“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose. It is a seeking that he who wishes may know the cosmic secrets of the world and that they dwell therein.”
—Zora Neale Hurston.
Unit 11.2: Research and Synthesis
Challenging Truth in Narrative

Enduring Understandings
- Literate individuals are discerning writers, speakers, readers, viewers, and listeners.
- Literate citizens incorporate new knowledge to adjust their world view.
- Literate individuals employ a variety of effective strategies to communicate with others.
- The success of a democracy depends on the literacy of its people.

Essential Questions
- How do readers and viewers engage meaningfully with text?
- How does a literate individual become part of the conversation?
- How is a writer both empowered and limited by writing from personal voice and experience?
- How does a writer know when to change strategies to communicate more effectively?

Common Tasks
Students should engage in a variety of tasks that demonstrate and deepen their learning. Teachers should provide specific instruction on strategies during each stage of the writing process for at least one of the common tasks. For other common tasks, teachers may focus instruction on one stage or may implement the tasks as homework, timed writings, presentations, or structured discussions.

- Compare brief clips (2–3 minutes) from two documentaries or nonfiction videos that present differing views on the same topic.
- Compare two news articles that cover the same event. Document each source using MLA format.
- Write a multi-paragraph essay analyzing how an author conveys his or her understanding of a truth in a narrative text.

For the fourth common task, choose one of the following options:

Option 1:
- Research the context and content of a documentary, a nonfiction video, or a still visual of historical or cultural significance. Write a research paper analyzing the methods the artist uses to achieve a purpose in the work. Use MLA format to credit and document sources.

Option 2
- Research a topic and create a multi-media presentation (e.g., documentary, nonfiction film, web site, online newspaper), synthesizing primary sources and archival documents to convey your perception of truth about the topic. Use MLA format to document the sources in your credits.

“Literature is where I go to explore the highest and lowest places in human society and in the human spirit, where I hope to find not absolute truth but the truth of the tale, of the imagination and of the heart” (Salmon Rushdie). Students research how literature and visuals convey truth.
Unit 11.2: Research and Synthesis
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Recommended Tasks

- Continue to use the writer’s notebook for reflecting on texts, themes, arguments, and seeds for their own ideas.
- Complete these handouts and activities from John Golden’s *Reading in the Reel World*: “Fiction or Nonfiction Films: An Introductory Survey” (7) and “Ethics and Dilemmas in Nonfiction Film” (42).
- Work in groups to compare news articles from the same day’s edition of newspapers that are generally labeled as conservative or liberal. Examine the use of language and discuss the objectivity or bias that is reflected in each newspaper.
- Review MLA format by having groups present how to document several different types of sources on an overhead or interactive white board.
- Work as a class or in groups to create an original documentary film clip of five to six minutes in length.
- Do a 2 to 3 minute whiteboard or PowerPoint presentation of research findings.

Paragraph Development

Unit 2 focuses on research writing, and students apply their knowledge of six types of paragraph development. Students thoughtfully consider the methods that might be used to develop the essay and choose the one which works best for the topic and sources they have selected.

Grammar, Usage, and Sentence Composing

Teachers should ensure that students revise during the writing process rather than after their papers have been graded. Students work on individual skills listed in their portfolios throughout the year. In addition, certain skills will be explicitly taught and integrated into writing instruction during Unit 2. Students will

- avoid incorrect use of commonly confused and misused words.
- recognize correct parallel structure and use it as a rhetorical device in their writing.
- use subordination and coordination to lend sentence variety to their writing.
- analyze and imitate the sentence style of professional writers.
Unit 11.2 Focus Indicators

**Standard 1:** The student will comprehend and interpret a variety of print, non-print and electronic texts, and other media.

1.1.4 — Apply knowledge of a word meaning, context, structure, and origin to define unfamiliar words.
1.2.1 — Determine the contributions of literary elements in classical and contemporary texts.
1.2.2 — Determine the critical or central idea(s) of a text.
1.2.4 — Interpret a literary work by using a critical approach.

**Standard 2:** The student will analyze and evaluate a variety of print, non-print and electronic texts, and other media.

2.1.1 — Analyze organization, structure, and syntax that reveal an author’s purpose.
2.1.2 — Analyze stylistic elements in a text or across texts that communicate an author’s purpose.
2.1.3 — Analyze connections between and among themes, ideas, and/or styles of two or more texts.
2.1.4 — Analyze and evaluate the purpose and effect of non-print texts, including visual, aural, and electronic media.
2.1.5 — Analyze and evaluate evidence and determine the credibility of information in a text.

**Standard 3:** The student will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

3.1.4 — Compose effective research essays that support, modify, or refute a thesis; use a logical structure; provide relevant and complete evidence; and cite and document sources accurately.
3.2.1 — Prepare for writing by generating and developing ideas.
3.2.2 — Select and organize ideas for specific audiences and purposes.
3.2.3 — Revise and edit texts for clarity, completeness, and effectiveness.

3.2.4 — Use general and specialized resources to correct or confirm revisions and/or editorial choices.
3.2.5 — Prepare the final product for presentation or publication.
3.3.1 — Narrow a research topic and generate a guiding research question, thesis, or controlling argument.
3.3.2 — Assess the appropriateness of sources of information on a self-selected and/or given topic.
3.3.3 — Evaluate the appropriateness of information to accomplish a purpose.
3.3.4 — Use a systematic process for recording and documenting information.

**Standard 4:** The student will control language by applying Standard English in writing and speaking and making effective language choices.

4.1.1 — Determine the relationship among the meaning, position, form, function and the grammatical classification of words.
4.1.2 — Apply Standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling in speaking and/or writing.
4.1.3 — Apply knowledge of the history and development of the English language in order to analyze and explain its dynamic structure.

**Standard 5:** The student will communicate orally in a variety of situations, for different audiences and purposes, and in different formats.

5.1.2 — Participate in and contribute to large- and small-group collaboration for a variety of assigned and self-selected purposes.
5.2.1 — Apply effective rhetorical structures.

**Standard 6:** The student will listen effectively in a variety of situations and for a variety of purposes.

6.1.1 — Apply skills and strategies to gather and interpret verbal messages.
6.1.2 — Demonstrate understanding of information and ideas communicated orally.
Unit 11.2 Course Terms

Annotation
Argument
 Assertion
 Audience
 Camera angle
 Citation
 Citizen
 Civil discourse
 Close reading
 Connotation
 Cornell notes
 Credible source
 Credibility
 Deduction
 Denotation
 Documentary
 Entering the conversation
 Graphic organizer
 Induction
 Nonfiction film
 • Visual track
 • Audio track
 • Text (or graphic) track
 Moving image

Narrative devices
 • Plot
 • Characterization
 • Point of view
 • Setting
 • Conflict
 • Mood
 • Tone
 • Epiphany (moment of insight)
 • Denouement
 • Theme

Patterns of development
 • Cause and effect
 • Comparison and contrast
 • Definition
 • Division and classification
 • Exemplification
 • Problem and solution

Personal voice
 Perspective
 Point of view
 Portfolio
 Rhetoric
 Research
 Research paper

Six Traits of Writing
 • Ideas
 • Organization
 • Voice
 • Syntax or Sentence Fluency
 • Diction or Word Choice
 • Conventions

Source
 • Primary source
 • Secondary source

Speaker
 Style
 Synthesis of sources
 Tone
 Truth in fiction
 Truth in nonfiction
 Visual rhetoric
 Visual text
 Works cited

Writing process
 • Inquiry
 • Pre-writing
 • Drafting
 • Revision or deep revision
 • Editing or surface revision
 • Presentation or publishing
Unit 11.2: Texts

Challenging Truth in Narrative

Students read a combination of nonfiction and fiction texts in Units 1 and 2. While certain titles are recommended for each unit, teachers may use the Unit 1 and 2 texts interchangeably as appropriate. Throughout the year, teachers should combine classic literature with contemporary works and choose a diverse group of writers who represent the richness of America’s cultures and traditions.

The texts and the research paper complement each other as students examine how writers and artists perceive truth and how they use information and narrative to present their truths to their audiences. Teachers should choose a narrative text and a documentary and have students analyze the techniques used by the writers to convey a truth as they see it. Many of the texts and documentaries below can also be paired by subject matter if the teacher chooses to make a thematic connection between the text and the documentary.

**Narrative Texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</td>
<td>Mark Twain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Chica</td>
<td>Maria Arana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Surgeon’s Notes on an Imperfect Science</td>
<td>Atul Gawande</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crucible</td>
<td>Arthur Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Duk</td>
<td>Frank Chin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreams from My Father</td>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close</td>
<td>Jonathan Safran Foer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fallen Angels</td>
<td>Walter Dean Myers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Glass Castle</td>
<td>Jeannette Walls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Made of Dawn</td>
<td>N. Scott Momaday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Geraldine Brooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Yet Sung</td>
<td>James McBride</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Documentaries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Producer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becoming American: The Chinese Experience</td>
<td>PBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam</td>
<td>Bill Couturie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward R. Murrow: The McCarthy Years</td>
<td>CBS News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huck Finn: Born to Trouble</td>
<td>PBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made in L.A.</td>
<td>Almudena Carracedo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Powerful Noise</td>
<td>Tom Cappello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeds</td>
<td>Marj Safinia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam War with Walter Cronkite</td>
<td>CBS News</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 11.2: Texts

Challenging Truth in Narrative

Nonfiction Film Clips

In preparation for the first common task, teachers should pair film clips that approach the same subject or information from differing perspectives. These are only a few ideas for such pairs. Teachers should be careful to choose subject matter that is appropriate for eleventh graders, and while they should choose clips that provoke thought, teachers should avoid objectionable content.

*Fahrenheit 9/11*  Michael Moore
*Celsius 41/11*  Citizens United
*by parental permission only (Rated R)

FOX News Clip
MSNBC News Clip
ABC or CBS News Clip
*The Daily Show* Clip
Local News Clip
National News Clip

Teacher Resources

*Deeper Reading*  Kelly Gallagher
*Image Grammar*  Harry R. Noden
*Reading in the Dark*  John Golden
*Reading in the Reel World*  John Golden
*Sentence Composing*  Don Killgallon

http://www.silverdocs.com/news-links/ (Links to documentary sites)
http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/photos/ (Analysis of photographs)

Vocabulary and Language Skills

Vocabulary study enhances students’ understanding of the writer’s craft—how word choice creates character, defines mood, and sets tone. Separated, or explicit instruction, focuses on both meaning and word structure, and students will:

- apply the 30-15-10 list to comprehend unfamiliar words.
- identify unfamiliar words in texts and employ strategies to understand meanings in context.
- know and use course terms for Unit 2.

Students become independent, strategic readers of challenging text by identifying and defining unfamiliar words in context and studying the etymology and morphemic structure of words. As students learn about the variety and richness of language, they write with diction that is more deliberate, choosing words that are appropriate to the purpose and the audience.