



Eastern Illinois  
Univeristy

# *Comprehensive Portfolio*

Halie Selsor

ENG 4801



# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Resume   | 3  |
| Teaching Philosophy                              | 5  |
| DEI Statement                                    | 7  |
| Clinical Experience Essay (Pedagogy Reflection)  | 9  |
| Clinical Experience Hours Log                    | 19 |
| Unit Plan  | 20 |
| Evidence of Professional Organization Membership | 94 |

# HALIE SELSOR

selsorhalie@gmail.com | 217-799-6034 |  
2500 Nantucket St. Apt 402  
Charleston, IL, 61920

---

## OBJECTIVE

Pursuing a degree in English Language Arts with the goal of inspiring and education secondary-level students. Seeking opportunities to apply my knowledge, skills, and experiences in a classroom setting to create meaningful educational opportunities that empower and inspire students.

---

## EDUCATION

### Bachelor of Arts

Eastern Illinois University

- Major in English Language Arts (ELA) Teacher Education

Aug 2023 - Present

Expected Grad.

Date - May 2026

### Associates of Arts

Danville Area Community College

Aug 2021 - May 2023

---

## HONORS

### Morris Family Endowment in English Scholarship Recipient

- Spring 2023

### The James Jones Fund Scholarship Recipient

- Spring 2025

### Dr. Robert V Wharton Scholarship Recipient

- Spring 2025
- 

## ORGANIZATIONS

### Illinois Association of Teachers of English

- Member, Spring 2025-Present

### Learning for Justice

- Member, Spring 2024-Present
- 

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### Charleston and Mattoon School Districts, IL

- *Classroom Observations*, Fall 2024, Spring 2025
  - Observed experienced educators and their various methods, strategies, and skills.

### Hoopeston Area School District, IL

- *Classroom Observations*, Fall 2024, Spring 2025
  - Observed experienced educators and their various methods, strategies, and skills.

---

## EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

### Cross Functional Team Member, AMC Theaters - Mattoon IL

- Collaborated with team members to ensure seamless business operations
- Demonstrated multitasking skills through food and beverage preparations, stock management, and meeting health standards.
- Resolved guest concerns promptly, minimizing disruptions and ensuring a positive overall experience.
- Provided outstanding guest service by welcoming patrons, addressing concerns, and delivering high-quality service daily.

### Cross Functional Team Member, Monical's Pizza Co. - Hoopeston IL

- Managed time efficiently by balancing multiple tasks, ensuring smooth daily operations, and meeting critical deadlines.
- Developed creative and effective solutions to customer and team-related challenges
- Optimized workflows to improve team efficiency during high-demand periods.
- Interacted with and supported team members, fostering collaboration and maintaining a positive work environment

---

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

### Eastern Illinois University Food Pantry - Charleston IL

- Fall 2024
  - Learned the importance of community support and resource management through hands-on experience assisting individuals in need.

---

## KEY SKILLS

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| • Communication      | • Conflict Resolution      |
| • Problem-solving    | • Interpersonal Relations  |
| • Adaptability       | • Organizational Abilities |
| • Team Collaboration | • Multimodal Analysis      |

## **Teaching Philosophy**

### **Objectives**

As an aspiring English Language Arts (ELA) teacher, I want my students to develop an understanding of education as a transformative force that shapes academic skills and fosters self-awareness, empathy, and critical thought. I believe in cultivating a classroom environment that prioritizes academic thought and intellectual independence, as well as personal connections to reading and writing. Through a personal exploration of teaching philosophies within a structured educational environment, I feel that my own teaching philosophy blends humanist and liberal approaches, prioritizing both engagement and rigorous inquiry to empower students as purposeful readers, writers, and citizens.

### **The Role of Literacy in Secondary Education**

Reading and writing are deeply interconnected, serving as tools for self-expression, critical analysis, and ultimately, civic engagement. Literature provides students with exposure to a range of perspectives that encourage them to challenge existing biases and inequalities, acting as both a reflection of society and for personal consideration; this cultivates empathy and broadens student understanding of the world around them. I believe that literature should not be passively examined – rather, students must question, critique, and engage with literature as a dynamic conversation between author and reader. Writing, in turn, allows students to refine their ideas, develop their voices, and advocate for change as active citizens.

I will emphasize both critical questioning and personal engagement in literacy instruction in my future classroom, guaranteeing that students approach texts analytically while also connecting emotionally. Through close reading strategies, guided discussions, and reflective writing, students will learn to interrogate multimodal narratives while developing meaningful interpretations in order to “find validity and empowerment in their research and their writing” (260). In these ways, the many components of the ELA become not just academic jargon, but a process of discovery where students are enabled to explore ideas, develop and refine arguments, and express personal perspectives with clarity and purpose.

### **Pedagogical Approach**

My approach to teaching literacy emphasizes scaffolding, multimodal engagement, collaborative learning, and many principles from the Universal Design for Learning (UDL). From my perspective, students thrive when they are given both structured support and intellectual autonomy, enabling them to develop confidence in their literary abilities. I plan to incorporate such methods as inquiry-based analysis, Socratic circles, collaborative discussion and writing, and scaffolded analysis and writing alongside multimodal content to provide students with multiple means of engagement with materials and ways to demonstrate comprehension. By blending structured learning with creative exploration, students will become

both analytical thinkers and expressive writers, prepared to engage thoughtfully with the text, ideas, and world around them.

In my opinion, teaching ELA is more than transmitting technical skills – it is about nurturing independent thinkers, compassionate citizens, and confident readers and writers. As educators, we must work to encourage students to think critically and inspire confidence in them to share their insights, both academically and in their personal lives. I want to guide my students toward both self-discovery and critical analysis, ensuring they leave my classroom fully equipped with the ability to engage deeply with and think critically about multimodal literature while meaningfully expressing their insights and opinions. This balance between rigor and connection helps to scaffold my own goals to help students succeed academically while growing into ethical citizens and engaged, lifelong learners.

## DEI Statement

I grew up in a small, rural community. My actual hometown has about 100 people who reside there – all of them white, all of them straight, all of them Christian. My “hometown” was slightly more diverse with a larger population of around 4,600. Growing up, I did not personally know any people of color, anyone a part of the LGBTQ+ community, and barely anyone who was not a Christian. While I found a small, culturally diverse group of friends in high school, the small world around me was anything but.

When I started college in August 2021, I made a very small transition from high school to community college. I would like to say that it was here that I encountered many culturally diverse individuals and socially just ways of thinking, but that is not entirely true. While the education I received at this community college *was* more culturally responsive than anything I had been exposed to in a classroom before due to their transparency concerning social justice issues including race, gender, and the climate crisis, and the integration and inclusion of numerous multicultural texts -- there was a lack of diversity in both the student body and faculty, and I found that my relationships and social experiences remained very much the same. However, it was during my first year of community college that I realized that a more inclusive, equitable world *was* possible. I began pursuing my degree in education, aspiring to be a positive, culturally responsive role model for future generations; I am still on that journey today. Transferring to Eastern Illinois University (EIU) was eye-opening and inspiring, to say the least. There are numerous diverse cultures and lifestyles on campus – both students and faculty provide unique, insightful perspectives that I had previously never been exposed to. Additionally, the literature and content I have engaged with since becoming a student at EIU are incredibly varied and provide insightful commentary on numerous socially relevant issues such as race, gender, sexuality, and class. As I continue to grow and experience new things, I want to apply what I have learned from these culturally engaging opportunities and experiences in my future classroom.

Ensuring that my future students are exposed to culturally responsive materials that reflect their own positions in society, as well as those of others, is one of my top goals as a pre-service teacher. I will continuously work to remain aware of my implicit biases and the impact of my words, educating myself each day to become a better educator and ally to all students by maintaining awareness of the socio-political climate of the United States, campaigning for inclusivity and equity within my community, and educating myself every day on diverse perspectives. As I continue my education, become licensed, and establish myself as a seasoned educator, I will consistently strive to create an accessible, inclusive learning environment for every student I encounter. Incorporating inclusive practices into my classroom will be a process that takes many forms, starting with ensuring that the backgrounds and experiences of culturally diverse students are reflected in the content, materials and resources utilized in my classroom. Additionally, this will appear through incorporated skills and strategies supported by the

Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Such methods include providing student choice and autonomy, ensuring varied levels of challenge and support that accommodate various needs and abilities, prioritizing multimodal learning and explicit, scaffolded instruction, and offering multiple means of interaction and expression. Overall, I want to show students that I care; I want to serve as a positive role model, providing a safe space for struggling students.

In closing, I emphasize that diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential elements of successful learning for all students. Further, I believe that creating and maintaining a culturally responsive classroom environment will ensure that students feel confident to take ownership of their learning, feel respected when sharing insights and ideas, and feel safe to take risks and make mistakes during their academic journeys. In doing so, students will emerge from my classroom as confident, passionate, and empathetic individuals equipped with the necessary skills to self-reflect and critically analyze the world around them to cultivate a more inclusive future.



## **Clinical Experience Essay/Pedagogy Reflection Essay**

### **Overview**

This semester, I observed Mrs. T's Period 1 Honors English III class and Period 3 English II class at Charleston High School (CHS). CHS utilizes a block schedule, so Period 1 precedes Period 3. During the first class period, Mrs. T began instruction with a mini-lesson on embedding quotations in essay writing before releasing students to engage with peer review of their analytical essay outlines and first drafts. During Period 3, class began with a mini-lesson on proofreading and sentence revision; following this lesson, students engaged with a shared reading of chapters 25-27 of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee using an audiobook. While observing the two classes back-to-back, I noticed a great difference in the way that Mrs. T engaged with students, as well as a difference in the ways the students engaged with the lessons and materials. The Honors III class was disengaged, talkative, and unprepared for class and received little supervision or direction from Mrs. T. In contrast, the English II class was incredibly interested in the novel, frequently made inferences and predictions about the novel, and engaged with answering guiding and pressing questions. I also noticed that students were actively (and excitedly, I might add) leading the conversation throughout the period. This class received a lot more supervision and explicit direction from Mrs. T. The students in each class were engaging with entirely different materials, assignments, and activities, which I felt was very interesting.

### **Learning Environment**

In the Honors III class, it seemed to me that instruction, structure, and direction concluded after the Embedding Quotes mini-lesson at the beginning of the period. During this mini-lesson, Mrs. T stood at the front of the room and reviewed the contents of a slideshow with her students. Throughout instruction, Mrs. T read from the slides, modeling how and why to embed quotes in the proper ways. Although she frequently asked questions, students were not engaged, and the room sat silently until she provided an answer and moved on to the next step. To foster engagement, I might incorporate more interactive elements within the lesson through examples for students to complete in their notebooks or a turn-and-talk. At points, she would instruct students to interact with examples on the digital whiteboard; students would copy the sentences into their notebooks, practicing embedding the quotes and citations. Following the lesson, Mrs. T provided each student with a peer review handout and offered explicit directions on how to engage with the activity. After handing out the peer review sheet, Mrs. T stood at the front of the room at her desk, grading papers. At first, the room was completely silent, and I was unsure why students were not actively engaging in discussion. To combat this, I might have asked students to move/turn their desks to face one another in their pairs or groups to promote more active engagement with the task. In no time, however, the classroom erupted into conversation, although many of these discussions had nothing to do with the peer review

assignment. There was little intervention from Mrs. T, however. Notably, the students at the front of the room were far more engaged than those at the back of the room. One way that I might have approached this peer review session differently. As stated above, I think having students turn their desks to face one another may have fostered more active engagement with the assignment in the beginning. Additionally, I think that completing multiple checks for understanding and consistently monitoring student progress would have been beneficial to keeping students on track.

In contrast to Period 1, Period 3 – English II, direct instruction, structure, and explicit direction were maintained throughout the period. To begin, students engaged with the Proofreading Mini-lesson, taking notes, answering questions, and responding to prompts both in their notebooks and aloud. Following the mini-lesson, students revisited a short list of review questions about previous chapters of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This evolved into a larger discussion where students practiced the “four key comprehension tools: questioning, summarizing, predicting, and clarifying” discussed in the text *Reading For Understanding* (Schoenbach et al., 75). Students made inferences and predictions about the text, answering guiding and pressing questions from Mrs. T, pushing them to examine and clarify their reasoning for the predictions made. Following this discussion, students participated in a shared reading of the text using an audiobook, which Mrs. T paused frequently to ask questions about the novel’s contents. Throughout the entire period, students were engaged with and excited about the text, leading discussions as well as asking and responding to peer questions. The text *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Practice into Promise* notes that “good evidence points to the power of literate conversation – discussion – in fostering both literacy development and the acquisition of content knowledge....discussion-based instruction was more effective at each grade level... and for students from every achievement group and ethnic group” (Allington, 281). Due to the stark differences concerning engagement and interactivity between the two classrooms observed, I am led to wonder if the Honors English III class may have benefited more from structured classroom discussions about their essays and individualized teacher feedback rather than partner-based peer review.

## **Cultural Diversity**

Concerning the Honors English III class, there was little discussion to be had about cultural diversity or social justice topics. However, the English II class was completely centered around discussions of cultural diversity as they read and analyzed *To Kill a Mockingbird*. What I truly enjoyed about observing the conversations of the English II class was that the class was culturally diverse, and each student was confident in providing their own unique perspective on the text and questions being asked. While Mrs. T and her students conversed about the text, I could not help but think of suggestions made in the text *Positionality, Epistemology, and Social*

*Justice in the Classroom*: “through dialogue, we are led into doubts about the certainty of the “correctness” of our own position, as we come to learn that our views may be constrained by the narrow range of experiences we have had” (Takacs, 170). Throughout the discussion, Mrs. T encouraged students to share their insights and perspectives to broaden engagement and produce richer discourse about the text. Through this discourse, the class engaged in what Takacs calls “cooperative argumentation,” which prioritizes arguing “towards consensus rather than toward winning” (174). Further, I witnessed a glimpse of Mrs. T’s dedication to culturally diverse instruction by observing the ways she taught *How to Kill a Mockingbird*. In less culturally responsive classrooms, educators might ignore the “white savior” elements of this text or even highlight them as socially progressive. However, I noticed that Mrs. T actively worked to “deconstruct, construct, and reconstruct” the text, pushing students to analyze the “distortions and omissions” through reliance on “the experiences and knowledge” of she and her students (Ladson-Billings, 32). This was especially relevant as she led her students (or rather, they led her) in discussions about Miss Gates, her hypocrisy, and explicit racism.

### **Differentiated Instruction**

Due to the lack of lengthy direct instruction during the Honors English III class, I do not have much to say about the use of differentiated instruction in this class. The students had all read *The Great Gatsby* before crafting an outline and first draft of their essay. Further, there was no other means of expression to demonstrate knowledge other than writing the essay. While, of course, in an ELA classroom, writing in its many forms is important, I think that the lack of engagement from students in the Honors English III class was partially due to a lack of interest in the assignment. If I were to alter one thing about what I observed in this class, I would attempt to facilitate a bit more flexibility in order to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge using “representational strategies that best suited the work they hoped to accomplish” (Shipka, 345). In prioritizing multimodality through allowing students to engage with multiple means of expression, I believe that their engagement with and interest in the assignment would have been elevated.

Concerning the English II class, I felt that Mrs. T did a great job providing students with multiple access points throughout the period. Students engaged with a digital, visual presentation, taking handwritten notes. Additionally, following the mini lesson, students interacted collaboratively during class discussion, before listening to an audiobook version of their unit text. Throughout this lesson, Mrs. T provided students with multiple means of expression, engagement, and representation, giving learners “various ways of acquiring information and knowledge... alternatives for demonstrating what they know” and worked to “tap into learners’ interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase motivation” (Dolmage, 2). For this class, Mrs. T appeared to understand her students and their abilities, and employed numerous UDL strategies (such as interactive elements in the mini lesson and using an

audiobook to read along with) to keep them engaged and interacting excitedly with the contents of the core text and lesson.

## **Social Justice**

The English II class conversed about social justice as they read *To Kill a Mockingbird* during my observation, discussing structural racism, systemic discrimination and injustice against people of color, and the American Justice System (or “injustice” system in *To Kill a Mockingbird*) as they reviewed the previous chapters and read chapters 25-27 alongside the audiobook. As established in the essay “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference,” by Audre Lorde, “Much of Western European history conditions us to see human differences in simplistic opposition to each other: dominant/subordinate, good/bad, up/down, superior/inferior” (114). Although many of these sentiments are depicted in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Mrs. T worked to guide students through difficult conversations of race and inequality while pointing out the simplistic nature of it’s story, enabling students to engage more critically with the (albeit dated and permeated with white saviorism) social justice themes of the novel. Examining these elements of the novel through a more critical, anti-racist lens seemed to empower students, encouraging them to share their diverse interpretations and observations about the text and its historical contexts.

## **Critical Thinking & Real World/Cultural/Societal Connections**

While I did not observe many real world connections in the Honors English III class, there were multiple in the English II class. As the students led conversations on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, they consistently made connections to injustices they are seeing in this United States today. For example, while discussing the role of Miss Caroline and her blatant hypocrisy concerning the Holocaust and racial injustices in America, many students open discussions about Donald Trump’s treatment of undocumented individuals and the (typically) white, conservative support of these policies. As noted in the article “Made in the (Multicultural) U.S.A.: Unpacking Tensions of Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Education” by Nina Asher, “such episodes can be productive. At the very minimum, they serve as ‘sites of resistance’ in the K-12 and multicultural... classroom, where individual students... can resist the oppression of silencing forces” (71). While these students may not have been “on task” in terms of solely discussing the novel, their interest and passion toward the story inspired them to make real world connections that, in the end, were quite productive in helping them unpack the racial injustice of the novel.

## **Integrating the Language Arts Threads & Crafting Cross-Curricular Connections**

Although I did not observe this during my visit in the Honors English III classroom, I am aware that the class did discuss cross-curricular connections. Mrs. T informed me that students had just finished reading *The Great Gatsby*, and had spent time examining the wild lifestyles of Americans in the 1920s. Additionally, ELA threads were incorporated into the classroom, as students read and analyzed the novel together before examining the novel's contents more closely on their own while writing their essays in order to demonstrate their comprehension of the story and themes. In the English II classroom, cross-curricular connections were made as students discussed not only the past violence and injustice that plagued Black Americans in the rural south during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, but they also made contemporary connections to these issues as well. These ties are ground in U.S History and Government/Civics. Language arts threads were integrated as students practiced speaking and listening during discussion, literary analysis during shared the shared reading of the novel, and close reading each time Mrs. T stopped the audiobook to ask questions about the contents of the story.

### **Professional Reflection/Growth & Reflection on Pedagogy/Practice Alignment**

As I continue to learn and grow as an educator, there are multiple methods that Mrs. T used in her classroom that I would like to adopt for my own class one day. From allowing student choice in who they worked with during peer review in Honors English III to engaging in critical discussions about historical and contemporary social justice issues with her English II class, I felt that I received a very well-rounded, insightful observation experience. Although I may have addressed a few things differently in the Honors English III class, I still have much to learn about direct instruction, structuring group work and peer review, and managing a classroom. Continuing on with my studies as a pre-service teacher, I hope that I will be able to adopt a wide array of teaching skills including leading students in close reading and literary analysis so that I can facilitate a culturally responsive, student-led classroom environment like the ones I saw while observing Mrs. T.

## Works Cited

- Allington, Richard. "Effective Teachers, Effective Instruction." *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into Practice*, edited by Kylene Beers et al., Heinemann, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 2007, pp. 273–288.
- Asher, Nina. "Made in the (multicultural) U.S.A.: Unpacking tensions of race, culture, gender, and sexuality in Education." *Educational Researcher*, vol. 36, no. 2, Mar. 2007, pp. 65–73, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x07299188>.
- Dolmage, Jay. "Universal design: Places to Start." *Disability Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 2, 19 May 2015, pp. 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v35i2.4632>.
- Schoenbach, Ruth, et al. "Acquiring Cognitive Tools for Reading." *Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms*, 1st ed., Jossey-Bass Inc, San Fransico, California, 1999, pp. 74–97.
- Shipka, Jody. "Negotiating Rhetorical, Material, Methodological, and Technological Difference: Evaluating Multimodal Designs." *College Composition & Communication*, vol. 61, no. 1, 1 Sept. 2009, pp. 343–364, <https://doi.org/10.58680/cc20098326>.
- Takacs, David. "Positionality, Epistemology, and Social Justice in the Classroom." *Social Justice*, vol. 29, no. 4 (90), 2002, pp. 168–81. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29768156>.

## Pedagogy Reflection Essay Rubric

| Criteria   | NCTE Standard(s) | Not Acceptable (1)  | Acceptable (2)   | Target (3)   | Candidate Score |
|--|------------------|---|--|--|-----------------|
| Knowledge of Pedagogical & Ability to Reflect on the Teacher's Role in Motivating and Instructing Diverse Learners | NCTE III.1       | Candidate does not showcase adequate knowledge of theory, research, and best practice in terms of crafting ELA learning experiences and instructional strategies that are motivating and accessible to all students, including English language learners, students with special needs, students from diverse language and learning backgrounds, those designated as high achieving, and those at risk of failure. | Candidate showcases knowledge of theory, research, and best practice in terms of crafting ELA learning experiences and instructional strategies that are motivating and accessible to all students, including English language learners, students with special needs, students from diverse language and learning backgrounds, those designated as high achieving, and those at risk of failure. | Candidate showcases extensive knowledge of theory, research, and best practice in terms of crafting ELA learning experiences and instructional strategies that are motivating and accessible to all students, including English language learners, students with special needs, students from diverse language and learning backgrounds, those designated as high achieving, and those at risk of failure. |                 |
| Incorporating Interdisciplinary Teaching Methods into ELA  | NCTE III.6       | Candidate does not consistently indicate an ability to incorporate interdisciplinary  | Candidate indicates an ability to incorporate interdisciplinary teaching   | Candidate indicates an advanced ability to incorporate interdisciplinary teaching  |                 |

| Curriculum   |                                   | teaching methods.  | methods.   | methods.   |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Differentiating Instruction to Fit Students' Needs & Backgrounds | NCTE IV.4<br>NCTE V.1<br>NCTE V.2 | Candidate does not demonstrates a commitment to customizing instruction to draw upon students' home and community languages, cultural backgrounds, individual differences, and/or literacy levels to create inclusive learning environments that contextualize curriculum and help students participate actively in their own learning in ELA. | Candidate demonstrates a commitment to customizing instruction to draw upon students' home and community languages, cultural backgrounds, individual differences, and/or literacy levels to create inclusive learning environments that contextualize curriculum and help students participate in their own learning in ELA. | Candidate demonstrates a commitment to customizing instruction to draw upon students' home and community languages, cultural backgrounds, individual differences, and literacy levels to create inclusive learning environments that contextualize curriculum and help students participate actively in their own learning in ELA. |  |
| Aligning Instructional Plans with Social Justice Goals           | NCTE VI.1                         | Candidate does not demonstrate an ability to plan or reflect upon instructional units that promotes social justice and engagement with complex issues related to maintaining a diverse, inclusive,   | Candidate discusses instructional plans that promote social justice and critical engagement with issues related to maintaining a diverse, inclusive, equitable   | Candidate articulates instructional plans that promote social justice and critical engagement with complex issues related to maintaining a diverse, inclusive, equitable   |  |



|   |                           |  |   |   |  |
|---|---------------------------|--|---|---|--|
|   |                           | equitable society.   | society.  | society.  |  |
| Reflection on Teacher's Role in Cultivating Supportive Learning Environments that Address Student Diversity | NCTE VI.2                 | Candidate shows little evidence of analyzing learning environments and/or the ability to draw upon theories and research to consider instructional approaches that are responsive to students' local, national and international histories, individual identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender expression, age, appearance, ability, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and community environment), and languages/dialects. | Candidate analyzes learning environments and draws upon theories and research to consider instructional approaches that are responsive to students' local, national and international histories, individual identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender expression, age, appearance, ability, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and community environment), and languages/dialects. | Candidate skillfully analyzes learning environments and draws upon a range of theories and research to consider instructional approaches that are responsive to students' local, national and international histories, individual identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender expression, age, appearance, ability, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and community environment), and languages/dialects. |  |
| Reflective Practices for Professional Growth  | NCTE VII.1,<br>NCTE VII.2 | Candidate shows limited ability to reflect on ELA experiences and/or fails to demonstrate ethical practices  | Candidate reflects on experiences related to ELA and indicates a commitment to ethical practices  | Candidate critically reflects on a variety of experiences related to ELA and demonstrates a   |  |

|                      |    |   |   |   |  |
|----------------------|----|---|---|---|--|
|                      |    | and/or plans for professional development.  | and professional development.   | commitment to ethical practices and professional development.   |  |
| Pedagogy & Practice  | -- | Does not demonstrate an ability to reflect on pedagogical best practices as the essay does not include a discussion of (or testing of) the materials discussed in this class. Fails to cite specific texts, theories, and/or scholars in essay. | Demonstrates some ability to reflect on pedagogical best practices by comparing real life observations to classroom material; cites a few specific texts, theories, scholars, etc., throughout essay. | Demonstrates an ability to reflect on pedagogical best practices by comparing real life observations to classroom material in meaningful ways; cites specific texts, theories, scholars, etc. throughout. |  |
| Language & Mechanics | -- | Multiple proofreading errors, primarily an informal tone, disorganized essay flow   | Few proofreading errors, mostly professional tone, few organizational lapses  | No proofreading errors, professional tone, college-level vocabulary, organized essay  |  |

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_/24

24 x .835 = \_\_\_\_\_



# CLINICAL EXPERIENCE RECORD

Eastern Illinois University  
Department of Student Teaching and Clinical Experiences  
600 Lincoln Avenue, Charleston, IL 61920  
217-581-2620 (fax) 217-581-2518  
<http://www.eiu.edu/~clinical>

Participant's Name: Halie Selsor

E # 12636374

EIU Course ENG 4801 EIU Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Tacke

Semester: Spring 2025 Total # of Hours: 5

Signature of EIU Instructor when clinical experience is completed: \_\_\_\_\_

| DATE OF VISIT           | NAME OF SCHOOL             | DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY   |   | TIME SPENT  | SIGNATURE OF SCHOOL SUPERVISOR |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <del>4/16</del><br>4/16 | Charleston High School     | Embedding Quotations Mini-Lesson  | Students engage in peer review of essay outline & draft | <del>2 hr</del><br><del>40 min</del><br>1 hr 20 min | <i>H. Selsor</i>               |
| <del>4/16</del><br>4/16 | Charleston High School     | Shared reading of chapters 23 (Ch. 26-27) & class discussion  |   | 1 hr 20 min   | <i>H. Selsor</i>               |
| 5/2                     | Hoopeston Area High School | Students working on parts of speech w/s & silent reading time   |   | 50 min  | <i>Carla Moley</i>             |
| 5/2                     | Hoopeston Area High School | Silent reading; parts of speech & sentence structure/grammar practice   |   | 50 min  | <i>Carla Moley</i>             |
| 5/2                     | Hoopeston Area High School | "Long way down" w/s; edit & revise essay first drafts & peer review (can be done in class w/ peers or out of class w/ family members) |   | 50 min  | <i>H. Selsor</i>               |

Halie Selsor

## **Merging Conversations on Diversity with Graphic Novels**

### **Unit Overview/Rationale**

This unit examines the emotional and psychological impacts of racism through the analysis of narrative and visual storytelling in Darrin Bell's 2023 graphic memoir *The Talk*. *The Talk* is a graphic memoir that explores the disheartening realities of growing up as a Black individual in the United States, focusing on the difficult (but ultimately necessary) conversation Black parents must have with their children about systemic racism, racial violence, and survival. Throughout the story, Bell reflects on personal experiences navigating racial injustice – from childhood encounters with racial bias and discrimination, his growth as a political cartoonist, and his decision to have “the talk” with his own son. Additionally, this graphic novel connects Bell's personal narrative with historical and modern contexts concerning racial struggles in America, culminating into a powerful narrative that reckons with the ongoing fight against systemic racism. Additionally, the narrative not only explores his lived experiences with racism, but also consistently connects them to both historical and modern contexts. Further, the depiction of these struggles through graphic format makes this dialogue more accessible to students through visual storytelling. Due to Bell's deeply personal and incredibly relevant lens into social discrimination and injustice in America, I felt that this graphic narrative would be an exemplary core text to support the focus of this unit.

Throughout this unit, students will examine how graphic novels convey complex emotional narratives surrounding social justice issues by critically analyzing the interactions between text and imagery. The central goals of this unit include developing students' analytical skills, encouraging and enhancing student comprehension of the profound effects of racism on individuals, families, and communities, and fostering empathy in readers. These unit objectives align with broader educational objectives to connect literary analysis with real, modern-day issues, empowering students to think critically and compassionately.

Designed for 10<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts (ELA) students in rural, central Illinois, this unit considers a diverse classroom demographic, reflecting a mix of cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Activities throughout the unit will be scaffolded to provide access to all students and will accommodate various learning styles and levels in order to create a

welcoming, respectful, and inclusive space for engagement and critical discussions. This approach ensures that every student is supported in their learning as they navigate complex themes and reflect on personal and societal implications of racism.

Utilizing graphic texts such as *The Talk* provide a compelling and accessible medium for addressing and discussing the emotional, generational impact of racism. The combination of textual and visual storytelling enables students to engage both intellectually and emotionally, enhancing their abilities to investigate multimodal storytelling. By engaging with this text in the classroom, students will develop or further enhance their abilities to critically analyze multimodal works, connect literary observations to modern social justice issues, and reflect on their roles as informed citizens. Through guided annotations, comparative analysis, and collaborative discussions and projects, students will cultivate their skills and demonstrate a deeper understanding of how language and visual imagery work together to convey meaning. Further, guided writing prompts and Socratic Circles will encourage students to clearly articulate their observations, strengthening their abilities to connect literary insights with contemporary social justice issues.

The goals of this unit are grounded in the belief that examining systemic injustice through literature fosters academic growth and personal development, equipping students with crucial tools to navigate and critique their world. By analyzing and consistently revisiting key themes through group discussion and engaging in thorough self-reflection activities, students will be encouraged to expand their comprehension of how literature can help to shape and inform individual perspectives of the world.

## **Goals and Objectives**

Throughout the creation of this unit, the most important goal was to introduce students to crucial conversations about race in America through graphic novels, providing them with a safe and respectful environment to share their personal experiences, thoughts, and opinions. This approach to racial social justice is designed to foster and facilitate open dialogue surrounding sensitive conversations in the secondary classroom, enabling both me and my students to explore diverse perspectives, develop and/or strengthen empathy skills, and grow as learners and citizens

in our communities. As mentioned in the journal article “Made in the (Multicultural) U.S.A.: Unpacking Tensions of Race, Culture, Gender, and Sexuality in Education” by Nina Asher, “Multiculturalism is about asking and telling about – and, of course, listening to and seeing – the differences, contradictions, and in-betweennesses from which one tends to shy away” (Asher, 66). It is my goal to create a socially responsive classroom environment that is driven by multicultural materials and discussions that inspire students to become more aware of diverse experiences and perspectives. To do so, I must first establish classroom norms with students, including maintaining respectful discourse, practicing active listening and mindfulness, and reflecting on personal experiences, perspectives, and biases to foster empathy. I will consistently model these behaviors and remain mindful of the impact of my implicit biases and language. Further, I will work every day to introduce multicultural, multimodal content and material (such as our unit core and supplementary texts) that portray diverse perspectives and reflects the lives of students in my classroom.

### **Text/Material Selections**

In order to be successful in learning, students must be exposed to an array of materials that clearly display new information, skills, and strategies. Additionally, to facilitate engagement and provide opportunities for my students to succeed, I must also prioritize content and material that reflects their diverse experiences and perspectives. In the chapter “Yes, But How Do We Do It?” by Gloria Ladson-Billings, found in the text *White Teachers/Diverse Classrooms: A Guide to Building Inclusive Schools, Promoting High Expectations, and Eliminating Racism*: “how they [teachers] think about their students is a central concern of successful teaching” (Ladson-Billings, 31). In this unit, these materials are comprised of graphic novels, short stories, poems,

textual excerpts, articles, paintings, and news clips that depict diverse experiences that may resonate with, inspire, and/or critically engage students; examples include *The Talk* by Darrin Bell, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *The Flowers* by Alice Walker, *Here to Stay: Education is Liberation* by Yehimi Cambrón, and the PBS News Hour clip “Getting in the Pool” featuring activist and social justice lawyer Bryan Stevenson. These multimodal texts serve a critical role in “preparing students to combat inequity” by teaching them to be “highly competent and critically conscious” of the past, present, and future injustices that they have observed or will observe in the world (30). By providing students with a variety of multimodal, multicultural materials to analyze throughout the unit, it is my hope that all students will be able to critically examine diverse perspectives and that minority students will feel represented and develop/strengthen their confidence to share their own experiences.

### **Reading Strategies and Close Reading Support**

This unit was designed for secondary students in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, so they may have had previous experiences with more complex reading strategies and close reading. However, the core text of this unit (and at least two of the supplementary texts) will be a graphic novel. That being said, the literacy strategies and skills students will be exposed to in my unit will look different than what students may have learned before; close reading graphic novels not only asks students to comprehend and analyze text such as captions and dialogue but also asks them to closely examine and deeply analyze visual materials. In order to support students as they learn to read and comprehend graphic materials, I will utilize what Katie Monnin calls the “three windows of opportunity” in her text *Teaching Graphic Novels: Practical Strategies for the Secondary ELA Classroom*. Monnin states “These three windows for teaching reading comprehension with

graphic novels are: the words window, the images window, and the words and images window” (Monnin, 16). This strategy teaches reading comprehension of graphic novels through all three “windows.” I will build on this strategy with another of Monnin’s educator skills – text potential. “Text potential stresses the relationship between the text and the individual reader.... When students read graphic novels with text potential in mind, they will look through each window of reader access and determine how they, as individual readers, personally relate to the story through words, images, or words and images together” (24, 26). . For non-graphic texts, students will engage frequently with shared readings, guided annotations, and structured classroom discussions with frequent guiding and pressing questions.

While I believe that frequent exposure to multimodal texts is essential to student comprehension, it is crucial that students are active participants in the process. As stated by Carol Olson in *The Reading/Writing Connection: Strategies for Teaching and Learning in the Secondary Classroom*, “readers and writers are active, not passive; productive, not receptive” (5). To support engagement and reading comprehension during this unit, I will employ instruction and activities such as shared readings, guided annotations, artistically creative assignments, and explicit vocabulary instruction. By using these strategies and prioritizing student interaction with materials, I can structure student instruction to help them comprehend both textual and visual elements of multimodal texts, building confidence and literary competency.

### **Scaffolding Literary/Visual Analysis**

During the creation of this unit, I chose an array of multimodal texts that would support critical thinking, close reading, visual and auditory analysis, and making real-world connections. From



the beginning of the unit, students will engage with numerous multimodal texts that support diverse methods of analysis – they will practice literary, visual, and even auditory analysis as we move through the unit. With that being said, I actively prioritized carefully sequenced lessons and activities which, according to the text *Teaching Literacy in the Secondary School*, “consider how initial activities can serve to prepare students for subsequent activities” (Beach & Marshall, 186). The processes of literary and visual analysis in our core and supplementary texts will be explicitly modeled and scaffolded throughout the unit, whether through shared reading and guided annotations, structured discussions, or close examination of language, imagery, and vocabulary through class-wide, group/peer, or individual activities including storyboard creation and creative writing. As mentioned in Jim Burke’s *The English Teacher’s Companion*, effective reading instruction “must take into account a host of factors, including student perceptions of their competencies as readers and writers, their level of motivation and background knowledge, and their interests” and “use a variety of instructional strategies to support and enhance reading instruction within a classroom that supports, even encourages, intellectual risk-taking from students at all ability levels and invites metacognitive conversations about students’ reading processes” (163, 171). It is my hope that the lessons, assignments, and activities I have carefully sequenced account for students’ unique learning abilities, peak their interests, challenge their preexisting knowledge, and encourage them to take risks.

### **Vocabulary Instruction**

As previously stated, teaching graphic novels relies heavily on vocabulary instruction. For students to develop comprehension and analytical skills concerning graphic texts, they must be knowledgeable about the numerous structural elements that support graphic novel formatting. As

stated by Janet Allen in the chapter “Mastering the Art of Effective Vocabulary Instruction” of the text *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into Practice* by Kyleene Beers, Robert Probst, and Linda Rief: “Using vocabulary instruction as a way to build background knowledge, support comprehension, and provide a vehicle for students to demonstrate content understanding offers common ground that supports all students in the class” (98). Terms including “panel,” “bubble,” “gutter,” “splash,” “bleed,” and “frame” are essential to building student understanding of the multimodal content found in graphic novels. Spending time with these words and exploring how they appear in graphic texts will build student vocabulary for future use in writing and discussion, support student comprehension of the graphic texts we read in class, and provide critical content knowledge that will help students structure and format their own graphic texts during the final summative assignment.

In addition to the explicit instruction of graphic novel vocabulary, I also plan to prioritize terms and vocabulary that supports culturally responsive learning and teaching. Since this unit is structured around exploring systemic racism and social injustice in the United States, it is crucial that students are equipped with the proper vocabulary to respectfully and intellectually discuss the complex social issues we will be exploring throughout the unit. As Allen mentions, “Knowledge of a word is critical to success in reading” (98). To ensure student success during this unit, I felt that the best course of action was to provide explicit vocabulary instruction based on the social justice topics they will be interacting with daily. Terms such as “activist,” “civil rights,” “equality,” “equity,” “justice/injustice,” “racism,” “discrimination,” and “prejudice” are essential to examining and understanding the core focus of the unit. Further, I plan to implement class rules and norms concerning respectful, culturally responsive language in order to “foster the sorts of proficiencies that enable students to engage in civil discourse with others who hold a

different perspective” and maintain a safe and welcoming environment (Allington et al., 273).

Hateful language and/or rhetoric will not be tolerated, and I will do my best to ensure that all students feel safe and confident to share their perspectives and insights each day.

### **Assessment Plan**

While creating assignments and activities for this unit, I tried to employ numerous methods of assessment that would scaffold student understanding and monitor comprehension of concepts and materials in order to prepare students for the final summative assignment. Beach and Marshall remind us that “in developing a unit.... teachers should compare students’ initial responses to subsequent ones to determine improvement in their use of strategies” (189). I feel that both elements of this unit – exploring racial justice and analyzing graphic novels – are extremely important for students. The first enables them to critically analyze and critique the world and events happening around them, with the second providing students with multimodal literacy and crucial media analysis skills. Ladson-Billing notes that “culturally relevant teachers speak in terms of long-term academic goals for students... They... spend a considerable amount of time planning trying to figure out what the semester or yearlong goals are” (35). To take this further, I am considering lifelong goals; how will the skills I am teaching during this unit support students as individuals, community members, and civic leaders?

Throughout this unit, students will be formatively assessed through participation in and engagement with guided discussions, classroom debates, and paired/group activities to monitor and determine crucial critical thinking, collaborative, and communication skills. Additionally, students’ progress and understanding will be gauged through summative assignments including their initial storyboard creations and the development of their social justice-focused graphic

novels throughout the unit. This assignment will be assessed in full using a rubric at the end of the unit in order to determine comprehension of content and materials and mastery of skills. This rubric will use clear, student-friendly language that establishes expectations transparently to ensure student success.

### **Differentiated Instruction**

This unit was designed to support and accommodate the diverse educational needs of a variety of students. This differentiated instruction was planned and employed using principles from the Universal Design for Learning (UDL), incorporating an array of multimodal materials and means of interaction, representation, and expression for students. As mentioned by Peter Smagorinsky in the text *Teaching English by Design*, “You should always ask yourself, Whose building is being constructed here? Whose needs will it serve? Who is learning what through this kind of construction? Are there other possible ways to envision and build this text?” (23). Throughout the unit, I have prioritized differentiated instruction to support diverse learning needs through the inclusion of texts of varying complexity such as graphic novels, short stories, and traditional novel excerpts. Further, I have incorporated multimodal content that ensures diverse access points including the aforementioned graphic novels and video clips. Throughout the unit, students will also be provided numerous ways to demonstrate literary and analytical competency. Students will engage collaboratively through discussions and debates, demonstrating understanding of materials and practicing speaking and listening skills. They will write reflectively, analytically, and creatively. Finally, they will use artistic expression to demonstrate their understanding of/experiences with social justice issues and knowledge of graphic novel structure and visual design. Through the use of “multiple and flexible strategies to address the

needs of all students,” I hope to maintain high expectations for students and foster a creative, engaging and inclusive learning environment. Further, I hope that these methods provide students with the support they need to achieve success.

### **Addressing Student Diversity**

One of the most important goals for this unit was to create an inclusive classroom environment that not only acknowledges student diversity, but essentializes it. Throughout the unit, students will encounter numerous texts concerning racial injustice/justice and will be encouraged to share their personal experiences, perspectives, and insights in a respectful and culturally responsive manner as we move through our unit materials. As stated by Asher, “multiculturalism breaks silences; offers ways of rethinking the oppressive binaries of self and other.... Instead of adhering to a culture of ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’... we can move toward explicitly ‘affirming diversity’ by unpacking the complex and contradictory tensions of multiculturalism and creating a culture of ‘do ask, do tell’” (71). Further, students will be asked to examine their positions in society – that is, where they stand in relation to positions of power -- and how these positions impact the way they perceive and experience injustice as we examine the experiences and perspectives of others. In his article *Positionality, Epistemology, and Social Justice in the Classroom*, David Takacs states “To work toward a just world – a world where all have equal access to opportunity – means, as a start, opening up heart and mind to the perspectives of others.... We must understand how we are positioned in relation to others” (169). By asking students to reflect on and share their positions, experiences, and perspectives, it is my hope that my classroom will hold space for respectful, culturally responsive discourse.

In addition to cultural diversity among students, I will also prioritize providing support and accommodations to students with diverse learning needs. As mentioned in the previous section, I have employed numerous UDL strategies and incorporated multimodal content into this unit to provide students with diverse educational needs numerous opportunities for success. Shared reading and video clips are included to ensure accessibility for auditory learners and/or students who benefit from hearing materials read out loud in order to provide extra support for strengthening comprehension. Additionally, the imagery utilized in graphic novels and paintings will benefit visual learners. Modified handouts will be prepared for students during annotation exercises and classroom activities to guide those who may need extra scaffolding or instructions, and I will provide verbal guidance and support when needed. These strategies enable all students to actively participate in class and engage with unit materials in order to foster an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

## Works Cited

- Allen, Janet, et al. "Mastering the Art of Effective Vocabulary Instruction." *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into Practice*, Heinemann, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 2007, pp. 87–104.
- Allington, Richard L., et al. "Effective Teachers, Effective Instruction." *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into Practice*, Heinemann, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 2007, pp. 273–288.
- Asher, Nina. "Made in the (multicultural) U.S.A.: Unpacking tensions of race, culture, gender, and sexuality in Education." *Educational Researcher*, vol. 36, no. 2, Mar. 2007, pp. 65–73, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x07299188>.
- Baldwin, James. *Sonny's Blues*. Smashwords Edition, 2015.
- Burke, Jim. "Part II: Foundations." *The English Teacher's Companion*, 4th ed., Pearson, Boston, MA, 2011, pp. 153–177.
- Cambron, Yehimi. *Here to Stay: Education Is Liberation*. Atlanta, GA.
- Caputo, Joseph. "The 'Art' of Storytelling." *Smithsonian.Com*, Smithsonian Institution, 6 July 2009, [www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/the-art-of-storytelling-11343036/](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/the-art-of-storytelling-11343036/).
- Cisneros, Sandra. "Those Who Don't." *The House on Mango Street*, Vintage Books, New York City, New York, 1984, pp. 28–28.
- "Getting in the Pool." Kelly Corrigan, Bryan Stevenson, *PBS News Hour*, PBS, 1 Oct. 2020. <https://www.pbs.org/video/getting-pool-dnreo9/>.

- Ladson-Billings, Gloria, et al. ““Yes, But How Do We Do It?”” *White Teachers/Diverse Classrooms: A Guide to Building Inclusive Schools, Promoting High Expectations, and Eliminating Racism*, Stylus Publishing, 2006, pp. 29–41.
- Lewis, John, et al. *March: Book One*. Top Shelf Productions, 2013.
- Monnin, Katie. “Teaching Reading Comprehension with Graphic Novels.” *Teaching Graphic Novels: Practical Strategies for the Secondary ELA Classroom*, Maupin House Publishing, Inc, Gainesville, FL, 2010, pp. 16–37.
- Olson, Carol Booth. *The Reading/Writing Connection: Strategies for Teaching and Learning in the Secondary Classroom*. Pearson, 2011.
- “On America’s Rational Terrorism, ‘Silence Has Condemned Us’ .” *PBS News Hour*, PBS, 13 Apr. 2017, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/americas-racial-terrorism-silence-condemned-us>.
- Satrapa, Marjane, and Anjali Singh. *Persepolis*. Vintage Classics, 2024.
- Smagorinsky, Peter L. “Providing Scaffolds for Student Learning.” *Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units*, 2nd ed., Heinemann, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 2007, pp. 22–35.
- Walker, Alice. “The Flowers.” *Google Drive*, Google, [drive.google.com/file/d/1-NCqmI86jlYnbH5DP69L2iWNdJNLiZry/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-NCqmI86jlYnbH5DP69L2iWNdJNLiZry/view).
- Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. Random House, 2023.



## Common Core Alignment Sheet

### Appendix for English Language Arts Unit Plans

**Directions:** Use this chart to document your coverage of the ELA Standards in this unit plan. In the column asking for evidence, type a brief explanation or reference that is clearly demonstrates coverage of this standard (e.g. Compare & Contrast Paper – Rubric Housed in Supplementary Materials; Mini-Lesson on Tone; Week Four’s Speaking & Listening Practice Activities during Literature Circles). Do not simply write a date (e.g. See Monday, September 5<sup>th</sup>).

#### ELA Common Core Standards, Grades 9-12<sup>1</sup>

| Standards   | Evidence of Where Standard is Met within Unit Plan  |
|---|---|
| CC.9-10.R.L.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.  |   |
| CC.9-10.R.L.2 Key Ideas and Details: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.   |   |
| CC.9-10.R.L.3 Key Ideas and Details: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.  | Close examination of how characters develop in <i>The Talk</i> through discussion, Day 12   |
| CC.9-10.R.L.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).   | Discussion on how characters develop in core and supplementary texts, Day 12<br>Students will also apply this to their own creative works as they develop characters for their graphic novel projects |
| CC.9-10.R.L.5 Craft and Structure: Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.  |   |
| CC.9-10.R.L.6 Craft and Structure: Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.   |   |
| CC.9-10.R.L.7 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s <i>Landscape with the Fall of Icarus</i> ).   |   |
| CC.9-10.R.L.9 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).   |   |
| CC.9-10.R.L.10 Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. | .   |
| CC.9-10.R.I.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.  |   |
| CC.9-10.R.I.2 Key Ideas and Details: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.  | Scaffolded direct instruction, modeling, and guided discussion as well as individual identification and development of social justice themes in student graphic novels, days 1, 6, 11, 16, 22, and 26 |
| CC.9-10.R.I.3 Key Ideas and Details: Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.   |   |
| CC.9-10.R.I.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).   |   |

<sup>1</sup> The standards listed below are for CC.9-10. Students designing a unit plan intended for upperclassmen can still utilize this chart with the understanding that they are aiming to meet the descriptors for these standards as listed in the corresponding CC.11-12 Standards. Likewise, students crafting a unit plan for middle school may use this chart with the understanding that they are aiming to meet the descriptors for these standards as listed in the corresponding CC.6-8 Standards.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| CC.9-10.R.I.5 Craft and Structure: Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).  | Examining various storytelling techniques used in graphic novels, Day 2   |
| CC.9-10.R.I.6 Craft and Structure: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.   | Examination of the ways that the author of our core text uses personal experiences to drive the social justice narrative of his graphic novel, days 5 & 6   |
| CC.9-10.R.I.7 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.   |   |
| CC.9-10.R.I.8 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.  | This standard will first be addressed on Day 8 of the unit and continue on throughout until students have completed their graphic novel summative projects. Students will commit to researching their social justice topics through examining external sources as well as the core and supplementary texts of the unit to guide them through creating their own social justice narrative. |
| CC.9-10.R.I.9 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington's Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, King's "Letter From Birmingham Jail"), including how they address related themes and concepts.   | This standard will be addressed on Day 8 as students examine and analyze a quote from Civil Rights activist Fannie Lou Hammer in order to comprehend Civil Rights perspectives on racial discrimination and activism.   |
| CC.9-10.R.I.10 Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. | Analyzing excerpts of Satrapi's <i>Persepolis</i> and Wilkerson's <i>Caste: The Origins of our Discontents</i> , Days 4, 21, 23, and 25   |
| CC.9-10.W.1 Text Types and Purposes: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.   |   |
| CC.9-10.W.1.a Text Types and Purposes: Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.  |   |
| CC.9-10.W.1.b Text Types and Purposes: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.  |   |
| CC.9-10.W.1.c Text Types and Purposes: Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.   |   |
| CC.9-10.W.1.d Text Types and Purposes: Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.   |   |
| CC.9-10.W.1.e Text Types and Purposes: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.   |   |
| CC.9-10.W.2 Text Types and Purposes: 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.  |   |
| CC.9-10.W.2.a Text Types and Purposes: Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.  |   |
| CC.9-10.W.2.b Text Types and Purposes: Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.  |   |
| CC.9-10.W.2.c Text Types and Purposes: Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.  |   |
| CC.9-10.W.2.d Text Types and Purposes: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.   |   |
| CC.9-10.W.2.e Text Types and Purposes: Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.   |   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| CC.9-10.W.2.f Text Types and Purposes: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).   |  |
| CC.9-10.W.3 Text Types and Purposes: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.   |  |
| CC.9-10.W.3.a Text Types and Purposes: Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.  |  |
| CC.9-10.W.3.b Text Types and Purposes: Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.  | This standard will be addressed throughout the unit as students are explicitly taught through scaffolding and modeling to write creatively while crafting their social justice graphic novels. |
| CC.9-10.W.3.c Text Types and Purposes: Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.  |  |
| CC.9-10.W.3.d Text Types and Purposes: Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.  |  |
| CC.9-10.W.3.e Text Types and Purposes: Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.   |  |
| CC.9-10.W.4 Production and Distribution of Writing: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)   | This standard will be addressed throughout the unit as students are explicitly taught through scaffolding and modeling to write creatively while crafting their social justice graphic novels. |
| CC.9-10.W.5 Production and Distribution of Writing: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 on up to and including grades 9–10 page 55.)                      | This standard will be addressed throughout the unit as students are explicitly taught through scaffolding and modeling to write creatively while crafting their social justice graphic novels. |
| CC.9-10.W.6 Production and Distribution of Writing: Use technology, including the Internet, 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.   |  |
| CC.9-10.W.7 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.  |  |
| CC.9-10.W.8 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation. | Students will practice research skills throughout the unit to support the social justice topic/theme of their graphic novels. However, this process will begin on Day 8 of the unit.           |
| CC.9-10.W.9 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.   |  |
| CC.9-10.W.9.a Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Apply grades 9–10 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]”).   |  |
| CC.9-10.W.9.b Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Apply grades 9–10 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).   |  |
| CC.9-10.W.10 Range of Writing: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.   | This will be expected of students every day of the unit, as students work to develop their social justice-focused graphic novels   |
| CC.9-10.SL.1 Comprehension and Collaboration: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.   | This will be expected of students every day of the unit, as whole class, group, and partner discussions are daily occurrences in the unit.   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| CC.9-10.SL.1.a Comprehension and Collaboration: Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. |  |
| CC.9-10.SL.1.b Comprehension and Collaboration: Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.                              |  |
| CC.9-10.SL.1.c Comprehension and Collaboration: Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.                  |  |
| CC.9-10.SL.1.d Comprehension and Collaboration: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.          | This will be expected of students every day of the unit, as whole class, group, and partner discussions are daily occurrences in the unit.           |
| CC.9-10.SL.2 Comprehension and Collaboration: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.  |  |
| CC.9-10.SL.3 Comprehension and Collaboration: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.   |  |
| CC.9-10.SL.4 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.     |  |
| CC.9-10.SL.5 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.   |  |
| CC.9-10.SL.6 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grades 9-10 Language standards 1 and 3 on pages 54 for specific expectations.)   |  |
| CC.9-10.L.1 Conventions of Standard English: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.   |  |
| CC.9-10.L.1.a Conventions of Standard English: Use parallel structure.*   |  |
| CC.9-10.L.1.b Conventions of Standard English: Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, propositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations. |  |
| CC.9-10.L.2 Conventions of Standard English: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.   |  |
| CC.9-10.L.2.a Conventions of Standard English: Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.  |  |
| CC.9-10.L.2.b Conventions of Standard English: Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.  |  |
| CC.9-10.L.2.c Conventions of Standard English: Spell correctly.   |  |
| CC.9-10.L.3 Knowledge of Language: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.  | This standard will be addressed on Day 12 of the unit as students evaluate how descriptive language can be used to introduce and develop characters. |
| CC.9-10.L.3.a Knowledge of Language: Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual (e.g., MLA Handbook, Turabian's Manual for Writers) appropriate for the discipline and writing type.   |  |
| CC.9-10.L.4 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.  |  |
| CC.9-10.L.4.a Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.  |  |
| CC.9-10.L.4.b Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy).  |  |
| CC.9-10.L.4.c Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.             |  |
| CC.9-10.L.4.d Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).   |  |
| CC.9-10.L.5 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.   |  |
| CC.9-10.L.5.a Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Interpret figures of speech (e.g., satire, sarcasm) in context and analyze their role in the text.  |  |
| CC.9-10.L.5.b Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.   |  |
| CC.9-10.L.6 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate  |  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. |  |
|--|--|

Strand Code: R.L=Reading-Literature, R.I=Reading Informational Text, RF=Reading Foundation Skills, W=Writing, SL=Speaking Listening, L=Language,

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to explore this unit plan, which is centered around Darrin Bell's 2023 graphic novel *The Talk* and the creation of graphic novels that magnify social justice ideals. This plan was carefully designed to engage students in meaningful conversations about race, equity, and advocacy in the classroom while also encouraging self-expression through graphic novel format, an accessible and immersive method of storytelling.

At its core, this unit reflects the belief that education has the potential to not only *inform* but *transform*. By critically analyzing *The Talk*, students will develop an understanding of systemic issues and the impact of storytelling as a tool for advocacy and invoking change. Through the process of creating their own social justice centered graphic novels, students will connect individual experiences to societal conversations on race, gender, sexuality, climate change, and more, discovering the power of their voices along the way.

This unit was designed using backward design, ensuring that all instructional choices were made with clear learning outcomes in mind. By establishing essential goals that span the entirety of the unit – such as establishing and/or reinforcing student ability to engage with thematic analysis and narrative structure and make contextual connections – each lesson builds upon prior knowledge and previous content from the unit to guide students toward purposeful creative work.

Additionally, I incorporated many Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to inform lesson scaffolding by providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to support diverse learners with differing educational needs. Throughout the unit, the integration of literature, multimedia resources, and discussion-based activities ensures accessibility and inclusivity to all students, allowing them to connect with the content of this unit in ways that align with and support their strengths, while also helping them acknowledge and develop growth areas.

While working on this unit, I have constantly tried to reflect on areas that may need growth, particularly in refining the depth and length of the creative process of crafting graphic novels as well as the research components that will guide and support students as they explore historical

narratives and anecdotes that will guide their creative endeavors. Additionally, I made it a point to include multiple moments for structured peer-led feedback sessions to further improve student comprehension and ownership of the creative process. Moving forward, I aim to expand upon opportunities for student-led questioning and collaborative work while maintaining the unit's core focus on advocacy, analysis, and creative expression.

It is my hope that this unit inspires students to approach learning with curiosity, compassion, and a commitment to justice. Additionally, I hope it equips them with the correct tools when using their creativity as instruments for advocacy in their own lives. Thank you for joining me in supporting these efforts to empower young learners to challenge inequities and build a more equitable future.

Sincerely,  
Halie Selsor

## READING FOR TEACHING (RfT)

### Overview of Core Text

**Title:** *The Talk*

**Author:** Darrin Bell

**Synopsis** (2-3 sentences, including year, genre, and basic info):

*The Talk* by Darrin Bell is a graphic memoir that explores the various impacts of racism on the author's life, beginning with a childhood moment in which his mother warned him about the dangers of being perceived and treated differently as a Black child growing up in the United States. Through the employment of vivid imagery and pointed humor, Bell reflects on personal experiences, social injustice, and the generational influence of "The Talk" -- a conversation that Black parents must have with their children about maneuvering through a world shaped by systemic inequality, prejudice, and injustice. The narrative of this graphic memoir spans from Bell's early years living in Los Angeles, California, to the widespread protests that occurred in 2020 after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, culminating in his decision to have "the talk" with his own son.

#### 1. Takeaways

- How racism deeply impacts individuals, families, and communities generationally.
- How to critically reflect on the ways that systemic inequality and injustice shape the lives and relationships of marginalized racial groups in various ways.
- How graphic novels blend narrative and visual storytelling techniques to address social justice issues.
- How to visualize the ways that authors employ graphic storytelling to portray personal experiences to make complex issues more accessible to a variety of readers.
- How using their voices and actions to critique and challenge prejudice, inequality, and injustice can provide allied support to marginalized communities.
- How empathy and education can push positive, meaningful societal changes.

#### 2. Reading Strategies

- How to analyze text and images in a graphic novel in order to recognize the ways that these elements work together to convey emotions and themes.
- How to identify and track themes in graphic texts in order to recognize recurring ideas/messages and explore how they develop throughout a story.



- How to connect graphic novels to their historical, cultural, and social contexts in order to better comprehend their relevance and real-world, modern significance.
- How to examine the use of panel layout and pacing in graphic novels in order to comprehend how structure influences the flow and emotional impact of a narrative.
- How to evaluate character development in graphic novels in order to explore how personal experiences are used to reflect broader, more complex social justice issues.

### 3. Craft (Literary & Rhetorical Devices)

#### A. Key Ideas & Details

- How Bell employs visual design (color, composition, transitions) to evoke emotions, emphasize narrative themes throughout the novel, and illustrate the personal and societal burdens of systemic racism.
- How the combination of dialogue, captions, and visual imagery in *The Talk* creates a stratified narrative experience that deepens reader comprehension of the impact of systemic racial prejudice.
- How Bell employs dialogue in his graphic memoir (both internal and external) to reveal the complexities and difficulties of navigating identity within a systemically prejudiced society.

#### B. Genre & Structure

- How *The Talk* employs graphic storytelling structure to create a layered and immersive narrative.
- How Bell utilizes memoir structure to engage readers and provide an intimate perspective on the impact of systemic racism.
- How the text develops through a series of flashbacks and vignettes, demonstrating through a fragmented structure the culminative nature of generational trauma and impact of institutionalized racial injustice.
- How the text defies linear storytelling conventions by employing a blend of visual symbolism, nonlinear timelines, and reflective narration to enhance its explorations of identity and racism.
- How Bell uses diverse panel sizes, structure, and pacing to emphasize crucial moments in the story.
- How the author utilizes the composition, structure and pacing of panels in *The Talk* to guide the reader through the narrative of the text and

#### C. Figurative Language

- How Bell utilizes metaphor (“deadly beasts”(5), “barking orders at me” (24)) to simplify and convey complex, abstract concepts such as systemic oppression.
- How the author uses recurring symbols (the water gun, notepad and pencil) to expose readers to deeper layers of meaning and intensify emotional impact
- How the author employs juxtaposition (childhood innocence VS racial awareness) to highlight inequality and racial struggles.
- How the author uses hyperbole (“I felt like the weight of the world was on my shoulders”) to emphasize the emotional impact of prejudice and systemic racism
- How the text employs personification to bring abstract concepts to life (“Racism sat at our dinner table, uninvited”)

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | reinforce themes including the generational impact of institutionalized racism.   |   |
| <p>•</p> <p>4. <b>Conventions</b> (Grammar &amp; Style)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the author’s use of conversational tone and Black English grammar reflects relatability and helps to normalize diverse cultural language practices.</li> <li>• How intentional punctuation (ellipses, dashes) contributes to pacing and emotional emphasis</li> <li>• How the cooperation between font and capitalization reinforces tone and mood within the text</li> </ul> |   |   |
| <p>5. <b>Supplementary Texts</b> (literary, informational, and visual/artistic texts that “speak” to the core text in terms of...)</p>   |   |   |
| <p>A. <b>Context &amp; Perspective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents</i> by Isabel Wilkerson (novel excerpt)</li> <li>• <i>The Lesson</i> by Toni Cade Bambara (short story)</li> <li>• <i>Here to Stay: Education is Liberation</i> by Yehimi Cambrón (mural painting)</li> <li>• “‘The little r’ Racist Idea that Swung the Election” from the Code Switch Podcast</li> </ul>  | <p>B. <b>Big Ideas, Themes, Concepts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Those Who Don’t” <i>The House on Mango Street</i> by Sandra Cisneros (novel excerpt)</li> <li>• <i>On America’s Racial Terrorism</i>, “<i>silence has condemned us</i>” Bryan Stevenson (PBS News Hour)</li> <li>• <i>Getting in the Pool</i>; Bryan Stevenson (PBS News Hour)</li> <li>• <i>The Flowers</i> by Alice Walker (short story)</li> <li>• <i>Let America Be America Again</i> by Langston Hughes (poem)</li> </ul> | <p>C. <b>Strategies, Craft, &amp; Conventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The “Art” of Storytelling</i> by Joseph Caputo (Smithsonian Magazine Article)</li> <li>• <i>March</i> by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell (graphic novel excerpt)</li> <li>• <i>Persepolis</i> by Marjane Satrapi (graphic novel excerpt)</li> </ul> |

## Unit Essential Question (EQ) & Rationale

**EQ:** In what ways can storytelling in various forms help us understand and address complex social issues?

**Rationale:** The essential question (EQ) of this unit was created to encapsulate the overall focus of the unit – using narrative and visual storytelling techniques to explore the emotional and psychological impacts of systemic racism. This question closely aligns with the core text of the unit, which blends text and imagery to convey these impacts. By asking students to examine how storytelling can foster empathy and elucidate systemic issues, students are encouraged to connect their analysis of the text with more complex, modern-day issues. The students who will be participating in the study of this graphic novel are at the stage where they are grappling with their individual identities; they are also beginning to become aware of intricate societal issues. Due to these experiences, students will most likely be more receptive to stories that expand upon their knowledge of the world they live in. By building on their natural curiosity and their abilities to engage critically with socially relevant, socially critical texts, the EQ of this unit will motivate students while maintaining accessibility for diverse learners through the medium of graphic novels.

The EQ for this unit meets the criteria of effective inquiry by directly addressing central focuses of ELA – analyzing media and literature. The EQ also recurs naturally across disciplines and throughout history, prompting an ongoing exploration of how narrative and visual storytelling have shaped societal understanding. It invites further reflection on related issues, including the role of both literature and art in addressing systemic inequities. Further, the essential question of the unit has no apparent “correct” answer, prompting students to engage in rich, varied discussions about racism, injustice, and inequality in the United States. Additionally, it is deliberately framed to spark and maintain student interest throughout the entirety of the unit, connecting literary narratives to real-world issues, fostering critical and empathetic thinking.

## **Learning Targets**

1. Students can analyze how graphic novels use multimodal content to convey themes and emotions in order to deepen critical comprehension of how multimodal storytelling impacts readers.
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.7:** Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment
  - b. **Rationale:** This LT develops or enhances critical reading and multimodal analysis skills central to the main focuses of the unit. Analyzing the connections between text and visuals in graphic novels provides students with essential tools that will guide them in interpreting meaning while also addressing the story's themes of racism and social justice.
2. Students can evaluate how an author's choices in narrative structure and other elements of multimodal design visual images contribute to the development of themes in order to better interpret complex social justice texts and their underlying critiques on racism in the United States.
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details
  - b. **Rationale:** This target emphasizes higher-level critical thinking, guiding students to make connections between visual and narrative techniques. It aligns with the focus of analyzing social justice narratives through graphic texts, helping students foster critical thought and analysis of the introduction and development of textual and visual storytelling throughout a graphic novel.
3. Students will be able to write a reflective narrative piece (inspired by *The Talk*) that explores a social justice issue in order to express their own perspectives (positionality) on social justice issues like race.
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- b. **Rationale:** Encouraging students to create their own reflective narratives will foster empathy and personal engagement with social justice issues, complementing student analysis of the core text.
- 4. Students will be able to construct an original graphic novel that explores a social justice issue of their choice (or their positionality in relation to a chosen social justice issue) in order to communicate a meaningful socially responsive perspective through multimodal narrative and visual storytelling.
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - b. **Rationale:** This learning target emphasizes students' abilities to synthesize their understanding of graphic novels as a medium by applying narrative and visual techniques to their own creative works. This task encourages both critical and creative thinking, empowering students to engage personally with social justice issues and develop creative storytelling skills.
- 5. Students will be able to craft a topic proposal paper of at least two pages that clearly articulates the research/narrative focus of their graphic novels in order to develop a well-structured and purposeful research-based foundation for their creative projects.
  - a. **CCSS.ELA.Literacy.W.9-10.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately.
  - b. **CCSS.ELA.Literacy.W.9-10.7:** Conduct short as well as sustained research to answer a question or solve a problem
  - c. **Rationale:** This learning target allows students to engage deeply with the research process as well as critical analysis of their social justice topic prior to committing to the full social justice graphic novel project. By articulating their ideas early, students are provided with the opportunity to practice essential academic skills such as synthesis of information and inquiry-based learning. This approach enables students to more closely assess and engage with the history of their topics, strengthen their focus, and gather reliable sources that support their narratives. This process also reinforces the importance of structured writing and iterative revision, ensuring that students build confidence and clarity in their academic exploration.

6. Students will be able adopt discipline-specific vocabulary (such as panel, gutters, word bubbles, captions, splash page) to describe how graphic novels communicate themes and ideas in order to articulate their analysis of the text clearly and effectively to others.
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.6:** Acquire and accurately use general academic and domain-specific words and phrases
  - b. **Rationale:** This target prioritizes using precise language to equip students with the proper tools to effectively articulate their analyses confidently. This learning target will help students in building both academic and professional communication skills using clear, concise language.
7. Students will be able to engage in respectful and inclusive discussions about the social and emotional implications of racism in *The Talk* in order to develop or enhance their abilities to listen and collaborate effectively with their peers, and explore complex, sensitive social justice topics (such as race) thoughtfully.
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions
  - b. **Rationale:** This LT enables students to create and maintain a supportive and inclusive classroom environment. Additionally, it guides students in developing or expanding upon their communication and social-emotional skills.
8. Students will be able to craft and present a multimodal analysis of how storytelling in graphic novels fosters empathy and understanding in order to communicate their observations and interpretations of literary social justice narratives such as race effectively to an audience.
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4:** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically.
  - b. **Rationale:** This LT encourages students to engage more deeply with the textual and visual storytelling in the core text of the unit. Multimodal presentations allow students to creatively synthesize their learning and share their insights and observations with peers. By participating in and actively engaging with this LT, students will strengthen their communication and analytical skills. Scaffolding will begin with targeted close readings, annotation exercises, and guided discussions to help students identify multimodal techniques that foster empathy in graphic novels.

Additionally, structured graphic organizers will be provided for support, ensuring connections between elements and thematic messaging are clearly articulated.

9. Students will be able to reflect on how their identities and experiences shape their understanding of social justice issues such as racism in order to build empathy and critically examine personal biases.
  - a. **Illinois CRTLS Standard 2C:** Educators will facilitate discussions in a way that allows students to communicate their ideas, perspectives, and lived experiences.
  - b. **Rationale:** This target aligns with the Illinois Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards (CRTLS) by encouraging students to prioritize self-awareness and critical reflection of their positionality in relation to social justice issues. By encouraging students to engage with this learning target, they will be able to stimulate and maintain empathy and culturally responsive thinking.
10. Students will be able to explore how diverse narratives like those presented in *The Talk* contribute to an expanded understanding of social justice issues in order to acknowledge and appreciate the role of varied perspectives in fostering inclusivity and social justice.
  - a. **Illinois CRTLS Standard 3B:** Educators understand that culturally responsive practice involves recognizing how different perspectives shape teaching and learning.
  - b. **Rationale:** This learning target highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing diversity, encouraging students to think critically and empathetically about diverse perspectives and experiences. It encourages students to acknowledge and respect diversity within storytelling and to see literature as a critical tool for enacting positive social change. By engaging with this LT, I will facilitate student growth as culturally responsive thinkers and learners.

## Supplementary Texts

### Context and Perspective -

- ***Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson (novel excerpt)**

- **Description:** This work by Isabel Wilkerson examines the silent hierarchy of social divisions in the U.S. Throughout the text, Wilkerson explores strict caste systems in America, discussing how systems of inequality shape societal dynamics. Through a series of compelling stories, as well as historical research and analysis, Wilkerson highlights the ways that caste impacts lives and perpetuates systemic injustice and racial prejudice.
- **Rationale:** By pairing excerpts from Wilkerson's text with Bell's graphic novel refines student comprehension of systemic injustice by connecting personal narratives with expansive societal frameworks. Bells graphic text provides a personal, visualized account of navigating racial discrimination, while Wilkerson offers a contextualized account of these experiences through a broader historical analysis. In teaching these texts alongside each other, students are encouraged to acknowledge the connections between individual perspectives and structural, generational experiences. This fosters increased understandings of the ways that societal systems have perpetuated injustice in the past and continue to do so in the modern-day.

- ***The Lesson* by Toni Cade Bambara (short story)**

- **Description:** *The Lesson* explores social inequality and self-awareness through the eyes of a young girl named Sylvia. The story, similar to *Sonny's Blues*, is set in Harlem and follows a group of children who embark on a field trip to an upscale toy store by their teacher; she takes the children there to educate them about economic disparities and systemic injustices. At the store, Sylvia observes the contrasts between her own life and the displays of wealth in the store, she struggles with the realities of privilege and inequality. Throughout her short story, Bambara highlights themes of race, class, and self-realization through a crucial moment of awakening in Sylvia.
- **Rationale:** Pairing this short story with *The Talk* provides students the opportunity to explore social injustice and self-awareness. Although *The Lesson* focuses primarily on the impact of economic disparities on young minds, teaching these texts together invites students to examine how personal experiences and societal structures intermingle, fostering a deeper understanding of privilege, inequality, and societal awareness and encouraging students to reflect on their experiences, positions, and roles in creating a just, equitable world for all.

- ***Here to Stay: Education is Liberation* by Yehimi Cambrón (mural painting)**

- **Description:** This mural created by Latina American artist Cambrón is a symbolic statement piece located on the Latin American Association building in Atlanta, Georgia. The mural features a monarch butterfly (a universal symbol of migration) with its body represented by a pencil, and one wing composed of fluttering book



- pages. The imagery of the mural depicts themes of education, resilience, and the immigrant experience – celebrating the strength and journeys of immigrant communities while challenging exclusive narratives.
- **Rationale:** Teaching this mural painting alongside Bell’s graphic text offers students a multimodal exploration of identity, resilience, and social justice. Both works communicate criticisms of systemic inequalities while acknowledging and commending the strength of marginalized racial groups. Additionally, in providing students with a painting to examine alongside the visual imagery of the graphic novel, they will increase their visual analysis and comprehension skills.
  - **“‘The little r’ Racist Idea that Swung the Election” from the Code Switch Podcast**
    - **Description:** This episode of the Code Switch Podcast investigates the pervasive racist dynamics that influenced the 2024 presidential election. The episode features New York Times political correspondent Astead Herndon, and examines how the “little ‘r’” racist ideas – those that are less overt but incredibly impactful – shaped voter behavior and influenced the outcome of the election.
    - **Rationale:** Listening to this podcast episode while reading *The Talk* offers students a nuanced exploration of the various ways that systemic racism operates on both the personal and societal level. This pairing provides students with multimodal access to themes of racial identity, discrimination, and positionality. Together, this episode of the Code Switch Podcast and Bell’s *The Talk* encourage students to critically analyze the connections between individual experiences and institutionalized injustice, fostering enhanced comprehension of how racism shapes narratives, policies, and individual/community perceptions and actions within a society.

### **Big Ideas, Themes, and Concepts -**

- **“Those Who Don’t” *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (novel excerpt)**
  - **Description:** This chapter from Cisneros’ novel follows the narrator of the story, Esperanza, as she reflects on the ways that outsiders perceive her neighborhood. Esperanza highlights that those who do not live on Mango Street are fearful of it, labeling it as dangerous because of its inhabitants and unfamiliarity. She contrasts the feelings of these outsiders by describing her own feelings of comfort and belonging; she emphasizes that those who feel fearful or threatened while on or around Mango Street draw their conclusions due largely to prejudice. The chapter highlights themes of community, stereotyping, and the impact of discriminatory biases and invites readers to examine how fear and ignorance influence the ways that people view each other.
  - **Rationale:** Reading this chapter of *The House on Mango Street* alongside *The Talk* encourages students to examine the influence of biases and stereotypes on

communities and individuals. Both works outline the impact of prejudice – Bell's graphic novel through personal narratives of racial profiling and Cisneros's work on how ignorance and stereotypes shape prejudiced attitudes. Together, both works invite students to examine the consequences of stereotyping and discrimination in order to foster empathic classroom dialogues about breaking down ignorance and fear to create inclusive perspectives.

- ***On America's Racial Terrorism, "silence has condemned us"* Bryan Stevenson (PBS News Hour)**

- **Description:** This short clip from PBS News features social justice lawyer and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative Bryan Stevenson as he reflects on the prevailing impact of racial violence and inequality in the United States. In the brief clip, Stevenson examines how slavery and "racial terrorism" have evolved throughout history, highlighting the failure of the U.S government to confront or condemn these instances of violent injustice openly. He also examines the importance of acknowledging history in order to take steps towards true social justice and freedom and simultaneously recognizes the strength of those who have endured and continue to endure violent racial discrimination.
- **Rationale:** By pairing this PBS News clip with Bell's graphic novel, students are offered a critical lens to explore the historical and personal elements of violent racial discrimination and injustice. Stevenson's reflections in the brief clip contextualize Bell's personal experiences as a Black American, with a broader examination of racial violence and systemic marginalization. It offers students multimodal access to examine the enduring impact of complicity in perpetuating racial violence and injustice, encouraging them to think critically about the necessity of confronting uncomfortable or abstract truths.

- ***Getting in the Pool;* Bryan Stevenson (PBS News Hour)**

- **Description:** This short segment features Bryan Stevenson as he recounts a childhood experience that revealed the deep-seated hate he encountered as a Black child growing up in America. He describes a visit to a hotel pool with his sister where they both witnessed first-hand the impact of racism and exclusion due to the color of their skin. The clip highlights the persistence of prejudice and inequality in the United States over time, providing a moving reflection on the struggle for racial justice and the importance of confronting discrimination.
- **Rationale:** Watching this clip while reading *The Talk* offers students a multimodal exploration of the pervasive nature of racism. Together, these works highlight the resilience of marginalized communities, the power in confronting prejudice and the importance of challenging injustice to facilitate social justice and equality for all.

- ***The Flowers* by Alice Walker (short story)**

- **Description:** This short story examines the harsh realities of racial discrimination and violence through the story of Myop, a young, Black American girl as she explores

- nature near her home. However, her joyful day takes a dark turn when she stumbles upon the remnants of a lynching. Through the use of symbolic imagery, Walker conveys the devastating impact of systemic racism, violence, and the loss of innocence.
- **Rationale:** Teaching this short story by Alice Walker alongside Bell's *The Talk* provides students with a complex exploration of the dark realities of racism. While *The Flowers* depicts the sudden realization of the horrors of racial violence through the eyes of a child, *The Talk* examines Bell's examination of the continued reality of systemic injustice and racial discrimination in the United States. When taught together, both works encourage students to reflect on the historical and personal implications of racial injustice in order to foster crucial conversations about how such experiences can shape individual identities.

### Strategies, Craft, and Conventions:

- ***The “Art” of Storytelling by Josphe Caputo (Smithsonian Magazine Article)***

- **Description:** This article explores the power of storytelling through art, highlighting how artists have consistently used visual imagery to craft stories and push narratives, inviting viewers to critically engage with and interpret them. Further, the author reflects on the relationship between the artist's intended message and what the audience interprets the meaning of the piece to be, emphasizing the collaborative nature of visual storytelling.
- **Rationale:** Using this article alongside Bell's graphic memoir invites students to explore how storytelling transcends literature. The article highlights the importance of visual narratives in storytelling, encouraging students to consider the ways that meaning can be conveyed through multiple mediums such as text and imagery. By pairing these two texts together, students can engage in discussions about the role of narrative in visual mediums, inspiring them to think critically and creatively about the several ways that narratives can be conveyed.

- ***March by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell (graphic novel excerpt)***

- **Description:** *March* is a graphic trilogy, although for the purpose of this unit students will only examine the first novel. Written by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, and illustrated by Nate Powell, this graphic novel is an autobiographical account of the Civil Rights Movement told through Lewis' perspective. The first novel in the series chronicles Lewis' experiences from his childhood in rural Alabama up to his participation in sit-in protests at segregated lunch counters in the rural south. It highlights the courage, strength, and determination of Black activists who challenged systemic racism and discrimination during the Civil Rights Movement in order to enact positive social change.

- **Rationale:** Teaching the first volume of *March* alongside *The Talk* provides students with insights into the past and present struggles against systemic racism in the United States. Both works employ visual storytelling and utilize an autobiographical, graphic novel format to convey individual experiences and socially significant narratives about racism and injustice. Together, these graphic texts urge students to engage in critical discussions about how visual storytelling can bring historical and personal accounts of justice and resilience to life, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of these complex issues.
- ***Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (graphic novel excerpt)**
  - **Description:** This graphic memoir chronicles Satrapi's childhood and young adulthood in Iran before, during, and after the Islamic revolution. Satrapi shares her experiences of growing up in a politically turbulent time, exploring themes of identity, oppression, family, and resistance to oppressive societal norms. Her narrative combines personal experiences with historical context, offering a peek into the complexities of life under an oppressive authoritarian regime.
  - **Rationale:** Teaching students both *Persepolis* and *The Talk* highlights the shared craft and conventions of graphic storytelling when addressing systemic oppression, resilience, and personal growth. Both works employ visual imagery to connect individual experiences with larger societal issues, using paneling, imagery, and contrast to evoke emotion and meaning. This pairing allows students to explore how graphic novels can communicate striking truths about identity, injustice, and perseverance across diverse historical and cultural contexts, inviting students to think critically and empathetically about social justice narratives.

## Summative Prompt

**Objective:** The purpose of this final summative assignment is for students to demonstrate their understanding of the craft, conventions, and impact of graphic narratives, as well as the importance of educating themselves and their peers on social justice issues and the importance of using their voices to provide allied or internal support for their chosen issue. Students will create an original graphic novel, applying visual and textual storytelling techniques to effectively portray their chosen issue, analyzing and incorporating their own positionality, perspectives, and experiences to make their narrative more authentic and meaningful. This assignment aims to empower students to critically engage with social justice themes, reflect on their own identities, and explore how graphic novels can be a powerful medium for advocacy and expression.

**Prompt:** For your final summative creative assignment, you will craft an original graphic text that addresses a social justice issue of your choice, which will be supported by the creation of a topic proposal prior to creating your graphic novel. While reflecting on your own perspective, positionality, and experiences. Your graphic novel should demonstrate the craft and conventions of the medium, including paneling, imagery, visual symbolism, and effective use of narration, captioning, and dialogue. It should also incorporate your individual experiences, identity, and/or worldview to create a meaningful, impactful narrative.

Your completed graphic novel should be 8-10 pages, created using either digital tools or traditional hand-drawn methods. Before beginning to work on your graphic novel, you will submit a 2 page proposal to articulate the focus of your story and guide you in refining your ideas prior to creating the full story. This proposal will include your proposed idea, a one paragraph overview of your graphic novel pages, and at least 2 annotated resources that support your proposal. Alongside your original work, you will submit a 1–2-page critical reflection in which you will explain your creative choices, discuss how your positionality shaped your narrative, and further connect your work to your chosen social justice issue. This reflection should also include an MLA works cited page that references any resources you may have used while crafting your graphic text. This assignment invites you to use graphic storytelling to raise awareness, inspire empathy, and spark critical conversations around societal issues, so although I am asking you to be creative, ensure that the information you include in your graphic novel and reflection is true to your lived experience or research!

**Outline:** Your graphic novel should include the following:

- A creative title and visually appealing cover design that displays an important aspect of your narrative

- A clear, explicit focus on a specific social justice theme
  - An integrated narrative that explores the complexities of your chosen issue
- An integration of your personal perspective, identity, and lived experiences
  - Reflection of how your background and understanding of the issue influence your portrayal
- Two characters with clearly defined roles in the story and a setting that is logical to the plot of the story
- A cohesive narrative structure including an explicit beginning, middle, and end
  - Key moments of conflict, growth, and/or resolution that reflect your chosen issue
- Effective and deliberate use of paneling and visual imagery (character placement, setting, symbols, contrast, shading, perspective) that will:
  - guide reader's experience
  - establish pacing
  - convey mood, tone, and narrative meaning.
- Narration, captioning, and dialogue that advance the narrative and provide context or enhance emotional depth
- Clear, legible, and polished illustrations
- Consistency in style and tone

### **Skills and Understanding:**

- **Ability to connect relevant research or experiences to social justice themes**
- **Awareness of personal identity (positionality), background, and lived experiences, and how those shape viewpoints on social justice topics**
- **Ability to craft a cohesive graphic story with a clear beginning, middle, and end (Storyboarding).**
- **Ability to clearly articulate and convey a central theme or message related to the chosen social justice issue**
- **Ability to draft and finalize a cohesive, linear, literary plot and themes.**
- **Ability to incorporate visual symbols and imagery to enhance meaning and emotional impact**
- **Ability to create dialogue and narration that complement visuals and add depth to narrative**
- **Understanding on how to represent diverse voices and experiences respectfully within narrative storytelling**
- **Ability to review and revise work, ensuring clarity and coherence.**

- **Understanding of how to use panel layout, composition, and pacing to guide the reader's experience**
- Ability to analyze and articulate creative choices
- Technical skills in drawing or digital illustration to effectively portray characters, settings, and actions.
- Ability to balance text and visuals, ensuring that they work together cohesively without overwhelming the narrative

## Analytic Rubric

### Graphic Novel Creation Rubric

| Criteria                         | Exceeds<br>Expectations  | Meets<br>Expectations  | Approaching<br>Expectations   | In Development   | Points<br>Earned |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|------------------|
| <b>Plot<br/>Development</b>      | Plot is well-developed, engaging, and easy to follow. Content draws from research and personal experiences to create a story that is accurate to lived experiences or relevant research.<br><b>(20 points)</b> | Plot is mostly developed, engaging, and easy to follow. Content is mostly original and accurate to lived experiences or relevant research.<br><b>(15 points)</b> | Plot is developing, ; but may be difficult to follow. Content is occasionally original or accurate to lived experiences or relevant research.<br><b>(10 points)</b> | Plot is missing or needs further development. Incorporation of more unique perspectives and research-based insights is necessary.<br><b>(5 points)</b> | <b>/20</b>       |
| <b>Organization<br/>Of Ideas</b> | Graphic novel follows a logical sequence with an   | Graphic novel is mostly logically sequenced, but may   | Graphic novel is loosely sequenced. Clarity of social   | Sequence of graphic novel needs further development. Social  | <b>/20</b>       |



|   |   |   |   |  |                   |
|---|---|---|---|--|-------------------|
|   | <p>explicit, coherent social justice focus.</p> <p>Ideas are well organized and easy to follow through multimodal and smooth transitions.</p> <p><b>(20 points)</b></p> | <p>at times [name move]. Social justice focus is clear and understandable.</p> <p>Ideas are mostly organized and followable through both visual and narrative connections.</p> <p>Transitions are mostly smooth but may be choppy in some places.</p> <p><b>(15 points)</b></p> | <p>justice focus is still developing and may be difficult to understand.</p> <p>Organization of ideas is still evolving. Visual and narrative connections are unconventional. .</p> <p>Few transitions are included, and they may be choppy and/or harsh.</p> <p><b>(10 points)</b></p> | <p>justice issue requires more research and should be expanded upon in text and visuals. Ideas are unstructured and need to be reevaluated. Visual and narrative connections are missing or unclear.</p> <p>Little to no transitions are present.</p> <p><b>(5 points)</b></p> |                   |
| <p><b>Grammar</b></p> <p><b>And Mechanics</b></p> | <p>No identifiable spelling or grammatical mistakes (not including written</p>  | <p>Spelling or grammatical mistakes (not including written dialect) appear</p>  | <p>Spelling or grammatical mistakes (not including written dialect) are apparent</p>  | <p>Spelling or grammatical errors (not including written dialect) in student work hinder</p>   | <p><b>/15</b></p> |

|  |   |  |   |   |                   |
|--|---|--|---|---|-------------------|
|  | <p>dialect) throughout student work.</p> <p><b>(15 points)</b></p>  | <p>throughout student work, but do not hinder meaning or followability.</p> <p><b>(10 points)</b></p>  | <p>throughout student work and may hinder meaning or followability.</p> <p>Further time spent on reviewing grammar and spelling may improve narrative meaning and readability.</p> <p><b>(5 points)</b></p> | <p>meaning or followability throughout narrative. Spending time practicing grammar and spelling skills and reviewing within projects will lead to improvements.</p> <p><b>(1 point)</b></p> |                   |
| <p><b>Visual Imagery/ Graphics</b></p> | <p>Graphics are consistently relevant to story, communicate meaning, and evoke emotion. Characters are developed clearly and can be</p> | <p>Graphics are mostly relevant to story and communicate meaning/evoke emotion most of the time. Characters are developed well and clear</p> | <p>Relevancy of graphics are to story are still developing and occasionally communicate meaning/evoke emotion. Clarity, well developed</p>  | <p>Graphics may be missing, unrelated to story, and/or do not communicate meaning/evoke emotion. Further review of clear character</p>  | <p><b>/20</b></p> |

|                               |  |   |   |   |            |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|---|------------|
|                               | distinguished from one another through characterization.<br><br>Setting is clear and relevant.<br><br><b>(20 points)</b>   | characterization is apparent. Setting is mostly clear and relevant.<br><br><b>(15 points)</b>   | characterization, and setting could benefit from further review to enhance meaning. ,<br><br><b>(10 points)</b>   | development, distinguishable characterization, and setting would greatly enhance meaning.<br><br><b>(5 points)</b>  |            |
| <b>Layout and Composition</b> | Panel size, shape, and placement are always integral to narrative.<br><br>Transitions and connections between panels are well-planned and logical.<br><br>Panel order is always clear. Word balloon order within panels is always clear. | Panel size, shape, and placement are mostly integral to narrative.<br><br>Straightforward evidence of planning for transitions and connections between panels.<br><br>Panel order is almost always clear.<br><br>Word balloon order | Panel size, shape, and placement are occasionally integral to narrative.<br><br>One or two examples of planning for transitions and connections between panels.<br><br>Panel order is abstract. . Word balloon order within | Panel size, shape, and placement are still in development.<br><br>. Further emphasis on planning for transitions and connections is needed.<br><br>Adjustments to word balloon order with panels could improve clarity.<br><br><b>(1 point)</b> | <b>/15</b> |

|                                |  |  |  |  |      |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|------|
|                                | (15 points)  | within panels is almost always clear.<br>(10 points)   | panels is still evolving. .<br>(5 points)  |  |      |
| <b>Title and Cover Page</b>    | Title is well-thought out and directly connected to narrative. Cover page is visually appealing and clearly conveys information about text.<br>(10 points) | Straightforward evidence that title was thought-out and intended to be linked to narrative. Cover page is appealing and somewhat conveys information about text.<br>(7 points) | Title is evolving and could benefit from explicit intention. Cover page is somewhat appealing but would benefit from enhancements to clarify insights into text.<br>(4 points) | Title is still in development and is approaching relevancy to narrative. Cover page is could benefit from explicit intentions and clarified designs. (1 point) | /10  |
| <b>Total Points out of 100</b> |  |  |  |  | /100 |

Adapted from RubiStar Storyboard-Multimedia Rubric

## **Rationale for Graphic Novel Creation and Rubric**

This summative assignment offers students an opportunity to creatively engage with current social justice issues while also developing or enhancing their skills in storytelling and self-reflection. By inviting students to select a topic they are interested in or passionate about, this project encourages student ownership over their learning and promotes personal investment in the assignment. This will foster enhanced comprehension of the complexities and nuances surrounding their chosen social justice issue, while also allowing them to share their own perspectives and experiences. Additionally, by analyzing and incorporating their positionality in relation to their chosen social justice issue, students will be pushed to reflect on the numerous ways that their individual identities and experiences shape their perspectives. This aspect of the assignment fosters empathy and self-reflection and also guides students in evaluating their roles as agents of change within their communities and society.

Aside from promoting increased storytelling and personal reflection skills concerning social justice issues, this project emphasizes the craft and conventions of graphic narratives, drawing inspiration from graphic works including Darrin Bell's *The Talk*, Lewis, Aydin, and Powell's *March*, and Satrapi's *Persepolis*. Through the graphic medium, students will learn to incorporate text and visuals effectively by leveraging panel composition, visual imagery, and visual and textual symbolism to convey crucial social justice narratives. This assignment not only reinforces student analytical skills but also prioritizes creativity by challenging them to express complex ideas in an accessible and engaging format. Overall, this project empowers students to use graphic storytelling as a tool for advocacy and awareness, highlighting the power of graphic narratives in addressing social justice issues and inspiring change.

This unit's rubric (adapted from the RubiStar Storyboard Multimedia Rubric) provides clear expectations for students of what is expected of them when brainstorming and creating their own social justice graphic novel. The point scale determined for the rubric was chosen to create distinction between levels of achievement, while giving students peace of mind concerning goals between levels as they create their graphic stories. Each category contains clearly written expectations that ensure quality assessment and feedback from the teacher and critical thought and sufficient effort from students/ Throughout the creative process, students will be able to reference this rubric to guide them as they work. The structure of the rubric also provides students with critical information that motivates them to think and work critically and analytically – reminding them that throughout the project they should be prioritizing their positionality/perspectives concerning social justice issues, as well as peer-reviewed research that is relevant to their social justice topic. Overall, the rubric serves as a point of reference to guide students throughout the creative process, help them reflect on their research and work, provide constructive feedback to their peers, and receive constructive feedback and quality assessment from their teacher.

## Summative Exemplar Sample

# Social Justice Through Art

Kendyll and Aya are at the art museum

I've never seen that one before. The message is powerful.

Look at this artwork, Aya!

It's Norman Rockwell's "The Problem We All Live With." It depicts Ruby Bridges, the first black child to attend an all white school!

Isn't it amazing how artwork can look so beautiful, but also serve such an amazing purpose? This painting has such a strong message behind it!

In the 1960s, Rockwell wanted to paint something that served as a commentary on racial segregation and discrimination in America; a very horrible, very true reality for Black Americans up until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed.

If the Civil Rights Act fixed things, why do we still see discrimination?

The Civil Rights Act only ended racial segregation in public spaces – not racism. That's why we need to use our voices, resources, and creativity to advocate for marginalized groups!

By speaking out against racism in all its forms, we can help support larger social justice initiatives in eliminating systemic injustices ingrained in our country's laws, social norms, and structures.

So speaking out against these systems, like Rockwell did, can help? I'm going to research as much as I can so I can become an advocate too.

## Unit Calendar

### *Week #1: Introduction to Graphic Novels and Social Justice Themes*

#### **Day 1: Introduction to Graphic Novels**

##### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will identify the defining characteristics of graphic novels in order to understand their structural and creative elements.
2. Students will examine the relationship between text and visual imagery in graphic novels in order to recognize how they communicate themes and messages.

To begin class, I will ask students to respond to the Essential Question (EQ) and the day's Do Now prompt: **"In what ways can storytelling in various forms help us understand and address complex social issues?"** Students will take a few moments to respond to the "Do Now" prompt, which will always be located on Padlet, linked through our classroom webpage (most likely Google Classroom).

Following the "Do Now" activity, I will put students in pairs to participate in a gallery walk activity. Throughout the classroom, a wide array of graphic novel excerpts (including from our core text, *The Talk* by Darrin Bell) will be placed around the room. With their partners, students will circle the room, spending 2-3 minutes with each example, discussing and taking notes on the structure and layout of each excerpt using a structured graphic organizer. I will set a timer, ensuring that as a class we only spend 15-20 minutes on this gallery walk; once the timer is up, we will come back together to discuss student observations. **What did they notice? What elements seemed to stand out?**

Following the gallery walk activity, I provide each student with a packet containing photocopied versions of the graphic novel excerpts they viewed during the gallery walk and 6 different colored markers or pens. I will lead students in direct instruction with a visual presentation on key elements of graphic novels, including panels, gutters, word balloons, splash, bleed, and frame. As we move through the visual presentation and learn about these different elements, students will be asked to locate and circle examples of each in the excerpts contained in the provided packet using their colored markers to categorize each element.

During the remaining 5-10 minutes of class, I will facilitate a discussion with students, prompting them to consider how the elements we discussed during the lesson enhance storytelling. For homework, students will be asked to create a short comic-strip detailing a memorable event from their day using the graphic novel elements we discussed in class today (following the visual presentation, located for reference on our class website) to familiarize themselves with graphic novel formatting.

#### **Day 2: Analyzing Graphic Novel Features**



### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will break down the visual and textual components of graphic novels in order to understand the storytelling techniques of graphic texts.
2. Students will analyze how visuals, panel arrangement, and transitions can affect the pacing and tone of a graphic story in order to develop an understanding of visual storytelling.

To begin class, students will examine a single panel (p. 21) from our core text, *The Talk*, which will be displayed on the visual whiteboard. In a discussion post on Padlet, students will take note of the ways that they think the text and imagery in the panel work together to convey meaning.

Immediately following the “Do Now,” I will ask a few volunteer students to share their responses out loud, and we will discuss their observations and insights. Then, I will guide students through direct instruction on some of the visual elements in graphic novels, including color schemes, art style, character clothing & expressions, and panel transitions using excerpts from a variety of graphic novels and comics.

Following direct instruction, students will receive graphic organizer handouts and be placed into groups. Each group will be assigned one element of graphic novels that we discussed during direct instruction, using the graphic organizer to take note of their insights and observations by answering prompts on the handout.

In the remaining 5-10 minutes of class, I will ask volunteers to share a few of their responses to the prompting questions on the graphic organizer, which I will then transition into a discussion on how the elements and techniques we learned about enhance storytelling. For homework, students will choose 1 of the elements/techniques discussed in class, applying it to a short, written storyboard of their creation. They will outline the visuals they might use to accompany their story (e.g., a storyboard about their day would accompany descriptions (outlines) of visuals such as “eating breakfast” or “riding the bus”).

### **Day 3: Defining Social Justice**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will articulate their understanding of social justice in order to connect it to their personal and community experiences.
2. Students will identify examples of contemporary social justice issues in order to broaden their perspectives on equity and activism.
3. Students will discuss the role of storytelling in promoting awareness of social justice issues in order to establish a solid connection between art and activism.
- 4.

As students enter the classroom, they will be provided with 1 sticky note. They will follow a prompt on the whiteboard that reads: **“Write down one word or phrase you associate with the word ‘justice.’”** When students have documented their answers on their sticky notes, they will place them on a class chart at the front of the room labeled as “Justice is...” After all students have placed their sticky notes on the chart, I will read out their responses and then guide them in a discussion based on what they have written, asking guiding questions as we converse such as

**“Does justice always mean fairness?” ; “Can justice exist in environments where some groups or individuals benefit more than others?”**

We will then watch the video *Is Social Justice Just? The Origins of Social Justice* from The Federalist Society YouTube channel, and the video *Equality, Equity, and Social Justice* from the SIPDC Trainer YouTube channel. As we watch each video, students will follow along using video guide graphic organizer handouts, taking notes and answering the prompts on the handout.

After watching the videos, the entire class will participate in a think-pair-share activity, exploring examples of social justice issues in their communities (communities meaning neighborhoods, towns, or cities in this case). After this activity, students will be asked to redefine “justice” based on our discussions and the videos we have watched, and these new definitions will be placed on the chart.

In the remaining 5-10 minutes of class, I will guide students in a discussion about the relevance of storytelling in addressing and critiquing social justice issues. For homework, students will be asked to write a brief reflection (1-2 paragraphs) on a social justice issue they relate to or feel strongly about (climate change, racism, LGBTQIA+ issues, income inequality, etc.), explaining why they feel strongly about it and how storytelling could bring attention to the issue they have chosen. They will also be asked to reflect (in at least 3 sentences) on whether they would like to use this topic as the core focus of their summative graphic novel project.

#### **Day 4: Close Reading of *March***

##### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze the narrative techniques from *March* by John Lewis in order to understand how the author conveys themes of racism.
2. Students will evaluate the role of visual imagery in enhancing the impact of the text in order to understand the relationship between text and visuals.
3. Students will examine the author’s perspective of systemic racism and the Civil Rights Movement in order to critically engage with the text and develop an understanding of racism as a complex social justice issue.

To begin class, students will examine a single panel (p. 71) from the graphic novel *March* by John Lewis and write what they think is happening in the scene, supporting their interpretation using only evidence included in the imagery of the scene. Then, volunteer students will be asked to share their interpretations of what is happening in the panel.

After students share, we will participate in a shared reading and annotation of an excerpt of *March* as a class, providing students the bigger picture to the panel they examined for the “Do Now” (this will include pp. 67-73). First, we will read only the text in the excerpt. Then, we will examine only the visuals. After exploring both, we will consider them together, annotating each page on a printed handout. I will model both visual and textual analysis for students on the digital whiteboard, asking them to circle, highlight, underline, and write everything exactly as I do on my handout.

After annotating, students will be split into pairs and asked to analyze 1 or 2 additional panels from the novel using guiding prompts on a provided handout. In the remaining 5-10 minutes of class, we will discuss how the text and visuals in the graphic novel work together to provide a powerful critique of racism as a social justice issue. For homework, students will be asked to choose and examine the visuals, texts, and their relationship in one panel from our core text *The Talk*, documenting notes and observations in a discussion forum on Padlet.

## **Day 5: Discussion and Reflection on Race**

### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will reflect on their own positionality and lived experiences in order to better understand how their perspectives shape their understanding of racism.
2. Students will discuss how systems of power and privilege influence individual and collective experiences with racism in order to better analyze the social structures depicted in *The Talk*.
3. Students will evaluate the importance of amplifying marginalized voices in storytelling in order to recognize the role of art in promoting social justice and equity.

At the beginning of class, students will respond to the following “Do Now” prompt: **“What is one story you have encountered (in any format: literature, TV, movies) that taught you something about racism and/or justice? What did you learn?”**

Following the “Do Now” activity, volunteer students will share their responses; I will then segue their shared responses into a mini lesson on our core text, *The Talk* by Darrin Bell. This mini lesson will serve as a critical introduction to the graphic novel before we begin reading on Monday. I will display a presentation on the board containing information about both the author (including his childhood, adolescence, and adulthood) and the graphic novel (including information about the art style, use of color, themes, etc.) Throughout the presentation, I will ask students to follow along, taking notes so that they can document information that is crucial to the story. In the remaining class time, I will open the floor for class discussion on the presentation, asking students guiding questions and pressing them for deeper, more analytical responses. There will be no homework over the weekend.

## ***Week #2: Deep Dive into Storytelling and Racism in Graphic Novels***

### **Day 6: Introduction to Critical Themes in *The Talk***

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will explore the author’s perspective and purpose for writing *The Talk* in order to begin engaging with its central themes.
2. Students will reflect on their own positionality and perspectives in order to consider how their personal experiences might influence their interpretations of the story.
3. Students will examine the societal structures and issues to be addressed in the story in order to contextualize their reading with broader discussions of race and racism.

To begin class, I will display the cover page of *The Talk*, asking students to examine it closely and write down three predictions for the story based on the cover (title and imagery) alone. I will ask students to volunteer to share their predictions, and then we will quickly revisit the visual

presentation from Friday to refresh student memories as we discuss what the novel is actually about.

Then, I will lead the students through a mini lesson about design techniques in graphic novels, explaining the purpose and intentions of visual imagery including color, art style, and character clothing. Students will follow along during the lesson, taking notes on a provided guidance handout. After this lesson, I will begin to read the first section of the novel aloud to the class, pausing intermittently to clarify unknown vocabulary and concepts, ask and answer questions, and make comments. As we read, students will be encouraged to ask questions and make comments about the content of the novel themselves.

In the remaining class time, I will ask students the following guiding question: **“What emotions did the imagery in the opening evoke? Why do you think you felt/feel that way?”** in order to facilitate a discussion about the design of the novel. As homework, students will consider the guiding question asked at the end of class and the emotions they felt while reading. They will then be tasked with developing a brief narrative outline (2 characters, setting, simple plot) for their own graphic novels, taking into consideration the emotions they felt while reading our core text in class.

### **Day 7: Analyzing Narratives of Racism**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will critically analyze the portrayal of lived experiences of racism in the novel in order to explore how systemic oppression impacts both individuals and communities.
2. Students will consider the perspective and positionality of the author in order to deepen their understanding of the text’s message.
3. Students will engage in discussions that acknowledge diverse lived experiences and perspectives in order to develop or strengthen empathy and cultural awareness.

To begin class, I will project a panel (p. 26) from yesterday’s reading, asking students to write one word that described the emotion conveyed through the image and text displayed. After students have documented their answers, I will ask volunteers to share their thoughts, facilitating a discussion on the visual cues presented in the text.

Then, we will transition into talking about the imagery and themes present in yesterday’s reading, and I will ask students to lead the conversation by discussing their observations and insights. Following these discussions, students will be placed into groups to analyze specific scenes and identify narrative techniques (symbolism, tone, imagery) and their impact. Groups will then present their analyses, supported by evidence from the text and visuals of the story. For homework, students will read Chapters 4-5 of *The Talk* and select a moment that was impactful or resonated with them; they will write a short reflection (2-3 paragraphs) connecting it to either their own experiences or a broader issue in society.

### **Day 8: Connecting *The Talk* to Historical Racism**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze the connections between historical racism and the present-day experiences depicted in the novel in order to contextualize systemic inequality.

2. Students will explore how historical narratives inform contemporary discussions of race in order to critically examine ongoing issues of injustice, especially those presented in *The Talk*.
3. Students will identify patterns of privilege and power in historical and contemporary contexts in order to deepen their understandings of societal structures.
4. Students will reflect on the role of personal and collective narratives in order to engage in critical dialogues about equity and justice.

As students enter the classroom, I will display a quote from the Civil Rights era ( **“I’m never sure anymore when I leave home whether I’ll get back or not. Sometimes, it seems like to tell the truth today is to run the risk of being killed. But if I fall, I’ll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight for freedom. I’m not backing off”** - Fannie Lou Hamer) asking students respond to it using the following prompt: **“How might this quote reflect experiences of systemic racism? How might this sentiment remain relevant for marginalized groups facing racism today?”**

After students take 3-5 minutes to respond to the quote and prompt, we will talk as a class about the history behind this quote (and hundreds of others like it) and its relevance to the novel. We will then read the short story *The Flowers* by Alice Walker; I will read the story aloud to students, projecting my annotations on the digital whiteboard for them to copy in order to practice close reading. I will verbalize any questions or comments I might have, but I will encourage students to take the reins by verbalizing their thoughts and questions as we annotate. We will then briefly discuss the historical implications of the text and how reading it alongside *The Talk* highlights Bell’s examination of continued racial violence and discrimination.

We will then watch the video PBS News Hour Clip *Getting in the Pool* featuring social justice lawyer Bryan Stevenson, analyzing what his personal experience as a child reveals about the pervasive nature of racism in the United States after reading. We will wrap up class discussing the importance of connecting historical contexts to the modern day. As homework, students will read Chapters 6-7 of the text. They will also begin researching one historical event related to racism in the United States for a short analytical reflection in which they will connect/compare their chosen event to the themes in *The Talk*. This practice with researching historical aspects of a social justice issue will help students later on as they perform research for their graphic novel projects.

## **Day 9: Storytelling as a Tool for Social Justice**

### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will evaluate how personal stories like those in *The Talk* highlight inequities and injustices in order to better understand storytelling as a form of activism.
2. Students will reflect on their own positionality and perspectives in order to identify connections to broader social justice themes.
3. Students will analyze the use of visual storytelling techniques in the novel in order to brainstorm ways to incorporate these techniques into their own graphic stories.

As class begins, students will be asked to examine a panel from *The Talk* that displays a powerful visual or quote about racism and respond to the following question: **“How does this panel challenge or inspire you? Why?”**

After the “Do Now” activity, I will lead students through direct instruction on how storytelling (like what we see in *The Talk*) can amplify marginalized voices and challenge social norms. During direct instruction, we will discuss the power of art (not just literature/verbal storytelling) in social justice movements. I will provide students with a physical copy of the Smithsonian Article *The “Art” of Storytelling* by Joseph Caputo, inviting students to investigate how storytelling can transcend literature through visual imagery and encouraging them to explore the ways that meaning can be conveyed through multiple mediums, as we see in graphic novels like *The Talk*. Following direct instruction, students will choose one vignette from the novel *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros to read. Once they are finished reading, they may read another or choose to find and read an article on the social justice issue of their choice.

During the remainder of the class period, students will spend time brainstorming about potential social justice issues and themes they would like to focus on for their final project, examining their reflections from Day 3 to support their brainstorming. As an exit ticket (which I don’t use very often), students will respond to the prompt: **“What story do you want to tell and why?”** to help them clarify the brainstorming process and help me monitor where they are at with developing their theme and choosing an issue to write about. As homework, students will identify the issue they want to address, detailing one personal connection to the issue they have chosen. Students will also read Chapters 8-9 of the novel, taking notes as they read.

## **Day 10: Bringing Narratives to Life**

### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will reflect on their own positionality and the stories they wish to tell in order to craft meaningful narratives that address social justice issues.
2. Students will begin developing their graphic novel narratives with attention to diverse perspectives and experiences in order to create accurate, inclusive, and socially responsive works.
3. Students will experiment with visual storytelling techniques in order to effectively convey tone, emotion, and meaning.
4. Students will engage in collaborative feedback sessions with peers in order to refine their ideas and consider alternate viewpoints.

At the beginning of class, students will interact with a “Do Now” prompt asking them to document 3 adjectives that describe the message they want to convey in their graphic novel project. Additionally, students will return to their notes on *The Talk* and highlight a favorite panel or page that they believe incorporates an impactful visual sequence, explaining why in no more than 2 sentences.

After completing the “Do Now,” we’re going to jump right into a mini lesson revisiting how to create impactful visual narratives. This lesson will include strategies and tips on panel composition, text placement, character clothing and facial expressions. Accompanying this mini lesson will be a visual presentation containing examples, as well as a physical handout that includes effective strategies for creating impactful visual designs such as color theory, tips for

creating settings, and strategies for panel layout (including frame, gutter, splash, bleeds, and panel placements.)

Students will spend the remainder of the class period developing the format of their graphic novel projects using the strategies for panel layout discussed in our lesson (listed above). Peer feedback will be included in the drafting process, as students will work in pairs or groups to give and receive feedback as they work. For homework over the weekend, students will write and continue crafting their graphic novel format – the goal will be to have panel layout drafts completed for all pages of their graphic novels (8-10). Over the weekend, students will also read Chapters 10-11, taking notes as they read.

### ***Week #3: Creation Process – Understanding and Brainstorming***

#### **Day 11: Exploring Themes in *The Talk***

##### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze the themes presented in the novel in order to connect them to broader social justice issues.
2. Students will explore the relationship between personal and societal issues in order to build a strong foundation for their narrative ideas.

For the “Do Now” activity, students will examine a key panel (p. 33) from the novel that focuses on a central theme and will write down what they think the theme of the panel is and why it matters.

To start the lesson, we will discuss a few student observations about the panel theme, uncovering the author’s intentions as we converse. We will then practice close reading using the featured panel, closely analyzing the textual and visual elements to examine how Bell uses them to convey theme. Additionally, I will begin scaffolding and modeling how to create theme within written narratives – this will include modeling and discussing how messaging, symbolism, and historical/contemporary contexts can work together to create a theme. Additionally, we will read the vignette “Those Who Don’t” from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, examining how Cisneros’ messaging, symbolism, and use of historical and contemporary contexts influence the larger themes at play in the excerpt.

After direct instruction on theme, I will facilitate a class discussion by asking students how the issues the panel represents relate to the modern society we live in or lives we live today. For homework, students will read Chapters 12-13 of the text, taking notes as they read. They will also examine their responses to the “Do Now” activity from the previous day, determining the message they want to convey in their graphic novel and writing notes on the ways they can create theme(s) for their projects from this message.

#### **Day 12: Story Arcs**

##### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze the structure of *The Talk* in order to understand how narrative arcs shape storytelling.
2. Students will outline a narrative arc for their graphic novels in order to create more engaging and meaningful stories.
3. Students will reflect on how their chosen theme and characters fit into the narrative arc in order to strengthen the focus of their stories.

To begin the class, I am going to display an outline of a narrative arc for *The Talk* for students to examine. They will then respond to the arc by identifying which part of the story is the most important and why.

After students have completed the “Do Now” activity, we’re going to dive into the narrative arc. First, we’re going to discuss the basics – what each section is and what it might look like in a traditional novel. We’ll then discuss how each section/stage of a narrative arc is used to reinforce themes and character development throughout the story, from exposition to climax and down to resolution at the end of the novel. I will then model for students how to create narrative arcs before guiding them in outlining their own graphic novels using a narrative arc handout.

During the remainder of class time, students will work on developing their narrative arcs. For homework, students will complete their narrative arcs and write a brief (2-3) paragraph reflection explaining how their chosen theme and characters are represented or woven into their arc. For homework, students will read Chapters 16-17 of the text, taking notes as they read.

### **Day 13: Developing Characters**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze how characters in the story reflect diverse perspectives and lived experiences in order to consider how to develop their own characters meaningfully.
2. Students will reflect on their own social identities in order to create authentic and socially responsive protagonists.
3. Students will explore how graphic texts reveal character traits both visually and textually in order to experiment with character creation techniques.

During the “Do Now” activity at the beginning of class, students will react to a panel from *The Talk* that showcases character development (i.e., a moment of dialogue or internal conflict), writing down what they learn about the character in that panel and how the visuals contributed to their understanding.

The lesson will begin with volunteer students sharing the responses to the “Do Now” prompt. Then, I will facilitate a close reading of the text, examining 2-3 different panels with the class and focusing on how Bell develops characters through text, visuals, and interactions with theme. This close reading/discussion will develop into a mini lesson about creating complex characters where we will discuss the importance of giving characters a backstory, showing their goals, motivations, and growth, and using visuals and descriptive language to show readers who the characters are, rather than telling them. I will model this process, creating my own complex



character for the class by taking suggestions from them for the character's background, goals, flaws, motivations, and desires, and filling out a graphic organizer handout. Students will then receive a copy of the same graphic organizer to begin mapping out their own characters, both a protagonist and antagonist. The lesson will wrap-up with students turning to peers and trading graphic organizers to receive feedback in the last 5-10 minutes of class. For homework, students will read Chapters 14-15 of the novel, taking notes as they read. Additionally, students will revise their character maps based on peer feedback, adding details about the challenges their characters face and explaining how they connect to the social justice theme of the students' story.

#### **Day 14: Visual Design Inspired by *The Talk***

##### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze how visual elements like setting and composition enhance storytelling in the novel in order to apply similar techniques to their own graphic novels.
2. Students will design visual settings for their narratives in order to create mood and reinforce themes.
3. Students will reflect on the cultural and social contexts of their settings in order to ensure their designs are safe (now hateful), inclusive, and meaningful.

To begin the class period, I will display a panel from the graphic novel *Persepolis* (p. 3) with a vivid setting on the digital whiteboard, asking students to write 3 details about how the setting might contribute to the mood or theme of the scene.

Then, we will open dialogue by discussing student answers to the "Do Now." Immediately after students share their responses, I'm going to begin direct instruction on how to design settings and composition in graphic novels; this will include helping students brainstorm ideas and giving them guidance, support, and advise as we discuss where they want to take their stories and what they are about.

In the remainder of the period, students will brainstorm the setting for their stories, considering how visual elements such as setting reflect mood and tone. They will begin drafting a short proposal (2-4 paragraphs) detailing their proposed setting and why they chose it. In the last 5-10 minutes, students will share their proposal with a partner to give/receive helpful feedback. For homework, students will revise and refine their proposals, writing a brief description (1 paragraph) about how it might reinforce their social justice themes. Students will also read Chapters 18-19 of the novel, taking notes while they read.

#### **Day 15: Connecting to Panel Planning**

##### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze the flow and composition of panels in the novel in order to develop an understanding of how pacing affects storytelling.
2. Students will draft and refine panels for their graphic novels in order to visualize key moments of their narratives.
3. Students will experiment with panel layouts and transitions in order to strengthen the pacing and focus of their stories.

To start the class period, students will take notes about the visual flow of the panels in a storyboard template for a scene from *The Talk*, also documenting how the flow impacts the narrative. I'll then facilitate a conversation with students about how Bell uses pacing and composition to engage readers with his story. During this lesson I will also teach students about panel planning, text placement, visual balance, and focusing on transitions between both text and images.

Following direct instruction, students will receive storyboard template handouts, which they will use to draft key moments of their graphic novel applying techniques used in the novel and discussed in class. In the last 5-10 minutes, class will wrap up when I ask students to write a reflection on the challenges or successes they have had during the drafting process. For homework over the weekend, students will revise their storyboard drafts and complete at least 2 new panels that advance the plot when connected visually and textually. Students will also finish *The Talk*, reading chapters 20-24 and taking notes.

#### ***Week #4: Crafting the Graphic Novel***

##### **Day 16: Amplifying Social Justice Themes**

##### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze how *The Talk* amplifies systemic racism and injustice in order to reflect on techniques for addressing similar issues in their graphic novels.
2. Students will explore how social justice themes intersect with narrative structure and visuals in order to refine their storytelling techniques.
3. Students will draft the opening panels of their graphic novels in order to establish their themes and purpose.

To begin class, I will display a panel from *The Talk* on the digital whiteboard that centers on systemic racism in the United States (p.27). Students will respond to the “Do Now” prompt: **“What social justice issue is highlighted here, and how does Bell use visuals and text to convey its impact?”** Briefly afterwards, we will spend some time discussing student responses to the “Do Now” prompt, investigating Bell’s strategies and techniques for creating, maintaining, and growing theme throughout the novel.

After discussion, students will engage with a drafting session, where they will spend the remainder of the class period refining their storyboards. Throughout the process, students will be placed into either pairs or groups so that they can receive peer feedback as they work to identify growth areas. As homework, students will revise their opening panels based on peer feedback and write a reflection explaining how their revisions enhance the theme(s) and tone of their proposed narrative.

##### **Day 17: Exploring Power Dynamics Through Visual Techniques**

##### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze how visual techniques enhance storytelling in the novel in order to apply these approaches to their own graphic novels.
2. Students will revise their existing panels in order to strengthen the visual impact of their narratives.
3. Students will reflect on how visuals interact with text in order to create cohesive and engaging storytelling.

To begin class, students will analyze a panel from the graphic novel *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (pp. 101-102). Students will be asked to respond to the following “Do Now” prompt related to these panels: **“What do the color and composition of these panels reveal to you about the story?”** As usual, following the “Do Now” activity we will take some time to discuss student responses to the prompt.

I will then facilitate a close read of several panels from the text, focusing on the author’s use of design techniques including composition, color, and attention to detail to communicate themes and messaging. I will teach a mini lesson which informs and encourages students to experiment with visual elements including panel composition, color, and character design in order to alter themes and/or mood. I will then guide students through revising their opening graphic novel panels based on the insights we discussed in class today. For homework, students will continue to refine their existing panels and write a reflection about how techniques used by both Satrapi in *Persepolis* and Bell in *The Talk* helped to guide/inspire their revisions.

## **Day 18: The Role of Dialogue in Addressing Justice**

### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze how Bell uses dialogue to convey themes of justice and empathy in *The Talk* in order to develop powerful text for their own graphic novels.
2. Students will reflect on their protagonists’ voice and perspective in order to ensure their dialogue aligns with the narrative theme.
3. Students will draft new panels focusing on impactful dialogue in order to advance their stories and social justice themes.

To begin class, students will examine a dialogue-heavy panel from the core text, displayed on the digital whiteboard or found in their copies of the novel. They will be asked to document their thoughts in 3-5 sentences on how the dialogue of the panel advances themes of justice or injustice.

Once students have completed the “Do Now” activity, we will discuss the role of dialogue in the chosen panel and its impact on the story, messaging, themes, and audience reactions. We will engage in a close reading of the dialogue on the page, examining how Bell uses introspective and conversational text to outline themes of injustice/justice on the page. I will then lead students

through direct instruction on how to craft dialogue that is purposeful, logical, structured, and reflective of (social justice) themes.

Students will then be put into pairs, with one stepping forward to draw 3 strips of paper from a bowl/bucket – one will have 2 characters on it, one will contain the topic of their conversation, and the third lists an activity they are doing while talking. With their partners, students will examine the topic of conversation and activity to craft structured, logical dialogue. Volunteer students will share their responses with the class, explaining the choices they made and why. For the remainder of class time, students will revisit their panel drafts, adding or finalizing dialogue. Additionally, students will draft 2 additional panels, focusing on advancing the themes of their narratives through meaningful conversation between at least 2 characters.

### **Day 19: Social Responsibility in Storytelling**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will reflect on the ethical considerations of addressing social justice themes in literature in order to strengthen the impact of their narratives.
2. Students will analyze how Bell engages in responsible storytelling in order to evaluate their own creative choices.
3. Students will refine their graphic novels in order to ensure their themes are handled thoughtfully and authentically.

To begin class, students will engage with the following “Do Now” prompt: **“What is one responsibility authors might have when addressing social justice issues in their work?”**

Volunteer students will share their responses to the prompt, leading us into a facilitated conversation about their responsibilities as storytellers writing social justice narratives; I will guide them through discussions about responsible storytelling by providing examples of those conveying social justice themes responsibly, including *The Talk*, as well as supplementary texts from our unit such as *March*, *The Flowers*, and *The Lesson*.

Following direct instruction, students will engage with a workshop where they will work individually to reflect on the ways that their graphic novels (thus far) engage with their chosen social justice topics: **Is it accurate to lived experiences? Whose experiences?; If not based on lived experiences, is it backed by research?; Is the story written with empathy and respect in mind?** Students will engage with these questions as they work, collaborating with both myself and their peers for feedback to help them refine their narratives and visuals. As homework, students will write a 1 page reflection about one creative choice they made to responsibly address their social justice theme.

### **Day 20: Peer Review for Social Justice Impact**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will evaluate their peers’ graphic novel drafts for clarity, impact, and connection to social justice themes in order to provide constructive feedback.
2. Students will revise their drafts in order to improve their narratives and visuals based on feedback.
3. Students will reflect on how their graphic novels address social justice themes in order to prepare for presentations.

To begin class, I will share a panel checklist for peer review with every student, both as a hard copy and digitally. Students will be assigned partners as they walk in the door (displayed on the digital whiteboard), and will write their name under “being reviewed” and their partners name under “reviewing” on their handout. On the back of their checklist, students will be asked to write one goal they have for improving their creative works based on the checklist.

I will lead students in a brief mini-lesson on effective, in-depth peer review, walking them through the checklist and using clear, explicit language to explain what they should be looking for as they review. I will write sentence starters on the board for students to use as they make notes on the checklist such as **“I noticed on page X of your storyboard draft that you.... this is impactful because....”**; **“This might work better if....”**; **“The imagery on page X of your storyboard draft might be more impactful if....”** and we will wrap up the lesson by discussing common challenges and strengths identified during peer review sessions.

Then, students will exchange checklists with their partners and share their storyboard drafts with one another. They will spend the remainder of the class reviewing the work of their partner, taking notes on their checklists, and discussing strengths/challenges with their partners. At the end of class, students will exchange checklists once more, and use the remaining class time to review the feedback they have received. As homework over the weekend, students will make revisions based on peer feedback. Students will also continue to develop their graphic novel storyboards, incorporating elements discussed throughout the week including panel composition, color, character design, and dialogue. By Monday morning, students should have a complete rough draft of their storyboard.

## **Week 5: Linking Creation to Social Justice**

### **Day 21: Student Stories**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze the connection between personal stories and systemic issues in *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent* in order to strengthen the themes of their graphic novels.
2. Students will revise their drafts in order to ensure their work reflects the intersection of personal and societal justice.

For the day’s “Do Now” activity, students will examine a panel from the novel where Bell connects personal experiences to moves for societal change. Students will write a 1 paragraph reflection explaining how their own graphic novels connect personal narratives to broader societal issues.

Following the “Do Now” I will facilitate a close reading of an excerpt from Isabel Wilkerson’s *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, examining and discussing the ways that Wilkerson’s depictions of her experiences (and those of hundreds of others in the Black community) connect to larger societal issues such as police violence, racial profiling, prejudice, and discrimination. As we examine these examples, we will discuss how both personal stories can spread awareness and inspire systemic change.

Students will then be placed into small groups to revise their storyboard drafts to strengthen narrative connections between social justice themes and individual experiences. In the remaining 5-10 minutes of class, all students will pass their drafts to the person on their right to receive peer feedback. As homework, students will continue to work on their drafts. They will also write 2 paragraphs on how their story reflects their personal experiences, and how it connects to broader social justice issues.

## **Day 22: Strengthening Themes**

### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will identify key moments in the novel that highlight its themes in order to draw connections to their own graphic novels.
2. Students will revise their narratives in order to ensure their stories contain clear, impactful themes.
3. Students will refine their closing panels in order to conclude their narratives effectively.

To begin class, I will display a panel from *The Talk* on the digital whiteboard that reflects a pivotal moment of change or realization. Students will write about how this moment connects to the story's larger themes. I will then lead them through a guided discussion of what makes the moment impactful, helping students identify similar moments in their own stories. I will also guide students in making revisions to their storyboard narratives to ensure that their themes are structured, clear, and impactful by pushing them to think about the key takeaways they want readers to emerge with after reading their story. As students revise, I will call them back one by one to review their panels and provide feedback that will help them craft strong conclusions as we near the end of the unit. For homework, students will continue to work on their graphic novel projects.

## **Day 23: Crafting Empathy Through Visual Narratives**

### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze how *The Talk* fosters empathy through text and visuals in order to ensure their work achieves similar goals.
2. Students will revise their existing panels in order to enhance the emotional impact of their narratives.

To begin the class period, students will choose 1 panel from the novel that they believe evokes empathy. They will document the page number and briefly explain what happens in the panel. Then, they will reflect on how the visuals in the panel reinforce feelings of empathy for the characters and themes appearing in the panel/on the page.

After the "Do Now" I will facilitate a close reading of key scenes in *The Talk* and *Persepolis* that illustrate emotions through visuals, focusing on the techniques the authors use to foster empathy in the reader (including color, character expressions, close ups, negative space, and panel layout). Then, students will work in groups to analyze their storyboard drafts, examining key panels in their stories that portray emotions and evoke empathy in readers, discussing the illustration techniques used by the author to impact the reader.

Following the group activity, students will work independently to refine or enhance the emotional impact of their narratives through visual means. Students will use the remainder of class time to work with their drafts and adjust visuals as needed to evoke emotions and empathy in their readers. For homework, students will continue revising the emotional content of their drafts. They will also be asked to write a brief (1 paragraph) reflection about one change they made to their story to strengthen their calls for empathy in their storytelling.

## **Day 24: Connecting Elements**

### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze the interaction between text and visuals in *March* in order to improve the integration of these elements in their graphic novels.
2. Students will reflect on their creative choices in order to ensure their storytelling aligns with their social justice themes.
3. Students will revise their drafts with a focus on text and visual harmony in order to enhance the clarity and impact of their work.

To begin class, students will examine a panel from the graphic novel *March* where texts and visuals interact to communicate a powerful message (pp.6-7). They will answer the question: **“How do the text and visuals complement each other in the panel, and what makes this combination effective?”** I will then lead students in a mini lesson about the integration of text and visuals in graphic novels to highlight techniques including alignment, tone, and pacing in order to identify areas where visuals or text could be refined. Students will then work with a group to give and receive feedback based on our lesson, focusing on tone, pacing, and alignment of text and visuals. For homework, students will continue to examine and revise their graphic novel storyboards in preparation to submit next week for grading.

## **Day 25: Exploring Systemic Structures Through Text and Visuals**

### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will analyze how Bell portrays systemic structures through text and visuals in order to reflect critically on their roles in perpetuating inequality.
2. Students will draft panels focusing on systemic structures or their consequences in order to advance their social justice themes.

To begin, students will respond to the “Do Now” prompt: **“Recalling discussions from previous weeks, how can storytelling be used as a form of activism? Write one way your graphic novel advocates for change or amplifies marginalized voices.”** We will then spend some time revisiting storytelling as a form of advocacy, reading an excerpt from Isabel Wilkerson’s *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent* in order to examine the connections between individual experiences and structural, generational interactions with racism, and how telling these stories creates strength, unity, and power within marginalized communities. Students will be encouraged to refer to their notes from our previous reading of *Caste* to support discussion and analysis during instruction.

I will then guide students in evaluating their own graphic works to look for thematic clarity: **“Do you have a single, unifying idea? (principle theme) What is it?”; “What are some other ideas (themes) that are introduced that reinforce the strength of your core theme?”; “How**

**do your visuals and text reinforce the social justice themes in your story?"** Following our shared reading and direct instruction, students will be given the remainder of class time to polish visuals and begin to finalize their narratives. I will set up a station in the back, calling students back one at a time to discuss progress and allow students to ask any questions or address concerns. To wrap up class, I will ask students to reflect on the following question: **"What impact do you hope your graphic novel will have on your target audience?"** For homework, students will continue to polish and revise their storyboard drafts, ensuring they have at least 8 pages (but no more than 10) that are fully outlined with dialogue, captions, structured panel layout, established setting, and established characters. They will submit it next Friday for grading.

## **Week #6: Finalizing and Submitting Graphic Novels**

### **Day 26: Reflecting on Narrative Flow and Themes**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will reflect on the purpose and themes of their graphic novels in order to ensure their narratives align with their social justice goals.
2. Students will evaluate the narrative flow of their graphic novels in order to refine their storytelling for clarity and impact.
3. Students will revise key panels and text in order to strengthen their connection to the central theme.

To begin, students will respond to the Essential Question of the unit: **"In what ways can storytelling in various forms help us understand and address complex social issues"** by writing about how their graphic novel creations will help readers understand and address the social justice issue they chose to write about. Then, students will receive another copy of the peer review charts from last week, and pair with a partner to review drafts before submission on Friday. Students will be asked to focus on the narrative flow, themes, and messaging of the novel to ensure that they are logical, well-structured, clear, and impactful. For homework tonight, students will revise their drafts based on peer feedback, focusing on narrative flow and themes.

### **Day 27: Polishing Visual and Textual Elements**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. *Students will analyze the interaction between visuals and text in their work in order to ensure cohesion and effectiveness.*
2. *Students will revise their visuals and text in order to clarify themes and enhance emotional resonance.*
3. *Students will finalize a sequence of panels in order to polish a key section of their graphic novels.*

In a "Do Now" activity, students will be asked to write down comments about one visual/textual element they are proud of in their narrative, as well as one visual/textual element they feel could be improved. After students complete the "Do Now" activity, I will teach students best practices for finalizing the visual/textual elements of their graphic novels, including editing and finalizing spacing, text alignment, color use, character expressions and clothing, and panel composition. Following direct instruction, students will be given the remainder of class time to work on their



drafts, ensuring that visuals and text interact well to reinforce their themes. For homework, students will complete revisions on the sequencing/formatting of panels worked on in class.

### **Day 28: Completing Author's Notes**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will articulate the purpose and themes of their graphic novels in order to finalize their Author's Notes.
2. Students will connect their personal and social justice themes in order to explain the relevance of their work.
3. Students will complete their Author's Notes in order to provide context and meaning for their graphic novel submission.

For the "Do Now" activity, students will respond to the following question: **"What is the single most important takeaway you want readers to gain from your graphic novel?"** Following the "Do Now" activity, students will participate in a class discussion about the role of author notes in providing insights into the story's narrative, themes, and visual elements to determine purpose. As we discuss, I will guide students through revising and finalizing their Author's Notes for their graphic novels, circling the room to provide feedback and ask questions to help them contextualize their notes such as **"What is your story about?"**; **"Why did you create it?"**; **"What impact do you hope it will have?"** For homework, students will finalize their Author's Notes, focusing on narrative, themes, and visual elements to determine purpose. They will also work through their graphic novels, continuing to edit and finalize for submission.

### **Day 29: Work Day**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will work to finalize their graphic novel storyboards.

For the "Do Now" assignment, students will establish 2 goals they want to achieve by the end of class. For the remainder of the period, students will be expected to work individually on their graphic novel assignments, finalizing narratives and visuals. I will set up a work station in the back of the classroom to provide extra guidance and support for students who need it.

### **Day 30: Submitting Final Drafts**

#### **Learning Targets:**

1. Students will finalize and submit their graphic novels for grading
2. Students will reflect on the process of creating a short graphic novel

For the "Do Now" assignment, students will again set 2 goals they want to achieve by the end of class. Students will work individually on their final drafts for the majority of the period. The work station will be "open" for students who need assistance, guidance, or support. Students will have until midnight tonight to finalize and submit their graphic novel drafts for grading. I will

provide extensions until Sunday at 5pm if students need extra time to finalize and submit their work.

## Lesson Plan #1 + Attending Materials

Lesson #1:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Teacher Name</b>   | Miss Selsor   |
| <b>Grade</b>  | 10th Grade  |
| <b>Text(s)</b>  | <i>The Flowers</i> by Alice Walker  |
| <b>Materials/Resources</b>  | PBS News Hour Clip <i>Getting in the Pool</i> ; PBS News Hour Clip <i>On America's Racial Terrorism</i> , "silence has condemned us"; notebooks, pens/pencils, school provided device (Chromebook)  |
| <b>Step 1: Desired Results (LEARNING OBJECTIVES)</b>  |   |
| <i>What will students be able to know/do by the end of the lesson?</i>  |   |
| <b>Student Learning Objective(s):</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Students will explore how historical narratives inform contemporary discussions of race in order to critically examine ongoing issues of injustice, especially those presented in <i>The Talk</i>.</b></li> <li><b>Students will identify patterns or privilege and power in historical and contemporary contexts in order to deepen their understandings of societal structures.</b></li> <li><b>Students will reflect on the role of personal and collective narratives in order to engage in critical dialogues about equity and justice.</b></li> </ol> | <b>Related Common Core Standards:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>RH.9-10.6:</b> Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.</li> <li><b>RI.11-12.7:</b> 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.</li> <li><b>SL.9-10.1:</b> Initiate and participate effectively in collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</li> </ul> |

| Rationale of Learning Objectives  |   |
|---|---|
| How does the activity connect to student interests and the focused aspect of writing? How does this lesson connect to prior knowledge/learning? | The contents of this lesson will help to build student awareness of race as a long-standing social justice issue by displaying 3 examples from different time periods in United States history (and the modern day). This activity will incentivize students to begin researching the social justice issue of their choice to prepare them for writing and illustrating their own 10–20-page graphic novel. |
| How will the activity build a sense of purpose/ownership for students?  | This activity will give students a sense of ownership by giving them multiple opportunities to engage with complex topics, contribute to discussions, and connect the content of the lesson (and their research) to their own lives and experiences.  |
| How will this activity lay the foundation for the assignment/sequence steps to come?  | This assignment helps to build critical thinking skills, contextual awareness of social justice issues, and personal engagement with the themes of systemic racism, historical relevance, and social justice. These will be relevant as we continue reading through Bell’s graphic novel, and will continue to remain so as students research, write, and revise their graphic novels later in the unit.    |
| Step 2: Content Explanation   |   |
| What specific concepts, skills, and/or processes are you introducing?   | <p>Concepts: Systemic Racism, Storytelling as Advocacy, the Intersection of history and modern issues, empathy and perspective.</p> <p>Skills: Critical Analysis, Close Reading, Comparative Thinking, Research, Discussion and Collaboration.</p>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | Processes: Text-to-Context Connections, Multi-media Analysis, Research Foundations  |
| How do you understand this content? (For example, if your activity addresses the concept of voice, how would you define voice within this context?)                                | I understand this lesson as a multi-layered investigation of systemic racism in connection to the core text, <i>The Talk</i> . This lesson integrates literature, multimodal analysis, and reflective practices to strengthen students' critical thinking abilities and analytical skills.  |
| <b>Step 3: Acceptable Evidence of Learning (ASSESSMENT)</b>  |   |
| <i>This is very useful practice: How will you know and measure whether or not students have met each learning objective and what meaning they made from the lesson?</i>            |   |
| <b>Formative (How will you check for student understanding throughout the lesson and at key points?)</b>   | <b>Summative (What is acceptable evidence for <i>this</i> isolated lesson?):</b>  |
| Response to the "Do Now" prompt; active engagement in class discussion; reading and annotating along during shared reading;  |   |
| <b>Step 4: Learning Plan (LEARNING ACTIVITIES)</b>   |   |
| <i>Learning activities (step-by-step, from start to finish, uses headings, includes specific prompts; detailed enough for another teacher to follow with scripting as needed):</i> |   |
| <b>Lesson Procedure:</b><br><br>As we discuss both the short story and the two videos, I will frequently check in with students to monitor understanding.                          | <b>Do Now (5 min):</b> I will display a quote from the Civil Rights era ("I'm never sure anymore when I leave home whether I'll get back or not. Sometimes, it seems like to tell the truth today is to run the risk of being killed. But if I fall, I'll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight for freedom. I'm not backing off" - Fannie Lou Hamer) |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>asking students respond to it using the following prompt:</p> <p><b>“How might this quote reflect experiences of systemic racism? How might this sentiment remain relevant for marginalized groups facing racism today?”</b></p> <p><b>Direct Instruction/Modeling (35 min):</b> After students take 3-5 minutes to respond to the quote and prompt, we will talk as a class about the history behind this quote (and hundreds of others like it) and it’s relevance to the novel.</p> <p>After a brief discussion on the “Do Now” prompt, we will read the short story <i>The Flowers</i> by Alice Walker; I will read the story aloud to students, projecting my annotations on the digital whiteboard for them to copy in order to practice close reading. I will verbalize any questions or comments I might have, but I will encourage students to take the reigns by verbalizing their thoughts and questions as we annotate. We will then briefly discuss the historical implications of the text, and how reading it alongside <i>The Talk</i> highlights Bell’s examination of continued racial violence and discrimination.</p> <p>We will then watch the video PBS News Hour Clip <i>Getting in the Pool</i> featuring social justice lawyer Bryan Stevenson, analyzing what his personal experience as a child reveals</p> |
|--|---|

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>about the pervasive nature of racism in the United States after reading. Finally, we will watch the PBS News Hour Clip <i>On America's Racial Terrorism</i>, “<i>silence has condemned us</i>” also featuring Stevenson, further analyzing the historical and contemporary prevalence of racial violence, discrimination, and injustice the United States.</p> <p><b>Lesson Closure/Reflection (10 min):</b> I will ask students to respond to a series of structured discussion questions, tasking them with leading the conversation about power, privilege, and discrimination as learned through the text and videos we have read today, encouraging them to take ownership of their learning.</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> As homework, students will read Chapters 6-7 of the core text. They will also begin researching one historical event related to racism in the United States for a short analytical reflection in which they will connect/compare their chosen event to the themes in <i>The Talk</i>. This practice with researching historical aspects of a social justice issue will help students later on as they perform research for their graphic novel projects.</p> |
| <b>Considerations</b>                                      |  |
| What challenges can I anticipate? How can I plan for them? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Some students may find themes of systemic racism, racial violence, and social justice emotionally overwhelming OR difficult to connect with. To combat this, I will ensure that my classroom is a safe, welcoming space for all students, I will practice</li> </ol>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>gradual release of sensitive topics to slowly build engagement, and offer alternative methods of engagement to insure comfort and inclusivity.</p> <p>2. Some students may be resistant to exploring or accepting concepts of systemic racism due to lack or prior exposure or personal biases. To combat this, I will ensure that discussions are rooted in facts and backed by historical, academic evidence to remain objective. I will also encourage students to practice critical thinking, framing discussions as explorations from diverse perspectives to allow students to analyze and form their own conclusions. However, if at any point a student becomes hateful and begins to “spout” harmful ideologies or rhetoric, they will be asked to leave the classroom.</p> |
| What can I do to ensure that all students are engaged and challenged at the appropriate level? | I will prioritize the use of differentiated instruction – offering multiple entry points and designing and revising tasks to suit individual abilities and levels.  |
| Connections to Previous/Next Lesson  | The next lesson continues to build on the skills introduced here, expanding student abilities to connect personal stories and historical events to broader social justice themes.   |
| <b>References</b>  |   |
| List external resources (i.e., lesson planning websites) used to design this lesson.           |   |



## Lesson Plan #2 + Attending Materials

Lesson #2:

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Teacher Name</b>   | Miss Selsor   |  |  |
| <b>Grade</b>  | 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade                                      |  |  |
| <b>Text(s)</b>  | <i>The Talk</i>   |  |  |
| <b>Materials/Resources</b>  | Notebook, Pens/Pencils, School provided device (Chromebook) |  |  |
| <b>Step 1: Desired Results (LEARNING OBJECTIVES)</b>  |   |  |  |
| <i>What will students be able to know/do by the end of the lesson?</i>  |   |  |  |
| <b>Student Learning Objective(s):</b>   |   | <b>Related Common Core Standards:</b>  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will identify key moments in the novel that highlight its themes in order to draw connections to their own graphic novels.</li> <li>2. Students will revise their narratives in order to ensure their stories contain clear, impactful themes.</li> <li>3. Students will refine their closing panels in order to conclude their narratives effectively.</li> </ol> |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>RL.9-10.2:</b> Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.</li> <li>▪ <b>W.9-10.3b:</b> Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences; use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Rationale of Learning Objectives</b>   |   |  |  |
| How does the activity connect to student interests and the focused aspect of writing? How does this lesson connect to prior knowledge/learning?   |   | This activity taps into student creativity by connecting the themes of the novel to their own narratives, fostering engagement through personal storytelling.  |  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>This activity emphasizes writing by encouraging and guiding students to create impactful themes in their graphic novels, practicing creative writing.</p> <p>The lesson builds on previous discussions and lessons in the unit about <i>The Talk</i>, particularly those on thematic analysis, close reading, and contextualizing historical and modern day issues pertaining to race.</p> |
| How will the activity build a sense of purpose/ownership for students?               | It allows students to become leaders in the classroom by connecting pivotal moments in the story to their writing, as well as pivotal moments in their writing to real life.  |
| How will this activity lay the foundation for the assignment/sequence steps to come? | This lesson scaffolds future sequence steps by guiding student through the process of identifying impactful moments in literature, as well as applying thematic analysis to their own graphic novels. It also encourages them to focus on developing clear, purposeful themes.  |
| <b>Step 2: Content Explanation</b>   |   |
| What specific concepts, skills, and/or processes are you introducing?                | <p>Concepts: Thematic impact, Narrative closure, Personal and Broader Connections</p> <p>Skills: Textual Analysis, Revision, Critical Reflection</p> <p>Processes: Theme Identification, Guided Feedback, Independent Revisions</p>   |
| How do you understand this content? (For example, if your activity addresses the     | This content serves as an investigation of how themes and impactful moments shape a narrative's overall meaning. It   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| concept of voice, how would you define voice within this context?)  | focuses on helping students critically analyze storytelling techniques from the novel and apply those strategies in their own writing.  |
| <b>Step 3: Acceptable Evidence of Learning (ASSESSMENT)</b>   |   |
| <i>This is very useful practice: How will you know and measure whether or not students have met each learning objective and what meaning they made from the lesson?</i>   |   |
| <b>Formative (How will you check for student understanding throughout the lesson and at key points?)</b>  | <b>Summative (What is acceptable evidence for <i>this</i> isolated lesson?):</b>  |
| Engaging with “Do Now”; Actively participating in class discussions   | Reflection homework assignment  |
| <b>Step 4: Learning Plan (LEARNING ACTIVITIES)</b>  |   |
| <i>Learning activities (step-by-step, from start to finish, uses headings, includes specific prompts; detailed enough for another teacher to follow with scripting as needed):</i>  |   |
| <b>Lesson Procedure:</b><br><br>Add in Checks for Understanding (CFUs) in this column parallel to their placement in the lesson sequence:<br><br><i>(i.e., As students work in pairs, the teacher will walk around the room and check each partners’ example of voice to identify and address misconceptions)</i> | <b>Do Now (5 min):</b> I will display a panel from <i>The Talk</i> on the digital whiteboard that reflects a pivotal moment of change or realization. Students will write about how this moment connects to the story’s larger themes.<br><br><b>Direct Instruction/Modeling (25 min):</b> I will then lead them through a guided discussion of what makes the moment impactful, helping students identify similar moments in their own stories. I will also guide students in making revisions to their graphic narratives to ensure that their themes are structured, clear, and impactful by pushing them to think |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>about the key takeaways they want readers to emerge with after reading their story.</p> <p><b>Partner Work (15 min):</b> As students revise, they will discuss impactful moments in their own graphic narratives one on one.</p> <p><b>Wrap-Up:</b> As the partner activity concludes, we will branch out discussions to converse as a class about what makes moments impactful in stories, and how we can develop these moments in our own writing.</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> For homework, students will finalize their panels and write a 1 page reflection about how their stories present themes.</p> |
| <b>Considerations</b>                                      |   |
| What challenges can I anticipate? How can I plan for them? | <p>Some students may struggle with theme identification and connecting them to external elements. To combat this, I will scaffold interactions with themes by providing guiding questions and structured activities to help students identify key moments.</p> <p>Some students might lose focus or motivation during the revision process, especially if it seems repetitive or incredibly</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | challenging. To combat this, I will incorporate multiple opportunities for peer review and for students to share their progress to maintain their motivation. |
| What can I do to ensure that all students are engaged and challenged at the appropriate level? | I will actively practice differentiated instruction by providing students with multiple means for engagement and expression throughout the unit.              |
| Connections to Previous/Next Lesson  |   |
| <b>References</b>  |   |
| List external resources (i.e., lesson planning websites) used to design this lesson.           |   |

# Account

Home Subscriptions Payments Logout

| MEMBERSHIP  | SUBSCRIPTION   | ACTIVE | CREATED        | CARD EXP.                   |
|---|--|--------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Student Membership Level<br><i>mp-txn-6807df13dac17</i> | None<br><i>Free for as long as you are a student</i><br><i>Expires: April 22, 2026</i> | Yes    | April 22, 2025 | <a href="#">Change Plan</a> |

Your Learning for Justice account has been created! Inbox x



Learning for Justice <donotreply@learningforjustice.org>  
to me ▾

Sun, Apr 27, 6:18 PM (10 hours ago) ☆ ☺ ↶ ⋮

Thank you for creating an account with Learning for Justice! Our free educational resources—articles, guides, lessons, films, webinars, frameworks and more—help foster shared learning and reflection for educators, young people, caregivers and all community members.

[Click here to learn more!](#)

Thank you for all you do for students,  
The Learning for Justice team

### The Professional Portfolio Rubric

| Criteria  | Below  | Satisfactory  | Meets   | Exceeds   |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Design</b><br>(5, 7, 8, 10)  | Some issues with design in terms of functionality, professionalism, and connections.   | Design is functional, mostly professional appearance, some connected parts.   | Solid design choices, professional appearance, parts connected.   | Purposeful design, professional appearance, parts connected to the whole.   |
| <b>Organization</b><br>(0, 3, 4, 5)   | Missing table of contents.   | Multiple errors on table of contents or missing key components.   | One error on the table of contents, may be underdeveloped.  | Accurate and complete table of contents.  |
| <b>Resume/CV</b><br>(5, 7, 8, 10)   | Multiple errors in terms of resume layout and/or language rules, some qualifications are not listed clearly.   | A few errors in following resume layout and/or language rules, qualifications are clear but not detailed.   | Conforms to the basic resume rules in terms of layout and language, qualifications are covered well.  | Shows mastery of resume rules in terms of layout and language, thorough coverage of qualifications.   |
| <b>Teaching Philosophy</b><br>(5, 7, 8, 10)   | More reflection and clarity could be used to fully explain your teaching principles, does not specifically address your pedagogical beliefs concerning English Language Arts, under length.  | Overall a solid reflection of your principles but unclear at points, does not fully address your pedagogical beliefs concerning the teaching of English Language Arts, may fall short or exceed page limit.   | A good reflective piece utilizing some clear examples, captures your principles, a solid focus on your pedagogical beliefs concerning the teaching of English Language Arts, meets length requirements.   | Highly reflective, not overtly abstract, captures your basic principles, focuses primarily on your pedagogical beliefs concerning the teaching of English Language Arts. Document 2 single-spaced pages.  |
| <b>DEI Statement</b><br>(5, 7, 8, 10)   | More reflection and clarity could be used to fully explain your beliefs about DEI. Statement may be surface, fail to name explicit practices, and or is under length.  | Statement includes a reflection on DEI, but may not have a clear focus or contain enough explicit examples. May not meet page requirement (too short, or over one page).  | Thorough and reflective piece utilizing some clear examples to name DEI beliefs. May be a bit abstract at times. Meets length requirement and doesn't go over one single-spaced page.   | Highly reflective, not overtly abstract statement. Clearly names DEI principles and engages explicit examples. Meets length requirement and doesn't go over one single-spaced page.   |
| <b>Clinical Experience Essay</b><br><br>*MUST attach EIU's Scoring Rubric*<br><br>(0, 15, 20, 25) | The field work experience is not clearly documented here and/or course materials are not utilized in the reflection process. Under length. Fulfills little to none of EIU's reflection criteria. Does not address the following: cultivating a learning environment, reflective/collaborative teaching practices, fostering critical thinking, connecting curriculum to society, and integrating the arts/humanities. EIU Scoring Rubric is missing. | Discussion of field work is present but is awkwardly discussed and/or combined with the course materials, more reflection on self and profession would better this piece. Fulfills some of EIU's reflection criteria. Hits on some of the following items: cultivating a learning environment, reflective/collaborative teaching practices, fostering critical thinking, connecting curriculum to society, and integrating the arts/humanities. | Combines discussion of field work experience and course materials into an interesting discussion period with some reflection on self and profession. Fulfills most of EIU's reflection criteria. Hits on five of six of the following items: cultivating a learning environment, reflective/collaborative teaching practices, fostering critical thinking, connecting curriculum to society, and integrating the arts/humanities. | Weaves detailed field work and course studies into an interesting discussion piece, demonstrates reflection on self and profession. Fulfills all of EIU's reflection criteria discussing a teacher's role in cultivating a learning environment that capitalizes on cultural diversity, inspires critical thinking, connects curriculum to current society, and integrates arts, humanities, and media into the other threads of Language Arts. |
| <b>Unit Plan &amp; Lesson Plans</b><br>(0, 13, 16, 20)  | Shows some weakness in unit and lesson design.   | Shows a basic understanding of unit and lesson design.  | Shows advanced understanding of unit and lesson design.   | Shows mastery of unit and lesson plan design.   |
| <b>Professional Membership</b><br>(0, 0, 0, 5)  | Evidence is not provided here.   | --  | --  | Evidence provided here.   |
| <b>Language / Mechanics</b><br>(0, 2, 3, 5)   | Multiple oversights in terms of proofreading and language usage.   | Some proofreading errors and language issues.   | A few proofreading errors, college level writing.   | Flawless proofreading, college level writing.   |