

Summary for Parents of the Integrated Humanities Units

As noted in the section on the Reading and Writing Workshop model, students will progress at their own rates and do much work individually and in small groups.

Teachers also will make individual decisions for their classes and their students, which may include varying the order of topics listed below.

The information below is a very general summary of the work during each time period. It is not all-inclusive. This summary is organized by grade and by time of year.

Grade K:

September-October: Building a Community of Learners:

Kindergartners work together in creating a safe, respectful learning environment.

Reading: reading habits, environmental print, story language, details in texts and pictures, phonemic awareness (starting sounds, rhymes, etc.)

Writing: putting ideas on paper with pictures, adding details, labeling illustrations with letters and/or stretching out words, oral storytelling

Social Studies: classroom community, rules, jobs, getting to know one another, we are alike/ we are different

October-November: Pumpkin Cycle:

Early learners explore their world by closely looking at and listening to their surroundings.

Reading: Listen to emergent storybooks read aloud. Retell emergent storybooks, using “story language” and voice to retell stories.

Writing: Label parts and characteristics of objects. Use sight words in their writing. In shared writing, know that capitals start a sentence.

Social Studies: Symbols and traditions help develop a shared culture and identity in the United States. Children, families and communities have cultural similarities and differences.

November-December: Power of Communication:

People communicate with each other in a way that gives the entire group or family strength and power to grow.

Reading: Point under each word as you read. Go back and reread. Make sure words match pictures. Use sight words (also called snap words or trick words) as you read. Use beginning sounds as you read. Be persistent when figuring out words. These decoding strategies are playfully called “super powers.”

Writing: Tell stories. Use pictures and words to write stories. Add details. Use speech bubbles when someone is speaking. Label by stretching words to hear beginning and/or ending sounds. Begin to move from labels to simple sentences. Use periods. Use plurals. Reread writing by tapping each word. Use tools (word wall, vowel chart, etc.) to help you write. Revise writing by adding details.

Social Studies: Concept of family, nuclear family, extended family. Families have needs and wants. Families have traditions.

January-February: Winter Study:

Both animals and people gather, react to, and share information which they use to make decisions that affect the way they live.

Reading: Use decoding “super powers” to read even bigger and harder books with tricky words. Blend beginning sounds together to solve words. Carry a pattern from page to page and notice when there is a word that changes the pattern. Check that reading makes sense and sounds like a book. “Does it make sense?” “Does it sound right?” “Does it look right?”

Writing: Write a how-to book using procedural language (first, next, then, etc.). Stretch out a word, identifying its sounds. Prepositions (to, from, in, out, etc.). Sentence structure: what makes something a sentence.

Social Studies: Maps, globes, north/south/east/west, direction vocabulary, how people and animals are affected by and adapt to their physical environment.

February-March: Nonfiction: It’s For Real!:

Students question the world around them and generate new ideas.

Reading: Fiction vs. nonfiction. Formulate questions to guide reading of nonfiction. Stop and think about what one is reading and ask, “What am I learning here?” Retell key details across fingers. Make sense of how information is organized in a text.

Writing: Write “All About” books. Plan and organize writing beforehand. Use text features such as a table of contents and subheadings. Add examples. Use interrogatives (who, what, etc.) Use periods, question marks, and exclamation points.

Social Studies: People use folktales, legends, oral histories and music to teach values, ideas, traditions, and important events from the past.

April-May: What Matters to Me and My World:

Students have the ability to make the world a better place. Empathy and perseverance bring about change.

Reading: Capture thoughts, feelings and questions about books by recording thoughts on post-its. Use specific words to describe characters’ feelings. Check one’s reading by asking: Does it sound right? Does it look right? Does it make sense?

Writing: Opinion writing, persuasive writing. Think about audience. Give reasons. Use descriptive words. Produce and expand complete sentences. Edit for capitals and punctuation marks. Reread and fix up one’s own writing.

Social Studies: Describe how environment affects activities. Identify a human activity that changed a place. Relate to garden project.

May-June: Everything Grows!:

Children use all that they have learned to persevere in their world and be mindful of their actions.

Reading: Use text clues to infer what the character is doing, saying, thinking and feeling. Identify and describe character traits. Notice how characters and their feelings change throughout a story. Use voice to act out a story. Compare and contrast characters with a partner.

Writing: Plan and write a story across multiple pages. Make a beginning to pull the reader in. Show what happened in order. Use actions (verbs), talking (speech bubbles) and feelings (descriptive words) to develop characters. Make an ending. Use dialogue between characters. Stretch out words. Reread and fix up writing.

Social Studies: Continuation from last unit. Describe how environment affects activities. Identify a human activity that changed a place. Garden project.

Grade One:

September-November: Building a Community of Learners:

Committed learners have responsibilities within their classroom community.

Reading: Readers use a combination of meaning (pictures, content, “What makes sense?”), sentence sense (“What sounds right?”), and visual/phonetic details (“What looks right?”) to solve words and determine meaning as they read. Use all they know to solve words.

Writing: Write a focused “small moment” story with: an engaging beginning, sequenced story ideas, realistic characters, and a powerful ending.

Write a how-to book, with topic, facts, and details. Use technical vocabulary.

Use capital letters. Use prepositions. Use common, proper and possessive nouns and pronouns.

Social Studies: Citizenship: What is a citizen? What is a government? Pledge of Allegiance and patriotic songs. Class rules and responsibilities.

November-January: Getting to Know You and the World Around You:

Families can be alike and different. America is diverse.

Reading: Read nonfiction. Learn and use text features. Stop and think, “What is this book teaching me?”

Writing: Write a nonfiction chapter book. Use text features and structures. Use craft moves. Use punctuation. Expand sentences to make them vivid. Use adjectives.

Social Studies: Develop questions. Use evidence (maps, oral histories, etc.). Retell a family event and/or change over time. Create a timeline. Identify similarities and differences between families. Speak of families with understanding of concepts of geography, economics and history.

January-March: Mapping Our Way:

We guide ourselves as readers developing our own toolbox of strategies and committing ourselves to growing as readers. We can guide others by giving directions, supporting each other as learners, and expressing ideas and opinions through writing. Others guide us by drawing maps to help us get from one location to another.

Reading: Read fiction. Perform a character’s actions and dialogue in order to understand him/her. Read smoothly/ fluently. Comprehend and discuss story elements (events, characters, setting, etc.).

Writing: Opinion writing, persuasive writing. Write a review. Use a lead-in, opinions, comparisons, facts, pros/cons, ratings, quotes, conclusions. Use conjunctions (and, or, etc.). Capitalize dates and names of people.

Social Studies: Maps, map symbols, map keys, cardinal directions.

May-June: The Cost of Decisions:

People and characters make decisions that affect their lives.

People make economic choices as producers and consumers of goods and services.

Reading: Read fiction. Authors teach lessons through characters in stories. Characters' feelings change. Look at the trouble in a story to analyze characters and lessons.

Read nonfiction. Comprehend nonfiction by "chunking" and adding to one's understanding after reading each chunk.

Writing: Realistic fiction writing, using story elements. Create a character, a problem and solution, etc. Write in third person. Use craft moves.

Write poems and songs. Revise through elaboration- adding verses, making comparisons and thinking about word choices.

Use commas to separate words in a series and in dates. Use prepositions (before, after, etc.) and determiners (a, the, etc.). Use verbs for past, present and future.

Social Studies: Economic concepts: goods, services, needs, wants, jobs, spending, saving, banks. What happens when there isn't enough? How do people make economic choices?

Grade Two:

September-October: Building a Community:

Communities are people who live, work, play, and learn together.

Reading: Orient oneself to a book before reading it. Increase reading stamina. Employ various strategies for word solving and comprehension. Self-monitor. Ask, “What’s going on?” Make a mind movie. Retell. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of key details.

Recognize vowel teams, suffixes and compound words in books.

Writing: Generate ideas and plan before writing. Elaborate to enhance writing: add details, dialogue, action and/or feeling. Use craft moves, including ones noticed in mentor texts.

Use reflexive pronouns (e.g., myself). Form and use past tense of verbs. Capitalize holidays, product names, and geographic names. Use an apostrophe to form contractions.

Social Studies: Communities and nations needs rules and laws. Concept of citizenship. Create class charter/ rules, perform classroom jobs, and locate things that a community needs to stay safe, healthy and happy.

November-December: Nonfiction Explorers:

Nonfiction is a genre that allows us to gain and share information.

Reading: Use text features (e.g., headings, table of contents, picture labels) to make sense of nonfiction texts. Notice big ideas. Use post-its to note ideas and wonderings.

Writing: Write a how-to book. Plan writing. Write a table of contents. Introduce the topic. Use collective nouns (e.g., group, family, audience). Write using regular and irregular plural nouns (irregular plural e.g.: fish, children).

Social Studies: Differentiate wants from needs in a community. Understand that a public place is run by the government and a private place is run by individual business owners. Explore the interrelationships of parts of a community and of communities.

January-February: Big and Beyond:

Second graders can move onto bigger understandings: of communities beyond the classroom, of longer books they are reading, and of big thoughts they can write into poems.

Reading: Scoop up words and phrases when reading text, in order to read fluently. Identify literary language.

Writing: Write poems. Use precise words, repetition and comparison. Edit. Compare formal and informal language. Use plural nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

Social Studies: Learn about and compare rural, urban and suburban communities. Understand population density and land use. Geography and natural resources shape where and how communities develop. Use maps and a compass rose. Learn about interdependence with jobs, goods and services to provide needs and wants. Learn symbols of our country and democracy.

February-March: Getting to Know Our Characters and Community:

Understand how characters and people impact or change events.

Reading: Identify character traits based on what a character says, thinks and does.

Identify character changes. Identify lessons/morals/author's purpose.

Writing: Write a fictional story. Create a realistic character who encounters a problem and a realistic solution.

Expand sentences. Use synonyms.

Social Studies: Study interdependence. Areas in a community can be residential, industrial, commercial, transportation, or recreational. Plan an imaginary community. Learn about taxes.

March-April: Changes Over Time:

Characters, people, and communities changes. Different pressures and experiences help to prompt these changes.

Reading: Identify evidence of character traits for the main character. Predict how the character will respond over series. Identify author's craft.

Writing: Create a persuasive letter with a clear opinion and evidence to support it.

Know traditional letter format, with greetings, closings, commas.

Social Studies: Understand the many factors that contribute to change in a community over time. Understand that changes can have both negative and positive effects on a community. Compare and contrast the community now and in the past. Create a timeline. Create and ask questions of others. Identify changes, and identify ways in which the past has influenced the present.

May-June: Noticing Change Around Us:

Noticing change helps us to understand the world around us.

Reading: Notice different perspectives and structures of nonfiction texts. How does an author's perspective color his/her writing? Retell key ideas. Figure out tricky words.

Writing: Write lab reports. Read, re-read, chunk information, and take notes. Write using a structure.

Edit writing.

Social Studies: Current events, interdependence.

Grade Three:

September-October: Growing as Readers, Writers and Citizens:

Students establish routines and expectations to help a community function smoothly. Make good decisions as readers, writers and citizens.

Reading: Establish reading routines and logs. Track one's thinking with post-its or graphic organizers. Self-monitor. Justify predictions using evidence. Infer characters' feelings and motivations.

Writing: Establish writing routines. Make decisions about structure, story development and conventions. Identify small moments. Tell stories in scenes. Organize writing by grouping related sentences together into a paragraph. Rewrite a scene after acting it out. Write strong beginnings and endings.

Use punctuation effectively, including quotation marks for dialogue. Capitalize titles and proper nouns.

Social Studies: Use maps and globes to learn about different parts of the world. Identify town, state, country, and continent. Name landforms. Use interviews, memories, websites, articles, maps and/or books to learn about life in different places. How does where you live affect how you live?

October-November: Discovering Clues- to Cultures, Mysteries and Poems:

Perspective shapes or changes truth.

Reading: Read mysteries. Learn how chapters and scenes fit together. Justify predictions with evidence. Reread to pay close attention. Retell. Determine importance. Sequence story events. Accumulate text across chapters. Compare/contrast characters. Notice and analyze characters' personalities, motivations, choices and responses. Find evidence to support ideas. Self-monitor and ask questions.

Writing: Teachers may choose to write mysteries or poems with their classes. Write with content, language and form. Use precise, deliberate word choice. Express ideas through sensory details or figurative language.

Use abstract nouns. Use superlative and comparative adjectives. Use regular and irregular verbs in simple tenses.

Social Studies: Use evidence from sources to identify the culture, historical influences and present-day evidence of the historical influence on culture. Compare and contrast aspects of daily life for children in different countries. Compare and contrast cultures. Create evidence-based arguments.

November-December: Researching as Readers, Writers and Citizens:

Researchers use multiple methods and resources to gain knowledge.

Reading: Learn about main ideas and text structures. Support all thinking with evidence from the text. Infer main ideas and identify details that support them. Describe cause and effect relationships. Notice how the writer has organized an informational text. Explain how different features or subsections of a text fit with and contribute to the whole.

Record notes. Use new vocabulary to teach others about a topic.

Writing: Teach readers information about a topic, using facts, definitions and details. Introduce, develop and conclude the topic. Plan and organize writing. Create table of contents. Group information into parts, with each part presenting one idea that connects to the big topic. Use transitional phrases (e.g., however, in conclusion, etc.). Use expert vocabulary. Join clauses using conjunctions. Use reference materials.

Social Studies: Study Brazil. Describe how landforms, climate, weather, and availability of resources have impacted where and how people live and work in different places in Brazil. Compare and contrast Brazil and the U.S. in geography, government and culture.

January-February: Looking Closely and Asking Why:

Respond to information with questions, connections, and inferences. Share responses, questions, and ideas, and learn from one another.

Reading: Observe a character's actions, dialogue, thoughts and feelings. Notice patterns in behavior and grow theories about a character. Form predictions. Notice how characters react to challenges. Notice the roles secondary characters play in the main character's journey. Pay attention to climaxes and lessons. Support claims with evidence from the text.

Writing: Plan, draft, revise and edit a literary essay. Write an introductory statement which states a claim or theory about a text/ character and support it with reasons and evidence.

Edit for subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement.

Social Studies: Study China. How is life in China similar to and different from life in the U.S. and Brazil? Study access to resources. How does where people live affect their access to resources? Determine problems and possible solutions. Research a topic of interest.

March: Close Reading and Writing to a Prompt:

Apply what you know about reading and writing to a response to a prompt.

Reading: Read actively. Answer what a prompt is asking. Use strategies for answering multiple-choice questions. Support answers with text evidence.

Writing: Plan an answer to a prompt. Support answers with text evidence. Determine which text details match the prompt. A short response includes a claim and two details. An extended response includes a claim and at least two pieces of evidence that support the claim using quotes, details and elaboration. Write with attention to time. Edit.

April-May: Informing Others to Make Real Changes in the World:

Interpret and analyze information/ research results to answer a variety of questions. New information influences how one thinks and acts.

Reading: Search for and use information to confirm or disconfirm predictions. Describe cause and effect relationships. Interpret graphics. Notice organization and features. Identify and compare/contrast the authorial intent for organizing information. Take notes. Back ideas with evidence.

Writing: Write an opinion/ persuasive piece. Introduce, develop and conclude the topic. Communicate main points. Provide relevant facts and details. Write for a specific purpose. Edit and proofread. Analyze one's own writing.

Social Studies: Examine social and civic issues. Research.

May-June: Be the Hero (Your Life, Your Story):

Examine social and civic issues to expand one's understanding of the world, its people, and yourself.

Reading: Participate in a social issues book club. Identify an issue. Read texts to find issues in them. Research a related topic. Use text features and search tools to locate information. Synthesize information from different texts. Apply information learned from research to form an action plan.

Writing: Teachers may choose a writing genre. One choice might be fairy tales; fairy tales often touch on social issues, whether directly or indirectly. Work on structure, development, voice, figurative language, and language conventions to strengthen a piece of writing. Use grammatical choices to enhance your writing.

Social Studies: Identify actions that unfair or discriminatory. Propose solutions. Explain the role of historical symbols, monuments, and holidays and how they affect a country's identity. Be a good citizen by taking informed action on a social issue of your choice.

Grade Four:

September-October: Arc of the Story:

The meaning of a story is co-constructed by both writer/teller and reader/listeners.

A culture's stories preserve its heritage, traditions, and values.

Reading: Develop a theory about a book or characters. Refer to details and examples in a text. Describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections. Make inferences and draw conclusions. Determine themes in stories; compare themes in different stories.

Compare and contrast the point of view and narrations of a text and one's own point of view. Track thinking with post-its or graphic organizers. Set goals and make resolutions to improve one's reading.

Writing: Tell a story in scenes. Experiment with leads and endings. Use a mix of dialogue, actions, thoughts and setting to "show not tell." Group related sentences together into paragraphs. Edit "on the go."

Capitalize sentences and proper nouns.

Social Studies: Identify and map New York State's physical features. Explain how Native Americans adapted to and modified their environments to meet their needs and wants.

Learn about Native American traditions, job specializations, transportation systems, and technology. Compare and contrast the organization and governance of Native American groups in New York. Examine contributions of Native Americans that are evident today. Analyze Native American myths and legends.

October-November: Building Up to Changes:

The colonies, Great Britain, France, and Native Americans had different needs and wants. These led to tensions that build toward a desire for change.

Different people have different perspectives on the same event.

Speakers and writers can persuade others through wise craft decisions.

Reading: Synthesize details and examples to make inferences about what is important in a text. Use boxes and bullets to record important details. Choose a text structure to summarize. Refer to details that explain main idea and the author's purpose in writing a text. Determine cause and effect relationships.

Writing: Write persuasive essays. Plan using boxes and bullets. Engage readers with leads and conclusions that include a thesis statement. Support the thesis with evidence. Use transitional words and phrases. Use commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text. Use commas when writing compound sentences.

Social Studies: Continue Native American study.

November-December: Interpretations:

People draw conclusions based on their interpretations.

Reading: Analyze characters and determine character traits. Identify theme and pivotal moments/turning points in stories. Analyze author's craft and purpose. Study point of view, perspective, foreshadowing, symbolism.

Writing: Write literary essays. Develop a thesis and support it with text-based evidence. Present readers with a larger context in the introduction, and leave them with something to think about in the conclusion. Revise and edit.

Use progressive verb tenses. Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., there, their, they're).

Social Studies: Analyze primary documents and look at various perspectives. Compare and contrast the regions in the thirteen colonies in relation to natural resources and reasons for settling. Identify key events in the age of exploration or colonial period in a time line.

January-February: The Revolution!:

There are many factors that lead to revolution.

People draw conclusions based on their interpretations.

Reading: Identify text structures. Take notes. Synthesize across texts. Study primary sources. Compare and contrast first and second hand accounts. Pay attention to details that reveal tone and point of view. Develop one's own point of view. Determine cause and effect relationships. Use context clues to determine the meaning of a new word.

Draw upon one's knowledge of interpretation to ask questions about history.

Writing: Research. Make a plan for the structure of one's writing. Consider character, setting, and conflict when writing a story about a time in history. Develop these statements and use facts to develop and support ideas.

Use commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text.

Social Studies: Identify and sequence key events in history that led to the Revolutionary War. Use primary sources; study Loyalist and Patriot points of view. Research major historical events. Discuss multiple perspectives of the same event. Summarize big ideas of the Declaration of Independence.

March- Reading Closely and Writing to a Prompt:

Reading and writing strategies affect one as a reader and affect one's overall performance.

Reading: Chunk and summarize a text. Restate questions. Predict an answer before looking at choices. Skim and scan a text to find an answer. Match answers to choices. Find key details.

Writing: Create a thesis statement based on the prompt. Question and revise a thesis to be sure it is supported by the whole text. Select evidence from the text to support ideas/claims. Include an introduction and conclusion. Edit.

April-May: Times of Change: Whose Freedom Is It?:

There have been moments in history when there have been significant changes increasing the recognition of rights and freedoms of certain groups of people.

What society has already learned can be made more accessible and clear, through historical fiction.

Reading: Read historical fiction. Analyze the setting to determine where and when the story takes place. Determine the “emotional setting.” Connect passages to other parts of the story. Keep track of story elements to build understanding of what’s going on. Create character timelines and historical timelines to deepen understanding of characters and historical events. Think or write about big ideas/ themes and support them with small moments or details from the book. Attend to the perspectives of minor characters.

Investigate power dynamics in the story. Look for similar themes across different books.

Writing: Teacher’s choice of writing genre: historical fiction or poetry. Draw on craft. Generate ideas through research. Choose a theme. Use punctuation for effect. Revise and edit.

Social Studies: Use nonfiction and historical fiction to learn about times of historical change that expanded freedoms (Women’s Suffrage, End of Slavery, Civil Rights Era, Child Labor). Understand the process by which laws are changed at the state and federal level. Learn about the 13th and 19th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and what they mean today. Discuss the meaning of “All men are created equal” from the Declaration of Independence. Possible social action project.

May-June: Moving On:

People help shape society and culture through ideas, skills and goods they bring with them when they move from one place to another.

Reading: Teacher’s choice of reading genre (e.g., immigration research).

Writing: Journalism. See stories in everyday moments, then capture the details of the event in a notebook. Include the who, what, when, and where of the event when collecting a story. Revise with a critical eye, cutting and changing the story to make it more focused and concise. Adopt the “tone” of a reporter. Ask “why” and “how” and then do research to try to answer these questions. Generate ideas by considering what seems fair and unfair in the world, or by considering people, places, and issues one cares about. Publish final pieces using technology.

Social Studies: Factors influence people to permanently leave one place and go to another. Study industrialization. Study westward movement in New York and what advancements made it possible. Study immigration. Explore and research major European groups who came to America through Ellis Island. Determine what pushed people out of their countries and what pulled them to America.

Grade Five:

September-October: Getting to Know You (People and Characters):

Where people live affects how they live, including their access to jobs, education, and representation.

Interactions shape people and the world. (Interactions occur between people and the land, between different groups of people, and between characters/books and readers.)

Reading: Set goals and track reading growth. Quote accurately from a text. Identify multiple themes. Draw conclusions. Discuss parts of a story in relation to a whole text. Distinguish points of view: yours, narrator's, character's. Compare and contrast themes across texts. Revise interpretations to make them more nuanced and precise. Consider authors' choices and techniques. Determine the meaning of words, phrases and figurative language.

Writing: Find ideas for true stories by thinking of turning point moments from personal memories. Use a story arc to develop a story structure and plan out possible plotlines. "Show, don't tell." Write leads and endings. Develop setting and characters. Check that all characters play a role and are related to the larger theme. Organize writing into paragraphs. Consider details and literary devices (punctuation, dialogue, actions, setting, pacing).

Use commas to separate items in a series and to set off certain words and phrases. Correct shifts in verb tense.

Social Studies: Study the geography of the Western Hemisphere and its regions. Regions share common characteristics (political, economic, cultural, physical). Study the relationship between humans and environment. Analyze the development of cultures, civilizations and empires.

November-January: World of Complexity:

Perspectives of real people, authors, and characters influence how one views and talks about historical events.

European explorers explore the New World and encounter societies and their complexities.

Students as readers explore issues and concepts through nonfiction reading, and as writers of information share their discoveries with a designated audience.

Reading: Set and maintain reading goals.

Read nonfiction. Make claims about text and support these claims with text evidence. Identify text structures in complex texts. Discuss the significance of a point in a text and its relationship to the whole text. Identify multiple main ideas within a text and a main idea across the entire text. Determine, sort and rank relevant details when summarizing a text. Use primary and secondary sources. Synthesize texts to develop one's own idea. Form a claim. Collect and sort information and ideas by subtopics or categories. Note when texts contradict one another and ask whether the differences come from the author's point of view.

Read fiction, too. Recognize details that support themes. Analyze a character's actions, words and relationships in connection with theme. Identify different perspectives in a story. Identify the author's perspective. Explain the purpose of word choice, symbolism, mood/tone in a story.

Writing: Teach readers through writing. Write multiple drafts. Use an organizational plan and structures, which may include headings and subheadings. Make deliberate word choices and use expert vocabulary. Choose text features to use. Include a conclusion that reiterates the main points and may offer a final thought or question for the reader to consider.

Underline, quote, and italicize titles of works when citing research.

Social Studies: Investigate explorers from different European countries and map the areas of the Western Hemisphere where they explored and that were colonized. Study migration route theories. Examine and explain the impact of interactions of Europeans and Native Americans. Learn that Africans were forced to move through slavery versus Europeans who desired to move.

Name and explain the elements of civilization: geography, religion, achievements, politics, economics and social structure (GRAPES). Locate the civilizations of the Maya, Aztecs and Inca. Compare and contrast Maya, Inca, and Aztec civilizations.

January-February: Rights and Responsibilities:

People work together to create social change.

Our freedom to argue is one of our most important rights of a citizen in a democracy.

Reading: Assess how the point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text. Read informational texts in a critical and analytical way. Evaluate the argument and claims in a text. Listen, summarize and respond. Consider larger issues. Ask, “How does this challenge my argument or idea?”

Writing: Suspend judgement, read critically, and note-take to build an argument. Collect evidence. Create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support a purpose. Accurately portray data and statistics to make an effective case.

Identify, explain, and debunk the counter argument. Use transition words. Decide which information to quote and which to paraphrase. Write a logical, thoughtful ending.

Articulate a position in a compelling way that is credible and convinces others.

Vary sentence structure. Write more complex sentences using conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections.

Social Studies: Identify and explain the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizens in relation to the Bill of Rights. Examine the founding documents of the U.S. government for evidence of the country’s beliefs, values, and principles. Identify and explain the basic structure of the U.S. Government, including the roles in each of the three branches, and the balance of power. Explain the purpose and components of the Constitution.

March: Close Reading and Writing to a Prompt:

Specific strategies are used when taking a test. One can adapt test taking strategies for use in other areas of life.

Reading: Determine effective reading strategies. Determine question types and notice implicit questions (cause/effect, theme, author’s purpose).

Writing: Write for a specific purpose. Restate the question. Incorporate text specific examples that support the thesis statement/ answer. Draft, revise and edit on-the-go.

April-May: Stepping Into New Worlds:

Suspending judgement is crucial when learning about new people, places and ideas.

What role does power play in a place?

Reading: Read fantasy genre texts. Make sense of multiple plot lines, layered characters, and complex themes. Recognize the narrator and discuss how the choice of first or third person point of view affects the reader. Identify and explain the character's quest. Create mind movies. Compare/contrast fictionalized versions of real events with "magical" events. Identify and explain symbolism, archetypes, power dynamics, perspectives.

Notice the author's use of language to convey sensory images, feeling, and mood.

Writing: Teacher's choice of genre: Fantasy Writing or Memoir. Write for an audience. Explore theme, etc.

Social Studies: Compare and contrast the government structures and functions of the U.S. government with those of Canada, Mexico, and one other country in either the Caribbean or South America. Describe and compare cultural features. Collect evidence about people and groups. Describe what makes each country different through both physical and human features. Study resources and symbols. Demonstrate how the movement of people, goods, and ideas provides opportunities for the exchange of values and customs among cultures, and creates economic and political interdependence.

May-June: Social Issues and Action:

We try to rid ourselves of prejudice, widen our minds, adjust our opinions, and become more responsible and just citizens.

Reading: Chart characters' troubles and the social issues surrounding these. Locate and analyze critical scenes. Determine universal issues. Chart power.

Consider how different authors address similar issues. Consider different perspectives of characters in a book and of different authors, and perspectives that come from a variety of sources and cover different sides to an issue.

Writing: Teacher choice of writing genre.

Social Studies: Continuation of Comparative Culture study, as noted in last unit. At this point in the unit, students can make deeper connections and comparison with social issues in book clubs. One possibility is to plan commentary or social action in response to an issue.