



8th Grade English Language Arts

Unit 1: Becoming an 8th Grade Reader: Reading with Power!

Anchor Text(s)	<i>Romiette and Julio</i> by Sharon Draper Excerpts from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare	Pacing	7 Weeks
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Unit Overview

The overarching goal of this unit is for students to develop into powerful, independent readers of literature. Additional goals include building student investment in reading, establishing a classroom culture centered on the values of curiosity and collaboration, and internalizing the habits of good readers. Students will read a variety of texts that build on their existing personal interests and further expose them to the joys, benefits, and power of reading. Students will review and use a variety of reading strategies in order to build stamina and understanding of complex texts. They will practice self-monitoring for understanding, close reading and making inferences, and begin to dive into deeper critical thinking and literary analysis. The unit spotlights close reading and analysis skills, including: reading for explicit meaning, making inferences and creating theories about texts, identifying big ideas and determining the importance of details, and analyzing the author's themes.

In addition to their independent reading books, students will read and analyze paired anchor texts: “Romiette and Julio” by Sharon Draper and “Romeo and Juliet” by William Shakespeare. Students will make meaning of each text individually, and then compare themes, plot, and characters across the two related texts. In the beginning of the unit, “Romiette and Julio” will serve as an engaging read aloud, through which students will be able to practice the speaking and listening skills of an 8th grade reader. The teacher will model how to analyze the text through think-alouds and by engaging students in text-based discussions. Halfway through the unit, some mini-lessons will begin to focus on carefully selected scenes from Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet,” which will require heavy scaffolding. By the end of the unit, students will synthesize what they’ve read to draw parallels between the two texts and evaluate how each author conveyed central themes. These texts also provide an opportunity for students to analyze how a modern work of fiction draws upon a traditional piece of literature.

By the end of the unit, students will understand that we read for a variety of purposes, including for understanding, knowledge, inspiration, and entertainment. They will understand that the world shapes literature, and literature in turn shapes our lives and the world. Ultimately, this unit will increase students’ motivation to become better, more critical 8th grade readers on the path to high school.

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Essential Questions	Genre and Standards-Based Vocabulary	Cutting to the Core
<p>I. How can practicing the habits of a strong reader (<i>reading actively, building stamina, discussing texts, and citing evidence</i>) enhance my understanding of texts and ideas? How can I personally benefit from becoming a powerful independent reader?</p> <p>II. What does it mean to read a text <i>closely</i>? How can I engage with texts through writing and discussion to uncover deeper meaning?</p> <p>III. Why must I collect evidence as I read? How can I use text evidence to defend my theories and ideas?</p> <p>IV. How do authors convey important themes, and how can I connect these to the world and my life?</p> <p>V. How can a modern work of fiction draw upon a famous and historically significant piece of literature? How do traditional themes, conflicts, and characters change when told through a modern lens?</p>	<p>Inference*</p> <p>Explicit vs. Implicit</p> <p>Close Reading*</p> <p>Perspective</p> <p>Point of View</p> <p>Narration</p> <p>Cite*</p> <p>Text Evidence*</p> <p>Claim/ Argument; Thesis Statement*</p> <p>Determine Importance</p> <p>Evaluate*</p> <p>Interpret</p> <p>Analyze</p> <p>Synthesize</p> <p>Objective vs. Subjective</p> <p>Character Development</p> <p>Relevant*</p> <p>Detail</p> <p>“Just Right Book”</p> <p>Setting</p> <p>Conflict*</p> <p>Plot</p> <p>Resolution</p> <p>Theme vs. Topic*</p> <p>Invest</p> <p>Quote*</p> <p>Paraphrase*</p> <p>Accountable*</p> <p>Context Clue</p> <p>Excerpt*</p> <p>Stamina*</p> <p>Annotate*</p> <p>Salient</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* = Priority Vocabulary Word</p>	<p>I: Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts</p> <p>➤ “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”</p> <p>II: Reading and writing grounded in evidence from the text</p> <p>➤ “Quality text-based questions, unlike low-level “search and find” questions, require close reading and deep understanding of the text”</p> <p>III: Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary</p> <p>➤ “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 deliberate close reading”</p>

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Common Core State Standards *(Including how the standards progress across grade levels)*

7 th Grade	8 th Grade	9 th Grade
RL 7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	RL/RI 8.1: Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	RL.9.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RL 7.2: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text	RL/RI 8.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.	RL.9.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
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).
SL 7.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	SL 8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	SL 9.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
W 8.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	W 8.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	W 8.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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Anchor Text:

“Romiette and Julio” & “Romeo and Juliet”

“Romiette and Julio” by Sharon Draper

Romiette “Romi” Cappelle is an African American teenager living in Cincinnati, Ohio. Plagued by dreams of drowning, Romi searches for an understanding of her fear of water and her recurring nightmares. Julio Montague is a Hispanic teenager who has just moved to Cincinnati. Julio hates the cold weather in Ohio and wishes he could move back home to his grandfather’s ranch. Julio knows that moving back home is out of the question since his parents moved from Texas due to the heavy gang presence in its schools.

When Julio meets Romi online in a teen chat room and they discover that they attend the same high school, they form an instant connection. Romi can’t believe that Julio is so good-looking, charming and sensitive. Julio has never known another girl like Romi - beautiful, smart, and caring. Although neither Romi nor Julio sees their racial difference as a problem, other people begin to object to their budding romance. Julio’s father tells him that he will never approve of his son dating a “black girl.” Then, there are the “Devildogs,” an African American gang at school who wear all purple and make it glaringly obvious to Romi and Julio that they don’t approve of their relationship. When Romi and Julio stand up to the gang members and turn the tables on them, the gang members threaten to get even. The danger escalates when the gang begins stalking the couple and making overtly violent threats. When Romi and Julio team up with a group of close friends and forge a plan to break away from the gang’s grip, they quickly find themselves caught up in a deadly situation.

Important Considerations for Instruction

Text Complexity:

The Lexile level of this text is 610, which provides a nice balance for the more complex “*Romeo and Juliet*.” The sentences structure and vocabulary in this novel are relatively simple, although its themes and plot line target a much more mature audience. Its low Lexile allows for students to read some of this text independently, when called for in the Instructional Calendar section of the Unit Plan.

“Romeo and Juliet”

In William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, a long feud between the Montague and Capulet families disrupts the city of Verona and causes tragic results for Romeo and Juliet. Revenge, love, and a secret marriage force the young star-crossed lovers to grow up quickly — and fate causes them to commit suicide in despair. Only once their children have taken their lives do the two families reconcile their differences and end their feud.

Notes:

- This unit plan requires students to read the following scenes, also listed in the Weekly Instructional Calendar:
 - *Act 1 Prologue*
 - *Act 1, Scene 5*
 - *Act 2, Scene 2*
 - *Act 3, Scene 1*
 - *Act 5, Scene 3*

Students may engage in reading other scenes as an extension project or for personal interest, but they will not be explicitly addressed in this unit.

- *Romeo and Juliet* is one of Shakespeare’s classic tragedies. Students will likely have some background knowledge about Shakespeare and this particular story, but will need to study the details of the plot closely for the purposes of this unit.
- Near the start of *Romeo and Juliet*’s famous balcony scene, Juliet asks “Wherefore art thou Romeo?” Because the word “wherefore” means “why,” Juliet is wondering *why* the boy she loves is called what he’s called — not *where* he is, as many readers believe.
- Juliet is a mere 13 years old, and Romeo is not much older.

Important Considerations for Instruction

Text Complexity:

The lexile level of *Romeo and Juliet* is NC1040L, however the qualitative complexity of the text is much higher due to its classic, complex language. (*The prefix “NC” means that the text’s lexile level is much higher than what’s*

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Big Ideas/Themes:

As its title suggests, *“Romiette and Julio”* is based loosely on Shakespeare’s *“Romeo and Julliet.”* The books share the themes of love, hate, violence, fate, and control. However, *“Romiette and Julio”* diverts from the original story in many ways. This text also explores race, prejudice, discrimination, gangs, and bullying. Also, because this novel does not end in suicide (Romi and Julio avert death and end up together), it conveys different themes around these topics than the original does.

Text Structure:

The structure of this novel is mostly chronological. The story is divided into 62 short chapters. Within each chapter, Sharon Draper experiments with a variety of structures and fonts. Some chapters consist of online chat room conversations, while others detail dreams or journal entries. The majority of chapters consist of traditional third-person narration. Similar to Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Draper’s *“Romiette and Julio”* includes numerous opportunities to teach foreshadowing.

Real World Connections:

Students will connect this modern-day novel to its culturally significant counterpart, *“Romeo and Juliet.”* They will also make connections to the real world when they analyze the gang violence and prejudice in this novel, along with the implications of young love. Since Romiette and Julio are both in high school, the story provides countless opportunities for students to connect with and relate to the characters.

Potential Challenges:

Most students should be able to access this text independently or with some scaffolding. However, one challenge is the variety of text structures and shifting point of view between chapters. For example, the first time you encounter a chapter with a noticeably different font, walk students through the process of determining the speaker or point of view, and the format of the chapter (journal entry, dream, conversation, etc.).

Thematically, the racism and violence presented by this novel may be challenging for students to discuss, but it’s important to have authentic conversations around these topics.

typical for its intended audience.) Share with students that Shakespeare takes careful and close rereading to understand, even for most adults! While difficult to access, the text should be interesting for 8th grade students as it centers on the relationship and forbidden love between two teenagers. The story is also brought to life through read-aloud and performance, as Shakespeare intended the drama to be read.

Big Ideas/Themes:

The central theme throughout the drama is the relationship between love and hate – more specifically, the power of love to challenge hate and vice versa, and the ability of love to incite hatred. The story also explores topics including family, control vs. autonomy, the individual vs. society, the inevitability of fate, and violence.

Text Structure:

Romeo and Juliet is a drama, meaning the elements of drama (stage directions, act, scene, etc.) will need to be explicitly taught. The tragedy is divided into 5 Acts; Acts 1-4 consist of five or more scenes each, while Act 5 consists of only three scenes. As do all of Shakespeare’s tragedies, the story ends with multiple deaths.

The play begins with a prologue. The prologue states that the two families having been fighting for a very long time and that two lovers will die because of it, providing a brief summary of the story’s plot. Because the prologue reveals the ending, and because this story is so well-known, *Romeo and Juliet* provides a great opportunity to study dramatic irony and foreshadowing with students.

Note: *This unit requires students to read select scenes from the play; consult the “Texts and Resources” section of the Instructional Calendar to determine which scenes to read and when. They are selected to correspond with chapters in “Romiette and Julio.” Since we are reading select scenes only, it is critical that teachers fill in essential plot details of this play for students, either through video or summaries, before moving on to the next scene.*

Real World Connections:

Shakespeare’s *“Romeo and Juliet”* is not only a staple of the theater and high school English classes around the world, but it has also inspired a number of

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modern day adaptations and variations, including the film featuring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes (the drama set in the present-day), as well as Sharon Draper's text "Romiette and Julio," which puts a modern spin on the classic tale.

Potential Challenges:

The greatest challenge with teaching Shakespeare is the complexity of his language. The teacher - through read-aloud, performance, and video analysis - must heavily scaffold this anchor text. Throughout the reading, teachers should constantly model the re-reading and internal questioning that occurs in order to effectively interpret Shakespeare's words. Students should understand that they don't need to know the meaning of every single word in order to make meaning of Shakespeare. Another potential challenge could be discussing the topic of suicide, so it's important that teachers plan the most effective way to analyze and discuss this tragic scene with their students.

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Instructional Calendar

Weekly Focus	Teaching Points	Texts and Resources	Suggestions for Implementation
<p>First Week of School</p> <p><i>What are the rules and rituals of my eighth grade classroom?</i></p> <p><i>How can practicing the habits of a strong reader (reading actively, building stamina, discussing texts, and citing evidence) enhance my understanding of texts and ideas? How can I personally benefit from becoming a powerful independent reader?</i></p> <p>RL.8.1 SL.8.1</p>	<p>I. Classroom Rituals, Rules and Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General Classroom Rules and Procedures ➤ ELA-Specific Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Checking out books from the classroom library ○ Handling our books with care ○ Independent reading – looks like, sounds like ➤ Why is Reading Important? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding why reading is important and how it empowers us (agency of choice, knowledge) • Use the poems “Afternoon in the Stacks” and “Chapter One” as a way to consider how reading can bring you joy and transport you to a new place <p>II. Who are you as a Reader?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Allow students to share their favorite books and preferences ➤ Set up/decorate your Reading Response Journal ➤ Set individual and class ELA goals <p>III. What is Reading Stamina and why is it important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Practice this “sacred time” in our ELA block ➤ Set stamina goals as a class ➤ Set individual stamina goals for independent reading at home; establish an accountability system <p>IV. What does it mean to be an “active listener?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use the first 7 chapters of Romiette and Julio to model what it looks like, sounds like, and feels like to participate actively in a fluent read aloud. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher reading aloud fluently; students following along in the text; underlining words/phrases that stick out, possibly jotting down notes or questions ➤ When discussing a text with a peer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eye contact; complete sentences, probing questions and response 	<p>Anchor Texts “Romiette and Julio” Chapters 1-7</p> <p>Supplemental Texts (Appendix B) - “Our Generation” - “An Afternoon in the Stacks” - “Chapter One” - “Why Independent Reading?” text and analysis questions - “Best Ways to Save an Aging Brain”</p> <p>Additional Resources (Appendix D) - “Accountable Talk” Stems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poem “Our Generation” is written by an 8th grade student and is a powerful way to start the year – by reading the poem both ways, you can engage students in meaningful dialogue around the impact of their choices and their ownership over their future. • Role play all classroom procedures - practice until perfect! • Read-alouds are a perfect way to develop an “I can” climate in your classroom, and to invest students in the anchor text and reading in general. • Before practicing reading stamina, it is best if students have an on-level independent reading

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V. What does it mean to be an “active reader?”

- Metacognition: your inner dialogue while you read
- Good readers have new ideas while reading, and they find evidence in the text around those ideas.
- Reinforce expectations for students when the teacher is reading aloud fluently. Students can practice underlining evidence or other phrases in the text; teachers can model and think aloud parts they might underline or annotate.

book selected.

- Setting high expectations around “active reading” and “active listening” is crucial at the beginning of the year. Be explicit and practice the routines until they are perfect!

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Week 2:

How can practicing the habits of a strong reader (reading actively, building stamina, discussing texts, and citing evidence) enhance my understanding of texts and ideas? How can I personally benefit from becoming a powerful independent reader?

RL.8.1

SL.8.1

I. How do I talk about texts with a classmate?

Teaching Point: Readers improve their understanding and grow appreciation for literature by discussing books they're reading. They may use Accountable Talk Prompts to drive the conversation.

- Accountable talk procedures
 - Students should attempt Accountable Talk sentence stems in small groups based on the anchor text that has been read aloud and after the teacher has modeled positive discussion habits.
- Accountable Talk Sentence Starters:
 - *I agree because...*
 - *I wonder...*
 - *To build on that, ...*
 - *I disagree because...*
 - *I know this because in the text it said...*
- Encourage students to prompt each other and ask questions while discussing.
 - *Tell me more.*
 - *Why do you think that?*

II. Establishing Independent Reading Habits

- Build on Week 1 by continuing to practice this "sacred" time during our ELA block (silently and independently)
- Tracking your thinking (annotating the text, post-its, etc)
 - Explicitly model and practice this over the next few weeks until students can do this effectively on their own. Teachers can conference or model positive reading habits during this time.
- Set up reading log or journal, and set goals for independent reading at home (identify obstacles and make a plan for overcoming them to keep this "sacred" time even at home)

III. What is a Reading Response Journal? What are the expectations of an 8th grade reader when writing responses to a text?

Teaching Point: Good readers have routines for reading and for recording what they've read.

- Teacher models exemplar RRJ response after shared reading of "Romiette and Julio" (students will continue to practice RRJ in

Anchor Texts

"Romiette and Julio"
Chapters 8-17

Supplemental Texts (Appendix B)

- "High-Tech Bullies" (with questions)
- Leveled Newsela Texts:
 - <https://newsela.com/articles/bullying-popular/id/3273/>
 - <https://newsela.com/articles/curbing-cyberkids/id/1646/>
 - <https://newsela.com/articles/cyberbullying-poll/id/1582/>

Additional Resources (Appendix D)

- "Accountable Talk"
- Reading Response Journal Prompts and Rubric
- RACE Graphic Organizer

- As students practice Accountable Talk, make sure that the questions you provide them with are rich and interesting. Pair Accountable Talk practice with one of the supplemental texts to allow students to deepen their understanding and address confusing parts. Post an anchor chart with sentence starters.
- Connect the supplemental bullying articles to Julio's experiences at his new school. How do the ideas in these articles help us understand the impact of bullying on Julio? In our own classroom and school? (Connect to building a strong and supportive classroom culture)
- If you have a document camera,

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response to the anchor text and for their assigned chapters in HW)

Writing Task: *Introduce RACE as a strategy for responding to questions in writing.*

- How has technology and social media changed the way bullying looks and sounds? What impact can this type of bullying have on its victims? Cite specific examples and text evidence from at least two texts.

explicitly model how to select what to underline and how you might annotate/mark up a text as an active reader.

- Post an anchor chart (and develop as students have new ideas or as you teach new strategies) around annotation: What symbols do we use? What types of things can we annotate, and why?
- Reading Response Journals are just one way that students can and should be writing about what they read. After Unit 1, teachers should decide how frequently students should write in their journals, and whether they will be used as a formal or more informal way for students to engage in writing activities.

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Week 3:

*What does it mean to read a text closely?
How can I engage with texts through writing and discussion to uncover deeper meaning?*

RL.1
W.10

When reading closely, good readers:

I. Read carefully (and reread) for explicit meaning

- Good readers read carefully for **explicit meaning** by self-monitoring for comprehension as they read.
 - Introduce and model self-monitoring strategies; provide ample time for students to practice these strategies with carefully selected chunks of text or their independent reading books
 - Model how to determine the meaning of unknown words or phrases using context clues, and how to use the text to determine whether or not the conclusion you drew was reasonable.
 - Use this week's supplemental texts to apply these skills to informational texts.

II. Choose Evidence from the Text that's "Worth Talking About"

- Model how to identify salient quotes or passages from the text, how to analyze it, and how to articulate your thinking about what that evidence tells us. Students can use the following 3-step questioning process to do this:
 1. *Which quote from this section is most interesting and thought provoking (made you stop and think)?*
 2. *Would this quote be meaningful outside of this context? Or, does it connect to previous chapters or characters in this book?*
 3. *Is there a lot to say about this quote? If so, what?*
- Model how to identify the evidence from the text that supports something that is explicitly stated in the text. Make inferences using the evidence.
 - *Ask yourself, "What from the text makes me think this? Which details prove that I'm correct? What did the author say to support my point?"*

III. Analyze and write about texts.

Teaching Point: ELA is about communication. We have to be able to

Anchor Texts

"Romiette and Julio"
Chapters 18 - 27

Supplemental Texts (Appendix B)

- "How to Talk to Little Girls" with corresponding evidence collector

Additional Resources (Appendix D)

- Self-Monitoring Question Stems
- Most Salient Quote Selection Graphic Organizer
- Writing About Quotes graphic organizer

- Continue reading aloud fluently from the anchor text daily. For close reading, select 1-2 shorter passages from the longer section you read aloud for students to reread with a purpose (ie. Selecting a quote that's worth talking about), and possibly text-dependent questions.
- Continue modeling "annotation" through think-alouds and visuals. Practice determining the importance of sections: Be transparent about why you're underlining certain lines, but not others.
- Scaffolding: Start small. The first few times students practice this, give them only 2-3 pre-selected quotes to choose from. Once they get the hang of what is "salient,"

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clearly and persuasively share our ideas and interpretations with other people. Discussion and writing are the two primary ways we share ideas and information.

- How to write about a salient quote (*Note: This is only one example of many ways students can write about quotes!*):
 1. **Explain** the Context of the Quote: *Say who wrote it, who they were talking to (if anyone), when they said it, and why they said it.*
 2. **Paraphrase** the Quote: *Put it in your own words.*
 3. **Analyze** what makes the quote interesting or thought-provoking: *Why is this quote worth talking about?*
 4. **Connect** the quote to other characters, themes, texts, or the world: *Where else is this quote or idea meaningful?*

****Continue building independent reading stamina and using Accountable Talk stems and structures****

Writing Task:

- Read Chapter 26 alongside the supplemental text, “How to Talk to Little Girls.”
 - a) Short Answer (Ch. 26): What are Destiny Romiette most concerned about as Romi gets ready for her date? How do you know? Cite two details from the text to support your answer.
 - b) Short Answer (“How to Talk to Little Girls”): How does this author want us to change the way we talk to little girls? What impact does she hope this change will have on the women they become? Cite two details to support your answers.
 - c) Longer Response: What advice would the author of this article have for Romiette as she gets ready to go on a date with Julio? What might she encourage Romiette to focus on?

gradually release them to select from increasingly larger sections of text.

- Students should always defend their selections through either discussion or writing. For students to do this at a high quality, teachers must model and provide written exemplars frequently.

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Week 4:

*What does it mean to read a text closely?
How can I engage with texts through writing and discussion to uncover deeper meaning?*

*Why must I collect evidence as I read?
How can I use text evidence to defend my theories and ideas?*

*How can a modern work of fiction draw upon a famous and historically significant piece of literature?
How do traditional themes, conflicts, and characters change when told through a modern lens?*

RL.1

RL.9

I. Read carefully (and reread) for explicit meaning.

- Students should read the “Romeo and Juliet” Plot Summary in Appendix B to build background knowledge before tackling Shakespeare’s actual text. Have them cut and match the visuals (*at the end of the document*) to each paragraph of text to help visualize and make meaning. They will be able to fall back on this basic knowledge of key events later to assist them in deciphering the language.
- Review the strategies from last week around self-monitoring as students tackle Romeo and Juliet. Emphasize that understanding Shakespeare is tough but rewarding – even for adults. Sticking with it, tapping into your background knowledge from *Romiette and Julio*, and using all possible resources around you will pay off.
- Teach students explicitly how to use a glossary and other resources for scaffolding Romeo and Juliet as tools to help them comprehend. Fluent read-aloud of these sections of text is especially important.

II. Make connections and find parallels between a modern adaptation (*Romiette and Julio*) and the story it’s based on (*Romeo and Juliet*).

- As you begin your study of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, have students keep a running log of similarities and differences they uncover between the original and the adaptation. Finding parallels between the texts will help students comprehend the more challenging language of Shakespeare.
 - Focus students’ evidence collection into categories based on the big idea of the section of text; for example, “Conflicts,” “Relationships,” “Characters,” “Setting,” or “Themes.”
 - See Appendix D “Romeo and Juliet Close Reading Graphic Organizers” for ideas on how to structure students’ rereading of key sections of Shakespeare’s play. They offer suggestions on how to guide students to make connections.

Anchor Text

“Romeo and Juliet”
- Act I Prologue (p. 7)
- Act I, Scene 5 - *Romeo and Juliet meet at the Capulets’ ball* (p. 50-61)

“Romiette and Julio”
- Chapters 28-37
Note: As our focus for close reading shifts to Romeo and Juliet, you can begin assigning some chapters of Romiette & Julio for independent reading or homework (with an in-class review) to preserve class time for Shakespeare.

Supplemental Texts (Appendix B)

- Romeo and Juliet Plot Summary (*with corresponding pictures for matching*)
- “Michelle Obama’s Gun Control Speech” (*use excerpts*)

Additional Resources (Appendix D)

- Abridged/Illustrated Text: Prologue and Act I, Scene 5 (*to be used with the original text, not instead of*)
- Romeo & Juliet Prologue Text-

- Show movie trailers (available on YouTube) from a few versions of *Romeo and Juliet* to hook students and build interest.
- From here out, use the excerpts from Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliette” as your anchor text, as this will require heavy scaffolding, read aloud, rereading, modeling, and other supports like glossaries or visuals. Clips from the various film versions are readily available on Youtube as another form of scaffolding.
- Chapter 35 is integral to the plot of the novel. If this is a chapter that students read at home, make sure you review events carefully together.
- Encourage students to refer to the

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III. Use Evidence from the Text to Develop Ideas and Create Theories

Teaching Point: A good reader is always trying to understand the big ideas conveyed by an author. To do this, active readers constantly collect text evidence, make connections, and develop theories about characters, themes, and the author's choices.

- **Review:** Continue modeling and practicing how to identify salient quotes, analyze them, and articulate your thinking about what that evidence tells us and means
- Model what it means to “zoom in” on a particular character, conflict, or idea in a text. After the fluent read aloud of a section, say, *“Now we’re going to go back into the text and collect ALL of the evidence we can find about _____.”*
 - *Now we’re going to look at all of the evidence we found. Do we notice any patterns? What ideas are we having about ____? What*
 - *Finally, create a theory about ____ from the evidence. Support it with the relevant details you collected.*
- Practice how to evaluate evidence for its strength. *“Which detail is best at proving my idea? Which piece of evidence most strongly supports what I’m thinking, and why?”*
- Students can practice this skill on informational text using Michelle Obama’s Gun Control Speech (Appendix B). This text can also be used to make connections to the issue of violence in the anchor text.

Writing Task:

- Reread/skim chapters 7-19 of *“Romiette and Julio,”* focusing on the chat room conversations between the two characters and the reactions of their parents to their budding relationship. How is the development of Romiette and Julio’s relationship similar to the early relationship between Romeo and Juliet? How are the two relationships different? Include evidence from *“Romiette and Julio”* and Act I, Scene 5 of *Romeo and Juliet* to support your claims.

Dependent Questions
- Romeo and Juliet Close
Reading/Connections
graphic organizers

“Accountable Talk”
anchor chart from
Week 2 throughout
discussions.

- Scaffold: If students are struggling to create their own theories at first, teachers can give them a claim, and students can practice only finding the supporting evidence first. Gradually release responsibility and keep modeling – this is a fundamental skill students will work on in all units.
- Note: It is okay if students’ theories are simple at first. We’re working on building independence and supporting ideas with text evidence, so the more practice they get with close reading, the more complex their theories will eventually become.

Unit 8.1: Becoming an 8th Grade Reader

Week 5:

How can a modern work of fiction draw upon a famous and historically significant piece of literature?

How do traditional themes, conflicts, and characters change when told through a modern lens?

How do authors convey important themes, and how can I connect these to the world and my life?

How can I engage with texts through writing and discussion to uncover deeper meaning?

RL.2

RL.9

SL.1

I. Make connections and find parallels between a modern adaptation (*Romiette and Julio*) and the story it's based on (*Romeo and Juliet*).

- Continue using graphic organizers to lead students to make connections between "Romeo and Juliet" and "Romiette and Julio."
 - A close reading of the famous monologues in Act II, Scene 2 will allow students to make connections between Romeo & Juliet's / Romiette & Julio's declarations of love.
 - Act III, Scene 1 provides a great opportunity to analyze how the forbidden love between R & J incites hatred and violence. Students can connect the events and character motivations in this scene to the violent threats of the Devildogs. *Note: Reread excerpts from **Chapter 35** alongside Act III, Scene 1 to make specific text-text connections about violence stemming from discrimination/love.*
 - See Appendix D for additional graphic organizers and close reading resources.

II. Given a topic (love, violence, family, etc.) in a text, determine the author's theme about it.

Teaching Points:

- **A topic is one (or a few) word(s) only.** Novels deal with many related topics that show up again and again throughout a story. *For example, "perseverance" and "love at first sight" are topics.*
- **A theme is the lesson, or message, the author wants to teach readers about a topic.** Themes are complete sentences or statements that can relate to anyone (they are universal). They do not contain characters' names or other book-specific information.
 - Create a bank of topics that appear again and again throughout "*Romiette and Julio*" (*love, violence, control, parent/child relationships, trust, loyalty, family, etc.*). Model

Anchor Text

"Romeo and Juliet"

- Act II, Scene 2 – *Famous balcony scene, declaration of love* [pgs. 69-83]

- Act III, Scene 1 – *Fatal swordfights: Montague vs. Capulet; Tybalt (Juliet's cousin) kills Mercutio, then Romeo avenges his death by killing Tybalt, and is banished* [pgs. 115-129]

"Romiette and Julio"

- Chapters 38-48

*Note: As our focus for close reading shifts to *Romeo and Juliet*, you can assign some chapters of *Romiette & Julio* for independent reading or homework to preserve class time for *Shakespeare*.*

Supplemental Texts (Appendix B)

- How do I love Thee? (Sonnet 43)

Additional Resources (Appendix D)

- Abridged/Illustrated Text: Act II, Scene 2 and

- This week, focus **theme analysis** primarily on "*Romiette and Julio*." This will allow students to isolate their practice with determining theme from the complexity of Shakespeare's language.
- Text-based discussion with peers may occur in the format of a whole group seminar, "fishbowl" discussion, or multiple small discussion groups occurring simultaneously. It can focus on one interesting short passage, a longer section of text, or an entire book. See Appendix D for ideas.
- In this first unit, teachers must provide rich and interesting text-based questions for students to discuss. Students should

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how students can find evidence from the text that supports it.

- Anchor Questions: *Which details have to do with my topic? Which characters or events make me think of this idea?*
- Look at all the evidence you've collected about this idea. Turn the topic word or phrase into a "theme statement:"
 - Anchor Questions: *Based on the examples and characters that connect to this topic, what is the author trying to teach me about it? What does the author believe about this? What do they want readers to understand and learn?*
- Connect to real-world examples

III. Prepare for and participate in a Text-Based Discussion with Peers

- Teacher Actions:
 - Determine the text(s) students will discuss – will you focus only on the two anchor texts, or can students draw from supplemental texts as well? Which ones?
 - Craft 3-4 rich, open-ended text-dependent questions. Remember, these questions must require students to go back into the texts in order to respond.
 - Example: *What elements of Romeo and Juliet did Sharon Draper rely on most when writing Romiette and Julio? Do you think her adaptation is faithful enough to the original so far? Why or why not?*
 - Create an anchor chart stating expectations for participation. Recommended: Talk about respect, systems for accountability during discussion, student ownership of the discussion, goal-setting, Accountable Talk
 - Share the structure and format of discussion with students.
 - Always leave time for students to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the discussion (habits and depth of knowledge/content), and set goals for next time.
- Student Actions:
 - Set goals prior to discussion – see resource in Appendix D.

Act III, Scene 1 (*to be used with the original text, not instead of*)

- Act II, Scene 2 Close Reading and Connections Graphic Organizers

- Discussion Formats and Structures Guide

- Discussion Starters and Goals (student resource)

- Citing Evidence to Support a Theme graphic organizer (student resource)

write responses and collect evidence before coming to the discussion.

- Have readers practice identifying themes and recurring topics in their independent reading books as well

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- Answer and collect evidence in writing for the “Big Questions” before the discussion.
- Track participation and listen/respond actively.
- Reflect on the discussion habits and content afterwards. Give and receive feedback.

Writing Task:

- Both Sharon Draper and William Shakespeare consider the issue of violence in the world. Based on the details in each text, what common theme do they develop about violence? Support your claim with details from both texts.

To begin brainstorming, think about these questions:

According to each author,

- *What motivates people to use violence?*
- *Is violence ever an effective way to deal with problems? Why or why not?*

Unit 8.1: Becoming an 8th Grade Reader

Week 6:

How do I identify evidence from a text that supports an overall theme? How do I connect a literary theme to its real world implications?

How can a modern work of fiction draw upon a famous and historically significant piece of literature? How do traditional themes, conflicts, and characters change when told through a modern lens?

RL.1

RL.2

RL.9

I. Determine the multiple big ideas and themes an author conveys, and identify the strongest text evidence the author uses to support them.

- To scaffold, provide students with a selection of relevant themes to choose from at first.
- Model how to find evidence that supports that theme or idea, and evaluate each detail's strength.
 - To practice evaluating which evidence is strongest, give students a list of relevant details and have them rank them in order of strength. Allow students to debate their lists and rationales with a partner.

II. Analyze similarities and differences between two texts (plot/conflicts, characters, themes).

- Focusing on the ending of each text, students should compare and contrast essential plot details. They should also notice similarities and differences between the main characters (Julio/Romeo and Juliet/Romiette).
- Then, push students to analyze how the different endings impact how each author conveys important themes. How are the lessons each author wants readers to learn different?

Writing Task:

- Why did Sharon Draper change Shakespeare's traditional ending in her adaptation? How does this decision impact the types of themes and lessons readers take away from her story?

Anchor Text

"Romeo and Juliet"

- Act V, Scene 3 - *Tragic final tomb scene, suicides* [pgs. 218-243, with a focus on monologues – see G.O. in Appendix D]

"Romiette and Julio"

- Chapters 49-62

Supplemental Texts (Appendix B)

Additional Resources (Appendix D)

- Abridged/Illustrated Text: Act V, Scene 3 (*to be used with the original text, not instead of*)

- Act V, Scene 3 Close Reading graphic organizer (tomb scene)

- Citing Evidence to Support a Theme graphic organizer (student resource)

- Allow students to watch video clips of different film versions of the tomb scene (and others if time permits). This is a great way to scaffold comparing and contrasting the two texts.

Unit 8.1: Becoming an 8th Grade Reader

Week 7:

How do I synthesize my learning from throughout the unit?

PCR Task
Literary Analysis Task

RL.1
RL.2
RL.9
W.10

I. Synthesize Learning

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding from Unit 1. This performance task consists of two parts:

1. Prose Constructed Response (Literary Analysis Essay based on “Romeo and Juliet” and “Romiette and Julio”)

Notes:

- Students should complete the Prose Constructed Response over the course of the entire week. Provide students with planning tools, outlines, quote banks, graphic organizers, and/or sentences starters for scaffolding as needed (some are provided in the PCR document in Appendix C).
 - Suggested Pacing:
 - Monday – Write your thesis statement and collect supporting text evidence
 - Tuesday – Organize your ideas using an outline
 - Wednesday – Drafting
 - Thursday – Revising & Editing, Publishing
 - Friday – Complete Analysis Task (see below)

2. Literary Analysis Task (MCLASS Beacon – using cold passages and multiple choice/multiple select/tech-enhanced questions)

Notes:

- Students must take the Literary Analysis Task online using MCLASS. There is a hard copy in Appendix C for you to preview, but you’ll notice that the tech-enhanced questions do not appear on this version, and so it should not be used with students.

Anchor Text

N/A

Performance Tasks (Appendix C):

- Prose Constructed Response
- MCLASS Beacon Assessment

- You must finish reading both anchor texts before students are able to complete the prose-Constructed Response. However, they may complete the MCLASS Beacon Literary Analysis assessment any time this week
- As part of the students’ pre-writing process for the PCR, it may be helpful to hold a discussion so students can share and flesh out ideas. Provide students with a note-taking template and guiding questions that are related to, but not exactly the same as, the PCR prompt.

Unit 8.1: Becoming an 8th Grade Reader

Appendix A: Unpacked Standards Guide

Source: *Public Schools of North Carolina NCDPI Collaborative Workspace*

Standard	Explanation and Example
<p>RL.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p>	<p>Eighth grade students will analyze a text for a central theme or idea and support their analysis with strong textual evidence. Students will learn that evidence is considered strong when it both convinces the reader and effectively expresses the central ideas or theme(s) of the text. To achieve this, students will first read closely in order to determine both explicit and inferred meanings of a text. This process involves determining the author's purpose and overall message of the text. Students may choose to mark the text as they read in order to guide their thinking. Work like this may involve students sorting textual evidence and using only the strongest segments; specifically, those that directly connect with and uphold the central idea or theme.</p> <p>Question Stems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which quote/detail from the text best supports theme X? • Which quote/detail from the text best supports the idea/prediction that...? • Which details best demonstrate why/how/when X may happen? • What details best explain what may have caused X event? • Read line #. What idea does this detail support? • Which is the best paraphrase of the text?
<p>RL.8.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</p>	<p>Students will record repeated messages or patterns they observe within various story elements. Students will note of how recurring interpersonal conflicts between characters, changing settings, and plot twists all influence/shape the theme and guide the reader toward realizing the theme in its entirety. Once students begin to realize the central idea, they should reflect on how the writer used such recurring patterns through the subtle avenues of setting, characterization and plot to slowly reveal it indirectly. Students will then be able to write objective summaries revealing the sequential development of a theme through description of characters, setting, and plot. Students may use a story map as a guide to outlining the story's thematic development.</p> <p>Question Stems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What best summarizes the entire text / a section of text? • Which statement objectively summarizes the text? • What big ideas or themes are hidden in this text? • How does the author use [the setting/character X/plot event X] to develop the theme? • How does the conflict between X and Y shape the story's theme? • How does the story's setting influence the theme or central message?

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<p>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.</p>	<p>Eighth grade students will understand the timeless nature of literary themes. Specifically, they should be able to observe how the same theme is presented across multiple texts, particularly in the genres of myths, traditional stories, and religious works. To master this, students must first be exposed to a variety of texts of varying formats and time periods that all focus around a common literary theme, such as love, friendship, or perseverance. As students read and discuss these texts, they should consider the author’s message about life. Once students have identified an overall theme of a text, they should examine how the writer created that theme. Students should specifically look for patterns of events, conflicts, or character types when choosing evidence of a theme. The final step of this standard involves students looking closely at the genres of myths, traditional stories, or religious works and determining how writers modernized their presentation of the theme while still holding true to the characteristics of that genre. As students read these texts, they should note specific use of elements such as language, character traits, conflicts, and settings in order to analyze the writer’s approach.</p> <p>Question Stems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the author draw on themes from other stories...? • How does the author’s portrayal of the character compare to Shakespeare’s...? • How do the two authors’ interpretation of ___ differ? • Was the author’s portrayal of the ____ faithful to Shakespeare’s? How did it differ? What was similar or different? • What [themes/conflicts/character types] appear across both texts?
<p>SL 8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.</p>	<p>Eighth grade students will work together in groups in an effort to collaborate and 'bounce ideas' off one another on various issues within a text, in order to reach a common understanding. To show mastery, students may participate in activities including book clubs, Socratic seminars, and philosophical chairs. To prepare for discussions and debates such as these, students must read a text closely and with predetermined purpose(s). Students then come together, under the guidelines of a specific structure, and probe for deeper meanings beneath the text. They should ask pointed questions, actively listen for and gauge other students' responses, and reflect on and reevaluate their initial belief or stance. This process encourages students to practice skills such as active listening, connecting to others’ ideas, and seeking to construct a higher truth or synthesis on whatever topic of discussion/debate is at hand.</p>
<p>W 8.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.</p>	<p>To become skilled writers, students must practice writing in a myriad of situations. Writing assignments should be woven naturally and routinely into instructional lessons. Writing opportunities may include warm-up assignments that activate prior knowledge, longer writing assignments that involve the writing process, and reflections that serve as both checks for introspection and understanding.</p>