8th Grade English Language Arts
Unit 3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

Anchor Text(s)	Collection of Short Stories	Pacing	3 weeks

Unit Overview

During this unit, students will read a collection of short stories to investigate the intentional choices authors make when writing. The stories and teaching points from this unit invite students to dive deeply into the "Reading Literature" Standards 4-6, with a heavy focus on author's craft and structure. Instead of focusing solely on what authors are trying to say, this unit challenges students to think about how authors wrote their stories, and why they made particular choices. Through repeated and purposeful close readings of each story, students will analyze:

- the impact of word choice and language on a story's tone and mood *(RL.4)*
- the purposeful structure of stories, and how that structure can reflect meaning *(RL.5)*
- the development of a character's or narrator's point of view *(RL.6)*
- how the author creates effects such as suspense and humor *(RL.6)*

Students will also learn to notice when writers include literary or historical allusions and what purpose those allusions serve in conveying meaning. Additionally, students will have an opportunity to compare a written story with its film version. They will not only notice similarities and differences in how the plot and characters are represented, but they will also analyze how the author and director create suspense in different ways.

Students will read a total of four stories, each of which will be read multiple times across class periods, each time for a new purpose *(as is outlined in the Weekly Overview).* These particular stories were selected because they have many layers of meaning that require multiple reads to uncover, and because their authors made intentional "craft and structure" moves that provide excellent opportunities for teaching and analysis. These stories, which will be read in this order, are "Checkouts" by Cynthia Rylant, "Early Autumn" by Langston Hughes, "Lamb to the Slaughter" by Roald Dahl (paired with its film version), and "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst.

In addition to analyzing each story as a complex piece of literature, we will also use this unit's stories as "model texts" and inspiration for student writing. In lieu of a culminating performance task, students will complete a series of shorter "Narrative Writing Tasks," which require students to continue, adapt, or build upon a story they've already read and analyzed. The phrasing and demands of these writing prompts match the rigor and task types of PARCC, based on recently released test items. Ideally through modeling and repeated practice, students will build greater familiarity and proficiency with narrative form and its unique elements.

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Essential Questions	Genre and Standards-Based Vocabulary	Cutting to the Core
I. What intentional choices do authors make while writing? How do these choices around craft and structure help authors convey their story's meaning? II. How can an author's choice of words and use of figurative language impact a story's tone and mood? III. What are some of the ways authors choose to structure stories? What effect does a story's structure have on the reader? IV. How does the narrator's point of view influence the flow of information and affect the reader's experience? V. How do authors use dramatic irony to create suspense?	• Structure • Style • Suspense • Humor • Dramatic irony • Irony • Manipulate • First person point of view • Rhetorical device • Third person omniscient point of view • Third person limited point of view • Dialogue • Allusion • Connotation • Denotation • Figurative language • Stance • Tone • Mood • Meaning • Adaptation • Film director • Interpretation	**I: Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts** ➢ *"Students need to be grounded in information about the world around them if they are to develop the strong general knowledge and vocabulary they need to become successful readers"* **II: Reading and writing grounded in evidence from the text** ➢ *"Quality text-based questions, unlike low-level "search and find" questions, require close reading and deep understanding of the text"* **III: Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary** ➢ *"The ability to comprehend complex texts is the most significant factor differentiating college-ready from non-college-ready readers. This shift toward complex text requires practice, supported through close reading"*

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Common Core State Standards *(Including how the standards progress across grade levels)*		
RL.7.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.	**RL.8.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.	RL.9.4: 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).
RL.7.5: Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning	**RL.8.5:** Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.	RL.9.5: 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.
RL.7.6: Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.	**RL.8.6:** Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.	RL.9.6: 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.
RL.7.7: Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).	**RL.8.7:** Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.	RL.9.7: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).
RL.7.9: Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.	**RL.8.9:** Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.	RL.9.9: 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).

W.7.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. • Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. • Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. • Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. • Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. • Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.	**W.8.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. • Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. • Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. • Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events. • Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. • Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.	W.9.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. • 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. • Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. • Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole. • Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. • Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
W.7.5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.	**W.8.5:** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.	W.9.5: 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.

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Collection of Short Stories

"Checkouts" by Cynthia Rylant	Important Considerations for Instruction
The main character is unhappy about her family's move to Cincinnati and spends most of her time in her room, miserable. Then one day, she goes grocery shopping for her parents and falls in love with the bag boy. The hope that she might see him again helps her forget her loneliness and adjust to Cincinnati. For the next four weeks, he is never on duty when she goes to the store. Little does she know, he is also thinking about and longing for her. Finally, one day she sees him, but for no reason that she can explain, she avoids him by choosing a different checkout line. Shortly after that, another boy asks her out, and the bag boy gets a new job at a bookstore. Months later, waiting in line for a movie with their respective dates, their eyes meet, and they smile like polite strangers.	I. Text Complexity: The storyline is straightforward so students most likely will not struggle with the plot itself. The complexity of this text lies with the characters' motivation and some challenging vocabulary and sentence structures.

II. Big Ideas/Themes: This story conveys the theme that situations and people are not always what we perceive them to be. Strangers can help us in unexpected ways, and vice versa. It also conveys themes about the nature and impermanence of young love.

III. Text Structure: This story is told from the third person omniscient point of view. The narrative alternates between the perspective of the boy and the girl, and also includes moments of external insight from the narrator. The story is focused around three moments: when the boy and girl first see each other, when they see each other again but say nothing a month later, and one final time when they cross paths, months later, each with another date. Although the story is short, several months pass between the story's beginning and end.

III. Real World Connections: Students will be able to connect with the feelings the boy and girl experience, including the excitement, nerves, and anticipation of having a crush, and the self-consciousness we feel when things don't go as we'd hoped. Students may also relate to the girl's frustration and anger towards her parents when they move the family to a brand new city.

IV. Potential Challenges: The author does not name the characters, so it will be important to come up with a common language to discuss them. The narrator also has moments of "adult-like" wisdom that students may need support understanding; for example, he references the girl standing "with the unfocused stare one often sees in young children." |

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"Early Autumn" by Langston Hughes	Important Considerations for Instruction
The story begins with a brief and vague flashback of a time when Bill and Mary were young and in love. We learn that they broke up on bad terms because Mary impulsively married someone "she thought she loved," leaving Bill feeling bitter. The remainder of the story is a conversation between the two people, years later, when they run into each other in New York City. Their conversation, while polite and cordial, reveals differences in the characters' attitudes towards each other, and emphasizes the distance that has grown between them. The closing lines suggest not only that the two are likely never to see one another again, but that Bill has had more of an impact on Mary's life than he will ever know. She leaves, overwhelmed with regret about the things she never told him.	I. Text Complexity: This is a seemingly simple story, but it requires readers to make inferences in order to understand its meaning. Students will likely not struggle with vocabulary or sentence structure, but may need support "reading between the lines." II. Big Ideas/Themes: From Mary's perspective, this story deals conveys the idea that choices we make (and people we meet) in our youth may have a greater impact on us than we'd expect. It also deals with regret and our inability to change the way history played out. From Bill's perspective, we learn that sometimes things you are bitter about in the moment end up being very trivial in the long-term. III. Text Structure: The story is told from a third-person omniscient point of view, with a slightly larger focus on Mary. It begins with a brief flashback, and the rest of the story is constructed of mostly dialogue and descriptions of characters' perceptions. The story's title is symbolic of a "season of loss," mirroring Mary's experiences in the story. This parallel between Mary's experience and the weather/setting runs throughout the story. III. Real World Connections: This story's themes around making careful decisions and thinking about the lasting impact they may have on you are relevant for students. They may also be able to connect with the idea that relationships change with the passing of time. IV. Potential Challenges: Initially students may struggle to understand the depth of this story, since it does seem simple at first. In order to do so, they will need to read the story multiple times through different "lenses." They will also need to take time to make inferences about the contrast between each character's "outward" behavior and true inner feelings.

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"Lamb to the Slaughter" by Roald Dahl	Important Considerations for Instruction
This darkly humorous story is a tale of irony and suspense. Mary Maloney eagerly awaits her husband Patrick's arrival home from work. When he finally arrives, it is obvious that something is wrong. He tells his wife that that he is leaving her. Shocked beyond reply, Mary begins cooking dinner. She grabs a large leg of lamb from the freezer. She walks up behind her husband and hits him on the head with the frozen meat, killing him. Then she places the leg of lamb into the hot oven. To establish an alibi, she goes out to the market and calmly asks the shopkeeper for potatoes and peas for her husband's dinner. When she returns home, she calls the police, pretending to have just discovered her husband's body. Hours later, as the police search for the murder weapon, Mary begs them all to eat the leg of lamb she has cooked so that it won't go to waste. The story ends with a final ironic twist as the police officers consume the leg of lamb, all while discussing the mysterious disappearance of the murder weapon.	I. Text Complexity: While the basic plot line is straightforward tale of revenge and deceit, the story's themes and characters make this story complex. Its dark humor and irony may also present a challenge for students.

II. Big Ideas/Themes: The story grapples with the ideas of innocence and destruction, as is alluded to in the story's title. It also conveys themes of manipulation, and suggests that people's outward appearances may be deceiving.

III. Text Structure: The story is told from third-person limited point of view; we have access only to Mary Maloney's inner thoughts and motivations. The narrative structure is chronological over the course of one evening. The author builds suspense throughout the story.

III. Real World Connections: Students will recognize the "detective story" trope as they search for a suspect and the murder weapon. They will also recognize the themes of revenge and manipulation from other popular books and movies.

IV. Potential Challenges: As Mary's behavior and demeanor changes drastically over the course of the story, students may need support understanding how she's changing and why. Her motivations and actions become increasingly darker, shocking, and manipulative, which may be difficult for students to understand without repeated reading and inferential thinking. |

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"The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst	Important Considerations for Instruction
"The Scarlet Ibis" is a troubling tale of two brothers. One brother, called Doodle, has physical disabilities and serious health problems. The other brother, known only as Brother, is desperate to turn Doodle into a "normal" kid in time to face the harsh world of school. Driven by his own pride, Brother pushes Doodle to develop physical capabilities beyond what any doctors ever expected he'd be capable of. However, the dark side of Brother's pride prevails in the end when one day, his pushing goes too far.	I. Text Complexity: This is the most complex story in this unit, as it is rich with symbolism, allusions, and figurative language that convey meaning. Its vocabulary and structure also add layers of complexity to this beautifully written story. II. Big Ideas/Themes: The most prominent theme this story conveys is the double-sided nature of pride and its tension with love: it can bring about positive change but it also has an incredibly dark and destructive side. Additional themes include the complex relationship between siblings and the consequences of regret and selfishness. III. Text Structure: Brother tells this story from his first-person point of view. He is telling the events of the story retrospectively, and reflects throughout the narrative on his own actions, regrets, and guilt. It begins with a reflection, then jumps to tell stories from when Doodle was two, then five, and finally the fateful day the following summer when Brother's pride and plans for Doodle cross the line. III. Real World Connections: Students can connect with the ideas of regret, love for family, and the impact siblings have on one another. The story also explores the consequences of society's stigma towards people with disabilities, as the shame Brother feels for Doodle and his selfish need for Doodle to be "normal" is what directly causes the tragic ending. IV. Potential Challenges: Students will need support understanding some of the rich figurative language and symbolism. They also may need help with critical vocabulary words, including "burden" and "scarlet." Since time jumps around, students should pay attention to clues that place them at a certain moment in the boys' lives, ie. "When Doodle was two…"

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Instructional Calendar

Weekly Focus	Teaching Points	Texts and Resources	Suggestions for Implementation

Week 1:
 	
Days 1 and 2: "Checkouts"
 	
RL.6
 	
Day 3: "Early Autumn"
 	
RL.6
 	
Day 4: Comparing "Checkouts" and "Early Autumn"
 	
RL.5
 	
Day 5: Narrative Writing Task #1
 	
W.3
	I. "Checkouts" by Cynthia Rylant
	Day 1 Focus: Key Ideas and Details
	• <u>Set the Purpose:</u> Over the next two days we will read a short story about two young people who fall in love. However, this story is different in many ways than "young love" stories you may be familiar with. Let's read to analyze the behavior and motivations of the boy and girl in this story, and also to figure out how their relationship affects and changes them.
	• ***Big Question:*** *How does the interaction and "relationship" between the boy and the girl impact their lives? How does it change them in the short-term and the long-term?*
	   o ***Sub-Question (key ideas):*** *Based on the story's characters and plot, why did the author choose the title "Checkouts?" What are some of the possible meanings of this title?*
	   o ***Sub-Question (character motivation):*** *What motivates the girl and the boy to act the way they do throughout the story? How is the boy's perception of what's going on different than the girl's?*
	
	Day 2 Focus: Analyzing the narration (*RL.6: point of view*)
	• <u>Set the Purpose:</u> "Point of view" is the lens through which a story is told. This story is told from a "third-person omniscient" point of view, which means that an outside narrator tells the story but reveals multiple characters' inner thoughts. The point of view from which a story is told affects the reader's experience in a variety of ways.
	• ***Big Question:*** *How does Cynthia Rylant's decision to tell the story from 3rd person omniscient point of view affect us as readers?*
	   o ***Sub-Question:*** *How does the boy's/girl's point of view differ from the reader's? What do we know that those characters do not?*
	     - *What effect do these differences ("dramatic irony") have on us as readers?*
	   o ***Sub-Question:*** *Why do you think the author chose to tell the story from this point of view? Was this an effective choice to convey the story's meaning? Why or why not?*
		Stories (Appendix B)
		• "Checkouts" by Cynthia Rylant
		• "Early Autumn" by Langston Hughes
		
		Supplemental Resources (Appendix D)
		
		• "Checkouts" Annotated Text (teacher copy)
		• "Early Autumn" Annotated Text (teacher copy)
		• CCSS Unpacked Standards and Question Stems
		• Online Writing Resource: WriteAlong RL.3 resources on Learnzillion.com: https://learnzillion.com/resources/57245-writealong-for-4th-grade *(Note: Although these are linked to 4th grade standards, many of our MS students*
			• The "set the purpose" section is meant to help with framing to students. Some may initially wonder why we're reading the same story multiple days; make sure to message the value in this so students internalize why we do this.
			• The "sub-questions" can be used as a guide and starting point for during-reading or analysis text-dependent questioning. *You will need to supplement, modify, and scaffold these for your students.*
			• Stories should be read aloud to students at least once to support them with comprehension. Gradually release reading responsibility to

II. "Early Autumn" by Langston Hughes

Focus: Analyzing how the author develops characters' point of view using a combination of dialogue and 3rd person omniscient narration

- <u>Set the Purpose:</u> Today, we will read "Early Autumn" by Langston Hughes multiple times to build on yesterday's work analyzing point of view.
    - o First, read to understand key information about what's happening and who the characters are.
    - o Once students understand key ideas and details, reread to analyze how this author develops his characters' points of view, and the effect his style of narration has on us as readers.
- ***Big Question:*** *What does the author's word choice and narration reveal about the relationship between Bill and Mary?*
    - o ***Sub-Question:*** *How does the author's use of dialogue reveal the point of view of each individual character?*
        - ▪ *Who cares about the other more? How do you know?*
    - o ***Sub-Question:*** *How do the narrator's descriptions of characters (bitter, old vs. young, frown, desperately) and descriptions of setting (nearly sunset, cold, leaves falling, autumn dusk) reflect the relationship between the characters?*
        - ▪ Students should pull out words like bitter, old, frown, desperately, "people they didn't know" (for characters) and sunset, cold, leaves falling, dusk (for setting). These words emphasize the growing distance and "coldness" between the two people.

III. Comparing "Checkouts" and "Early Autumn"

- <u>Setting the Purpose:</u> Today we will go back into both stories and analyze similarities and differences. We'll compare what the stories are saying, and we'll also push ourselves to analyze differences in the <u>way</u> both authors tell their stories (author's craft).
- ***Big Question:*** *How is the way Cynthia Rylant tells "Checkouts" similar to and different from the way Langston Hughes tells "Early Autumn?"*
    - o ***Sub-Question:*** *How are the stories themselves similar and different?*
    - o ***Sub-Question:*** *What is similar about the narrators of each story?*
    - o ***Sub-Question:*** *How does each author reveal what the characters are like in different ways?*
    - o ***Sub-Question:*** *What role does dialogue play in each story?*

still need modeling and support with narrative elements including developing characters. Also explore other video lessons in additional grades to meet your and your students' needs.)

students; by day 2, students should be doing at least some of the re-reading and analysis work independently or collaboratively.
- Throughout the unit, students should have opportunities to write and talk about the text daily. You can decide how students will demonstrate their understanding of the big idea by the end of each class (writing, discussion, etc.).
- Consider using a Venn diagram (or other graphic organizer) to help students organize thinking when comparing texts.

IV. Narrative Writing Task #1
- o Option 1: "Early Autumn"
  Imagine that you are Mary, and you have just gotten home after seeing Bill in the park. Write a journal entry from Mary's point of view. Use details from the story to describe what happened in the park, how you felt in the moment, and how you feel now that you've reflected on the experience. Include details from the story and add elaboration of your own to develop Mary's point of view.
- o Option 2: "Checkouts"
  Imagine that you are either the boy or girl in "Checkouts." Write a journal entry from your character's point of view that takes place a few days after you first saw the other person and fell in love. Use details from the story to describe the moment you saw them and how your feelings have developed over the past few days, and add elaboration of your own to develop your character's point of view.

- • You can either allow students to choose which writing prompt they want to complete; or, if you anticipate direct instruction and modeling will be beneficial, you can choose one for the entire class to complete.

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| Week 2:

Days 1-4: "Lamb to the Slaughter"

RL.6
RL.7
RL.4

Day 5: Narrative Writing Task #2

W.3 | **I. "Lamb to the Slaughter" by Roald Dahl**
Day 1 Focus: Key Ideas and Details *(Plot and Character development – Mary)*
• <u>Setting the Purpose:</u> This week we will read "Lamb to the Slaughter" by Roald Dahl. Over the next few days, we'll investigate what the author intentionally did to enhance and manipulate how we experience this story. Today, in addition to finding out what happens, we'll focus our analysis on Mary Maloney and how she changes over the course of the story.
• ***Big Question: How and why does Mary Maloney change throughout the story? (RL.3)***
• ***Sub-Questions:***
   o *How would you describe Mary as she waits for her husband to return home? What details support your description?*
   o *What causes Mary to become frightened? Why and how does her behavior change once her husband delivers his news?*
   o *Which of Mary's behaviors would you describe as unusual or unexpected? Why?*
   o *What motivates Mary to go to the store that evening? Why does Mary practice smiling and saying "Hi, Sam" before going out? What does this reveal about her state of mind?*
   o *How would you describe Mary at the end of the story?*
      ▪ *Scaffold: What evidence supports the claim that Mary is manipulative and no longer in shock by this point?*

Day 2 Focus: Analyze how the author's use of dramatic irony engages the reader by creating suspense and humor *(RL.6 – Point of View)*
• <u>Set the Purpose:</u> Dramatic irony occurs when the author lets the readers "in on a secret" that one or more characters are not aware of. This difference between the point of view of the characters and the readers can create tension, suspense, and/or humor. Today we'll reread the last half of "Lamb to the Slaughter" to investigate how Roald Dahl uses dramatic irony, and how it affects our reading experience.
• ***Big Question: How does Roald Dahl use dramatic irony to engage his readers? What effect(s) does this irony have on a readers' experience?***
   o Focus Passage for Close Reading: "Good evening, Mrs. Maloney" (top of page 3) → "And in the other room, Mary Maloney began to laugh." | **Stories (Appendix B)**
• "Lamb to the Slaughter" by Roald Dahl

Supplemental Text: (Appendix B)
• "Lamb to the Slaughter" Bible verse: Isaiah 53: 6-9
• "Lamb to the Slaughter" film: http://www.schooltube.com/video/b4ffb2ed2146057eda1d/

Supplemental Resources (Appendix D)
• Annotated "Lamb to the Slaughter" text (teacher copy)
• Continue using online writing resources at learnzillion.com (they span across many grade levels – pull from whichever videos your individual students need) | • On Day 1 of "Lamb," students should track Mary's progression from calm housewife wanting to please her husband → robotic actions, seemingly acting as if in shock → calculated manipulation of the situation at the end *(culminating in her laughter as the detectives eat the murder weapon).* Invite students to question whether Mary went through true changes, or if the "end" Mary was there, but hidden, all along - support with evidence from the text. |

- Students should first identify examples of dramatic irony – "times when we're in on a secret that another character is not." Teachers should model at least one example before asking students to find them.
- Ask students how they are feeling during these moments of dramatic irony – they're likely to say nervous, curious excited, frustrated, anxious, etc. These are feelings activated by the **suspense** Roald Dahl created.
- Zoom in on the final conversation between the detectives as they eat the leg of lamb. *What effect does the dramatic irony have in this scene? What is humorous about this interaction?*

Day 3 Focus: Analyze the extent to which a filmed production of a story stays faithful to or departs from the text, and evaluate the director's choices *(RL.7)*
- Set the Purpose: Today we will watch a filmed production of "Lamb to the Slaughter" and compare it with Dahl's original story. After we notice similarities and differences, you will make an argument about whether the film version is an effective representation of the story.
- Play the 25-minute film version of "Lamb to the Slaughter," directed by Alfred Hitchcock (*students should take notes in a graphic organizer, recording similarities and differences as they watch): http://www.schooltube.com/video/b4ffb2ed2146057eda1d/
- ***Big Question: Is the filmed production of "Lamb to the Slaughter" an effective representation of Roald Dahl's story? Why or why not? Cite specific examples from the text and film to support your analysis.***
  - *How are the written story and the film production similar?*
    - *How closely do the actors' performances match what you imagined these characters to be like from the story?*
    - *How closely do the setting and plot align with the details in the text?*
  - *How are the written story and the film production different?*
    - *Which scenes were omitted (taken out) or added into the film version? Why do you think the director made this choice?*
    - *How do the author and director create suspense in different ways?*

- Give students a structured note-taking sheet or graphic organizer to collect evidence and track similarities and differences while watching the film version. They should support all claims with evidence from both texts.

Day 4 Focus: Analyze the story's title as a biblical allusion and infer why the author included it: How does the allusion contribute to the story's meaning?

- Set the Purpose: An allusion is when an author refers to an outside text, usually one that is very well known. Authors include allusions to add an additional layer of meaning to their stories and to make readers think about the message they're trying to convey. Allusions to the Bible, one of the most "well known" books in history, are especially common in literature. Roald Dahl's title, "Lamb to the Slaughter," is a biblical allusion.
- ***Big Question:*** *Explain what the phrase "lamb to the slaughter" means in contexts outside of this story. How does the traditional/outside meaning of this phrase connect and add meaning to Roald Dahl's story?*
    - o Read aloud the Bible verse 6-8 (from the book of Isaiah 53).
        - ▪ Explain the verse's context: "he" refers to a "suffering servant," or an innocent servant who takes the blame for the sins of all the other people. Share that this phrase is also a common idiom that refers to someone who innocently, happily, and calmly goes into a dangerous situation without knowing something bad is about to happen to them.
        - ▪ Ask students to unpack what is meant by the excerpt's last five lines. Why is this person compared to a lamb going to slaughter, or to a sheep about to be sheared?
- **Writing Prompt: Why did Roald Dahl title this story, "Lamb to the Slaughter?" Which character(s) in the story does the title, "Lamb to the Slaughter," refer to? Cite evidence from the story and use your knowledge of the biblical allusion's meaning to support your claim.**
    - o Note: A variety of answers are acceptable. Some students may argue that Mary is the innocent "lamb," or victim, of her husband's cruelty, driven to slaughter another. They could also argue that the detectives are the innocent ones, slaughtered by Mary's manipulation and their ignorance. Others may argue that <u>no</u> characters are truly lambs, which is fine if they support their argument with logical reasoning and evidence.

- On Day 4, since students are only reading a short passage to better understand the title, reserve at least 20 minutes for students to respond to the Writing Prompt listed in the teaching points. This will allow students to synthesize their ideas about this story.

Day 5 Focus: Narrative Writing Task #2: Write a narrative in which you continue the story of *Lamb to the Slaughter.* Your narrative should be a believable continuation of the events, and it should clearly reflect the characterization (of Mary and the detectives) in the story. Consider questions including but not limited to: Does Mary ever feel guilty and confess, or does she hold tight to her secret? Do the detectives ever discover what really happened that night? How?

- As students draft their narratives, encourage them to try one or more of Roald Dahl's techniques, like adding suspense, dialogue, or incorporating dramatic irony. Note that these "writing tasks" are meant to be "first-draft writing" – encourage students to edit as they go, but their narratives won't go through an intensive revision process.

Week 3:	I. The Scarlet Ibis *(RL.4, RL.5, RL.6)*	Stories (Appendix B)	• *Note about Day 1:*

Week 3:

Days 1-3:
"The Scarlet Ibis"

RL.4
RL.5
RL.6

Days 4-5:
Narrative Writing
Task #3

W.3
W.5

I. The Scarlet Ibis *(RL.4, RL.5, RL.6)*

Day 1 Focus: Key Ideas and Details and Narrator's First-Person POV
- <u>Set the Purpose:</u> Today we're going to read a story told from the "first-person point of view." This means that the narrator is a character of the story, explaining his own experiences using the pronoun "I." In this case, the story is narrated by an unnamed character who is remembering his childhood growing up with his brother, Doodle. We're going to focus on the narrator's attitude towards Doodle, and the nature of their relationship.
- ***Big Question: How does the first-person narration help us better understand Brother's attitude towards Doodle? How does it help us understand their complicated relationship? (RL.6)***
  - Students should underline and stop-and-jot in the text when Brother describes himself, Doodle, and key events. Use evidence to answer text-dependent questions such as:
    - *How does Doodle feel about his Brother?*
    - *How does Brother feel about Doodle?*
    - *Would you describe their relationship as mostly positive, mostly negative, or in the middle? Why?*
    - *How do the narrator's feelings towards Doodle impact how he treats his brother throughout the story?*

Day 2 Focus: Analyzing the effect of specific words on a story's tone and structure *(RL.4, RL.5)*
- <u>Set the Purpose:</u> When writing, authors intentionally choose words that help them create a certain tone or convey a particular feeling/emotion to the audience. In "The Scarlet Ibis," Hurst's word choice when describing important places, characters, and events gives us hints that the tragic ending, Doodle's death, is coming. When an author gives readers "hints" about what's going to happen, that is called "foreshadowing. Today we'll reread a few passages to analyze these two things together – the author's choice of words, and how it foreshadows the ending.
- ***Big Question: How does the author's purposeful choice of words and descriptions foreshadow the story's ending?***
  - *See "Scarlet Ibis Day 2: Close Reading Guide" in Appendix D for specific zoom-in close reading passages and text-dependent questions to guide analysis.*

Stories (Appendix B)
- "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst

Supplemental Resources (Appendix D)
- Annotated "The Scarlet Ibis" Story
- "Scarlet Ibis" Day 2: Close Reading Guide (Passages and TDQs)
- "Scarlet Ibis" Day 3: Close Reading Guide (graphic organizer and writing prompt)

- *Note about Day 1: Since Days 2 and 3 allow students to delve deeper into Brother's pride and motivations, it's okay if students leave Day 1 with a more surface-level understanding of the boys' relationship and the reasons behind the story's events. The goal is that through repeated reading and analysis across three days, understanding deepens.*
- "The Scarlet Ibis" is very sad and may be upsetting for students. It is up to you if you'd like to warn them of the story's tragic ending and/or allow them time to write or talk about their emotional responses afterwards.
- Opportunity for Extension (RL.5): *Why does the author choose to begin the*

Day 3 Focus: Analyzing figurative language and how the author uses it to reinforce a theme about pride *(RL.4)*

- <u>Set the Purpose:</u> Authors use figurative language (like metaphors) to add layers of meaning to their stories. Figurative language can help develop characters or reinforce an important theme. Today we'll unpack three very short passages where Hurst's use of figurative language reinforces his theme about the nature of pride.
- ***Big Question: How does the author's use of figurative language reinforce his theme about pride?***
    - o *See "Scarlet Ibis Day 3: Close Reading Guide" in Appendix D for specific zoom-in close reading passages and graphic organizer to guide today's analysis.

Days 4 and 5: Narrative Writing Task #3
- o Beginning at the top of the last page ("After we had drifted a long way…"), write an alternate ending to "The Scarlet Ibis." In your alternate ending, imagine what might have happened if the narrator had made a different choice in the closing scene. Keep the author's style consistent with the rest of the story, but add your own elaboration to develop this new ending. Include dialogue to reveal Doodle's reactions and feelings, and reveal the narrator's feelings and motivations through description and by continuing the first-person narration.

story in a reflective way, with the narrator looking back into his past? How would the story be different if it were told chronologically?
- Note: There is no MCLASS Assessment or culminating performance task for this unit.
- Optional scaffolding for writing task #3: Write the beginning of the "alternate ending" (and decide what the narrator does differently) together as a group, and have students continue from there.

Unit 8.3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

Standard	Explanation and Example
RL.8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.	To interpret a writer's style and word choice, eighth grade students will work to gain insight into how the writer uses figurative language, creating a 'sub-story' or 'story-within-a-story' and why the author may refer to an alternate text in his writing. To achieve this, students will learn to identify words and phrases that create/reveal a variety of tones. Once students see the link between word choice and tone, they will be prepared to analyze multiple texts in which textual references, via allusion or allegory, are present. Through partner, small group, or whole class discussions, students should then debate the 'why' of that inclusion. Essential questions for this discussion may be: *Why does the writer relate his or her text to another through analogy or allusion?* What purpose does making this text-to-text connection serve? Finally, students should demonstrate their mastery of this standard by independently analyzing how a writer's use of language creates meaning within a text. Question Stems: • What does the word/phrase _____ mean in this selection? What clues did you use to determine the meaning? Cite specific textual evidence. • Without changing the meaning of the sentence, what word can best be used to replace the underlined part? • When the author uses ____, what connotation is s/he intending? Explain how you know. Cite specific textual evidence. • What is the meaning of the analogy _____? Cite specific textual evidence. • To what does _____ (word/phrase) allude? Cite specific textual evidence. • Which words help the reader understand the meaning of _____ in paragraph ____? • Find an example of figurative language and explain its meaning. Discuss its impact on the tone of the poem/story citing specific textual evidence. • What tone does the author evoke when s/he uses _____? Cite specific textual evidence.

Unit 8.3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

RL.8.5: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.	For this standard, students will analyze how and why writers construct texts using a variety of structures and how each choice affects the style and meaning of the text. To master this, students must first identify the narrative structures and choice of literary techniques the writer uses in his story. Careful analysis may include examining how chapter titles reflect the central idea or theme, how writers use text layout to affect meaning, and how the length and pace of chapters coincide with the movement of the plot. Once students can identify the structure(s) the writer uses, they should then work to compare and contrast two or more texts with different structures. Students should ask themselves why the writer may have made specific structural choices and how these choices affect the reader's understanding of a text. For example, students may discuss how and why different writers use cliff-hangers to extend the climactic moments of the text. Or, students may observe how one text may begin with a character involved in a flashback, while another text may end a story with one. Students may compare and contrast how each approach affects the story and the reader.

Question Stems:

- Describe the structure of the text. How does the structure of _____ text contribute to its meaning? Cite specific textual evidence.
- How does the author use foreshadowing? What effect does that create?
- Analyze the passing of time in the story. When does time pass quickly, and when does time slow down? Why?
- How does the author's use of dialogue contribute to the story's meaning and style?
- After reading two or more texts, compare and contrast their structure. What is the most likely reason each author selected the text structure he/she did? Use examples from the texts in your analysis.
- After reading two or more texts, compare and contrast their structure. Which structure is more effective? Why? Use examples from the texts in your analysis.
- After reading two or more texts, how does the structure of each contribute to its style? Use examples from the texts in your analysis.
- After reading two or more texts, how does the structure of each contribute to its meaning? Use examples from the texts in your analysis. |

RL.8.6: Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.	Students will understand the role of point- of-view in a given text. They should be guided to see how the point-of-view is essentially the lens through which the reader is allowed to see the story. To do this work, students may examine one story from a variety of viewpoints. For each viewpoint they assume, students should determine what „they" (as the character) know versus what other characters know. Once students have mapped out the differing viewpoints, they are ready to discuss the techniques writers use in order to experiment with and even manipulate point-of-view. In turn, placing themselves in the role as the reader, students can discuss how these techniques create specific tones and moods within the piece. Question Stems: • What point of view does the author use? Explain the benefits and shortcomings of this choice in the context of the story. Cite specific textual evidence. • What effect does the author create with narrator's point of view? How does the narrator control the flow of information readers receive? • How does the character's point of view differ from the reader's? What effect does that create? • How does the author use dramatic irony to keep the reader engaged? Use examples from the story to support your analysis. • How does the author use point of view to create suspense? Cite specific textual evidence. • How does the author use point of view to create humor? Cite specific textual evidence. • How does telling the story from _____(character's) point of view create humorous/suspenseful situations? Use examples from the text in your analysis. • How does the author's word choice develop the narrator's point of view? • How would the story be different if it were told from _____(character's) point of view? What information from the story supports your analysis? • What is the most likely reason the author told the story from _____(character's) point of view? What information from the story supports your analysis?

Unit 8.3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

RL.8.7: Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.

Students will understand how any given literary text can be transformed into and presented as another art form entirely; perhaps via film or live performance. To first understand how performed literature requires a different approach than written literature, students should be exposed to each medium and then be asked to assess and reflect upon the similarities and differences between them. For example, students could read a piece of literature and record their impressions as a reader. What strategies did they use as they read? What impressions did they have of the character? What details from the text directly contributed to these impressions? Then, the same piece of literature could be shown as a performance. Students may then reflect upon the similarities and differences between their initial understandings derived from the original text and those created from visual interpretation. For instance, they can observe how closely the setting in the live portrayal aligns with the details in the text that created their initial visual image. Furthermore, they may notice that particular scenes and characters have been omitted and then analyze the reason behind those omission(s) and alterations. To extend this standard, students could take text from a screenplay and attempt to convert it into written literature. This activity encourages students to look deeper into the reasons for the artistic choices made by the film or play's director, such as the choice of particular lighting, staging, costuming, and even casting.

Question Stems:

- Select an event from the story and compare it to a scene from the film. How are they different, and why?
- How does the production differ from the text? Cite specific textual evidence from both mediums.
    - Why would the director choose to depart from/stay faithful to the text? Cite specific textual evidence from both mediums.
- Do you agree with the director's decision to _____? Why or why not?
- Compare and contrast _____ (text title) with the filmed version of the story. Use specific examples in your comparison.
- Is the filmed version of _____ (text title) effective? Why or why not? Use specific examples in your analysis.
- To what extent does _____ (filmed production) stay faithful to/depart from the text? Were the choices the director and actor(s) made effective? Why or why not? Use examples in your analysis.
- Which medium most impacts your understanding of the selected work?

W.8.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.
d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Students are expected to apply the narrative plot structure to a real or imagined story. Students' writing should demonstrate their ability to create a context or setting for the story, naturally develop characters throughout the story, and apply writing techniques to interest their readers. This includes students developing a personal narrative focused around a significant moment in their life. As students build their story, they may choose to use a variety of brainstorming techniques, such as character maps and plot maps, to ensure their writing is well organized. Instruction may focus on how to reveal character traits, how to create suspense or conflict, and how to weave in reflection that links back to the central meaning or theme.