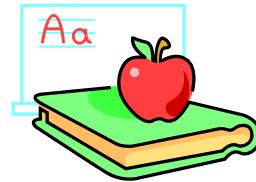


**Tara Fox**  
**TE 847**  
**Integrated Curriculum Unit**



**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading**  
**"Social Inequality"**

**Objectives:**

- Examine aspects of social inequality across time, culture, and literary genre
- Distinguish between different literary elements used
- Draw conclusions based on recurring themes, especially themes between different texts
- Examine reasons for the imbalance of power within a social group
- Analyze the relationship of social inequality with terms like "fairness" and "justice"
- Explore different writing styles
- Improve oral presentation skills
- Make personal connections to literature
- Engage in productive discussions with classmates
- Enhance and better skills in language mechanics

**Procedures:**

We will use a variety of comprehension strategies, each falling under a before-reading, during-reading, or after-reading category:

1. **Reading with a purpose** – Students will identify types of literature (i.e. prose, fiction, anthology, poetry, non-fiction, persuasive, etc) and strategies to better understand each particular style.
2. **Connect to prior knowledge** - This strategy can be applied to all the works we read, and it immediately gets the student thinking about the novel or excerpt. With this strategy, we can also use prediction to become invested in the story. By wondering how everything will turn out, students have more of an incentive to keep reading.
3. **Text processing** - Here, we'll employ higher-level thinking skills, moving from summarizing to synthesizing to analyzing the material. Visualizing becomes very important here, especially for concepts that seem light-years away (i.e. socialism, gender inequalities). Some strategies will also have more of an emphasis than others for certain works. For example, for *Animal Farm* and *Frankenstein*, there will be a

greater focus on vocabulary. Writing becomes very important during text processing, as students will jot down any questions or reflections that come to mind as they read (much like our reading logs)

4. **Making connections across literature** - We'll use literary elements to help make connections that span the literature selections and also relate to our own lives and experiences
5. **Monitor the reading process** - The students should always be asking questions, evaluating and revising their initial predictions as new information becomes available. They can use the comprehension strategies modeled in class to also help them with their independent reading.

## Literature:

### Novels:

*Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley  
*The Skin I'm In*, Sharon G. Flake  
*Animal Farm*, George Orwell  
*The Outsiders*, S.E. Hinton

### Supplementary Materials:

- *The EMC Write-In Reader*, Paradigm Publishing
  - Contains selections pertaining to fiction, poetry, drama, folktales, and non-fiction
- *Letters From Birmingham Jail* (excerpts), Martin Luther King Jr.
- Audio speeches of MLK, Jr.
- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (excerpt - his take on literacy) - Malcolm X
- *Esperanza Rising*, Pam Munoz Ryan
- *The Great Debaters* (film)
- "Chief Seattle's 1854 Treaty Oration" - Chief Seattle of the Suquamish tribe
- Excerpts, *The Diary of Anne Frank* (play)
- Selected poems of Langston Hughes
- "A Women Among Warlords" (pbs.com video) - an Afghan woman runs for parliament amid death threats and assassination attempts
- "The Diary of Anne Frank," stage adaptation by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. (excerpts)
- [www.studentsfordarfur.org](http://www.studentsfordarfur.org)

## Target Goals:

Target goals for this unit are based on the Florida K-12 Reading and Language Arts Standards for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

(<http://etc.usf.edu/flstandards/la/new-pdfs/points-8.pdf>)

Working in line with these standards, target goals aim to achieve student success in the following areas:

- Vocabulary Development
- Reading Comprehension
- Literary Analysis
  - Fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, and folktales
- The Writing Process
  - Pre-Writing, drafting, revising, editing for language conventions, and publishing
- Writing Applications
  - Creative, informative, and persuasive
- Communication
  - Listening and speaking and presenting work to students, parents, and teachers
- Information and media literacy
- Informational text, the research process, media literacy, and technology

By the end of this unit, students will be able to say the following "I Can" statements, each falling under a heading of reading, writing, discussion, evaluation, or technology. Each "I Can" statement supports one or more target goals.

### ***"I Can" Statements for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading:***

#### **Reading**

- I can summarize the plot of a story.
- I can identify the author's purpose.
- I can distinguish between different genres.
- I can create character sketches of major figures in a text.
- I can analyze literary elements.
- I can make connections among a variety of texts.
- I can improve on my comprehension.
- I can use context clues to determine the meanings of new words.
- I can actively work to develop my vocabulary skills.
- I can identify cause-and-effect relationships.
- I can become a fluent reader.

#### **Writing**

- I can communicate clearly in writing.

I can write to express myself.  
I can revise and improve on my writing.  
I can create paragraphs with sentences supporting a main idea.  
I can organize information to show understanding or relationships among facts, ideas, and events.  
I can write in a variety of forms and styles.

### **Discussion**

I can share my thoughts on a text.  
I can be respectful of others in discussion.  
I can speak clearly before an audience.

### **Technology**

I can use technology to enhance communication and achieve a purpose.

### **Evaluation**

I can demonstrate knowledge learned.  
I can create a rubric to assess my progress.  
I can present a paper or project to teachers, parents, and/or fellow students.  
I can ask for help when I need it.

## **Writing Strategies:**

The Book Club method will be explored in this unit. Here, students will benefit from discussions with their classmates and writing strategies designed to enhance understanding and comprehension.

For all novels, we'll begin by working with some pre-reading strategies, especially **connecting to prior knowledge** and **making predictions**. For example, with *Animal Farm*, the students will divide into their Book Clubs and brainstorm, on paper, everything they know about socialism, Joseph Stalin, and that time period in particular. Then, we'll have a group discussion about history in that era and students will create mind-maps (aka cluster diagrams) of important people, places, and ideologies during George Orwell's time. For *Frankenstein*, students will engage with the story through modified "Think Sheets."

For all novels, the students will also have to complete a "**literary packet**." These packets are four, front-and-back pages that deal with different themes in each novel. For example, one page in *Animal Farm* deals with political deception and the "everyday man." On the front of that page, students must find five quotes in the novel that show how the pigs in the novel (the socialists) deceive the other animals with progressively ruthless lies. Then, on the back page, they have to answer, in a short paragraph, a few prompts

relating to this theme. Finally, at the bottom of the 2nd page, the students write a 1-sentence thesis statement that they could use in a literary essay relating to this theme. The goal of these packets is to get the students thinking and writing critically about the novel.

At the conclusion of each novel, students will then write a two page **literary essay**, choosing a theme and thesis from one of the packets to jump start their writing. This is a chance for them to pull critically from a spectrum of ideas relating to the novel, connecting ideas across the board.

Students will also be required to **blog** weekly about their novels, using a message board format on my teacher website.

([www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/tfox1](http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/tfox1))

On this website, students will respond to different prompts and then be responsible for keeping a discussion going. In addition, students will keep **reader response logs** in a composition book to help track their thoughts on the novels and to serve as a foundation for their blog discussion groups.

### **Separate Projects**

*Frankenstein* – Students will participate in “Dr. Frankenstein’s Monster Lab 101.” Here, students will create a minimum 12-inch, 3-D monster from scratch. Along with the monster, they must also keep a scientist’s journal/log. For each piece of the monster they must log the material and reason for their choice in their journals. They must also describe the way and the order in which they pieced together their monster. All journal entries are to be typed and dated. Students will then present their monsters to the class.

*The Skin I’m In* – Students will create a poster board representation of the “skin” they are in. Each poster board will contain two artifacts that reflect, both textually and visually, aspects of the students’ lives. Students will also write two vignettes explaining the importance of these artifacts in their lives. Students will then present their posters to the class.

*Animal Farm* – Students will create a diorama depicting a scene from the novel. Along with the diorama, they will have to write a few paragraphs first describing the events taking place and then the importance of the scene in the overall scope of the novel. Then, they are going to present their dioramas to the class.

*The Outsiders* – Students will create a newsletter, writing in the voices of at least four protagonists in this novel. The articles within the newsletter can be in the forms commentary, editorial, reporting, or other news-related writing styles.

## **Assessments:**

In addition to teacher assessments, students will assess their classmates' progress based on both teacher and student-generated rubrics, using Rubistar as a jumping ground. Rubrics for in-class discussion groups can be found in Raphael's *Book Club: A Literature-Based Curriculum*. Students will also be presenting major projects in front of their classmates, and, when available, parents and other teachers.