 2024. <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/ageing-ageism#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20ageism%20is%20associated,reduce%20intergroup%20prejudice%20and%20stereotypes>.

<sup>7</sup> “Ageism.” World Health Organization.

<sup>8</sup> “Ageism.” World Health Organization.

East Mecklenburg High School is a diverse public school in Charlotte, North Carolina. Of our approximately 2,500 students, forty percent of our student body is Hispanic, and thirty-two percent are African American. Nineteen percent of our students are White. Of our approximately 2,500 students, 429 qualify for direct multilingual learner or English as a second language services (ESL). Approximately twenty-five languages are spoken at East Mecklenburg, but most ESL students speak Spanish, with 341 native Spanish speakers. The remaining emergent bilingual students speak languages that include Portuguese, French or French Creole, Turkish, Arabic, Burmese, Tigrinya, and many others. My classes typically reflect the makeup of the school and are primarily Spanish speakers, but I also have students who speak many other languages.

The students in my proposed classes are classified as intermediate English learners according to the WIDA ACCESS test, which measures students' proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening to English. The ACCESS test scores students from one (entering) to six (bridging). To exit ELL services, students must score a 4.8 composite score or higher across the four sections. Typically, intermediate learners range between 2.5 and 3.5. However, I have some students that fall below or above that range.

When reading, intermediate learners can typically match data or information with its source or genre (e.g., description of the element to its symbol on the periodic table), classify or organize information presented in visuals or graphs, follow multi-step instructions supported by visuals or data, match sentence-level descriptions to visual representations, compare content-related features in visuals and graphics and locate main ideas in a series of related sentences with success. As they improve their reading skills and acquire more English language, they can begin to apply multiple meanings of words/phrases to social and academic contexts, identify topic sentences or main ideas and details in paragraphs, answer questions about explicit information in texts, differentiate between fact and opinion in text and order paragraphs or sequence information within paragraphs. These are not the only skills an intermediate learner can do, but these should serve as a “snapshot” of their abilities. Students might need more support to accomplish other skills.

## Unit Goals

The unit has four essential questions:

- What beliefs do I hold about growing older and older adults?
- How do my beliefs affect how I perceive others?
- How have my experiences and the people around me shaped those beliefs?
- How do authors use character traits and actions to create a message?

These questions allow educators to teach students about the basics of aging, explore stereotypes, prejudices, myths, and biases on aging, how culture affects our perceptions of aging, and centenarians to foster a more positive perspective on aging. In essence, it is flipping the standard narrative that has perpetuated American society for decades that aging is all about decline and that older adults are senile, ugly, frail, and ill. Some skills students will develop and practice include finding the central idea of a text and supporting evidence,

as well as creating objective summaries. Please refer to Teaching Appendix One for a complete list of standards addressed in the unit. To address the final question, students will examine two nonfiction children's books for the author's perspective on the value and contributions of older adults. Students will explore how the author relays that message through character traits and themes. For the culminating task, students create public service announcements to be shared with our school community through the morning announcements where they describe why the issue of ageism in our society is significant using the information they acquired from this unit, describe the problem, discuss how our world could be different without ageism, the benefits of a positive mindset around aging, provide solutions, and how others can help end ageism.

## Content Research

### Aging Population Increase

People all over the world are living longer. According to the World Health Organization, by 2030, one in six people will be sixty years or older. Over time, the US population is expected to trend older as life expectancy increases and births decrease. The Pew Research Center estimates that “there are currently roughly sixty-two million adults ages sixty-five and older living in the U.S., accounting for eighteen of the population”<sup>9</sup>

### Negative Stereotypes

Despite the growing older population and the fact that we are all aging, negative stereotypes of older people are abound. Our brains love to put things into boxes. It keeps all the information we process organized and easy to understand. But sometimes, we end up putting people into categories, too. We often decide about their identity before we even know who they are. Older people are often stereotyped as “cranky, dependent, lonely, senile and sickly, are the target of prejudiced attitudes from all age groups, and face discrimination and abuse in health care settings, the workplace, and home.”<sup>10</sup> Although we all belong to specific communities, cultures, and traditions, there are no universal truths about who we are. Stereotyping often leads to othering, seeing people as only one aspect of their identities and different from another rather than trying to understand their full story and getting to know them on a deeper level. Each person has a story that we will not know anything about unless

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<sup>9</sup> Beshay, “U.S. Centenarian Population Is Projected to Quadruple Over The Next 30 Years,” Pew Research Center, April 14, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/01/09/us-centenarian-population-is-projected-to-quadruple-over-the-next-30-years/>.

<sup>10</sup> Lytle, Ashley et al., “Reducing Ageism With Brief Videos About Aging Education, Ageism, and Intergenerational Contact,” *The Gerontologist* 61, no. 7 (October 26, 2020): 1164–68, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnaa167>.lth Organization: WHO, “Ageism.”

we ask, and once we do, we often realize that we have more in common than we initially thought.

The AARP video, “Millennials Show Us What Old Looks Like” aims to break down stereotypes and the tendency to ‘other’ people. In the video, participants are asked their age and then asked to state the age at which someone is considered old. Then participants are told to do things like “Show... how an old person would cross the street” or “Show... how an old person would do a pushup.”<sup>11</sup> Millennials can be seen shuffling their feet or hunched over, walking with a fake cane, or struggling to complete one pushup before falling to the ground, indicating that they hold a stereotyped viewpoint of what it means to be old. Later, they are greeted by someone close to the age the participants consider old. Each person is instructed to teach the other person something they are good at. Skills and talents include jumping, dancing, yoga, and boxing. The experience did remarkably well in framing the attitude toward the stereotypical limitations of older adults. One participant remarked, “He could... do everything I told him to do”.<sup>12</sup> After the experience, each Millennial participant increased their age threshold for ‘old’ after they realized that chronological age is not a limiting factor for trying and learning new things. The younger participants also realized they had more in common with older participants than they thought, indicating the power of intergenerational connections and education to reduce ageism.

### Ageism

Age is one of the first noticeable characteristics when meeting others. Age is often used to categorize and divide people, leading to harm and injustice and causing social division. According to the World Health Organization, ageism is “the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or ourselves based on age.”<sup>13</sup> Ageism is everywhere and can affect people of all ages. However, when used colloquially, it often refers to discrimination against older people. Dr. Robert N. Butler, a world-renowned gerontologist and psychologist, dedicated his life to the needs and rights of older people through research and social advocacy, focusing on issues unique to that population. Dr. Butler recognized the discrimination against older adults in the 1960’s and coined the term ageism.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>AARP, “Millennials Show Us What ‘Old’ Looks Like | Disrupt Aging,” April 8, 2016

<sup>12</sup>AARP, “Millennials Show Us What ‘Old’ Looks Like | Disrupt Aging.”

<sup>13</sup>World Health Organization: WHO, “Ageism,” August 31, 2021, [https://www.who.int/health-topics/ageism#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/ageism#tab=tab_1).

<sup>14</sup>“Butler Legacy,” Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, September 13, 2023, <https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/research/centers/robert-n-butler-columbia-aging-center/about/butler-legacy>.

Aging does not occur in a vacuum; due to a person's unique life experiences, they might be placed at a 'double disadvantage' when it comes to age discrimination. Research supports the finding that People of Color and those with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed. A person who has a disability, is a person of color and is an older adult is even more likely to experience challenges finding employment.<sup>15</sup> Everyone's aging experience is unique, and different aspects of a person's identity might work together to make the experience more challenging. Kimberleé Crenshaw refers to this phenomenon as intersectionality and describes it as "a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves [creating] obstacles that are often not understood within conventional ways of thinking about... social justice advocacy structures".<sup>16</sup> Intersectionality is a reminder that each person's many identities intersect to create challenges that are unique to each individual.

Ageism takes on many forms, including explicit ageism. This occurs when an individual is aware of their ageist thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and deliberately acts on them. This might happen in a healthcare setting when younger people are prioritized for lifesaving vaccinations over older people because they are closer to death.<sup>17</sup> While this can happen, it is more common for ageist beliefs to be more implicit. Implicit ageism occurs "refers to the subconscious thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that shape a person's attitude toward older or younger people"<sup>18</sup>. This means a person could exhibit discriminatory behaviors without realizing or knowing how the beliefs formed. Implicit ageist beliefs are more difficult to change as they are often not visible forms of discrimination. These beliefs are usually rooted in a lack of knowledge, prejudice, and stereotypes that interact together and negatively affect society.

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<sup>15</sup> "3. the Intersection of Age with Other Grounds of Discrimination." 3. The intersection of age with other grounds of discrimination | Ontario Human Rights Commission. Accessed November 3, 2024.  
<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-discrimination-against-older-people-because-age/3-intersection-age-other-grounds-discrimination>.

<sup>16</sup>National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) , Kimberlé Crenshaw: What is Intersectionality?" YouTube video, 1:54, June, 22,2018,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViDtnfQ9FHc>.

<sup>17</sup>Brooke Zarecki. "Overcoming Ageism in Healthcare." Center for Healthy Aging, October 25, 2023.  
<https://www.research.colostate.edu/healthyagingcenter/2023/10/25/overcoming-ageism-in-healthcare/#:~:text=Implicit%20ageist%20behaviors%20may%20include,care%20that%20favored%20younger%20patients>.

<sup>18</sup> Hillary Young. "What Is Ageism and How Do We Tackle It? | Right at Home Blog | in Home Care for Seniors." Right at Home. Accessed November 3, 2024.  
<https://www.rightathome.net/blog/what-is-ageism>.

Stereotypes overgeneralize individuals based on their group membership. These beliefs and expectations are “stored in our cognitive structures and can lead to unfair treatment and discrimination”<sup>19</sup>. Applying prejudices and preconceived notions based on a person’s membership to a social group can contribute “to the creation or maintenance of hierarchical status in the relations among groups”.<sup>20</sup> This leads to a feeling of superiority among younger age groups and creates a sense of inferiority among older age groups. This creates division in society and contributes to a feeling of ‘otherness’. Discrimination based on real or perceived social group membership can create severe disadvantages in all aspects of society. One area where older individuals face discrimination is the workplace. They might face issues such as an employer “refusing to hire or promote [older] employees”, “encouraging or forcing retirement” or “using negative language when speaking to or about older employees”.<sup>21</sup>

Ageism can be portrayed in our speech and writing, but it can also be seen in pictures. One picture may not be ageist; however, if all the images and media we view depict older adults as frail and inactive, our collective imagery can become ageist. Over time, our mental conceptions can become limited. Words matter. For example, the phrase “senior citizen” has negative connotations. Using these words can activate negative ideas about young and older adults alike. An online search of the term returns thousands of images. While many images depict happy adults, many results show unhappy, frail adults who use walkers and wear frumpy clothing. That is visual ageism. Visual ageism refers to “visually underrepresenting older adults or presenting them in a discriminatory manner. Examples of visual ageism include the portrayal of older adults as lacking positive traits and the non-realistic or exaggerated portrayal” of members of the older population.<sup>22</sup> Consistently viewing images of older adults in this manner can harm the culture of a society by increasing conflict between generations of people, leading to possible discrimination in the workplace and beyond. Therefore creating less diverse and inclusive spaces and harming people of all ages.

Despite being a form of discrimination, ageism is rarely taken seriously. Ageist statements are often the topics of many jokes and radio and television commercials. For example, in a recent Draft Kings commercial featuring Kevin Hart and LeBron James, Hart

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<sup>19</sup> Patricia Fletcher, “What Is Ageism?,” National Institutes of Health, May 1, 2024, <https://www.edi.nih.gov/blog/opinion/what-ageism#:~:text=Ageism%20is%20a%20form%20of,the%20last%20socially%20acceptable%20prejudices>.

<sup>20</sup> Patricia Fletcher, “What Is Ageism?”

<sup>21</sup> Patricia Fletcher, “What Is Ageism?”

<sup>22</sup> Reuben Ng, “Societal Age Stereotypes in the U.S. and U.K. from a Media Database of 1.1 Billion Words.” International journal of environmental research and public health, August 21, 2021. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8391425/#:~:text=The%20role%20of%20the%20media,strong%20discursive%20dimension%20%5B14%5D>.



comments, “Aren’t you a little too old to be playing football? They want someone that can run a forty, not someone who is forty”.<sup>23</sup> Many people probably found this comment funny. However, it is discriminatory based on age. The commercial would not have been approved to air on television if Hart commented based on James’ race or sexuality. This is an example of how ageism is still largely invisible and socially acceptable.

Even though ageism is primarily accepted in society, it has far-reaching negative implications. The negative repercussions are so pervasive that the WHO considers ageism to be a world health crisis. Some of the impacts on society's health and well-being include being associated with earlier death, which is linked to poorer physical health, increased risky health behaviors such as unhealthy diet, poorer mental health, and an overall lower quality of life.<sup>24</sup> It has been documented that ageist viewpoints take seven and a half years off the average person’s life.<sup>25</sup> In essence, holding ageist viewpoints is as bad for the population as smoking. Most people know the risks associated with tobacco or other harmful behaviors, yet ageism is taking years off lives, and it is allowed to continue.

### Combating Ageism

Aging and the adverse effects of ageism can be combated; the WHO and other federal and state agencies are actively working to reduce ageism and recognize three strategies to do so, “policies and laws, educational activities and intergenerational interventions”<sup>26</sup>

The Positive Education about Aging and Contact Experiences (PEACE) model “highlights accurate education about aging and exposure to positive intergenerational contact as two key factors for reducing ageism.”<sup>27</sup> Many studies have examined different aspects of the PEACE model. In a research study developed by Aaron Guest designed to address ingrained beliefs surrounding ageism and gerontophobia, the fear of older adults, drawing was used as a foundation to explore what aging means. Undergraduate students in

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<sup>23</sup>Comment on Comercials 2, “Draft Kings 2024 Kevin Hart- LeBron James | New Costomers Bet \$5 GET \$200 Instantly - NFL,” August 24, 2024, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Am2hN\\_vJ8Ys](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Am2hN_vJ8Ys).

<sup>24</sup> World Health Organization: WHO, “Ageism.”

<sup>25</sup>Becky Levy et al., “Longevity Increased by Positive Self-perceptions of Aging.,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83, no. 2 (January 1, 2002): 261–70, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.83.2.261>.

<sup>26</sup> Ashley Lytle et al., “Reducing Ageism With Brief Videos About Aging Education, Ageism, and Intergenerational Contact,” *The Gerontologist* 61, no. 7 (October 26, 2020): 1164–68, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnaa167>.lth Organization: WHO, “Ageism.”

<sup>27</sup> Ashley Lytle, et. al., “Reducing Ageism With Brief Videos About Aging Education, Ageism, and Intergenerational Contact.”

Introduction to Gerontology courses were tasked with a six-element protocol. In the first element, students were prompted to draw a “ picture or representation of what comes to mind when they think of ‘aging’”<sup>28</sup> in ten minutes. Then, the students were asked to describe their drawings or representations in fifteen minutes. Elements three and four asked students to record their ages, years, and sex on the recording sheet. The sixth element asked students to write down the age at which someone is considered ‘old’. Finally, students were asked to write down words they associate with ‘old’ and ‘grandma.’

The average age at which someone was considered old was 65.2 years. Females reported a slight increase in the average age at 66.2 years<sup>29</sup>. This might be cultural, as sixty seven is the age required for retirement and Social Security benefits in the United States of America. Words that appeared in the accompanying descriptions of the drawings and with old age include “wrinkles,” “cane,” “bald/hair loss,” “slow,” “retirement,” and “male,” thus reinforcing negative connotations and stereotypes of aging and older adults. The presence of positive words such as ‘smile’ “...suggests the potential to achieve more accurate perceptions through educational interventions.”<sup>30</sup>. In this curriculum unit, students will participate in a modified version of the study elements to assess their perspectives on aging as part of the first lesson. They will then measure changes in ageist ways of thinking again near the end of the unit.

### *Diverse Cultural Perspectives on Ageing*

Today’s teachers must be culturally and linguistically responsive, especially in classes like the one where this curriculum unit was taught. The students speak a combination of three different languages, Spanish, Portuguese, and Kayah, and call a wide variety of countries home. These countries include, but are not limited to, Guatemala, Honduras, Venezuela, El Salvador, Colombia, Brazil, and Thailand.

In the Western world, societies have traditionally viewed aging as an “unfortunate aspect of life, taking extreme measures to retain youth for as long as possible”<sup>31</sup>. Western

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<sup>28</sup> Guest , Aaron et al., “Exploring College Students’ Attitudes Toward Older Adults: A Description of Methods Used by the Gerontological Literacy Network,” by Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education* 42–42 (2021): 578–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701960.2019.1638257>.

<sup>29</sup> Guest et al., “Exploring College Students’ Attitudes Toward Older Adults: A Description of Methods Used by the Gerontological Literacy Network.”

<sup>30</sup> Guest et al., “Exploring College Students’ Attitudes Toward Older Adults: A Description of Methods Used by the Gerontological Literacy Network.”

<sup>31</sup> “Cultural Perspectives on Aging: How the Experience of Aging Differs around the World " Online Graduate Programs in Innovative Aging Studies " College of Medicine " University of Florida,” University of Florida Online Graduate Programs in Inovative Aging Studies, September 23, 2024,

countries tend to embrace individualism, which puts the needs of the individual over the needs of others, often to the detriment of one's family from a young age as people are encouraged to pursue their dreams. This can cause "feelings of isolation"<sup>32</sup> among older adults as they age due to the loss of self and purpose as they no longer work full time. This can lead to an ageist viewpoint and undervaluing the contributions of the older adult population.

However, this is only the case in some cultures. For example, many Latin Americans live in multigenerational households and are expected to care deeply about their aging relatives.<sup>33</sup> According to research from AARP, many Hispanic adults aged thirty-five to fifty-five have positive perspectives on aging. Seventy percent of survey participants stated "life is more meaningful at fifty", "Sixty-five percent report feeling like reaching age fifty is an important milestone, and fifty-seven percent feel that fifty is still young"<sup>34</sup> In contrast, non hispanic adults (forty-five percent to sixty-three percent ) are less likely to state that getting older is much more about accomplishments in life than chronological age.<sup>35</sup>

Across Asia, respect and care for one's elders is integral to Buddhism; "In Cambodia, Malaysia, and Vietnam, at least eight-in-ten Buddhists hold this view."<sup>36</sup> Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge and celebrate that older adults' aging experiences and views are primarily cultural. It would not be culturally responsive to teach a curriculum unit that aims to change the narrative on aging from a mainly negative to an optimistic viewpoint and only teach from the perspective of those in the United States of America when many students might have a different perspective on aging. While some students might have a more positive perspective of the aging experience, it is crucial to consider that that positive attitude might just be of their grandparents or other significant older adults. One goal of this curriculum unit is for students to develop an optimistic viewpoint of all older adults, not just those close to them. All students deserve to be honored, valued, and respected for their identity and culture. Therefore, the students will explore the central beliefs of many diverse

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<https://online.aging.ufl.edu/2024/09/23/cultural-perspectives-on-aging-how-the-experience-of-aging-differs-around-the-world/>.

<sup>32</sup> "Cultural Perspectives"

<sup>33</sup> "Cultural Perspectives"

<sup>34</sup> Houghton, Angela. "Hispanic Attitudes on Aging." AARP, October 25, 2023.  
<https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/aging-experience/demographics/hispanic-aging-attitudes.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Houghton, Angela. "Hispanic Attitudes on Aging."

<sup>36</sup> Corichi, Manolo, and William Minor. "Across Asia, Respect for Elders Is Seen as Necessary to Be 'truly' Buddhist." Pew Research Center, July 17, 2024.  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/07/17/across-asia-respect-for-elders-is-seen-as-necessary-to-be-truly-buddhist/>.

cultures and their effects on society while comparing them to the beliefs held by many citizens of the United States of America.

### Positive Perspectives of Centenarians

A centenarian is any person who lives to be one hundred years old or older. According to a Pew Research report, the number of centenarians living in the United States of America is expected to quadruple over the next thirty years. Recent U.S. Census data report that “centenarians currently make up just 0.03% of the overall U.S. population, and they are expected to reach 0.1% in 2054”<sup>37</sup>. In the 1950s, an estimated 2,300 people aged 100 or higher lived in the United States of America. By 1990, that number was 37,000. Today, in 2024, that number is estimated to be 101,000; by 2054, it will be close to 422,000.<sup>38</sup>

There’s a famous saying in the gerontology community: “If you’ve seen one older person, then you have seen one older person.” This saying respects that each person’s aging experience is unique. Many people assume that they are unhappy, fragile people who are just waiting to die. Of course, some people reach later life who are not in the best of health, but generally speaking, those who live to reach 100 years or later have lived and continue to live happy, fulfilled lives. There are areas around the world called “Blue Zones.” In these areas, there are proportionately more people who live over the age of one hundred than in other places worldwide. These ‘zones’ occur all over the world, but researchers have found that they all share specific characteristics, including regular, intentional movement throughout life, strong social bonds, a sense of belonging and a purpose, and a positive attitude towards life.<sup>39</sup>

### Aging in Literature

Literature is a vital medium through which the values and beliefs of a society are transmitted. However, an analysis of present and past literature reveals that the “aged have been stereotyped and portrayed negatively”.<sup>40</sup> Ageism in literature results when authors do

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<sup>37</sup>Katherine Schaeffer, “U.S. Centenarian Population Is Projected to Quadruple over the next 30 Years,” Pew Research Center, January 9, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/01/09/us-centenarian-population-is-projected-to-quadruple-over-the-next-30-years/>.

<sup>38</sup>Katherine Schaeffer, “U.S. Centenarian Population Is Projected to Quadruple over the next 30 Years,”

<sup>39</sup>Buettner, Dan “How to Live to Be 100+,” n.d., [https://www.ted.com/talks/dan\\_buettner\\_how\\_to\\_live\\_to\\_be\\_100?subtitle=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_buettner_how_to_live_to_be_100?subtitle=en).

<sup>40</sup>Anita Dodson and Judith Hause, publication, Ageism in Literature. An Analysis Kit for Teachers and Librarians. (Acton, MA: McCarthy-Towne School, 1981).

not give older characters in their works “a full range of human behaviors, emotions, and roles”.<sup>41</sup>

Literature portrays authors' and societies' negative stereotypical views and negative images when older adult characters are only portrayed “in passive roles, such as storytelling, fishing or housekeeping”.<sup>42</sup> “Older men are depicted with wrinkles, white hair, and canes, while older women are portrayed as fat or skinny, with their hair in “buns” and wearing aprons”<sup>43</sup> or the personality of protagonistic older characters is one-dimensional and the characters are either portrayed as “crotchety” or “unfailingly pleasant”.<sup>44</sup> Representing the older adult population in this manner helps perpetuate negative stereotypes and teaches readers that older adults are not valued members of society and that life ends when a person enters their later years. Portraying older adults in this way can also affect their self-esteem leading them to believe that they are unlovable or flawed. People who internalize negative stereotypes may participate in self-discrimination which can have negative health impacts and decreased quality of life. Children can also internalize these beliefs and perpetuate the negative stereotypes in the lives of the older adults around them and think negative thoughts about themselves in later years.

It would be nearly impossible to remove all literature that has stereotypical views of older adults from a library and or classroom. However, educators can look at their options with a more critical eye and consider if other texts portray older adults more positively while still teaching the required skills and content. To help facilitate this process, Anita E. Dodson and Judith B. Hause two reading specialists from Boxborough Reginal School District and Acton Public Schools respectively published an ageism in literature analysis toolkit for teachers and librarians. Although it is outdated, published in 1981, the suggestions are still relevant. The analysis form they created includes ten guidelines that teachers can use to help them select literature that promotes positive perspectives on aging. Teachers are encouraged to rank the guidelines from one to three. One being poor, two being fair and three being good. Some of the guidelines include, “the older character plays a vital role in the story”, “the older person’s personality is fully developed”, “the older character is self-reliant as opposed to dependent”, “stereotypic adjectives... are not frequently used or exclusively used... to refer to older people” and “The older character is not engaged in

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<sup>41</sup> Anita Dodson and Judith Hause, Ageism in Literature. An Analysis Kit for Teachers and Librarians.

<sup>42</sup> Anita Dodson and Judith Hause, Ageism in Literature. An Analysis Kit for Teachers and Librarians.

<sup>43</sup> Anita Dodson and Judith Hause, Ageism in Literature. An Analysis Kit for Teachers and Librarians.

<sup>44</sup> Anita Dodson and Judith Hause, Ageism in Literature. An Analysis Kit for Teachers and Librarians.

stereotypic roles of his/her ethnic or racial group.”<sup>45</sup> If a book scores mostly “good” or “three” on the rubric it would most likely be an enriching addition to a teacher’s library or lesson.

A vast array of centenarians have had children’s literature written about them that can help educators expose students to stories that portray a positive perspective on aging and enjoying the later years of life. One such children’s book that meets the guidelines outlined in the “Ageism in Literature” toolkit is *Fauja Singh Keeps Going* by Simran Jeet Singh. The book tells the real-life story of Fauja Singh. Singh was born in Punjab, India, and his mobility challenges often prevented him from joining his peers in everyday activities. However, he ran his first marathon at eighty-one years old and later became the oldest person ever to run a marathon over one hundred and has set many records since.

In the forward of the book, Singh states,

All my life, people have set limitations on me. They said that I would never walk....No matter what people say, I always believe in myself. I knew my body better than anyone else. I knew what I was capable of. I keep trying. I never gave up.<sup>46</sup>

*Fauja Singh Keeps Going* tells the inspirational story of one determined centenarian. Still, countless others provide similar themes of determination and resilience and teach children of all ages that it is never too late to try something new.

## **Instructional Implementation**

A solid lesson and unit should incorporate the four domains of the English language (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Students will read texts from various genres, watch videos, write responses and reflections, talk to each other and share with the class, and listen to share-outs from other students throughout the unit. Some lessons may be more focused on one or two domains, but we will touch on each of the domains every day, and the focus should be even when spread throughout the entire curriculum unit.

The CMS Multilingual Learner department uses the P.I.E. method to develop lessons and units. “P” stands for preparing the learner. In this stage, teachers focus on developing concepts, activating (or building) relevant background knowledge, and introducing essential vocabulary in context. Then, teachers move into the “I” stage or interact with the text. This is the bulk of the lesson, where teachers and students deconstruct the text, focus on understanding a chunk, and then connect the chunk to the whole text by establishing connections between concepts within

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<sup>45</sup> Anita Dodson and Judith Hause, *Ageism in Literature. An Analysis Kit for Teachers and Librarians*.

<sup>46</sup> Singh, Simran Jeet *Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person to Ever Run a Marathon* (Penguin, 2020).

the text. Finally, teachers and students extend the learning process by demonstrating an understanding of new learning. This section of the lesson sequence contains traditional informal and formal assessments such as exit tickets, posters, and other projects.

### Prepare the Learner

The prepare the learner stage of a lesson helps activate prior knowledge for the lesson ahead. Often, English language learners have background knowledge on a topic but still need to possess the vocabulary to express their knowledge in English. Therefore, the strategies used in this moment of the lesson often focus on surveying learning and vocabulary development. Some methods that will be utilized include anticipation guides, novel ideas only, semantic maps, a preview of the text, think-pair, share, turn, and talks, as well as quick writes. Please refer to the lesson plans in the lesson activities section for details regarding these strategies and how they will be implemented.

### Interact with the Text

Interacting with the text is the most prominent moment of the lesson. In this section, teachers and students will deconstruct the text, focus on understanding a chunk at a time, reconnect a chunk to the whole text, and finally establish connections and establish connections between concepts in the text and their lives. It is important to note that, in this case, ‘text’ refers to anything that can be interpreted. Therefore, a text could be a video. In this unit, students will read and watch texts from various sources. Some strategies that will be used include close reading, jigsaw, reading with a focus, quick writing, and power sentences. Once again, please refer to the lesson sequence for an explanation and detailed instructions on implementing these strategies.

### Extend the Understanding (Assessment Strategies)

Finally, students extend the learning process by demonstrating new learning by completing a project or other task that assesses knowledge gained from the lesson sequence. While educators often think of assessments as tests or projects, students’ learning must also be assessed informally through quick checks for understanding. Students will complete quick writes and exit tickets found at the end of lessons one and two. Graphic organizers can also be used as assessment tools. For example, students complete graphic organizers to help them organize the critical elements of a summary for both “The Lobster Lady” and “Fauja Singh Keeps Going.” Teachers should check students’ understanding of “Who” or “When” before creating their summaries. This will help identify gaps in knowledge and areas needing further practice or

reteaching before students draft their summaries. Students will also complete venn diagrams comparing and contrasting the themes of the two texts that can be used as formative assessments. Every lesson has formative assessments built into the lesson sequence. For detailed information, please refer to each lesson's "Extend the Understanding" section.

Since the extend portion of the lesson is typically a project, it is an excellent opportunity to integrate art into the curriculum. Students will also extend or demonstrate their understanding of individual texts and concepts throughout the unit. Projects are more summative. For example, after viewing the infographics in lesson three, students will create a poster in which they are required to synthesize the information they learned about ageism and its effects with their thoughts and symbols to represent ideas. After reading "The Lobster Lady," students will create a mind mirror project demonstrating their understanding of key ideas and themes. This task allows students to synthesize and represent their understanding of a character by imagining their character looking in a mirror. However, instead of seeing their physical reflection, the character sees their inner mind: a combination of thoughts, needs, wishes, and fears. Students create a poster of their character's psyche to express these ideas. Once again, this section is not an exhaustive list of all the summative assessments for detailed instructions and many rubrics please refer to the "extend" portion of each lesson.

The final public service announcement project is an "extended" task or summative assessment for the unit. Students will create a video to share with the school community to raise awareness about ageism. For this video, students will consider all the knowledge and experiences they gained from engaging in the topic. The video will include a description of ageism and why it is a problem, what the world would be like if ageism did not exist or was not a problem, a proposed solution to the problem, and potential benefits for the community if the solution is implemented. The video should end with a call to action identifying how viewers can make positive changes. A rubric has not been included; however, educators are encouraged to grade holistically based on the inclusion of all elements and the accuracy and feasibility of the solution. For more details, refer to lesson seven.

## Instructional Implementation

It is important to note that preparing the learner, interacting with the text, and extending the learning are moments of a lesson. The amount of time spent in each moment will vary for each lesson. A typical lesson can take one to three days depending on the complexity of the task and the number of instructional minutes in each class period.



**Lesson Slides:** [PSA: Ageing isn't Bad, but Ageism Is](#)

Lesson One: All I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten
See <a href="#">Appendix Three</a> for necessary materials.
<p><b>Language Targets:</b></p> <p><b>I can infer meaning from and reframe text by having class discussions, working in collaborative groups, and understanding the central meaning and author's tone.</b></p> <p>The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to some of the academic vocabulary they will use throughout the unit and to have them begin thinking about how many ideas they have about life are instilled in them from a young age. This lesson has been adapted from the Charlotte Mecklenburg ELD 9 Unit 2 curriculum.</p>
Prepare the Learner
<p><b>Instructions:</b></p> <p><b>Vocabulary Sort &amp; Dialogue Intro:</b> Provide students with the vocabulary words, definitions, and examples to sort. Then, ask students to discuss the sorting activity using the sentence starters provided in the slides.</p> <p><b>Think-Write-Pair-Share</b>—Ask the students to think about a childhood or kindergarten memory. Then, ask the students to write about the memory. When they finish, students will share their memories with a partner.</p> <p><b>Group Brainstorming &amp; Discussion</b>—Ask each student to write one rule that might be needed in a Kindergarten class. Allow students to share their rules with their group. Then, ask the students to compile their responses into a list of “Rules for Children” on one sheet of paper.</p> <p>Then, each student will be asked to write one good rule for creating a better society. Allow students to share their rules with their group. Then, ask the students to compile their responses into a list, “Rules for Everyone,” on one sheet of paper. Ask the groups to compare and discuss the rules on the two lists.</p> <p><b>Figurative Language Mini-Lesson</b></p> <p>Present the Literal vs. Figurative Mini Lesson ( embedded in lesson slides) to the students.</p> <p><b>Practice</b></p> <p>Before continuing the lesson, students will complete a ten-question “quick check” to assess their understanding. They will be asked if statements are literal or figurative.</p>
Interact with the Text

**Guided Reading**

1. Read the text aloud.
2. Each partner will read a section - at the stop sign stop and discuss what they read.
3. Students will highlight four important rules.
4. As a class, discuss how the rules might be interpreted more for adolescents, adults, and society.

**Graphic Organizer Analysis (Page 2 of Guided Reading)**

Complete graphic organizer. Have students review the graphic organizer to discuss the rules. Students will identify literal meanings and symbolic meanings.

**Extending the Understanding****Collaborative Poem**

Create an original “All I Need to Know...” poem in small groups.

1. In groups of four, students will think of another activity or place outside of school where they might learn important lessons (for example, on the soccer team, in the kitchen, shopping at the mall, or in English class).
2. Students will title the poem with the new topic, “All I Need to Know I Learned (in the kitchen)...”
3. They will create 4-5 rules based on what they learned from the activity or place they chose. For each rule, include an image.

Allow students to share their posters and present 1 rule/real-world scenario.

Option: Create a gallery walk and let students walk through with sticky notes to write comments on three to five posters.

**Exit Ticket:**

To help facilitate some of the discussions in later lessons, students will respond to the question, “At what age do you begin to develop the majority of your beliefs? Can you change your beliefs?”.

**Lesson Two: What do I believe about aging?**

See [Appendix Three](#) for necessary materials.

**Language Targets:**

Through drawing, word associations, and watching and responding to videos, I can articulate how my beliefs surrounding aging and older adults could be stereotypes and perpetuate ageism.

## Prepare the Learner

### Instructions:

#### Drawing Activity

Ask students to draw a picture or representation of an “old person.” Give students 10 minutes to draw their pictures or representations. Then, ask students to provide a written explanation of their explanation in another 10 minutes. Ask students at which age they consider someone to be old.

#### Word Association/Novel Ideas

Students will work in groups of three to four and number their papers 1-8.

In groups, each person will take turns responding to the prompt: **“Write down words you associate with old.”** When someone answers, everyone in the group repeats the answer verbally and then writes it down. Continue until they have all eight responses. Students choose one person in their group to read out loud. Everyone stands up. The first group reads their responses and then sits down. As the groups read, if a response matches one on their list, put a checkmark beside it. The next group that reads will read ONLY the reactions that do NOT have a checkmark. Groups sitting down will add 1-2 new items from each list read to their own. Continue until every group has read their “novel” responses. Record the novel ideas on a class list. Have students repeat the process with the word **“grandma.”**

#### Connotation Sort

Students will be introduced to the concept of connotation. Briefly discuss the idea that words have emotions associated with them. Words can have positive, negative, or neutral connotations. Have students sort the words from the “old” and “grandma” lists. Then, discuss with the students which word has a more positive connotation and why they think it does.

#### Old Person Actions

Later in the “interacting with the text” section, students will watch “Millennials Show Us What Old Looks Like.” To help prepare students for the video's content, ask for student volunteers or have students respond to the “old person actions” in small groups. See the lesson slides for the prompts.

## Interact with the Text

### Millennials Show Us What Old Looks Like

Students will watch the video with the focus question, “What is the message or lesson of this video?”

### What is a Stereotype? Video Notes

Students will watch a video and complete cloze-style notes to facilitate the discussion of stereotypes. I recommend watching the video multiple times. I would slow the video down to .75 speed. The first time students watch the video, have them fill in as many words as possible. Students should understand that they likely will only understand some things but should be able to understand the main ideas. Before watching the video again, allow students to discuss the words they heard with a partner. Watch the video a second time and have students focus on trying to understand two or three more words. Finally, for the third time, put the subtitles of the video in English and pause the video to allow students to fill in the words they missed. As you watch the video for the third time, discuss the ideas with the students to ensure they understand them. After watching the video, have students write down the definition of “stereotype” and the example “All old people are waiting to die.” Prompt students to come up with their examples. They should have been exposed to plenty of examples at this point in the lesson. Encourage students to share their examples with a partner before sharing them with the class.

### Extending the Understanding

#### Exit Ticket

Students will extend their understanding of the lesson by providing one way older adults are wrongly made fun of and how they could change that way of thinking.

## Lesson Three: What is Ageism, and What are its Effects?

See [Appendix Three](#) for necessary materials.

### Language Targets:

After viewing and analyzing infographics, I can create a poster synthesizing information about ageism and its effects, using anticipation guides and graphic organizers as support.

### Prepare the Learner

#### Instructions:

#### Essential Questions

Use the two essential questions for the lesson as a focus for this activity (What beliefs do I hold about growing older and older adults? How can my beliefs affect how I perceive others?) Have students write them down in their notebooks. Have students provide answers to the questions based on current knowledge. Then, have students pair-share before discussing the questions as a whole group. Explain to students that everything they read and interact with today will help them answer the essential questions better. Explain to students that they will

revisit the two questions at the end of the lesson to add new knowledge and revise understanding.

### **Anticipatory Guide**

To begin exploring ideas and themes of the unit, students will read a series of five statements, check whether they agree or disagree, and provide a short reason to support their thinking. To practice speaking skills, students will discuss their opinions with a partner using the provided discussion stems (on the slide and the student handout).

## **Interact with the Text**

### **Ageism Infographics with Graphic Organizer**

Students will view the infographics posted around the room using the gallery walk style. As they walk around the room, they will complete the graphic organizer focusing on finding the answers to three main questions, “What is ageism?”, “What are the negative effects of ageism?” and “How can a positive perspective on aging be beneficial or helpful?”. Students may not be able to answer every question using every infographic. Explain to students that this is not the goal. The goal is to confidently and accurately answer each of the three questions at the end of the activity.

## **Extending the Understanding**

### **Collaborative Posters**

Each group of four students uses a large piece of paper and four markers of different colors. Each person must use only one color, and each teammate must sign the poster using their color. The time allotted to complete posters should be at most 45 minutes. The poster should synthesize information learned about ageism and its effects. The following should be included in the poster.

- At least two quotes from any of the texts shared in the lesson
- At least two original phrases or descriptions that synthesize critical information
- At least two symbols or icons representing key ideas shared by your team
- The poster should answer the three questions from the graphic organizer

### **Essential Questions**

Based on new knowledge, students will return to the essential questions posed at the beginning of the lesson and revise their understanding. Then, have students pair-share before discussing the questions as a whole group.

## **Lesson Four: Other Cultural Perspectives**

See [Appendix Three](#) for necessary materials.

**Language Targets:** I can identify the main idea, supporting details, and effect on society of different cultural perspectives on aging using expert jigsaw groups and graphic organizers.

### Prepare the Learner

#### Instructions:

##### **Padlet:**

Students will use the Padlet, a digital collaboration tool similar to an online bulletin-style discussion board. Students will consider the following question: “**List six rules for how you should treat older adults.**”

##### **Semantic Map**

Create a semantic map for the word “Culture.” Write the word culture in the center. Start simple if you have never done a semantic map as a class. Have students brainstorm out loud definitions, examples, non-examples, and related terms to the word in the center. Organize the ideas as you brainstorm. You can create as many bubbles stemming from the word in the center as needed. There are no right and wrong; just let the class think aloud about the word and discuss it organically - you can steer it as required, but accept all ideas first. After creating the map, briefly discuss the meaning of the word “culture” with students; after discussing with students, ask if they believe culture can affect our beliefs and if so, how.

### Interact with the Text

#### **Jigsaw Reading Activity**

**Teacher Note:** Each text comprises excerpts from two or three different articles. If you want to explore more, the student-facing text document links to the full text. In addition, the three different texts focus on Eastern, Western, and Latin American cultures. Consider having multiple groups of students read the same depending on your class size to facilitate smaller group sizes.

If this is your first time doing a jigsaw activity with your class, click [here](#) to learn more.

1. Ask students to read and follow the annotation guide for their assigned text.
2. Explain the Jigsaw process to students and model how it will work. Students must understand that they are responsible for returning information to this home group before switching to expert groups.
  - a. First, students will collaborate with their expert groups (other students who have read the exact text) to share their annotations using the sentence frames.
  - b. This same group will create a Google Slide using the template provided. Each student should have a copy.

- Once students have completed the slides, you may have the expert groups share with the class while everyone completes the Jigsaw Matrix. You may also have students meet with their home groups

### Extending the Understanding

#### **Compare and Contrast “Top Hat”**

A “Top Hat” is an alternative to the traditional Venn diagram for comparing and contrasting. The name comes from the shape of the graphic organizer. It is a T-chart to contrast two concepts with a singular text box below to list similarities between the ideas. Students will compare their assigned culture with another culture using their graphic organizers for support.

### Lesson Five: Centenarians are Just Like Us Pt 1 (The Lobster Lady)

See Appendix Three for necessary materials.

#### **Language Targets:**

I can write an objective summary of “The Lobster Lady” using a graphic organizer as a support.

### Prepare the Learner

#### **Instructions:**

#### **Quick Write/Pair Share:**

Students respond to the prompt, “What do you like to do in your free time? Do you think you’ll still do it when you are 100?” Once students are done writing, pair them with a partner to share their responses before sharing them with the entire class.

#### **Anticipation Guide/Teach Vocabulary**

Students will state whether they agree or disagree with the statements to facilitate the teaching of vocabulary and ideas from the text. Teachers should use Pear Deck to facilitate this activity, as it helps engage all students.

### Interact with the Text

#### **W’s Graphic Organizer**

As students read “The Lobster Lady,” they will complete a graphic organizer that asks them to respond to “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where,” and “Why/How.” Students will then use that information to create an objective text summary.

#### **“Lobster Lady turns 104”**

The book was published in 2021. To help reinforce the idea that Virginia Oliver is real, show students the video linked in the Slide Deck. As of June 4, 2024, she is 104 years old and still catching lobster!

### Extending the Understanding

#### Mind Mirror Poster

This task allows groups to synthesize and represent their understanding of a character in literature or history. Students imagine their character looking in a mirror. However, instead of seeing their physical reflection, the character sees their inner mind: a combination of thoughts, needs, wishes, and fears. Students create a poster of their character's psyche to express these ideas. For this project, students will create a poster for the Lobster Lady Virginia Oliver.

Ask students to think about their character and these questions:

What did he say?

What did he do?

What did he want?

What did he feel?

What did others do to/for him?

What did others say about/to him?

To represent the character, the mind map must include:

- Two quotes from the text that reveal the essence of the character's state of mind,
- Two hashtags to show key ideas or feelings going through the character's head,
- Two symbols related to the character's condition,
- Two drawings about the character's state of mind and
- One original phrase that describes a theme (lesson) of the text.
- Be creative with facial features (eyes, mouth, etc).

Teachers can have students present their mind mirrors if they would like.

### Lesson Six: Centenarians are Just Like Us Pt 2 (Fauja Singh Keeps Going)

See [Appendix Three](#) for necessary materials.

#### Language Targets:

1. I can write an objective summary of "Fauja Singh Keeps Going" using a graphic organizer as support.
2. I can compare and contrast nonfiction texts with similar themes.



### Prepare the Learner

#### Instructions:

#### Quick Write/Pair Share:

Students respond to the prompt, “Has anyone told you that you couldn’t do something? What was it? How did you react?” Once students are done writing, pair them with a partner to share their responses before sharing them with the entire class.

#### Anticipation Guide/Teach Vocabulary

Students will state whether they agree or disagree with the statements to facilitate the teaching of vocabulary and ideas from the text. Teachers should use Pear Deck to facilitate this activity, as it helps engage all students.

### Interact with the Text

**Teacher Note:** The lesson slides have embedded a video of the book being read aloud with pictures.

#### Clarifying Bookmarks

As students read/listen to the text, they will be encouraged to stop periodically and use the statements on the clarifying bookmark to help them process what they are reading. There are three different versions, depending on your students' needs.

#### 5 W’s Graphic Organizer

As students read “Fauja Singh Keeps Going,” they will complete a graphic organizer that asks them to respond to “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where,” “Why/How.” Students will then use that information to create an objective text summary.

### Extending the Understanding

#### Venn Diagram

Students will complete a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the big ideas from the texts “The Lobster Lady” and “Fauja Singh Keeps Going.”

### Lesson Seven: PSA

See [Appendix Three](#) for necessary materials.

#### Language Targets:

1. I can create a video to educate our school community on problems with ageism and how our world could be different without ageism.
2. I can reflect on how my opinions and perspectives of older adults and aging have changed throughout the unit.

### Prepare the Learner

#### Instructions:

##### Power Sentence:

- First, read the sentence (“The funny thing about ageism as a form of discrimination is that we are essentially discriminating against our future selves” chorally as a class in four voices (assign each group a portion to read).
- Students will explore subjects, verbs, and objects; the typical sentence order is typically written in English.
- Then, ask students to reread the sentence and write their responses to the question prompts.

### Interact with the Text

#### **What is a PSA?**

Show slides explaining what a public service announcement is.

#### **PSA Analysis:**

Students will analyze “Age Proud Bristol” to determine the elements they must include in their public service announcement.

### Extending the Understanding

#### **Adobe Express Video:**

Students will create a video using a planning guide, an Adobe Express video template, Google Slides, and screen recording software to educate them on ageism's problems and how our world could be different without it.

When students are finished creating the video, have them present their videos to the class.

#### **I used to think... Now I think...**

Students will reflect on their learning and experiences by completing these statements: “I used to think aging was.... Now I think aging is...” and “I used to think older adults were... Now I think older adults are....”

## **Appendix 1: Teaching Standards**

### **WIDA ELD Standard 1: Social and Instructional Language**

#### **ELD-SI.4-12.Narrate**

- Connect stories with images and representations to add meaning
- Identify and raise questions about what might be unexplained, missing or left unsaid
- Recount and restate ideas to move the dialogue forward

#### **ELD-SI.4-12.Inform**

- Summarize the most important aspects of information
- Define and classify facts and interpretations; determine what is known and unknown

#### **ELD-SI.4-12.Explain**

- Generate and convey initial thinking.
- Offer alternatives to extend or deepen awareness of factors contributing to particular outcomes.

#### **ELD-SI.4-12.Argue**

- Generate questions about different perspectives
- Support or challenge an opinion, premise, or interpretation
- Clarify or elaborate ideas based on feedback
- Evaluate changes in thinking, identifying trade-offs
- Refine claims and reasoning based on new information or evidence

### **WIDA ELD Standard 2: Language for Language Arts**

#### **ELD-LA.9-12.Narrate.Interpretive**

- Identify themes or central ideas that develop over the course of a text
- Analyze how the author choices about character attributes and actions relate to story elements
- Evaluate the impact of specific word choices on meaning, tone, and explicit vs. implicit point of view

#### **ELD-LA.9-12.Narrate.Expressive**

- Develop and describe characters and their relationships over a progression of experiences or events.
- Engage and adjust for audience

### **ELD-LA.9-12.Argue.Interpretive**

- Analyze the use of rhetoric and details to advance a point of view or purpose
- Evaluate the relevance and sufficiency of evidence as well as the validity of reasoning to support claims.

### **ELD-LA.9-12.Argue.Expressive**

- Introduce and develop precise claims and address counterclaims
- Support claims and refute counterclaims with valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone
- Logically organize claims and counterclaims, reasons and evidence

## **Language Arts**

### *Reading Standards for Literature:*

#### Key Ideas and Evidence

**RL.9-10.1:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**RL.9-10.2:** Determine a text's theme and analyze in detail its development throughout the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**RL.9-10.3** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

**RL.9-10.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

### *Reading Standards for Informational Text*

#### Key Ideas and Evidence

**RI.9-10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**RI.9-10.2** Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development throughout the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

## Craft and Structure

**RI.9-10.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and

### *Writing Standards*

#### *Text Types, Purposes, and Publishing*

**W.9-10.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### *Research*

**W.9-10.4** Use digital tools and resources to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

## Appendix Two: Vocabulary Quick Reference Guide

**Ageism:** unfair treatment of people because of their age, often because they are considered too old

**Centenarian:** a person who is 100 years old or more

**Gerontology:** the scientific study of old age and the process of growing old

**Gerontophobia:** a fear of older people

**Gerontologist:** a person who studies the process of people growing old

**Discrimination:** the practice of treating somebody or a particular group in society less fairly than others

**Prejudice:** an unreasonable dislike of or preference for a person, group, custom, etc., primarily when it is based on their race, religion, sex, etc.

**Stereotype:** a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality and may cause hurt and offense

## Appendix Three: Teaching Materials

### *Lesson One:*

In addition to the handouts mentioned in the lesson sequence, teachers will need

- Chart paper to create an anchor chart/ T-chart for the sticky note brainstorming activity

- Art supplies such as markers, colored pencils, or crayons to complete the collaborative poster
- construction/blank copy paper for the collaborative poster

#### *Lesson Two:*

In addition to the handouts mentioned in the lesson sequence, teachers will need

- Blank paper for the drawing activity
- Student notebooks or other locations for students to record notes and ideas not on a handout

#### *Lesson Three:*

In addition to the handouts mentioned in the lesson sequence, teachers will need

- Tape to hang the printed infographics
- Blank paper for the collaborative poster
- Art supplies such as markers, colored pencils, or crayons to complete the collaborative poster
- Student notebooks or other locations for students to record notes and ideas not on a handout

#### *Lesson Four:*

In addition to the handouts mentioned in the lesson sequence, teachers will need student notebooks or other locations for students to record notes and ideas not on a handout

#### *Lesson Five:*

Teachers will need a copy of " The Lobster Lady " in addition to the handouts mentioned in the lesson sequence. Consider borrowing this book from your school or local public library.

#### *Lesson Six:*

In addition to the handouts mentioned in the lesson sequence, teachers will need a copy of "Fauja Singh Keeps Going." Consider borrowing this book from your school or local public library.

#### *Lesson Seven:*

In addition to the handouts mentioned in the lesson sequence, teachers will need student notebooks or other locations for students to record notes and ideas not on a handout.

## **Annotated List of Resources For Teachers and Students**

“Free Design, Photo, and Video Tool - Design Made Easy | Adobe Express.” Adobe Express. Accessed October 19, 2024. <https://www.adobe.com/express/>.

Adobe Express, formally Adobe Spark, is a free or paid app or website where users can create shareable content such as posters, flyers, social media posters, logos, videos, and more.

“Comprehensive K-12 Solutions for Enhanced Learning.” Pear Deck. Accessed October 12, 2024.

Peardeck is an interactive extension that can be added to a Google Slides presentation. Students connect to the presentation through a shared code that allows them to join the presentation at [joinpd.com](https://joinpd.com). Students can remain anonymous if they choose to do so. Peardeck allows for real-time feedback as all students participate; teachers can see responses in real-time as students are typing. Answers can then be projected to the class to check for understanding and discuss responses. Teachers have a variety of question types available to them through Peardeck to engage all students, including Free-response questions with short text, long text, or number capabilities. The Pear Deck allows all students “think time” to formulate an answer before sharing, so they are a little more confident in sharing their answers.

Muse Wellbeing. “Stereotypes for Kids - What Are Stereotypes?,” August 13, 2022

This video is a short, easy-to-understand overview of stereotypes used in lesson two, helping students understand the basics of stereotypes. Stereotypes are fixed ideas or images many people have of a particular type of person or thing based on one aspect of their identity. This idea is often untrue and may cause hurt and offense. Students can then apply this information to their ideas of older adults and see that many of their views are stereotypes perpetuated by popular culture, such as movies and TV.

News Center Maine. “Maine’s ‘Lobster Lady’ Turns 104,” June 8, 2024.

“The Lobster Lady” was published in 2022. Oliver is 104 years old as of June 8, 2024. This forty-seven-second video comes from News Center Maine’s YouTube channel. It is an excellent addition to lesson five after instructors read the story with students to reinforce some of the themes from the story.

Singh, Simran Jeet. *Fauja Singh keeps going: The story of the oldest person ever running a Marathon*. Holland: Dreamscape Media, LLC, 2021.

This book tells the real-life story of Fauja Singh. Singh was born in Punjab, India, and his mobility challenges often prevented him from joining his peers in everyday activities. However, he ran his first marathon at eighty-one years old and later became the oldest person ever to run a marathon, over one hundred, and has set many records since then. *Fauja Singh Keeps Going* tells the inspirational story of one determined centenarian. Still, countless others provide similar themes of determination and resilience and teach children of all ages that it is never too late to try something new.

Walsh, Barbara, and Shelby J. Crouse. *The lobster lady: Maine's 102-Year-Old Old legend*. Irish Rover Press, 2022.

This book tells the story of Virginia Oliver, the oldest lobster trapper in Maine. People worldwide think Virginia is brave and strong for such difficult labor at her age, but she knows the “secret to staying young” is doing what she loves. She does not plan to stop lobstering until she dies, teaching the young and old alike that finding your passion keeps you young at heart.

“Visual Collaboration for Creative Work and Education.” Padlet. Accessed October 12, 2024.

Padlet is a free digital collaboration tool similar to an online bulletin-style discussion board. Students can collaborate in real time with questions posted by the Padlet creator. Participants can respond to questions in a comment using text and multimedia such as images, audio files, videos, and l



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