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AGAINST THE ODDS



Inquiry
by Design

Grade 7 | Unit 1

Teacher Guide

UNIT 1

AGAINST THE ODDS

Grade 7



Sample

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Overview

About the Unit

Against the Odds invites students into an exploration of identity, resilience, and the power of choice. The unit consists of a rich mix of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction that investigates the relationship between choice and identity. Through poetry, students explore decision-making in the face of difficult choices. Two short stories ask students to reflect on how outside forces influence the choices we make. By reading a nonfiction text, students understand the importance of developing a strong self-identity. Guided by thoughtful text-dependent questions and meaningful discussion, this unit empowers students to consider how internal and external factors have shaped who they are. Learning culminates in a narrative task where students reflect on a memorable choice and its role in shaping their lives.

Essential questions for this unit:

- What influences the choices we make?
- How do limitations affect the choices we make?
- How do our choices shape our identity?

Unit Texts

The following texts are used to build knowledge and develop literacy skills in this unit:

- “Choices” by Nikki Giovanni
- “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” by Tanya Stephenson (1170L)
- “The Difficult Path” by Grace Lin (790L)
- “Amigo Brothers” by Piri Thomas (890L)
- “Invictus” by William Ernest Henley
- “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost

Unit At-A-Glance

Lesson	Student Learning Outcome	Lesson Objective
Lesson 1 Unit Introduction: Build Anticipation	Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and explain how the ideas clarify the unit topic.	Analyze a video and generate initial responses to the unit’s topic.

Lesson	Student Learning Outcome	Lesson Objective
Lesson 2 Unit Introduction: Set Purpose and Prepare to Learn	Gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.	Demonstrate prior knowledge of words important to this unit and review unit expectations.
Lesson 3 Unit Introduction: Learn Vocabulary Routine	Determine or clarify the meaning of grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words using a variety of strategies.	Learn the vocabulary routine and clarify the meaning of words important to this unit.
Lesson 4 Reading “Choices”	Analyze how an author uses form and structure to develop ideas.	Analyze how Giovanni uses form and structure to convey meaning.
Lesson 5 Reading “Choices”	Compare and contrast the effects of techniques in written and spoken poetry.	Compare the written and verbal techniques used in the presentation of the poem “Choices.”
Lesson 6 Reading “Building a Powerful Self-Identity”	Analyze how an author uses structure to develop a central idea.	Analyze how structure is used to develop the central idea in “Building a Powerful Self-Identity.”
Lesson 7 Reading “The Difficult Path” <i>Paragraphs 1–51</i>	Analyze how elements of a story interact.	Analyze how the setting affects the narrator in “The Difficult Path.”
Lesson 8 Writing About Choices	Write a narrative that introduces a narrator, establishes a context, organizes an event sequence, and uses narrative techniques to develop events and characters.	Write a narrative about a time when you disagreed with someone’s choice.
Lesson 9 Reading “The Difficult Path” <i>Paragraphs 52–91</i>	Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the perspectives of different characters.	Analyze how Lin develops and differentiates Lingsi’s perspective from other characters’ perspectives in “The Difficult Path.”
Lesson 10 Reading “The Difficult Path” <i>Paragraphs 92–112</i>	Determine a theme and analyze its development.	Analyze how Lin develops a theme in “The Difficult Path.”
Lesson 11 Writing About Choices	Write a conclusion for a narrative, incorporating transitional words and phrases to convey sequence.	Write a short narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to “The Difficult Path” and that is consistent with Lingsi’s character.
Lesson 12 Reading “The Difficult Path”	Understand how authors use or alter history by comparing and contrasting fictional and historical portrayals about the same period.	Compare a historical figure with a character from “The Difficult Path.”

Lesson	Student Learning Outcome	Lesson Objective
Lesson 13 Discussing “The Difficult Path” and “Building a Powerful Self-Identity”	Engage in and follow rules for a collegial collaborative discussion.	Participate in a collaborative discussion about the connections between “The Difficult Path” and “Building a Powerful Self-Identity.”
Lesson 14 Reading “Amigo Brothers” <i>Paragraphs 1–43</i>	Analyze how elements of a story interact.	Analyze how the events of the story develop and impact the characters in “Amigo Brothers.”
Lesson 15 Reading “Amigo Brothers” <i>Paragraphs 44–82</i>	Analyze how an author uses words and phrases to develop different characters’ perspectives.	Analyze how Thomas’s word choice develops Felix and Antonio’s perspectives in “Amigo Brothers.”
Lesson 16 Mid-Unit Assessment: Reading and Writing About Choices	Write a conclusion for a narrative that establishes characters and context, organizes an event sequence, uses narrative techniques to develop events and characters, and incorporates transitional words and phrases to convey sequence.	Write a short narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to “Amigo Brothers” and that is consistent with your understanding of the characters.
Lesson 17 Mid-Unit Assessment Extension: Reading and Writing About Choices	Write a conclusion for a narrative that establishes characters and context, organizes an event sequence, uses narrative techniques to develop events and characters, and incorporates transitional words and phrases to convey sequence.	Revise a narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to “Amigo Brothers” and that is consistent with your understanding of the characters.
Lesson 18 Writing About Choices	Revise a narrative, using narrative techniques to develop events and characters.	Revise a narrative about an alternate conclusion to “Amigo Brothers,” improving the pacing and descriptive language to further develop events and characters.
Lesson 19 Reading “Invictus”	Analyze how figurative language and sound impact the development of a theme.	Analyze the use of language and sound in “Invictus.”
Lesson 20 Reading “Invictus”	Compare and contrast the effects of techniques in written and spoken poetry.	Compare the impact of written and spoken techniques in the presentation of “Invictus.”
Lesson 21 Reading “The Road Not Taken”	Analyze how rhyme and structure impact meaning in poetry.	Analyze poetic techniques in “The Road Not Taken.”
Lesson 22 Reading “The Road Not Taken”	Analyze a theme’s development using text evidence.	Analyze a theme in “The Road Not Taken.”

Lesson	Student Learning Outcome	Lesson Objective
Lesson 23 Researching Poems About Choice	Use search terms effectively to re-search and gather information.	Research to find a poem that conveys ideas about choice and personal experiences.
Lesson 24 Discussing the Unit's Poems	Engage in and follow the rules for a collegial collaborative discussion, using evidence to probe and reflect on ideas.	Participate in a collaborative discussion about what poetry says about choice and identity.
Lesson 25 End-of-Unit Assessment: Planning a Narrative	Write a narrative that develops experiences or events using effective techniques, relevant details, and well-structured sequences; establishes context and point of view; uses dialogue, pacing, description, and transitions; includes precise language and sensory details; and concludes with reflection on the events.	Plan a narrative about a choice you made that has influenced your identity.
Lesson 26 End-of-Unit Assessment: Writing a Narrative	Write a narrative that develops experiences or events using effective techniques, relevant details, and well-structured sequences; establishes context and point of view; uses dialogue, pacing, description, and transitions; includes precise language and sensory details; and concludes with reflection on the events.	Write a narrative about a choice you made that has influenced your identity.
Lesson 27 End-of-Unit Assessment: Revising a Narrative	Write a narrative that develops experiences or events using effective techniques, relevant details, and well-structured sequences; establishes context and point of view; uses dialogue, pacing, description, and transitions; includes precise language and sensory details; and concludes with reflection on the events.	Revise a narrative about a choice you made that has influenced your identity.
Lesson 28 End-of-Unit Extension: Vocabulary	Use grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific words and phrases accurately.	Review and assess unit vocabulary.
Lesson 29 End-of-Unit Extension: Choice Writing or Research	Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience, or conduct short research using relevant information from multiple sources.	Write or research about choices.
Lesson 30 End-of-Unit Extension: Discuss Writing or Research	Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond with relevant observations and ideas.	Discuss students' written and research work by generating questions.

Unit Assessment

Formative Assessment

Formative questions and prompts are designed to help you check for understanding in real time. You can identify these questions/prompts by the label “Check” for in-lesson assessment and the bolded text response question/prompt for end-of-lesson assessment. Student responses to these questions give you critical insight into their progress toward the lesson’s Student Learning Outcome and Lesson Objective. Use these responses to guide your instructional decisions and provide targeted feedback.

Mid-Unit Assessment

For the Mid-Unit Assessment, students will write a narrative that imagines an alternative ending to “Amigo Brothers,” incorporating vivid descriptive details and clear transitions. This task challenges students to think critically about choice, character motivation, and theme while applying narrative techniques to creatively reimagine the resolution of a story they have studied in depth.

End-of-Unit Assessment

For the culminating task, students will craft a multi-paragraph personal narrative reflecting on an important or memorable choice they’ve made. Drawing connections to at least two texts from the unit, students will explore how that choice has shaped their identity and continues to influence their life in the present day. This culminating task allows students to demonstrate an understanding of key themes while developing aspects of narrative writing, such as perspective, structure, and style.

Setting Up Student Notebooks

Students will use their notebooks for various tasks throughout the unit. The following sections will support organization: vocabulary, language and grammar, unit knowledge, independent reading, and notes. For example, within the unit knowledge section, students will record knowledge statements based on their growing knowledge from unit texts and independent reading texts.

Independent Reading

This opening unit invites students to consider how both internal and external forces influence the choices we make and the people we become. Independent reading can support this inquiry by helping students build stamina, strengthen vocabulary, and increase knowledge of key topics and themes. The Student Independent Reading Guide (Appendix) includes a text list showcasing diverse texts that highlight varied perspectives on choice and identity. Teachers

are encouraged to select titles that best fit district guidelines and the unique needs of their students.

Appendix and Lesson Resources

All materials within the Appendix of this unit are included for teacher reference only. All student-facing materials may be accessed through the Digital Resource Hub. For ease of access and use, each student handout is a separate link. A digital version of this teacher guide, lesson slides, vocabulary resources, as well as the Program Guide may be accessed through the Digital Resource Hub as well.

Sample



LESSON 1

Unit Introduction

Build Anticipation

Agenda

1. Analyze media
2. Introduce essential questions
3. Write to share knowledge
4. Introduce independent reading

Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and explain how the ideas clarify the unit topic.

Lesson Objective

- ✓ Analyze a video and generate initial responses to the unit's topic.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review the video clip options. Select one or find your own (3-4 minutes) to use in this lesson.
- Prepare copies of the Student Independent Reading Guide (Digital Resource Hub).

Materials

- Student Independent Reading Guide (one per student)
- Lesson slides
 - Video clip options

Activate



5 min.

- Direct students to turn and talk: Describe a time when you struggled to make an important choice.
- Introduce students to the purpose for learning: Analyze a video and generate initial responses to the unit's topics.

Teach

10 min.



Analyze media (10 min.)

- Tell students they are going to look closely at a short video and respond to a few big ideas they'll explore in this unit.
- Explain that this activity will help them activate their thinking, make observations, and form opinions before they read.
- Have students watch the video. Ask students to respond to the following prompts:
 - See: What do you notice about the subject of the video? Describe details without interpreting.
 - Think: What does this video reveal about choices and identity? To what extent do you agree with this message?
 - Wonder: What questions about the topic of choices and identity does this video bring up for you?
- Explain that in this unit, students will explore the relationship between choice and identity and consider how resilience emerges when we face challenges.

Try

10 min.



Introduce essential questions (10 min.)

- Explain that every unit this year will be grounded in essential questions, which are thought-provoking, open-ended questions that guide learning and understanding of the unit's topic. The essential

questions are the big ideas of the unit and will be answered by the end of the unit.

- Display and read aloud the essential questions:
 - What influences the choices we make?
 - How do limitations affect the choices we make?
 - How do our choices shape our identity?
- Direct students to record the essential questions in their notebooks and do a quick write, jotting down 1–2 short notes of what first comes to mind for each question.
- Direct students to turn and talk to discuss which essential question feels more compelling.



Each text in the unit has been curated to support students in answering one of the unit's essential questions. Students will track their knowledge development by generating and verifying knowledge statements as they move through the unit.

Apply

15 min.

Discuss essential questions (5 min.)

- In a whole-group discussion, address each essential question one at a time.
- Use a combination of the following questions to probe students for more elaboration or ideas.
 - What's an example from TV, books, or your own experiences that supports your answer?
 - Does anyone agree/disagree? Why or why not?
 - Can anyone build on that answer with more explanation?
 - Are there any examples from TV, books, or your own experiences that support an opposing viewpoint?

Write to share knowledge (10 min.)

- Direct students to select one of the essential questions for a longer written response where they can share what they know about the unit's topic.
- Suggest students elaborate on their responses by explaining their reasoning, providing real or hypothetical examples, and summarizing or responding to what was shared in the previous discussion.
- Release students to begin writing independently.
- Monitor: Circulate to ensure students are engaged with the writing task.



Wrap up



5 min.

- Tell students that they will be reading many texts during this unit, both in class and at home. These texts all support understanding of the unit's essential questions.
- Explain that when we read many texts on a topic, we grow our knowledge more deeply and expand our understanding of the topic. We can also discover new ideas about a topic.
- Distribute the Student Independent Reading Guide and review the directions.
- Ask students to glance over the list of texts and star the ones they are most interested in reading.

Sample



LESSON 4

Reading “Choices”



How does Giovanni use poetic form and structure to convey meaning in her poem “Choices”?

Agenda

1. Introduce think pair share routine
2. Introduce the poem
3. Read and interpret “Choices”
4. Learn literary terms: form and structure
5. Analyze form and structure in “Choices”
6. Think-pair-share
7. Draft a Response

Vocabulary

identity
circumstance
diverged

Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Analyze how an author uses form and structure to develop ideas.

Lesson Objective

- ✓ Analyze how Giovanni uses form and structure to convey meaning.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Prepare student copies of the Poetry Reference Sheet (Digital Resource Hub).
- Review think-pair-share routine (Appendix).

Materials

- “Choices” by Nikki Giovanni
- Poetry Reference Sheet (one per student)
- Lesson slides

Activate



5 min.

- Direct students to turn and talk: Think about the last time you felt like you had no choice in something important to you. What was your response or reaction?
- Introduce the purposes for learning:
 - Determine how limitations affect the choices we make.
 - Analyze how Giovanni uses form and structure to convey meaning.

Teach

15 min.



Introduce think-pair-share routine (5 min.)

- Introduce the **think-pair-share** routine.
- Explain the routine:
 - **Think:** Think of your response independently.
 - **Pair:** Pair up to discuss responses.
 - **Share:** Share responses with the whole group.
- Model the routine:
 - Invite a student to help you model the routine as the rest of the class observes.
 - Ask this question: What school subject is most important, and why?
 - Say: *First, I'll quietly and independently think about my response to the question.*
 - Pause for a moment to model thinking time.
 - Say: *Now that I've had some time to think, I'm ready to discuss the question with my partner. I think social studies is the most important school subject because it teaches students about history and prepares them to be good community members. What do you think is the most important school subject?*
 - Invite the student to share their response.
 - Say: *Once we've both explained our responses to the question in a partner discussion, we'll return to the whole group to share.*

- Practice the routine:
 - Ask this question: What was a time when you had to choose between doing something you wanted to do and doing something you had to do?
 - Invite students to think of a response to the question independently.
 - Direct students to discuss their responses with their partner.
 - Invite a few students to share their responses with the whole group.
 - During whole-group sharing, record ideas and invite students to take notes in their notebooks.
 - Monitor: Monitor students’ active and equal participation in the **think-pair-share** routine.
- Provide feedback based on your observations of the use of the routine.

Introduce the poem (2 min.)

- Direct students to open to the poem “Choices” in their student readers and read the brief introduction.
- Read the title and the poem aloud, modeling prosody by using appropriate emphasis, expression, and tone.
- Prompt students to turn and talk:
 - What is the subject?
 - What do you notice visually about the poem?

Read and interpret “Choices” (5 min.)

- Explain that students will read “Choices” again independently, pausing to think and take notes about the poem’s meaning in the margins.
- Lead students in a guided practice by reading the first stanza aloud and modeling how to think about the poem’s meaning.
 - Say: *The speaker is thinking about what control she has over her life. She shares that when she isn’t allowed to do what she wants, she still tries to find a way to avoid doing what she doesn’t want to do.*
 - Write the note: “The speaker still finds ways to make her own choices.”
- Release students to read the rest of the poem independently and take notes about the poem’s meaning in the margins.

- **Check:** Reread lines 24–27. What do these lines imply about the speaker?
 - Possible interpretations:
 - The speaker is really aware of their emotions.
 - The speaker tries to see the positive side of things.
 - The speaker’s emotions are too big to express.
 - Even though the speaker can’t control everything in their life, they want to focus on what they can control.
- **Monitor:** Ensure students follow along in their texts and take notes during the interactive read-aloud.



Draw parallel and lateral lines to support students’ understanding of lines 22–23. Knowing there may be multiple interpretations, connect with students’ disciplinary or extracurricular knowledge to have them form their own:

- Using your knowledge of parallel lines in geometry, what might the speaker feel about being on a parallel path to the one she wants to travel? Why?
 - They feel relieved because they are at least moving in a similar direction.
 - They feel disappointed because their path will never intersect with or reach the same destination as the parallel path.
- Using your knowledge of lateral passes in football, how might the speaker feel about *not* moving in a lateral direction? Why?
 - They might feel frustrated because a lateral move doesn’t move them closer toward their goal.
 - They might feel relieved because a lateral move is still moving and can result in clearing a path toward the goal later.

Learn literary terms: form and structure (5 min.)

- Distribute copies of the Poetry Reference Sheet and explain that poets use form and structure to help them convey meaning.
- Review the definitions of **poetic form** and **structure**.
 - **Poetic form:** the type or style of a poem
 - **Poetic structure:** the way a writer organizes language and ideas in a poem, using techniques such as stanza and line breaks, repetition, rhythm, rhyme, capitalization, punctuation, and the visual shape of the poem on the page
- Introduce the two forms of poetry that students will analyze in this unit.
 - **Formal verse:** poetry that has a defined structure
 - **Free verse:** poetry that avoids rigid structures

- Tell students that the Poetry Reference Sheet provides helpful language for analyzing a poem’s form and structure, but there is no need to memorize or use complex terms to successfully analyze poetry.
- Ask students to take a look at the poem “Choices” again and jot down brief notes about what they notice about the structure or form. Have 2–3 students share different notices.
 - Listen for
 - Lack of punctuation
 - No capitalization
 - Different line lengths
 - Different lengths of stanzas
 - The wave pattern the different line lengths makes
 - Repetition of the word “do”
 - Extra large gap between the words “want” and “then”
- Check: Is “Choices” a formal verse or free verse poem?

Try

15 min.



Analyze form and structure in “Choices” (10 min.)

- Remind students that poets make deliberate choices about form and structure to impact the meaning of their poem.
- Model through a brief think-aloud how one of the notices students shared impacts the meaning of the poem.
 - Say: *I know that for school or work we have to use correct punctuation. The fact that the poet doesn’t follow the rules of punctuation is like a small act of rebellion. They might not have the choice to do what they want, so they are making this smaller choice that goes against the “rules” of grammar.*
- Explain that students will work in pairs to reread the poem and analyze how Giovanni uses poetic structure to convey meaning in her poem.
- Tell students to read the text again and highlight elements of poetic structure and write notes about the impact on meaning.



There is no one “correct” interpretation of a poem, *but* there are incorrect or unsupported interpretations. Use questions that ask for evidence or direct students to specific words or lines to redirect off-base thinking. Avoid sharing your own interpretations or labeling any interpretation as “right” to promote the idea that poetry can be open and debatable.

- Explain that pairs can work together as they annotate, but that each student should mark up their own text.
- Release students to begin the activity in pairs.
- Check: How does the free verse form add to the meaning of this poem?

Think-pair-share (5 min.)

- Use the **think-pair-share** routine with this question: **How does Giovanni use poetic form and structure to convey meaning in her poem “Choices”?**
- Monitor: Monitor students’ active and equal participation in the **think-pair-share** routine.
- Reflect on the routine:
 - Ask this question: How did the **think-pair-share** influence your thinking?
- Provide feedback based on your observations of the use of the routine.

Draft a response (3 min.)

- Tell students to individually write a short response to the question based on what they discussed in the **think-pair-share**.
 - **How does Giovanni use poetic form and structure to convey meaning in her poem “Choices”?**
- Encourage students to use vocabulary words in their responses.
- Use the Text Response Rubric to assess students’ responses.

Example text response

Nikki Giovanni’s use of form and structure conveys meaning by not following the rules people expect in formal writing. The speaker of the poem expresses frustration at not being able to choose where to go, what to do, or what to have in life. These feelings come from circumstances beyond the speaker’s control. The start of almost every stanza uses the word “can’t” which highlights that frustration of feeling powerless. The speaker responds to their not being able to go where they want by trying to avoid going where they *don’t* want to go. This act of rebellion is highlighted by Giovanni’s choice to rebel against normal rules of punctuation and capitalization in this poem.



Students’ written responses to the text response question can be used to make instructional choices in Lesson 5. Review the answers to ensure students have a strong grasp of form and structural elements in “Choices” and address any misconceptions in the Activate portion of Lesson 5. Additionally, these responses serve as a baseline for students’ written text responses. Notice areas to focus on when modeling writing a text response in Lesson 5.

Wrap up



5 min.

- Remind students of the essential question connected to this text: How do limitations affect the choices we make?
- Remind students that a knowledge statement is a response to the essential question and shows our understanding of the big idea of the text.
- Explain that knowledge statements will be generated for each text in the unit.
- Generate potential knowledge statement ideas from students.
- Reveal the knowledge statement and solicit reactions or responses from students: Limitations may hold us back from making certain choices, but we can empower ourselves by adapting and making the best choices within our circumstances.
- Ask: Is it better to be defiant or resigned when facing limitations in life?

Sample



LESSON 6

Reading “Building a Powerful Self-Identity”



How does Stephenson use structure to develop the central idea of “Building a Powerful Self-Identity”?

Agenda

1. Introduce read aloud, think aloud routine
2. Learn vocabulary: self-esteem
3. Analyze structure
4. Reread in pairs “Building a Powerful Self-Identity”
5. Write a response

Vocabulary

identity
circumstance
diverged
self-esteem

Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Analyze how an author uses structure to develop a central idea.

Lesson Objective

- ✓ Analyze how structure is used to develop the central idea in “Building a Powerful Self-Identity.”

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review the read aloud, think aloud routine (Appendix).

Materials

- “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” by Tanya Stephenson
- Lesson slides

Activate



5 min.

- Prompt students to turn and talk in response to the questions: Do you usually trust your gut, your brain, or other people when making choices? Why?
- Introduce the purposes for learning:
 - Analyze what factors influence the choices we make.
 - Analyze how structure is used to develop the central idea in “Building a Powerful Self-Identity.”
- Point out that students will continue to focus on text structure in this lesson, but instead of analyzing the structure of a poem, they will be reading and analyzing the structure of an informational article.
- Review the definition of **central idea** with students.
 - Central idea: a main point or message the author conveys over the course of a text

Teach



18 min.

Introduce read aloud, think aloud routine (10 min.)

- Introduce the **read aloud, think aloud** routine.
- Explain the routine:
 - Take turns reading aloud in pairs.
 - When Partner A pauses after a short section of reading, Partner B thinks aloud, focused on the task.
 - Then, Partner B reads aloud and Partner A responds with a new think-aloud.
 - Repeat to complete the reading.
- Identify the task for the routine: summarizing.
- Review that summarizing means to tell the most important ideas using fewer words.
- Model the routine for the summarizing task:
 - Direct students to open to “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” in their student reader.
 - Direct students to paragraph 1 in their texts to follow along as



This text includes frequent complex sentence constructions. The read aloud, think aloud routine can support students in breaking apart the text into manageable chunks to determine meaning.

you model the routine.

- Explain that you notice the paragraphs are short, so you will read three paragraphs to give you enough to summarize.
- Read paragraphs 1–3 aloud. Then pause to think aloud to model summarizing the text.
 - Explain that to summarize means to figure out the main points of the three paragraphs and put them in your own words.
 - Provide a sample summary of paragraphs 1–3: Self-identity is important for adolescents because they are discovering who they are and what they believe in.
- Practice:
 - Invite students to move into pairs or assign pairings.
 - Explain that students will start with paragraph 4 and read until the end of the text. Each partner will read aloud a short section, then think aloud to summarize the section of the text they read.
- Monitor: Circulate to ensure that pairs are summarizing in their own words rather than rereading word-for-word from the text.
- Check: What key ideas repeat throughout the article?
 - Listen for:
 - The connection between self-identity and mental health; the importance of supportive adults to help adolescents develop confidence.
 - Tell students that noticing and combining the repeating key ideas will help them to determine the central idea of a text.
- Reflect:
 - Ask: How did **read aloud**, **think aloud** influence your thinking or support your understanding?
 - Provide feedback based on your observations of the use of the routine.



Provide students with definitions for unfamiliar words they will encounter as they read:

- Anxiety: a feeling of being worried, nervous, or afraid that something bad will happen
- Depression: a sad feeling that can last a long time and cannot always be explained
- Reflective: thoughtful; characterized by or tending to deep contemplation.
- Autonomous: free and independent
- Competence: being capable, qualified, or sufficient

Learn vocabulary: self-esteem (3 min.)

- Refer to the Digital Resource Hub for vocabulary resources.
- Use the vocabulary instruction guidance to teach the following vocabulary. Prompt students to record information in their trackers.
 - Word: **self-esteem**

- Pronunciation: **self-i-steem**
- Part of speech: noun
- Definition: confidence in your own ability and value
- Example sentence: After practicing for weeks and finally performing onstage, her **self-esteem** grew.
- Check: Ask the following questions to review **identity** and **self-esteem**.
 - What do you think the word *esteem* means?
 - What’s the difference in the meanings of the words **identity** and self-identity?
 - Listen for: While both refer to the characteristics that make up a person, self-identity refers to a person’s own understanding of who they are.

Analyze structure (5 min.)

- Explain that students will reread “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” to analyze how structure is used to convey the central idea.
- Provide the definition for **text structure** in an informational text.
 - Text structure: the way a writer organizes language and ideas in a text, using sentences, paragraphs, scenes, chapters, or sections
- Direct students back to paragraphs 4–9.
- Read the paragraphs aloud, pausing to think aloud as you model analyzing the text’s structure.
 - Explain that one way to determine text structure is to look for patterns, or elements of the text that repeat. Another way is to figure out how parts of the text fit together or relate to one another.
 - Point out that paragraph 4 explains the effects of not having a strong self-identity, while paragraph 5 explains the effects of having a strong self-identity. Explain that the two paragraphs relate to one another by showing two contrasting ideas: Having a strong self-identity helps you to make healthy choices and handle challenges well, while not having a strong self-identity leads to doing risky things and experiencing mental health challenges.
 - Point out that paragraphs 6–9 repeat the positive effects of having a strong self-identity.

- Check: How does the structure of paragraphs 6–9 help you understand the central idea of this section?
 - Listen for:
 - A description of how the positive effects of having a strong self-identity are repeated, showing the central idea that building a strong self-identity is essential for teenagers’ mental health.

Try

10 min.

Reread in pairs “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” (10 min.)

- Invite students to move into pairs or assign pairings.
- Explain that partners will read the remainder of “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” aloud by alternating paragraphs.
- Remind students of the purpose for learning: Analyze how structure is used to develop the central idea in “Building a Powerful Self-Identity.”
- Release students to read the text, discuss, and take notes in response to the purpose for learning.
- Invite a few students to share their ideas; encourage students to add new insights to their notes as they are shared.
- Check: What idea does Stephenson develop through the use of the numbered list?

Apply

7 min.

Write a response (7 min.)

- Direct students to write a response to this question: **How does Stephenson use structure to develop the central idea of “Building a Powerful Self-Identity”?**
- Remind students to use their notes and to reference details from the text in their response.



- Review how to respond to a “how” question by providing sentence stems:
 - Stephenson develops the central idea that ____ by ____.
 - Through the use of ____, Stephenson develops the central idea that ____.
 - Stephenson structures the article by ____, which develops the central idea that ____.
- Direct students to underline evidence and examples from the text in their written response.
- Use the Text Response Rubric to assess students’ responses.

Example text response

Stephenson develops the central idea that building a strong self-identity is important for adolescents’ well-being and future success by using a clear and organized structure. The article begins by explaining what self-identity is and why it matters during adolescence, which sets the foundation for the central idea. Then, the author gives evidence of how a strong or weak identity affects teens’ choices, self-esteem, and mental health. Next, Stephenson provides a step-by-step guide that adults can follow to help teens build a stronger identity. These steps include encouraging self-reflection, setting goals, and promoting positive self-talk. Each section builds on the last, helping readers understand not just why self-identity is important but also how to support it. This structure helps make the message clear. It shows that building a strong identity helps teens grow into confident, healthy adults.

Wrap up

5 min.

- Remind students of the essential question connected to this text: What influences the choices we make?
- Generate potential knowledge statement ideas from students.
- Reveal the knowledge statement and solicit reactions or responses from students: Supportive relationships and a strong self-identity help us make good choices.
- Ask this closing question: To what extent do you agree that adults “play an important role in supporting young people” to develop a strong sense of identity?





LESSON 8

Writing About Choices

Agenda

1. Learn the elements of narrative writing
2. Analyze a mentor text
3. Vary sentence openings
4. Annotate for point of view
5. Prepare to write a narrative
6. Write a narrative

Vocabulary

identity
circumstance
diverged
self-esteem
consequence

Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Write a narrative that introduces a narrator, establishes a context, organizes an event sequence, and uses narrative techniques to develop events and characters.

Lesson Objective

- ✓ Write a narrative about a time when you disagreed with someone's choice.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Students will annotate “The Difficult Path” for a different purpose in this lesson. If they have previously annotated the text, suggest a different colored pen or highlighter for this task.
- Review the Introduction, Organization, and Development criteria on the Narrative Writing Rubric (Appendix).

Materials

- “The Difficult Path” by Grace Lin
- Narrative Writing Rubric
- Lesson slides

Activate



5 min.

- Invite students to sketch one important element of the setting of “The Difficult Path.”
- Direct students to share their sketch with a partner and have them guess what they drew and why it’s important to the story.
- Introduce the purpose for writing:
 - Write a narrative about a time when you disagreed with someone’s choice.

Teach

14 min.



Learn elements of narrative writing (2 min.)

- Review literary terms:
 - **Narrative:** a story, real or imagined, that uses characters, setting, and events to show what happens from a specific point of view
 - **Point of view:** the perspective from which the story is told
 - **Characterization:** how an author shows what a character is like through their words, actions, thoughts, appearance or what others say about them.
- Remind students that authors use narrative techniques such as dialogue to develop the plot, characters, and narrator’s point of view.

Analyze a mentor text (7 min.)

- Direct students to paragraph 1 in “The Difficult Path.”
- Read aloud the first sentence while annotating for narrator and point of view.
- Think aloud to describe how the annotations help determine the narrator and point of view: *This sentence uses “I,” so I know the narrator is speaking in first person.*
- Tell students to reread paragraphs 1–3 of “A Difficult Path” and annotate for where the characters and setting are introduced.
 - Remind students that setting is more than just a location; it includes time and atmosphere.

- Prompt students to turn and talk: Describe how the way Lin develops the exposition hints toward the conflict.
 - Listen for:
 - The descriptions of the narrator’s situation.
 - The descriptions of Mrs. Li.

Vary sentence openings (5 min.)

- Tell students that authors vary the way they begin sentences to engage readers. Starting every sentence the same way makes the writing sound repetitive or flat. When we vary sentence openings, we help readers focus on key details like emotions, actions, or setting.
- Explain that sentence openings can start in different ways:
 - With a subject: I ran down the hill.
 - With an adverb: Quickly, I ran down the hill.
 - With a prepositional phrase: At the top of the hill, I paused.
 - With a dependent clause: When the wind picked up, I ran faster.
 - With dialogue: “I have to keep moving,” I whispered.
- Direct students to locate paragraph 1 and read aloud the first two sentences.
- Underline or highlight the first sentence opening: “When I was sold to the Li family ...” and ask students how the sentence opening affects their understanding of the story.
- Underline or highlight the second sentence’s opening: “Her mother had fourteen other children ...” and ask students what impact this phrase has on their understanding.
- Prompt students to record notes and examples for varying sentence openings.



Language objective: Vary sentence openings.



Review grammatical terms for students:

- Adverb: modifies a verb, adjective, or other adverb
- Prepositional phrase: a modifying phrase that includes a preposition and its object
- Dependent clause: group of words that contain a subject and verb but cannot stand alone



Provide students with sentence frames to try new openings:

- While [character] waited,
- Nervously, [character]
- Through the trees, [character] saw
- Without warning, [event/action] happened.
- Because [event], [character] decided to

Try



5 min.

Annotate for point of view (5 min.)

- Return to the annotations for the narrator and ask students to describe what helps determine the narrator's point of view.
 - Listen for:
 - Use of "I" pronouns
 - The description of the narrator's (Lingsi's) thoughts
- Ask students to identify the lines that introduce the other characters.
- Review the purpose of dialogue:
 - Dialogue is used to show, not tell, the characters' personalities and motivations, move plot, and reveal the conflict.
 - Dialogue brings the reader into the story by allowing the reader to listen in on conversations.
- Invite students to turn and talk about how reading the dialogue in "The Difficult Path" helped them to understand the story.

Apply



16 min.

Prepare to write a narrative (6 min.)

- Read the prompt aloud:
 - Write a short narrative introducing a time when you disagreed with a choice someone made. Use the beginning of "The Difficult Path" for inspiration on how to introduce characters, setting, and narrator's point of view, and how to introduce characters with dialogue.
- Ask students to take a few minutes to think about the prompt and jot down a few ideas.
- Release students in pairs to discuss their ideas and help their partners choose the best idea to write about.
- Check: How might you introduce yourself, the other character, and the setting?

Write a narrative (10 min.)

- Direct students to review the Introduction, Organization, and Development criteria on the Narrative Writing Rubric.
- Instruct students to write a response to the prompt:
 - Write a short narrative introducing a time when you disagreed with a choice someone made. Use the beginning of “The Difficult Path” for inspiration on how to introduce characters, setting, and narrator’s point of view, and how to introduce characters with dialogue.
- Tell students to choose three variations in sentence starters:
 - With the subject
 - With an adverb
 - With a prepositional phrase
 - With a dependent clause
 - With dialogue
- Release students to begin writing.
- Use the Narrative Writing Rubric to assess students’ writing using the Introduction, Organization, and Development criteria.

Example text response

I still remember the afternoon my best friend Maya decided to skip soccer practice. We were walking from school to the field together when she suddenly stopped.

“I’m not going today,” she said as she stared down at the crack in the pavement.

I blinked at her, in shock. “What do you mean you’re not going? Coach is counting on us. We have a game this weekend!”

Maya shrugged as her ponytail swung behind her. “I just don’t feel like it. I’d rather hang out at home.”

The sun was setting behind the school, and we could see long shadows across the field. I could already hear our teammates shouting warm-ups in the distance, and my stomach twisted. Maya never missed practice, and now here she was, acting like it was nothing to just skip it.

“You can’t just not feel like it,” I said, trying to keep my voice calm. “What about the team?”

Without looking at me, Maya shoved her hands into her pockets. “It’s just one day. You worry too much.”

I tightened the straps of my backpack and turned toward the field. I was upset with Maya for not caring about our team. “Maybe. But I care. And I’m not letting the team down.”

That was the first time I realized that sometimes you disagree with others’ choices, even if they are your best friend.

Wrap up



5 min.

- Remind students that drafts, like the one they just wrote, don't need to be complete or perfect.
- Ask students to reread their draft and do the following:
 - Underline words or short phrases in their draft that reveal the characters, setting, and the narrative point of view.
 - Highlight the sentence that they are most proud of for its sentence starter variation.

Sample



LESSON 11

Writing About Choices

Agenda

1. Notice adverbial clauses to show time and sequence
2. Learn elements of narrative writing: conclusion
3. Prepare to write a narrative
4. Write a narrative

Vocabulary

identity
circumstance
diverged
self-esteem
consequence
mesmerize
begrudgingly
reverently

Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Write a conclusion for a narrative, incorporating transitional words and phrases to convey sequence.

Lesson Objective

- ✓ Write a short narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to “The Difficult Path” and that is consistent with Lingsi’s character.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review the Connections and Conclusion criteria on the Narrative Writing Rubric (Appendix).

Materials

- “The Difficult Path” by Grace Lin
- Narrative Writing Rubric
- Lesson slides

Activate



5 min.

- Review: Invite students to turn and talk: How did things conclude for Lingsi in “The Difficult Path” and what are some other ways it could have ended?
- Introduce the purpose for learning:
 - Write a short narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to “The Difficult Path” that is consistent with Lingsi’s character.

Teach



10 min.

Notice adverbial clauses to show time and sequence (5 min.)

- Remind students that they previously learned about three elements of narrative writing: point of view, characterization, and dialogue. Explain that in today’s lesson, students will learn about conveying sequence with adverbial clauses and about creating a conclusion that follows from the narrative and provides reflection and closure.
- Tell students that authors use **adverbial clauses** to tell the reader when something happens. These clauses are part of complex sentences and usually begin with words like *when*, *after*, *before*, *as soon as*, or *while*. They help the writer show the sequence of events clearly and keep the story moving smoothly.
- Define: An **adverbial clause** is a group of words with a subject and verb that functions like an adverb—it explains *when*, *where*, or *how* something happens. In narrative writing, it most often tells *when* something happens.
- Direct students to locate and read aloud paragraph 105 from the text.
- Underline or highlight the **adverbial clause**: *While all the wealthy nobles threw their goods at us and begged for mercy.*



Language objective: Notice adverbial clauses to show time and sequence.



Provide students with sentence frames to use adverbial clauses:

- After [event], [character] [action].
- While [action was happening], [character] [reaction].
- As soon as [event], [character] [response].

- Ask students how this sentence shows timing between the characters' actions. What would happen to the meaning if the clause were removed or changed?

Learn elements of narrative writing: conclusion (5 min.)

- Authors often end their stories with a reflective sentence—a sentence that shows what the narrator learned, how they felt, or what changed as a result of the experience. These sentences express thoughtful, personal ideas and help give the ending meaning.
- Define: A **reflective sentence** helps the reader understand what the narrator took away from the experience. It often includes:
 - Words that signal reflection (*even though, now that, I realized, looking back*).
 - Complex sentence structures to show cause and effect or contrast.
- Direct students to paragraph 112. Tell students to independently reread the paragraph as they underline the reflective sentences and write notes about the impact on the story's conclusion.
- Underline or highlight the sentences. Identify the two clauses:
 - (1) Now, as I write this on a pirate ship whose red sails paint the sky, (2) I ride the vast ocean.
 - (1) For while the path before me might be difficult, (2) it will be my own.
- Ask students what these sentences show about how the narrator feels at the end.
- Remind students that, when they write their own alternate ending, they should use reflective sentences to show what their character or narrator feels, learns, or takes away from the experience.

Language objective: Notice reflective sentence structure.

Provide students with sentence frames to use reflective sentence structures:

- Even though [event], I realized [lesson or insight].
- Now that it's over, I can see that [reflection].
- Looking back, [character or narrator] knows that [what changed or mattered].

Apply

25 min.



Prepare to write a narrative (5 min.)

- Read the prompt aloud:
 - Write a short narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to

“The Difficult Path” that is consistent with your understanding of Lingsi’s character.

- Ask students to take a few minutes to think about the prompt and jot down a few ideas.
- Release students in pairs to discuss their ideas.
- Check: Invite a few students to share with the whole group: What aspects of Lingsi’s character will you show in your ending to the story?

Write a narrative (20 min.)

- Direct students to review the Connections and Conclusion criteria on the Narrative Writing Rubric.
- Remind students that authors use compound sentences to impact the pace of a story and show how events relate to each other.
- Instruct students to write a response to the prompt:
 - Write a short narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to “The Difficult Path” that is consistent with your understanding of Lingsi’s character.
- Tell students to use at least two adverbial clauses and compound sentences to convey the sequence of events leading to the conclusion.
- Remind students that their conclusion should follow from the narrated experiences or events and provide a reflection, using a 1- or 2-sentence reflective statement.
- Release students to begin writing.
- Monitor: Circulate to ensure that students’ writing is focused on the prompt and that they’re incorporating adverbial clauses and a reflective statement.
- Use the Narrative Writing Rubric to assess students’ writing using the Connections and Conclusion criteria.



Language objective: Use compound sentences to sequence and explain events.

Provide students with a word bank of coordinating conjunctions:

- *And* to add or continue
- *But* to show contrast
- *So* to show cause/effect
- *Or* to offer options
- *Yet* to show contrast with surprise

Example text response

At first, I thought sailing with pirates would be nothing more than shouting, sword fights, and stolen treasure. But I learned that even pirates have routines: scrubbing the deck, sorting maps, and taking turns watching the horizon. Then, one morning just after dawn, I saw a dark shape on the water.

“Ship ahead,” I called, and Tianyi appeared at my side as soon as I spoke.

“A merchant ship,” she said, narrowing her eyes. “Let’s see what fortune offers today.”

Before I could speak, the crew rushed to their stations. I knew what was coming. Even though I still hated the idea of stealing, I’d stopped arguing about it. Instead, I watched, and I listened.

After we pulled alongside the merchant ship, I climbed aboard with the others. However, while they grabbed silk and tea, I spotted a small girl hiding behind a stack of crates. She looked about ten, eyes wide, mouth covered by her hand.

“Come out,” I whispered. “We’re not here to hurt you.”

She blinked, then nodded slowly. I took her hand.

Later, after we returned to our ship, I told Tianyi about the girl. At first, she frowned, but finally, she said, “If you can teach her to read, she can earn her keep.”

That night, I sat under the stars with the girl and opened the same book that had once saved me. Eventually, she smiled at the words on the page. At last, I understood: maybe I hadn’t chosen the pirate’s life, but I could still choose the kind of pirate I wanted to be.

Wrap up

5 min.

- Remind students that drafts, like the one they just wrote, don’t need to be complete or perfect.
- Ask students to reread their draft and do the following:
 - Underline adverbial clauses in their drafts that show a sequence of events.
 - Put a star next to their reflective statement.
 - Revise a sequence of two events in their story by using a compound sentence using a coordinating conjunction.



Sample



LESSON 13

Discussing “The Difficult Path” and “Building a Powerful Self-Identity”



What connections can be made between “The Difficult Path” and “Building a Powerful Self Identity”?

Agenda

1. Introduce the rules for discussion
2. Learn language for discussion
3. Fishbowl
4. Write a response

Vocabulary

identity
circumstance
diverged
consequence
mesmerize
begrudgingly
reverently

Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Engage in and follow rules for a collegial collaborative discussion.

Lesson Objective

- ✓ Participate in a collaborative discussion about the connections between “The Difficult Path” and “Building a Powerful Self-Identity.”

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review the fishbowl routine (Appendix).
- Identify strategic small groups for discussion.
- Prepare to play the video by accessing the multimedia and checking your equipment.
- Use the Discussion Rubric for Lesson 13 (Appendix) to assess speaking and listening skills during the fishbowl.

Materials

- “The Difficult Path” by Grace Lin
- “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” by Tanya Stephenson
- Lesson Slides
 - Fishbowl video

Activate



5 min.

- Introduce the purpose for learning:
 - Discuss the connections between two texts.
- Review: Prompt students to review their notes from “The Difficult Path” and “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” to write a 1- to 2-sentence summary of each text.
- Prompt a few students to share their summaries with the whole group.

Teach



10 min.

Introduce the rules for discussions (5 min.)

- Say: *Discussions empower us to ask meaningful questions, share our ideas, listen to the perspectives of others, and deepen our understanding of texts. Good discussions require us to follow rules, set goals, and share roles as we engage, speak, and listen. Today, we will focus on the rules for collegial discussions.*
- Introduce the rules for discussions and explain students’ responsibilities.
 - Engage
 - Monitor your amount of speaking and listening.
 - Bring the conversation back to the topic or text as needed.
 - Track the conversation, follow along in the text, and take notes.
 - Speak
 - Support ideas with evidence from the text.
 - Speak in a collaborative, positive, and respectful tone.
 - Pose questions that drive discussion and elicit elaboration.
 - Listen
 - Listen respectfully with the intention of understanding.
 - Understand that others have different opinions and experiences from you.
 - Acknowledge when alternate ideas or interpretations modify your own opinion or understanding.
- Check: Ask students to describe what the discussion should and should not look like, sound like, and feel like.

- Listen for:
 - One voice at a time.
 - Speakers connect ideas as they discuss.
 - Listeners are paying attention to the speaker and the text.
 - It feels safe to share your ideas.

Learn language for discussion (5 min.)

- Explain that connecting phrases help explain the relationship between ideas.
- Say: *Let’s practice using connecting phrases, which help us explain our ideas when speaking.*
- Provide students with a sentence frame:
 - I think [idea or claim] because [reasoning]. For example, [evidence].
- Check: Have students turn and talk to respond to this prompt using the frame:
 - Why is building a strong self-identity important for adolescents?
- Prompt students to record notes and examples for connecting phrases.



Language objective: Use connectors to elaborate on ideas.

Try

25 min.



Prepare for discussion (5 min.)

- Explain that students will review their notes from previous lessons to help prepare them for today’s discussion.
- Reveal the discussion question: What connections can be made between “The Difficult Path” and “Building a Powerful Self-Identity”?
- Direct students to prepare for the discussion using the following steps:
 - Review unit text annotations and highlight 1–2 pieces of evidence or annotations per text for discussion.
 - Create a notes page that includes thoughts and questions related to the discussion question.
 - Monitor: Circulate to ensure students are adequately preparing for the discussion.

Fishbowl (20 minutes)

- Introduce the **fishbowl** routine.
- Explain the routine:
 - Divide into two circles: an inner circle of 6–8 students and an outer circle of the remaining students.
 - In the inner circle, students discuss a question by speaking and listening. Students follow the rules for discussions. One student is the facilitator, posing relevant questions, making connections between speakers, and encouraging equal participation.
 - In the outer circle, students listen to the discussion and take notes about the conversation and process. Students observe how others engage, contribute ideas, and make connections.
 - Students take turns participating in the inner and outer circles.
 - After the discussion, students use their notes to reflect on the discussion.
- Model the routine
 - Explain that students will watch a video and take notes on how students are participating in the discussion.
 - Show the video.
 - After the video, invite a few students to share key ideas.
- Practice the routine:
 - Divide students into three groups and invite Group 1 into the inner circle.
 - Identify the facilitator for Group 1 and remind students that the facilitator poses related questions, makes connections between speakers, and encourages equal participation.
 - Remind students that only those inside the fishbowl are allowed to talk.
 - Provide examples of the types of notes students outside the fishbowl might make about the conversation and process.
 - Noteworthy ideas
 - Examples of the rules in action
 - Ask: **What connections can be made between “The Difficult Path” and “Building a Powerful Self Identity”?**



Use the following questions as needed to extend discussion or connect students' thinking to their independent reading texts:

- Of the six suggestions Stephenson shares for supporting adolescents in forming their self-identities, which are evident in Lingsi's story?
- How do Lingsi's choices reflect her self-identity?
- How does the main character or subject of your independent reading text demonstrate they do or do not have a strong self-identity?
- How do Lingsi's choices compare to the choices made by the character in your independent reading book?

- Set a countdown timer for five minutes and begin Round 1 of the **fishbowl**.
- Swap Group 2 to the inner circle and begin Round 2 with a new facilitator.
- Repeat the steps for Round 3 with Group 3.
- Prompt students to turn and talk: What are the top three points that stood out to you?
- Reflect:
 - Ask this question: How well did you engage, speak, or listen based on the rules?
 - Provide feedback based on your observations of the use of the routine.

Wrap up

5 min.



- Remind students of the essential question and knowledge statements connected to this discussion:
 - Essential question:
 - What influences the choices we make?
 - Knowledge statements:
 - Supportive relationships and a strong self-identity help us make good choices.
 - A combination of external and internal factors influences the choices we make.
- Invite students to share new ways that this discussion supports the knowledge statements.
- Ask this closing question: What is one question about self-identity you want to explore as we continue learning?

Sample



LESSON 16

Mid-Unit Assessment

Reading and Writing About Choices

Agenda

1. Read and write to assess

Vocabulary

identity
circumstance
diverged
self-esteem
consequence
mesmerize
begrudgingly
reverently
pensively
emerging

Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Write a conclusion for a narrative that establishes characters and context, organizes an event sequence, uses narrative techniques to develop events and characters, and incorporates transitional words and phrases to convey sequence.

Lesson Objective

- ✓ Write a short narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to “Amigo Brothers” and that is consistent with your understanding of the characters.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review the Mid-Unit Assessment guidance (Appendix).
- Prepare copies of the Mid-Unit Assessment (Digital Resource Hub)

Materials

- Mid-Unit Assessment (one per student)
- “Amigo Brothers” by Piri Thomas
- Lesson slides

Activate

2 min.



- Tell students that each unit includes a Mid-Unit Assessment to provide an opportunity for students to check their progress so far in the unit.
- Distribute the Mid-Unit Assessment and review the directions.

Apply

40 min.



Read and write to assess (40 min.)

- Direct students to begin the assessment without interruption.
- Circulate to monitor students as they complete the assessment independently.

Wrap up

3 min.



- Prompt students to annotate their written responses:
 - Underline adverbial clauses in their drafts that show a sequence of events.
 - Put a star next to their reflective statement.
 - Highlight in yellow a compound sentence that uses a coordinating conjunction.
- Collect the Mid-Unit Assessment.



LESSON 17

Mid-Unit Extension

Reading and Writing About Choices

Agenda

1. Build and support
2. Strengthen and refine
3. Enrich and extend

Vocabulary

identity
circumstance
diverged
self-esteem
consequence
mesmerize
begrudgingly
reverently
pensively
emerging

Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Write a conclusion for a narrative that establishes characters and context, organizes an event sequence, uses narrative techniques to develop events and characters, and incorporates transitional words and phrases to convey sequence.

Lesson Objective

- ✓ Revise a narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to “Amigo Brothers” and that is consistent with your understanding of the characters.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review the Responding to the Mid-Unit Assessment guidance (Appendix).
- Prepare copies of the Mid-Unit Assessment Extension Instructions (Digital Resource Hub).
- Prepare seating arrangements for three groups of students.
- In this lesson, students will be working in three groups simultaneously.

Materials

- Students’ Mid-Unit Assessments
- “Amigo Brothers” by Piri Thomas
- Mid-Unit Assessment Extension Instructions (one per group)
- Lesson slides
- Timer

Activate



10 min.

- Tell students that they will be working in small groups to extend their learning following the Mid-Unit Assessment.
- Explain to students that following the Mid-Unit Assessment in each unit, they will have a lesson specifically focused on strengthening their skills as readers and writers.
- Remind students that self-reflection and feedback allow us to continually grow as readers and writers.
- Prepare for small groups:
 - Divide students into three groups according to the Mid-Unit Assessment results. (Group 1: Build and Support, Group 2: Strengthen and Refine, Group 3: Enrich and Extend).
 - Distribute the appropriate Mid-Unit Assessment Instructions handout to each group.
 - Ask students to review their group's directions and think of any questions about their tasks.
 - Circulate to clarify the tasks and answer any questions.
- Invite students to turn and talk: What is important to remember when working in small groups and giving feedback?
 - Listen for:
 - Everyone participates, gives specific and kind feedback, is respectful, and stays on task.
- Invite a few students to share their ideas with the whole group.
- Set the timer for 30 minutes and release students to begin working in groups.

Teach

30 min.



Build and support (30 min.)

- Facilitate **read-think-write** with students:
- **Read:**
 - Model reading aloud paragraphs 83-85 of “Amigo Brothers” while students follow along. Pause and think aloud as you sum-

- marize the paragraphs. Repeat with the next 5 paragraphs.
 - Direct students to read aloud the remaining paragraphs in pairs, pausing at each paragraph to write a brief summary of the paragraph.
 - Listen and take notes to assess fluency (rate, prosody, accuracy, automaticity) as students read.
 - Check to ensure that each student can appropriately and accurately summarize the paragraphs as they read.
- **Think:**
 - Read aloud the first multiple-choice question from the Mid-Unit Assessment.
 - Think aloud as you model how to understand what the question is asking and how you are going to think about answering it. Tell students the answer. Clarify any questions or dissension.
 - Read aloud the second multiple-choice question from the Mid-Unit Assessment.
 - Ask students to explain what the question is asking. Direct students to revise their answer if needed.
 - Repeat with the remaining multiple-choice questions.
- **Write:**
 - Read aloud the Mid-Unit Assessment written response prompt:
Write a short narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to “Amigo Brothers” and that is consistent with your understanding of the characters.
 - Review the Mid-Unit Assessment Rubric.
 - Choose one or more instructional focus(es) according to students’ needs as indicated on the Mid-Unit Assessment Writing Rubric.

Introduction

- Remind students that an introduction should introduce the characters and narrator, set the scene, and keep a consistent point of view.
- Read aloud paragraphs 1–3 of “Amigo Brothers,” asking students to focus on aspects of an introduction.
- Ask students to annotate the text by highlighting character names.
- Check: Who are the characters?
 - » Antonio Cruz, Felix Vargas

- Ask students to annotate the text by underlining descriptive details. Prompt one or two students to share examples.
 - » 17 years old, Lower East Side of Manhattan
 - » Lean and lanky
- Ask students to annotate the text by circling words and phrases that show the point of view.
 - » They were
 - » The boys worked out
- Ask students to revise the introduction in their Mid-Unit Assessment written response.
- Remind students to check their work for correct grammar and punctuation.
- Check in with each student to monitor their revisions and provide timely feedback.

Organization

- Tell students that organization helps readers follow events and understand a writer's intended message.
- Remind students that organization includes events that unfold in a natural, logical way.
- Explain that students will practice organizing events by re-ordering sentences to create a narrative scene.
- Display the following sentences on a whiteboard or chart paper, including the number next to each sentence.
 - » 1. The ball swished cleanly through the net without touching the rim.
 - » 2. The crowd erupted in cheers, their clapping and shouts echoing through the gym.
 - » 3. She bent her knees, took a deep breath, and released the ball in a smooth arc.
 - » 4. Ashley dribbled the ball three times, her eyes locked on the hoop.
- Tell students that the sentences describe a basketball player taking a free throw during a game. While the sentences together create a scene, they are out of order and lack organization.
- Ask students to work in pairs to review the sentences and place them in a logical order.
- Check: What order is most natural for this scene?
 - » 4, 3, 1, 2

- Facilitate a brief discussion, focusing on what clues students used to logically order the sentences.
- Ask students to revise the organization in their Mid-Unit Assessment written response.
- Remind students to check their work for correct grammar and punctuation.
- Check in with each student to monitor their revisions and provide timely feedback.

Connections

- Remind students that connections are used in narrative writing to signal a change in time/place or transition between events.
- Use a whiteboard or chart paper to display commonly used connectors, such as:
 - » At first/later on, meanwhile, by the time, at last
- Tell students to work in pairs to revise the following sentences by adding connections. Display the sentences on a whiteboard or chart paper:
 - » She woke up.
 - » She heard the rain outside.
 - » She stayed in bed.
- Prompt one or two pairs to share their revised sentences.
- Facilitate a brief discussion, focusing on choices made with connections and how those impact a reader's understanding.
- Ask students to revise the connections in their Unit 1 Mid-Unit Assessment written response.
- Remind students to check their work for correct grammar and punctuation.
- Check in with each student to monitor their revisions and provide timely feedback.

Conclusion

- Remind students that a conclusion presents a logical ending to a piece of writing. In narrative writing, a strong conclusion provides a logical, clear ending to the story.
- Read aloud paragraphs 100-103.
- Ask students to respond to the following question with a brief written response: In what ways do these paragraphs meet the requirements for a strong conclusion?
- Allow students a few minutes to think and write their responses.

- Prompt one or two students to share their responses with the group.
- Ask students to revise the conclusion in their Mid-Unit Assessment written response.
- Remind students to check their work for correct grammar and punctuation.
- Check in with each student to monitor their revisions and provide timely feedback.

Development

- Remind students that development refers to elements such as dialogue, pacing, and description that add to the story.
- Read aloud paragraphs 66-70
- Ask students to annotate paragraphs 66-70 as follows:
 - » Underline dialogue
 - » Circle phrases that demonstrate pacing
 - » Highlight descriptive details
- Facilitate a brief discussion focused on each element.
- Ask: Which element of development is most effective during this section of the text?
- Ask students to revise the development in their Mid-Unit Assessment written response.
- Remind students to check their work for correct grammar and punctuation.
- Check in with each student to monitor their revisions and provide timely feedback.

Try

30 min.



Strengthen and refine (30 min.)

- Direct students to **think-pair-write**:
- **Think:** Invite students to exchange their Mid-Unit Assessment written response with a partner. Tell students to use the Mid-Unit Assessment Rubric and record their notices and wonders as they read their partner's written response. Direct students to use the rubric criteria as guidance for their notices and wonders.
- **Pair:** Direct students to discuss their notices and wonders with their

partner. Tell students to reread paragraphs 83-103 of “Amigo Brothers” in pairs. Have students discuss the multiple-choice questions and make corrections to missed questions based on their discussion and rereading.

- **Write:** Ask students to revise their Mid-Unit Assessment written response using the feedback from their partner.

Apply

30 min.

Enrich and extend (30 min.)

- Direct students to **think-pair-write**:
 - **Think:** Invite students to exchange their Mid-Unit Assessment written response with a partner. Tell students to record what they notice and wonder as they read their partner’s written response. Direct students to notice the similarities and differences between their partner’s ideas and their own.
 - **Pair:** Tell students to independently reread paragraphs 83-103 of “Amigo Brothers.” Direct students to discuss what they notice and wonder with their partner and extend the discussion with 2–3 text-based questions.
 - **Write:** Ask students to respond to the prompt: What new thinking and wonderings do you have about our essential questions and the unit topic? Encourage students to incorporate what they are learning from their independent reading into their response.



Wrap up

5 min.

- Ask students to reflect in a turn and talk:
 - How did someone help you understand yourself as a learner?
 - How did someone help you better understand your work?
 - What feedback was most helpful to you?
- Invite a few students to share their ideas with the whole group.



- Ask students to reflect on working in small groups by asking this question to the whole class: How did we do working in groups? How can we improve next time?
- Invite a few students to share their ideas with the whole group.
- Ask this closing question: To what extent does making choices build self-confidence?

Sample



LESSON 23

Researching Poems About Choice

Agenda

1. Introduce rules for research
2. Learn steps for effective research
3. Quick write to determine search terms
4. Research a poem

Vocabulary

identity
circumstance
diverged
self-esteem
consequence
mesmerize
begrudgingly
reverently
pensively
emerging

Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Use search terms effectively to research and gather information.

Lesson Objective

- ✓ Research to find a poem that conveys ideas about choice and personal experiences.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Ensure that students have access to devices with internet to facilitate responsible online research.
- Determine how students will save their poems (written in journals, printed, etc.); they will reference them in Lesson 24.

Materials

- Devices for internet access
- Lesson slides

Activate



5 min.

- Invite students to turn and talk: Share an experience you've had that connects to one of the poems we've read about choice or identity.
- Introduce the purpose for learning:
 - Research to find a poem that conveys ideas about choice and personal experiences.

Teach

10 min.



Introduce rules for research (3 min.)

- *Say: Research helps us take ownership of our own learning and deepen our understanding of a topic. In order to research effectively, it's important to stay focused, keep track of your sources, avoid plagiarism, and ask for help.*
- Introduce the rules for research.
 - Stay focused
 - Keep your attention on sources and websites that will help you with your research.
 - Keep track and avoid plagiarism
 - Track the sources you plan to use as you go.
 - Include the website name, title of the poem, and author in your notebook.
 - Ask for help
 - If you are feeling stuck, consider whether you need to adjust your search terms.
 - Don't be afraid to ask for help as you are developing your research skills.
- Check: How do you think these rules will help you research successfully?

Learn steps for effective research (7 min.)

- Tell students they will practice using search terms to research online and find a poem relevant to their personal experience and the idea of choice.

- Explain that search terms can impact how effective our research is. Effective search terms should be general enough to generate multiple potential sources. However, they should also be specific enough to help answer the prompt.
- Display the research prompt: **Research a poem relevant to your personal experience and the idea of choice.**
- Model how to identify effective search terms as you think aloud through these steps:
 - Notice keywords that could be used in the search: “poem” and “choice.”
 - Connect personal experience to something that is relevant to you: career.
 - Make the broader term more specific: teaching.
 - Put it together: poems about choice and teaching.
- Explain that because internet searches may uncover material that is stolen or used without permission, or material that is low quality or made by AI, it’s important to confirm the authenticity of the author. This can be done with a separate search of the author’s name, looking for proof that they exist and write poetry.
- Check: Why do you think it’s important for an author to be given credit for their work?

Try

30 min.



Quick write to determine search terms (5 min.)

- Instruct students to quick write, listing experiences they have had or areas of their life where they have faced tough choices. Encourage students to be as generative as possible.
- Tell students to review their lists and star or highlight the experiences they believe were most important to their identities.
- Prompt students to identify search terms for their research using their quick write as a guide. Remind them to choose something specific enough to generate results, but not so specific that they can’t explore a wide range of sources.
- Prompt students to turn and talk to share the search terms they will use to research their poem.

Apply



5 min.

Research a poem (20 min.)

- Explain that students will now use their search terms to research a poem and track their research in their notebooks.
- Encourage students to adjust their search terms as needed.
- Release students to research using their search terms based on the following prompt:
 - **Research a poem relevant to your personal experience and the idea of choice.**
- Remind students to confirm the authenticity of the author with a separate search.
- Monitor: Circulate to ensure that students are following the rules for research.
- Direct students to record their poems along with a sentence explaining how they confirmed the authenticity of the author.
- Invite students to reflect on their poem.
- Prompt students to turn and talk: What's one line from your poem that really stood out to you? Why?

Wrap up



5 min.

- Remind students of the essential questions connected to this unit:
 - What influences the choices we make?
 - How do limitations affect the choices we make?
 - How do our choices shape our identity?
- Ask this closing question: How could you utilize effective search terms in your life outside of class?

Appendix

Assessment Guidance

Responding to Text Responses
Responding to Discussion
Responding to Writing
Responding to the Mid-Unit Assessment
Responding to the End-of-Unit Assessment

Instructional Resources

Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Scale
Instructional Routines
Example/Non-Example of Written Text Response
Poetry Reference Sheet
Mid-Unit Assessment Extension Instructions

Independent Reading Guide

Independent Reading Guidance
Student Independent Reading Guide

Letters to Family

Letter to Family (English)
Letter to Family (Spanish)

Responding to Text Responses

Supporting students who are ...	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
In providing a response that answers the question.	Model how to extend answers by adding insight beyond the question.	Use guided questions to help fill in missing pieces of the response.	Provide sentence stems and graphic organizers to help structure the response.
In providing a response that includes text evidence.	Encourage varying evidence types (quotes, paraphrases, specific details).	Model finding relevant evidence in the text and highlighting why it supports the answer.	Use sentence frames (e.g., "The text says... which shows...") to scaffold integration of evidence.

Teacher Reference

Text Response Rubric

Student demonstrates comprehension of text in a written or oral response.			
	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
Response answers the question	Fully addresses all parts of the question; shows a clear understanding of the text and lesson objective.	Addresses the question but may leave out part of it, or show partial understanding of the text and lesson objective.	Does not clearly address the question, or shows a misunderstanding of the text and lesson objective.
Response includes text evidence	Accurately includes relevant and specific evidence from the text that supports the response; evidence is smoothly connected to the answer.	Includes some evidence from the text, but it may be vague, only partially relevant, or not fully connected to the answer.	Includes little or no evidence from the text, or the evidence provided does not support the answer.

Responding to Discussion

Use the Discussion Rubrics for Lessons 13 and 24 to assess students' progress toward the speaking and listening skills and then use the table below to pinpoint specific discussion skills to reinforce or extend in future lessons.

Supporting students who are ...	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
in Preparation	Assign advanced readings or research tasks that require synthesizing multiple sources.	Provide guided reading questions or evidence organizers to help connect ideas to the topic.	Pre-teach key vocabulary and content; use think-alouds to model how to use evidence.
in Collegiality	Give leadership roles such as discussion facilitator or timekeeper to model following rules and tracking goals.	Practice discussion norms in short, structured activities and assign clear, manageable roles.	Role-play discussion rules and responsibilities before group work.

Teacher Reference

Discussion Rubric (Lesson 13)

Student engages 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.			
Criteria	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
Collegiality	Follows discussion rules, helps track goals, and fulfills assigned role.	Inconsistently follows rules or contributes to group goals; role participation is minimal.	Rarely follows discussion rules, contributes to goals, or fulfills role.

Teacher Reference

Discussion Rubric (Lesson 24)

Student engages 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.

Criteria	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
Preparation	Is prepared through reading/research; uses evidence to support ideas.	Is partially prepared; provides limited evidence or few connections to the topic.	Is unprepared; rarely uses evidence to support ideas.
Collegiality	Follows discussion rules, helps track goals, and fulfills assigned role.	Inconsistently follows rules or contributes to group goals; role participation is minimal.	Rarely follows discussion rules, contributes to goals, or fulfills role.

Responding to Writing

Use the Narrative Writing Rubric to assess students' writing progress and then use the table below to pinpoint specific writing skills to reinforce or extend in future lessons.

Supporting students who are ...	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
in Introduction	Challenge students to create engaging openings with richer context and purposeful point of view choices.	Model how to provide consistent scene-setting and introduce characters clearly using mentor texts.	Teach and model basic scene-setting; practice introducing a narrator or characters using sentence frames.
in Organization	Encourage experimenting with more complex structures while maintaining logical flow.	Use graphic organizers to help students arrange events in a logical sequence.	Model sequencing with clear time-order cues; have students arrange index cards of events before writing.
in Connections	Guide students to use varied and nuanced transitions to enhance flow and meaning.	Review a range of transitions and encourage students to practice applying them in short writing exercises.	Review basic sequencing words (first, next, then, finally) and model their use.
in Conclusion	Encourage students to provide conclusions that offer reflection or thematic depth beyond the events.	Scaffold writing of conclusions that tie back to and reflect on the narrative events.	Provide sentence starters for simple endings that connect to the main events.
in Development	Encourage adding layers to dialogue, pacing, and description to enhance depth and engagement.	Provide targeted practice in using dialogue, pacing, and description to develop characters and events.	Model adding one descriptive detail or one line of dialogue at a time to build a scene.
In Language	Promote precise, vivid word choice and figurative language to enhance tone and imagery.	Model adding specific descriptive language and sensory details to clarify events.	Focus on replacing vague words with specific, concrete terms; use word banks.
In Grammar and Punctuation	Encourage varied sentence structures for style; review advanced punctuation use.	Review and practice correct grammar and punctuation in targeted mini-lessons.	Concentrate on one basic convention at a time (capitalization, end punctuation) before adding complexity.

Teacher Reference

Narrative Writing Rubric

Student writes narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.				
Criteria		Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
Purpose and Organization	Introduction	Scene is clearly set, point of view remains consistent, and narrator/characters are introduced.	Some scene-setting, but the point of view shifts or the character introduction is weak.	Scene, point of view, or character introduction is missing or unclear.
	Organization	Events unfold in a natural, logical order.	The order of events is uneven or sometimes confusing.	Events are hard to follow or are out of order.
	Connections	Appropriate transitions show the order of events and signal time/place changes.	Transitions are repetitive, simple, or sometimes confusing.	Few or no transitions; time/order is unclear.
	Conclusion	Clear ending that logically follows the story and reflects on it.	The ending is vague or loosely connected to the story.	The ending is either abrupt or fails to match the story.
Elaboration	Development	Dialogue, pacing, and description develop the story.	Dialogue, pacing, and description are not used consistently or effectively.	Dialogue, pacing, and description are rarely used, so parts of the story feel undeveloped.
	Language	Clear, appropriate descriptions and sensory details show events and experiences.	Language is general; there are few descriptive or sensory details.	Language is vague or confusing and lacks descriptive or sensory details.
Conventions	Grammar and Punctuation	Grammar and punctuation are mostly correct; sentence structures are varied and generally appropriate.	Noticeable errors in grammar and/or punctuation that sometimes affect meaning; some variation in sentence structures.	Frequent errors in grammar and/or punctuation make the writing hard to understand. Minimal or no variation in sentence structures.

Artwork by: *Aurora, 13*

AGAINST THE ODDS



Inquiry
by Design

Grade 7 | Unit 1

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Teacher Guide

UNIT 1

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

AGAINST THE ODDS

Grade 7



Sample

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LESSON 1

Introduction to *Against the Odds*

ELD Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Exchange information and ideas with peers about the topic of choices through collaborative conversations using appropriate connectives.

Vocabulary

identity
circumstance
diverged

ELD Lesson Objective

- ✓ Discuss the essential questions for the ELA unit *Against the Odds* using connectives and vocabulary to connect ideas and explain thinking. Revise your written response from Lesson 1 to include reasoning or examples.

ELA Lesson Connection

- ✓ This designated ELD lesson should be implemented **after** ELA Lesson 1.
- ✓ Students either revisit the video from the ELA lesson, or view a new one, and are reintroduced to the unit's essential questions and key vocabulary. Explicit language focus on connectives for discussion prepares students to engage more fully in upcoming unit discussions and respond to essential questions throughout the unit with elaboration and reasoning.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Prepare the same media from ELA Lesson 1 or choose another to introduce the topic and activate students' prior knowledge.
- Prepare and display the unit's essential questions.
- Prepare and display lesson vocabulary.

Materials

- Video for unit introduction (from ELA Lesson 1 or teacher-selected)

Teaching Notes (cont.)

- Prepare and display Sentence Frames for Collaborative Discussion (Appendix).
- Student responses from ELA Lesson 1
- Review and adapt the support suggestions for each PLD level in the Proficiency Level Differentiation section based on the needs of your students.

Activate

3 min.

- Welcome students to Designated ELD where they will have the opportunity to further their knowledge of how English works and practise using specific language features in their own speaking and writing. Note that students will be working collaboratively throughout their ELD time and will have daily opportunities to better understand how English is used in their English Language Arts class.
- Introduce the purpose for learning: Discuss the essential questions for the ELA unit *Against the Odds* using connectives and vocabulary to connect ideas and explain thinking. Revise your written response from Lesson 1 to include reasoning or examples.
- Display the media from ELA Lesson 1.
- Remind students that they viewed this video and learned that the title of the ELA unit is *Against the Odds*.
- Direct students to view the media again, taking notes about what they notice or wonder.
- Direct students to turn and talk about the following questions:
 - What stands out to you as important or surprising?
 - What does the video make you think about?
 - Based on the video and the title of the unit, what additional ideas do you have about what the unit will be about?
- As needed, provide sentence frames and connectives for their discussion:
 - Sentence frames:

- “I see that ____.”
- “I think this is important because ____.”
- “It makes me think about ____.”
- “I like/don’t like the video because ____.”
- “This detail reminds me of ____.”
- Connectives:
 - because
 - however / although
 - for example / for instance
 - in addition / also
 - therefore / so

Teach

12 min.



Introduce key vocabulary (5 min.)

- Explain that students will now learn some topic-related vocabulary to activate their prior knowledge and prepare them for the unit.
- For each word, provide multilingual support:
 - Word: identity
 - Show visual: Provide an image, symbol, or gesture for the word.
 - Pronunciation: Say the word aloud and have students say the word together (choral reading).
 - Part of speech: noun
 - Definition: the unique characteristics that make up who a person is
 - Identify cognates: *In Spanish, this word is identidad. Is the word similar in another language?*
 - Home language connections: *Do you know the word for identity in your home language? Do you use it often or rarely?*
 - Invite cultural examples: Invite students to share an example of identity and what it means from their family, culture, or community.
 - Word: circumstance
 - Show visual: Provide an image, symbol, or gesture for the word.
 - Pronunciation: Say the word aloud and have students say the word together (choral reading)
 - Part of speech: noun

- Definition: something that happens to affect an event or situation
- Identify cognates: *In Spanish, this word is circunstancia. Is the word similar in another language?*
- Home language connections: *Do you know the word for circumstance in your home language? Do you use it often or rarely?*
- Invite cultural examples: Invite students to share an example of a circumstance and what it means from their family, culture, or community.
- Word: diverged
- Show visual: Provide an image, symbol, or gesture for the word.
- Pronunciation: Say the word aloud and have students say the word together (choral reading).
- Part of speech: verb
- Definition: turned in a different direction
- Identify cognates: *In Spanish, this word is divergió. Is the word similar in another language?*
- Home language connections: *Do you know the word for diverged in your home language? Do you use it often or rarely?*
- Invite cultural examples: Invite students to share an example of a circumstance and what it means from their family, culture, or community.

Discuss essential questions (7 min.)

- Direct students to the posted essential questions for the unit.
 - What influences the choices we make?
 - How do limitations affect the choices we make?
 - How do our choices shape our identity?
- Remind that these questions are thought-provoking, open-ended questions that guide our learning and understanding of the unit's topic. The essential questions are the big ideas of the unit and will be answered by the end of the unit.
- Read aloud each question and invite students to read along aloud chorally.
- Ask: *When we look at this video, which question does it make you think about?*
- Explain that during a discussion, speakers use language to help express their ideas and better understand each other. Asking and answering questions are two ways to participate in a discussion:

- Questions: Asking questions allows us
 - to understand ideas better.
 - to clarify confusion or get more details.
 - to push the conversation deeper and help us think more.
- Responses: Responding to another speaker's comments allows us
 - to show we are listening and engaging with others' ideas.
 - to agree, disagree, or add on with our own thinking.
 - to help build a shared understanding of the topic.
- Explain that connectives are specific words and phrases that can be used when asking or answering questions. Using connective words and phrases allows us
 - to link our ideas to someone else's thinking.
 - to show how ideas relate (e.g., agreement, contrast, cause, example).
 - to make the conversation flow and stay focused on the topic.
- Explain that there are several different kinds of connectives: cause/effect, comparison, evidence, sequence, and many different kinds are likely to be used in a discussion.
- Direct students to the displayed Sentence Frames for Collaborative Discussion. Point out and explain the following connectives:
 - "Because" tells us a reason is coming.
 - "For example" introduces a specific example.
 - "Also" introduces another reason or more evidence.
 - "However" shows a different perspective.
- Ask: What influences the choices we make?
- Invite students to respond, using the sentence frames and connectives to help them convey their initial ideas about the essential question.
- Prompt after responses with the following questions, pointing students back to the frames and connectives:
 - How can someone build on that idea? You could use the frames "I agree because ____" or "In addition, ____."
 - Who can contribute something different? You can use the frame "However, I think ____"
- Affirm strong examples and address misconceptions if needed.

Try



5 min.

Partner discussion (5 min.)

- Direct students to form pairs for partner discussion about the essential questions.
- Remind students about the displayed sentence frames and connectives.
- Explain the discussion protocol:
 - Round 1: Partner A asks Partner B the essential question. Partner B responds using “I think ____ because ____” and adds an example using “For example, ____.”
 - Round 2: Partner B asks Partner A a follow-up question or a different essential question. Partner A responds and elaborates.
 - Round 3: Partners build on each other’s ideas: “I agree with ____ and also ____” or offer different perspectives: “However, I think ____.”
- Circulate and listen for use of sentence frames and connectives.
 - Prompt students to elaborate: “Can you add an example?” “Why do you think that?”
- Invite 1–2 pairs who demonstrated effective use of sentence frames and connectives during their discussion to share part of their conversation.

Apply



5 min.

Revise written response (5 min.)

- Direct students to retrieve their written responses from the ELA lesson.
- Explain students will apply the discussion language features to your written responses, by adding 1–2 sentences that do the following:
 - Incorporate some ideas from your discussion with your partner.
 - Use connectives like “because,” “for example,” “however,” or “in addition” to elaborate on your thinking.

- If time remains, invite 1–2 students to share one sentence from their response. Affirm use of connectives and elaboration.

Wrap up

5 min.



- Remind students of the lesson focus:
 - Discuss the essential questions for the ELA unit *Against the Odds*, using connectives and vocabulary to connect ideas and explain thinking. Revise your written response from Lesson 1 to include reasoning or examples.
- Ask these closing questions:
 - What more did you learn about the unit topic and vocabulary?
 - Which connective did you use most in your writing and why?
 - How did you feel using sentence frames to help you discuss and write?

Proficiency Level Differentiation

Emerging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Provide extended processing time before expecting responses; allow students to rehearse ideas with the teacher or in writing before partner discussion. (Activate, Try)
- Accept short-phrase responses (2–3 words) as valid contributions during partner discussions; the goal is participation and using at least one connective, not complete elaborate sentences yet. (Try)
- During partner discussion, assign Emerging students the “responder” role first so they can hear a model before having to generate their own question or extended response. (Try)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Focus on 1–2 basic connectives only: “because” and “for example”; post these visibly and point to them during instruction and discussion. (Teach, Try)
- Provide complete sentence frames for both discussion and writing with blanks only for content: “I think ____ because ____.” Students fill in without having to construct the frame. (Try, Apply)
- Use color-coding on displayed frames: highlight connectives in one color (e.g., yellow) so students can visually locate them quickly during discussions. (Teach, Try, Apply)

Expanding

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Prompt students to use at least 2–3 different connectives during the 6-minute partner discussion; track which ones they use and encourage variety. (Try)
- Expect use of 2–3 different connectives across the discussion (because, for example, also). (Apply)
- Expect students to elaborate beyond single sentences: after initial response, prompt “Tell me more” or “Can you add an example?” (Try)
- During APPLY, require students to build on or reference what their partner said in discussion: “My partner said _____. I agree because _____.” This reinforces listening and synthesizing. (Apply)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Teach 4–5 connectives and expect students to use at least 3 different ones across discussion and writing: “because,” “for example,” “however,” “in addition,” “therefore.” (Teach, Try, Apply)
- Provide sentence starters (not complete frames) that require students to choose and insert the appropriate connective: “I think _____. [Connective], _____.” Students must select which connective fits their meaning. (Try, Apply)
- Explicitly teach what each connective signals: “because” introduces a reason, “for example” introduces a specific instance, “however” introduces a contrasting idea. Have students explain why they chose a particular connective. (Teach, Apply)

Bridging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Encourage use of connectives without constant frame reference. (Teach, Try, Apply)
- Challenge students to offer a counter-perspective during discussion using “however,” “although,” or “on the other hand” even if they ultimately agree with their partner’s view. (Try)
- Have students synthesize the discussion, not just state their own view: “During our discussion, we explored _____. I think _____ because _____.” (Apply)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Expect complex use of connectives without referring to frames; students should integrate “because,” “for example,” “however,” “in addition,” “therefore” fluidly into speech and writing. (Try, Apply)
- Challenge students to layer multiple connectives in a single extended response: “I think _____ because _____. For example, _____. However, _____. Therefore, _____.” (Apply, Try)
- Prompt students to use sophisticated connective variations: instead of “but” use “nevertheless,” instead of “also” use “moreover” or “furthermore.” (Apply, Try)



LESSON 4

Close Reading: “Choices”

ELD Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Analyze how the text structure contributes to a poem’s meaning and discuss the effect using text evidence.

Vocabulary

poetic structure

ELD Lesson Objective

- ✓ Analyze and discuss how Giovanni uses poetic structure in “Choices” to create meaning.

ELA Lesson Connection

- ✓ This designated ELD lesson should be implemented **before** ELA Lesson 4.
- ✓ Students deepen their understanding of poetic structure, which they will encounter while analyzing how a poet uses structure to convey meaning during ELA Lesson 4. This explicit language analysis supports students’ comprehension when they read and analyze poetry and will help them write text-based responses about poetic structure.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review think-pair-share routine (Appendix).
- Review and adapt the support suggestions for each PLD level in the Proficiency Level Differentiation section.

Materials

- “Choices” by Nikki Giovanni
- Annotation tools (highlighters, colored pencils)

Activate



3 min.

- Review: Prompt students to share what they read and discussed in their ELA lesson, using the following questions:
 - What does identity mean?
 - Use the word circumstance in a sentence.
 - What is a synonym for diverged?
- Introduce the purpose for learning: Analyze and discuss how Giovanni uses poetic structure in “Choices” to create meaning.

Teach

22 min.



Review the text (2 min.)

- Direct students to open and review “Choices.”
 - Look at the title, headings, images, and text features.
 - Notice how long the text is and how it’s organized.
- Ask additional questions to support students to preview the poem:
 - What prediction can you make about the poem, based on the title “Choices”?
 - What about the poem stands out to you as you look at it for the first time?
- Depending on student responses, consider whether you more deeply review any concepts or topical knowledge prior to reading.

First read (6 min.)

- Introduce the **close reading** routine. Explain that close reading teaches students to analyze language choices made by authors and the impacts those language features have on us as readers.
- Explain the routine:
 - Step 1: Close read #1 with text-dependent questions.
 - Step 2: Close read #2 with text-dependent questions.
 - Step 3: Close read #3 with text-dependent questions.



Fluency Modeling

- As you read aloud, use your finger or pointer to track under each word from left to right to model directionality and one-to-one word correspondence.
- Read the same sentence 2–3 times with different emphasis to model how phrasing and intonation affect meaning.
- Exaggerate natural phrasing by grouping words into meaningful chunks (e.g., “In the dense forest / near the mountain peak / the hikers discovered / an ancient trail”).
- After reading, have students echo-read the sentence or passage to practice fluency with your model.

- Step 4: Apply to own writing or speaking.
- Explain that the first read is to gain a basic understanding of what the text says, or its literal meaning.
- Direct students to open to “Choices.”
- Read aloud the poem modeling prosody by using appropriate emphasis, expression, and tone.
- While reading, pause to reflect on words and phrases related to the questions. Depending on student needs, invite students to share their ideas or model a think-aloud while reading to respond to the following questions.
 - Check: What does the speaker do if they “can’t do what [they want] to do”?
 - Listen for: I notice that the poet uses the phrase “want to do” arranged in different ways. First she says “if i can’t do what i want to do,” and then follows this with “my job is to not do what i don’t want to do.” What does “not do what I don’t want to do” mean? This means the speaker isn’t going to do things that they don’t want to do. “Not do what I don’t want to do” seems like it has the same meaning as “do what I want to do” but there is a slight difference. The speaker isn’t truly doing what they want. They are just not doing the things they don’t want to do. Like the poem says in the second stanza, “it’s not the same thing but it’s the best i can do.”
 - Check: What do you think “satisfied” means in stanza 3? Why should the speaker be satisfied?
 - Listen for: I can look for context clues in the second stanza to help me figure out what “satisfied” means. I see the line, “my job is to want what i’ve got and be satisfied.” This helps me understand that being satisfied means to be happy with what you have. I can keep reading to figure out why the speaker should be satisfied. The poet says, “...be satisfied that at least there is something more to want.” This means that the speaker should be satisfied because they want what they already have, and now they still have more to want.
 - Check: What does “parallel movement isn’t lateral” mean?
 - Listen for: Right before this line, I see the line “since i can’t go where i need to go then i must go where the signs point.” This helps me understand the meaning of the phrase “parallel movement isn’t lateral.” It might seem like where the

speaker needs to go is the same place as “where the signs point,” but the poet makes it clear that they are not exactly the same place.

- Check: Why does the speaker say that “none of it is equal” in the last stanza?
 - Listen for: I know from my reading of the poem that the poet keeps showing how the speaker is unable to do things, so they have to do other things instead. For example, in stanza 1, the speaker says that they can’t do what they want to do, so they’re going to not do what they don’t want to do. In stanza 3, the speaker says that they can’t have what they want, so they’re going to want what they already have. This helps me understand what the speaker means when they say “none of it is equal.” They are saying that the things they wanted to do, and the things they are able to do, are not equal.
- Model underlining key words and phrases and taking notes as students follow along in their texts. Emphasize the importance of taking notes for reference later in the lesson.
- Monitor: Ensure students follow along in their texts and take notes during the interactive read-aloud.
- As students respond, listen for specific text evidence and vocabulary from the text to support their responses.
- Provide sentence frames for discussion:
 - The poet uses word/phrase ____ to show ____.
 - The poet repeats ____ to show ____.
 - The poet’s use of ____ helps the reader understand ____.

Second read (8 min.)

- Explain that the second reading of the excerpt is to analyze decisions the author has made by examining elements such as vocabulary, word choice, structure, and syntax.
- Again, read aloud “Choices” modeling prosody by using appropriate emphasis, expression, and tone.
- While reading, pause to reflect on words and phrases related to the questions. Depending on student needs, invite students to share their ideas or model a think-aloud while reading to respond to the following questions.

- Check: What is the impact of Giovanni’s repeated use of the word “do” in the first two stanzas?
 - Listen for: I notice that the poet repeats the word “do” 5 times in the first two stanzas. In these stanzas, the poet is showing the speaker’s struggle to accept that they can’t do what they want to do. By repeating the word “do,” Giovanni emphasizes the speaker’s struggle to act and make the choices they want to make.
- Check: What impact does Giovanni’s repeated use of the phrase “I can’t” have on us, the readers?
 - Listen for: I see that the poet uses the phrase “I can’t” at the beginning of stanzas 1, 3, 4 and 5. This phrase is used to set up what the speaker isn’t able to do, and is followed by what the speaker can choose to do instead. For example, in stanza 5, the poet shows that the speaker can’t express what they really feel, so they practice feeling what they can express. This helps me understand that the poet repeats the phrase “I can’t” followed by an alternative action to show that the speaker is faced with a lack of choices, but is also able to make different choices as a result.
- Check: Why do you think the poet ends the poem with the line, “but that’s why mankind alone among the animals learns to cry”?
 - Listen for: I notice that this line is very different from the rest of the poem, which uses repetitive words and phrases to show what the speaker can’t do and the actions they take. This line doesn’t use the pronoun “I” to show the speaker talking. Instead it uses the general word “mankind” to refer to all humans. It includes a larger observation about people as a whole: humans are the only mammals that learn how to cry. If I think about the rest of the poem, I can make an inference about why the poet ended with this line. I can see that the rest of the poem shows the speaker not having control over their choices, and trying to make choices in other ways to have even a little bit of power over their own life. I can infer that the poet ends the poem with this line to show that the difference between the choices we want to make, and the choices we can make, is so big that it’s hard to express it in words. That’s why humans learn to cry.

- Model underlining key words and phrases and taking notes as students follow along in their texts. Emphasize the importance of taking notes for reference later in the lesson.
- Monitor: Ensure students follow along in their texts and take notes during the interactive read-aloud.
- Direct students to turn and talk with the questions so they can practice discussing their analysis of the text.
- Invite students to share with the whole group. Push students to cite specific text evidence and vocabulary from the text to support their responses.
- Provide sentence frames for discussion:
 - The word ____ makes me feel like ____.
 - This word/phrase ____ creates an ____ effect by ____.
 - I think the author uses [word/phrase] to make the reader feel/question/wonder about ____.
 - I think the author uses [word/phrase] to ____.

Third read (6 min.)

- Explain that the third reading allows us to think about how the author’s use of language impacts our understanding of the text and the meaning it creates.
- Again, read aloud “Choices” modeling prosody by using appropriate emphasis, expression, and tone.
- While reading, pause to reflect on words and phrases related to the questions. Depending on student needs, invite students to share their ideas or model a think-aloud while reading to respond to the following questions:
 - Check: Why do you think the poet makes the choice to not include regular punctuation in “Choices”? What is the effect of this choice?
 - Listen for: I can see that the poet doesn’t use capitalization, commas or periods. Let me think back on the overall meaning of the poem to help me make an inference as to why she would do this. I know that this poem is mainly about the limits we face in life, when we don’t have many choices. The poet’s lack of punctuation means that as readers, we can make our own choices to pause or add emphasis to the poem as we read it. This makes me wonder if this is meant to show the reader

that they still have choices, even when it comes to something as small as reading a poem in a certain way. It also shows that the poet is making the clear choice not to follow grammatical rules.

- Check: How does the poet structure the poem to show the speaker having a realization, or learning something?
 - Listen for: Let me look back at how the stanzas fit together, or build on one another, to understand the poem’s structure. I notice that the poet uses a repetitive structure to show what the speaker can’t do, and what they choose to do instead. This structure changes at the end, when the poet uses a more impersonal line about humans in general: “but that’s why mankind alone among the animals learns to cry.” This helps me understand that the structure begins by showing the speaker’s struggle to come to terms with not being able to make choices. Then it ends with the speaker’s realization that not being able to make choices is a part of the human experience. It is so challenging that we need something outside of words to express it.
- Model underlining key words and phrases and taking notes as students follow along in their texts. Emphasize the importance of taking notes for reference later in the lesson.
- Monitor: Ensure students follow along in their texts and take notes during the interactive read-aloud.
- Direct students to turn and talk with the questions so they can practice discussing their analysis of the text.
- Invite students to share with the whole group. Push students to cite specific text evidence and vocabulary from the text to support their responses.
- Provide sentence frames for discussion:
 - I think the author uses ____ to ____.
 - I think the author’s use of ____ helps to convey meaning because ____.
 - Based on ____, I can infer that ____.

Apply



10 min.

- Explain that students will now demonstrate their understanding by responding to a prompt.
- Display and read aloud the prompt: Find an example of the poet’s use of structure in “Choices” and explain how it conveys meaning. Be sure to use keywords and vocabulary from the text to support your response.
- Direct students to **think-pair-share** about the prompt.
- Monitor: Circulate to monitor students’ active and equal participation in the think-pair-share routine.
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share, affirm correct use and provide corrections as needed.

Wrap up



2 min.

- Remind students of the purpose for learning: Analyze and discuss how Giovanni uses poetic structure in “Choices” to create meaning.
- Ask these closing questions:
 - How did reading this text multiple times help you understand it better?
 - What did you notice on the second or third read that you missed the first time?
 - How well were you able to discuss how the poet uses structure to convey meaning?

Proficiency Level Differentiation

Emerging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Allow students to process text in primary language; provide bilingual glossaries. (All Reads)
- Provide complete sentence frames for all responses. (Close Reads 1–3)

- Focus First Read on basic who/what/where/when; limit to 1–2 questions. (First Read)
- Provide images of vocabulary words (such as bulldozer).
- Provide a word bank of vocabulary and encourage students to use the words during discussion. (Close Reads 1–3)
- Have students conduct close reads two and three in pairs.
- Have students take notes on a two-column graphic organizer (Column A: Text Details; Column B: Significance). (Teach)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Use shorter passages; pre-highlight language features. (Second Close Read)
- Focus on one language feature at a time. (Second Close Read)
- Provide model response and word bank for Apply. (Apply)

Expanding

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Provide partial sentence frames; expect responses with text evidence. (Second, Third Reads)
- Provide a word bank of vocabulary and encourage students to use the words during discussion. (Close Reads 1–3)
- Encourage building on partner’s ideas during discussion. (All Reads)
- Have students take notes on a two-column graphic organizer. (Column A: Text Details; Column B: Significance) (Teach)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Analyze multiple related language features. (Second Read)
- Expect students to explain HOW and WHY language creates effects. (Second, Third Reads)

Bridging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Expect sophisticated analysis without sentence frames. (Second, Third Reads)
- Challenge students to evaluate effectiveness and suggest alternatives. (Third Read)
- Have students conduct the close reads independently or in pairs with minimal modeling.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Analyze sophisticated features: nominalization, embedded clauses, rhetorical devices. (Second Read)
- Compare how different authors use similar techniques. (Third Read)



LESSON 6

Close Reading: “Building A Powerful Self-Identity” (Pages 3–5)

ELD Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Analyze how the text structure contributes to a text’s ideas and write a text-based response using the text structure.

Vocabulary

text structure
resilience

ELD Lesson Objective

- ✓ Analyze how Stephenson uses text structure in “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” to organize ideas, and use a similar structure to write a response.

ELA Lesson Connection

- ✓ This designated ELD lesson should be implemented **after** ELA Lesson 6.
- ✓ Students deepen their understanding of text structure which they encountered while analyzing how text structure is used in “Building a Powerful Identity” to develop a central idea during ELA Lesson 6. This explicit language analysis supports students’ comprehension when they read differently structured texts and will help them use structure to effectively express ideas in their own text-based responses and narrative writing.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review think-pair-write-share routine (Appendix).
- Review and adapt the support suggestions for each PLD level in the Proficiency Level Differentiation section.

Materials

- “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” by Tanya Stephenson
- Annotation tools (highlighters, colored pencils)

Activate



3 min.

- Review: Prompt students to share what they read and discussed in their ELA lesson, using the following questions:
 - Describe the structure of “Building a Powerful Self-Identity.”
 - What is one central idea from “Building a Powerful Self-Identity”?
 - How does the author use structure to develop that central idea?
- Introduce the purpose for learning: Analyze how Stephenson uses text structure in “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” to organize ideas, and use a similar structure to write a response.

Teach



22 min.

Review the text (2 min.)

- Direct students to open and review “Building a Powerful Self-Identity.”
 - Look at the title, headings, images, and text features.
 - Notice how long the text is and how it’s organized.
- Recall any information from the text when you read it during ELA class.

First read (6 min.)

- Review the close-reading routine:
 - Step 1: Close read #1 with text-dependent questions.
 - Step 2: Close read #2 with text-dependent questions.
 - Step 3: Close read #3 with text-dependent questions.
 - Step 4: Apply to own writing or speaking.
- Explain that the first read is to gain a basic understanding of what the text says, or its literal meaning.
- Direct students to open to p. 3 of “Building a Powerful Self-Identity.”
- Read aloud paragraphs 1–9 modeling prosody by using appropriate emphasis, expression, and tone.
- While reading, pause to reflect on words and phrases related to the questions. Depending on student needs, invite students to share their ideas or model a think-aloud while reading to respond to the following questions.

- Check: How does the text define self-identity?
 - Listen for: All of the beliefs that shape how we perceive ourselves
- Check: What are the consequences of not having a strong self-identity, according to paragraph 4?
 - Listen for: Being more likely to engage in risky behaviors or experience anxiety and depression
- Check: What does paragraph 5 show about the consequences of having a strong sense of identity?
 - Listen for: In paragraph 5, the author describes the positive consequences of having a strong sense of identity for teenagers. The paragraph says, “Teenagers who have a strong sense of identity are more empowered to make stronger life decisions. This makes them likely to make healthy choices and have a positive outlook on life.” This shows that one positive consequence, or result, of having a strong sense of identity is making better life decisions. The last two sentences of the paragraph also explain that it helps teenagers handle challenges, such as peer pressure and academic stress.
- Check: What future benefits of having a strong self-identity as a teenager are explained in paragraph 7?
 - Listen for: It makes them more confident as adults, by making them more “resilient, reflective, and autonomous in the pursuit of important life decisions.”
- Model underlining key words and phrases and taking notes as students follow along in their texts. Emphasize the importance of taking notes for reference later in the lesson.
- Monitor: Ensure students follow along in their texts and take notes during the interactive read-aloud.
- As students respond, listen for specific text evidence and vocabulary from the text to support their responses.
- Provide sentence frames for discussion:
 - The text says _____. This shows _____.
 - The text defines _____ as _____.
 - The evidence _____ supports the idea that _____.

Second read (8 min.)

- Explain that the second reading of the excerpt is to analyze decisions the author has made by examining elements such as vocabulary, word choice, structure, and syntax.
- Again, read aloud paragraphs 1–9 modeling prosody by using appropriate emphasis, expression, and tone.
- While reading, pause to reflect on words and phrases related to the questions. Depending on student needs, invite students to share their ideas or model a think-aloud while reading to respond to the following questions:
 - Check: What does the author show about self-identity through the contrast of words like “struggle” in paragraph 4 and “empowered” in paragraph 5?
 - Listen for: The author uses the word “struggle” to show how teenagers are negatively affected when they don’t have a strong sense of identity: they “struggle with self-esteem and confidence.” The author uses the contrasting word, “empowered” to show how teenagers are positively affected by having a strong sense of identity: they “are more empowered to make stronger life decisions.” This contrast develops the idea that it’s important for teenagers to develop a strong self-identity because it has clear benefits, and the lack of a strong self-identity has negative consequences.
 - Check: How does the writer’s use of the words “self-worth, self-esteem, and self-awareness” support the idea of the importance of having a strong self-identity?
 - Listen for: The writer explains that having a strong self-identity will lead to having a stronger self-worth, and more self-esteem and self-awareness in the future.
 - Model underlining key words and phrases and taking notes as students follow along in their texts. Emphasize the importance of taking notes for reference later in the lesson.
- Monitor: Ensure students follow along in their texts and take notes during the interactive read-aloud.
- Direct students to turn and talk with the questions so they can practice discussing their analysis of the text.

- Invite students to share with the whole group. Push students to cite specific text evidence and vocabulary from the text to support their responses.
- Provide sentence frames for discussion:
 - The word/phrase ____ shows ____.
 - This word/phrase ____ supports the idea that ____ by ____.



Word Recognition

- Model “chunking” long words into recognizable parts (e.g., “I see ‘photo’ at the beginning, which I know means light”).
- Show how to use context clues alongside decoding (e.g., “I’m not sure about this word, but I know it’s about plants from the sentence”).
- Demonstrate looking for base words within complex words (e.g., “Darkness has the base word ‘dark’ plus the suffix ‘-ness’”).

Third read (6 min.)

- Explain that the third reading allows us to think about how the author’s use of language impacts our understanding of the text and the meaning it creates.
- Reinforce that students will build on their work analyzing structure in their ELA lesson to look closely at how language is used to create structure and express central ideas.
- Again, read aloud paragraphs 1–9 modeling prosody by using appropriate emphasis, expression, and tone.
- While reading, pause to reflect on words and phrases related to the questions. Depending on student needs, invite students to share their ideas or model a think-aloud while reading to respond to the following questions:
 - Check: What is the purpose of paragraphs 1–3, and what does this show you about their structure?
 - Listen for: I notice that these paragraphs define the concept of self-identity and give an overview of why it matters for adolescents. This shows me that these paragraphs use a descriptive structure to describe what self-identity is and to provide context for the rest of the article.
 - Check: How would you describe the structure of paragraphs 4 and 5? How do these two paragraphs relate to each other? What language does the author use to structure these paragraphs? Does the language point to a descriptive, cause and effect, or a compare and contrast structure? Would you describe this as a descriptive, cause and effect, or compare and contrast structure?
 - Listen for: These two paragraphs have a compare and contrast structure, as they show the contrast between having a strong sense of identity and not having a strong sense of identity. This develops the idea of how important it

is for teenagers to have a strong self-identity because it has many benefits, and there are many negative consequences to not having a strong self-identity.

- Check: How do paragraphs 6 and 7 build on paragraphs 1–5? What ideas expressed in paragraphs 1–5 are repeated or developed further in paragraphs 6 and 7? How do paragraphs 6 and 7 add to the ideas expressed in paragraphs 1–5?
 - Listen for: Paragraphs 6 and 7 repeat the importance of having a strong sense of identity and its benefits. Paragraph 7 adds to this idea by showing how having a strong self-identity as a teenager leads to being successful as an adult.
- Model underlining key words and phrases and taking notes as students follow along in their texts. Emphasize the importance of taking notes for reference later in the lesson.
- Monitor: Ensure students follow along in their texts and take notes during the interactive read-aloud.
- Direct students to turn and talk with the questions so they can practice discussing their analysis of the text.
- Invite students to share with the whole group. Push students to cite specific text evidence and vocabulary from the text to support their responses.
- Provide sentence frames for discussion:
 - The structure used in these paragraphs is ____.
 - I think the author uses this structure to ____.
 - The contrast between ____ shows ____.
 - Paragraph (s) ____ builds on paragraph(s) ____ by showing ____.

Apply

7 min.

- Explain that students will now demonstrate their understanding by responding to a prompt.
- Display and read aloud the prompt:
 - Discuss which structure is used in paragraphs 10–12. Use the same structure to write 2–3 sentences that develop the central idea that having a strong self-identity is important for adolescents. Be sure to use keywords and vocabulary from the text to support your response.



- Direct students to **think-pair-write-share** about the prompt.
- Monitor: Circulate to monitor students’ active and equal participation in the think-pair-share routine.
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share, affirm correct use and provide corrections as needed.

Wrap up

1 min.

- Remind students of the purpose for learning: Listen to paragraphs 69–75 from “Dragon, Dragon” read aloud to identify main characters, key events, and story sequence, negotiate with peers about important details, and collaboratively reconstruct the text using transition words and past tense verbs.
- Ask these closing questions:
 - How did reading this text multiple times help you understand it better?
 - What did you notice on the second or third read that you missed the first time?
 - How well were you able to produce sentences of your own using a similar structure?



Proficiency Level Differentiation

Emerging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Allow students to process text in primary language; provide bilingual glossaries. (All Reads)
- Provide complete sentence frames for all responses. (Close Reads 1–3)
- Focus First Read on basic who/what/where/when; limit to 1–2 questions. (First Read)
- Provide a word bank of vocabulary and encourage students to use the words during discussion. (Close Reads 1–3)
- Have students conduct close reads two and three in pairs.
- Have students take notes on a two-column graphic organizer (Column A: Text Details; Column B: Significance). (Teach)
- Provide substantial support by highlighting specific language choices in texts for students to evaluate.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Prompt students to name the text type and basic organization before reading or writing.
- Model how to identify text type and its organization through think-alouds: “This is a narrative because it tells a story in order”
- Provide model response and word bank for Apply. (Apply)

Expanding

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Provide partial sentence frames; expect responses with text evidence. (Second, Third Reads)
- Provide a word bank of vocabulary and encourage students to use the words during discussion. (Close Reads 1–3)
- Encourage building on partner’s ideas during discussion. (All Reads)
- Have students take notes on a two-column graphic organizer (Column A: Text Details; Column B: Significance). (Teach)
- Support students in providing detailed evidence when evaluating: not just “it’s good” but “it’s effective because ____.”

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Encourage students to apply growing understanding of how structure expresses ideas: narratives show change over time. (Third Read, Apply)
- Encourage students to apply growing understanding of how structure expresses ideas: narratives show change over time. (Third Read, Apply)
- Expect students to explain HOW and WHY language creates effects. (Second, Third Reads, Apply)

Bridging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Expect sophisticated analysis without sentence frames. (Close Reads 1–3)
- Challenge students to evaluate effectiveness and suggest alternatives. (Third Read, Apply)
- Have students conduct the close reads independently or in pairs with minimal modeling.
- Support students in explaining how specific language resources contribute to (or detract from) the overall argument.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Guide students to analyze how subtle variations in organization affect meaning and impact. (Teach)
- Prompt students to evaluate how well a text’s organization supports its purpose and audience. (Apply)
- Compare how different authors use similar techniques. (Third Read)



LESSON 8

Sentence Deconstruction “The Difficult Path” (Page 10)

ELD Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Analyze complex sentences to identify language features, determine meaning, and apply those features in speaking or writing.

ELD Lesson Objective

- ✓ Analyze sentences from “The Difficult Path” to identify adverbial clauses and prepositional phrases, and use these in your writing to make your sentences more varied and engaging.

Vocabulary

adverbial clause
prepositional phrase
humbly
browbeaten
unlike
despite

ELA Lesson Connection

- ✓ This designated ELD lesson should be implemented **after** ELA Lesson 8.
- ✓ Students deepen their understanding of how to use adverbial clauses and prepositional phrases to make their sentences more varied and engaging, which they encountered during Lesson 8. This explicit language analysis supports students’ comprehension when they continue their reading of “The Difficult Path” and will help them write varied and more complex sentences in their narratives for the Mid- and End-of-Unit Assessments.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review think-write-pair-share routines (Appendix).
- Review and, as needed, adapt the support suggestions for each PLD level

Materials

- “The Difficult Path” by Grace Lin
- Highlighters

Teaching Notes (cont.)

in the Proficiency Level Differentiation section based on the needs of your students.

Activate

3 min.

- Review: Prompt students to share what they read and discussed in their ELA lesson, using the following questions:
 - What are the main elements of a narrative?
 - What point of view is “The Difficult Path” written in?
 - Who are the main characters in the story?
- Review the following terms as needed:
 - Adverbial clauses: a group of words with a subject and verb that functions like an adverb, it explains when, where, or how something happens.
 - Prepositional phrases: begin with a preposition (like *of*, *in*, *by*, *for*, *to*) and provide more detail about the noun.
- Introduce the purpose for learning: Analyze sentences from “The Difficult Path” to identify adverbial clauses and prepositional phrases, and use these in your writing to make your sentences more varied and engaging.



Teach

14 min.

Model (6 min.)

- Direct students to open to paragraph 9 of “The Difficult Path.”
- Display first mentor sentence: I hid my smile and tried to walk humbly, as all the browbeaten servants were supposed to do.
- Introduce the **sentence deconstruction** routine. Explain that sentence deconstruction teaches students to analyze the components and internal structure of sentences to understand meaning.



- Explain the routine:
 - Step 1: Identify challenging parts.
 - Step 2: Annotate and color code.
 - Step 3: Paraphrase.
 - Step 4: Apply to own writing or speaking
- Explain that you will think-aloud to model the first three steps to deconstruct this sentence to understand it better.
 - *First, I read through it and identify any parts that are confusing or complex. I notice that the sentence has two clauses separated by a comma: “I hid my smile and tried to walk humbly” and “as all the browbeaten servants were supposed to do.” How do these two clauses connect? The second clause uses the phrase “as all.” This is used to show that something is similar, or like, something else. This helps me understand that the second clause shows how, or in what way, Lingsi was walking; she was walking like the other servants, in a humble way. I know that “As all the browbeaten servants...” is an adverbial clause because it adds detail to, or modifies, the phrase “tried to walk humbly.” Let me underline “as all the browbeaten servants were supposed to do” and draw an arrow back to “tried to walk humbly.”*
 - Underline “as all the browbeaten servants were supposed to do” and draw an arrow back to “tried to walk humbly” on the displayed sentence.
 - *This adverbial clause also helps develop the narrative, by giving the reader more details about Lingsi as a character. It shows that she is a servant. It also shows that she tries to walk humbly like the other servants.*
 - *Now I’m going to use color to help me see the pattern.*
 - *I’ll use green to highlight the adverbial clause.*
 - Highlight “as all the browbeaten servants were supposed to do.”
 - *I’ll use yellow for the phrase that the adverbial clause modifies, or adds more detail to.*
 - Highlight “tried to walk humbly.”
 - *Now that I’ve identified what each part means, I’m going to say this sentence in simpler words to make sure I understand:*
 - *“I tried to walk humbly like all the servants were supposed to walk.”*



- Read the same sentence 2–3 times with different emphasis to model how phrasing and intonation affect meaning.
- When encountering compound words, pause to show how two words combine (e.g., “brow-beaten is made of two word parts: brow and beaten”).
- Emphasize how letter combinations produce specific sounds (e.g., “Notice how these letters ‘lk’ in ‘walk’ make the /k/ sound”).

- *My paraphrase uses simpler words to clearly show how the two clauses are connected, and to show the purpose of the adverbial clause. This helps me check my understanding.*

Guide (8 min.)

- Have students continue focusing on paragraph 9 of “The Difficult Path.”
- Emphasize that when writers expand their sentences by adding adverbial clauses or prepositional phrases, they not only provide information about characters and plot; they also make their writing more engaging and less repetitive. Remind students that it’s important to expand their sentences so they don’t use the same sentence structure over and over again. Point out that in “The Difficult Path,” the writer uses many different types of complex sentences.
- Display second mentor sentence: Unlike Aunt Wang, however, I was not tired of Mrs. Li’s complaining story.
- Point out that this sentence comes directly after the sentence students deconstructed in the Model section of the lesson, and uses a different sentence structure.
- Explain that the class will work together to deconstruct this sentence to understand it better.
- Remind students the steps of the routine:
 - Step 1: Identify challenging parts.
 - Step 2: Annotate and color code.
 - Step 3: Paraphrase.
- Lead students in a choral reading of the second mentor sentence.
- Direct students to turn and talk about Step 1:
 - What are the two clauses in the sentence?
 - How do they connect?
 - What is the prepositional phrase, and what does it modify?
 - How is this sentence structure different from the previous sentence, “I hid my smile and tried to walk humbly, as all the brow-beaten servants were supposed to do.”?
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share providing feedback as needed.
- Ask: What color should we use for the prepositional phrase?
- Highlight “Unlike Aunt Wang” on the displayed sentence as directed by the students.

- Direct students to turn and talk about Step 3:
 - How would you paraphrase this sentence in simpler words?
 - Listen for: Remember to clearly show how the two clauses connect
 - Invite 2–3 pairs to share.
- During the whole group sharing, record ideas and invite students to take notes in their notebooks.
- Affirm accurate paraphrases and provide feedback to clarify any misunderstandings.

Try

5 min.

- Direct students to look at the last sentence of paragraph 9 in “The Difficult Path.”
- Display third mentor sentence: Despite my mother’s poor circumstances, she must have been spirited.
- Explain that students will work in pairs to deconstruct this sentence to understand it better.
- Remind students the steps of the routine:
 - Step 1: Identify challenging parts.
 - Step 2: Annotate and color code.
 - Step 3: Paraphrase.
- Release pairs to begin working.
- Students can use the following questions to support their analysis of the text:
 - What are the two clauses in the sentence?
 - How do they connect?
 - What is the prepositional phrase, and what does it modify?
- Circulate to monitor students’ ability to correctly identify the language feature.
 - Prompt as needed: “What does ‘despite’ mean?” or “What does the prepositional phrase show about Lingi’s mother?”
- Invite students to share with the whole group.



Apply



7 min.

- Explain that students are now ready to complete Step 4 of sentence deconstruction, apply their learning of how to expand sentences to their own writing.
- Display and read aloud the following writing prompt: Revisit your written response from today’s ELA lesson. Revise a sentence by expanding it with an adverbial clause or prepositional phrase.
- Direct students to **think-pair-write-share** about the prompt.
- Direct listeners to check if their partner used target structure correctly.
- Monitor: Circulate to monitor students’ active and equal participation in the think-pair-write-share routine.
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share, affirm correct use and provide corrections as needed.

Wrap up



1 min.

- Remind students of the purpose for learning: Analyze sentences from “The Difficult Path” to identify adverbial clauses and prepositional phrases, and use these in your writing to make your sentences more varied and engaging.
- Ask this closing question: How did expanding a sentence in your narrative help to develop characters or plot?

Proficiency Level Differentiation

Emerging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Provide extended processing time; allow students to discuss sentence meaning with partners before sharing with whole group.
- Use physical gestures, visuals, and context clues to support comprehension of unfamiliar vocabulary in sentences.

- Model oral paraphrasing multiple times; have students echo/repeat paraphrases before attempting independently.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Focus on basic sentence features: subject identification, pronoun referents (he/she/it/they), singular/plural forms, and verb tense markers.
- Begin with shorter, simpler sentences before moving to complex ones; select sentences with familiar vocabulary.
- Provide complete sentence frames for paraphrasing: “This sentence means _____. It tells us that _____.”

Expanding

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Prompt students to identify challenging sentence parts before teacher explains; encourage peer discussion.
- Encourage students to paraphrase independently using academic vocabulary and complete sentences.
- Use think-pair-share: Students identify confusing parts with partner, then share analysis with whole group.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Focus on multiple-meaning words, idiomatic expressions, and complex verb phrases (e.g., “could have been,” “will have completed”).
- Teach how connecting words (however, although, because, therefore) link ideas within sentences.
- Provide partial sentence frames: “The author uses _____ to show _____. This means _____.”

Bridging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Expect students to explain their reasoning and analysis without prompting; challenge them to justify interpretations.
- Have students compare different paraphrases and discuss which is most accurate and why.
- Students lead small-group sentence analysis before whole-class discussion; teacher monitors and supports as needed.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Focus on sophisticated structures: nominalization (verbs turned into nouns), embedded clauses, complex modification.
- Analyze how sentence structure and word choice convey the author’s purpose, tone, or emphasis.
- Minimal or no sentence frames; emphasize precision and sophistication in paraphrasing using domain-specific vocabulary.



LESSON 11

Sentence Deconstruction: “The Difficult Path” (Paragraphs 14, 61, and 77)

ELD Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Identify and interpret how pronouns, clauses, and cohesive devices function within sentences, and apply these devices when writing or speaking.

Vocabulary

adverbial clause
sequence

ELD Lesson Objective

- ✓ Analyze sentences from “The Difficult Path” to identify adverbial phrases and clauses that tell when, where, how, or why something happened, and add adverbials to your writing to show time or sequence.

ELA Lesson Connection

- ✓ This designated ELD lesson should be implemented **before** ELA Lesson 11.
- ✓ Students deepen their understanding of using adverbial clauses to show time and sequence, which they will encounter while writing short narratives during ELA Lesson 11. This explicit language analysis supports students’ comprehension when they read complex narrative texts and will help them use adverbial clauses to show time and sequence in their own narrative writing.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review the think-write-pair-share routine (Appendix).
- Review and adapt the support suggestions for each PLD level in the Proficiency Level Differentiation section based on the needs of your students.

Materials

- “The Difficult Path” by Grace Lin

Activate



5 min.

- Review: Prompt students to share what they read and discussed in their ELA lesson, using the following questions:
 - What is one theme in “The Difficult Path”?
 - What is a detail from the story that supports that theme?
- Review the following terms as needed:
 - Adverbial clause
 - Sequence
- Introduce the purpose for learning: Analyze sentences from “The Difficult Path” to identify adverbial phrases and clauses that tell when, where, how, or why something happened, and add adverbials to your writing to show time or sequence.

Teach



14 min.

Model (6 min.)

- Direct students to open to paragraph 14 of “The Difficult Path.”
- Display first mentor sentence:
 - When it was discovered that it was my sixth birthday, Mrs. Li remembered her promise to my mother, then paled and swayed like a blanched stalk of bamboo.
- Point out that adverbial clauses that show time and sequence often begin with the word *when*, but they can also begin with other words that show time, like *after*, *before*, *once*, *while*, *as* or *until*. Emphasize that an adverbial clause must have a subject and a verb. They provide information about a verb or action in a sentence, like when, why, or how something happens. For example:
 - In the sentence, “She went for a bike ride after it stopped raining,” “after it stopped raining” describes *when* she went for a bike ride. It has a subject (it) and verb (stopped raining), so it is an adverbial clause.



- Point to specific words as you highlight or underline them, reinforcing word boundaries and spacing.
- Use different colored highlighters for different features and explicitly state what you’re marking (e.g., “I’m using green for adverbial clause, or the phrase that is modified by the adverbial clause.”).
- Show how you track from word to word when identifying challenging parts (e.g., “I start here, move to this word, then to this phrase”).

- Explain that you will think-aloud to model the first three steps to deconstruct this sentence to understand it better.
 - *First, I read through the text and identify any parts that are confusing or complex. I notice that this sentence has two different clauses connected by commas: “When it was discovered that it was my sixth birthday,” and “Mrs. Li remembered her promise to my mother, then paled and swayed.” How are these two clauses connected? The first clause starts with the word “when.” This is a good clue. It helps me understand that this first clause shows the time when the events in the second clause happen: they happen when Lingsi has her sixth birthday. It also shows the sequence, or order, that the events happen in. First they discovered that it was Lingsi’s sixth birthday, and then Mrs. Li remembered her promise to Lingsi’s mother. I know that this is an adverbial clause because it has a subject and a verb, and it tells when something happens. I’m going to underline the adverbial clause and draw an arrow to “Mrs. Li remembered...” The adverbial clause “When it was discovered...” shows the time of the event of Mrs. Li remembering.*
 - Underline “When it was discovered that it was my sixth birthday” and draw an arrow to “Mrs. Li remembered” on the displayed sentence.
 - *Now I’m going to use color to help me see the pattern. I’ll use green to highlight the adverbial clause.*
 - Highlight “When it was discovered that it was my sixth birthday” in green.
 - *I’ll use yellow for the phrase that is modified by the adverbial clause. In other words, the phrase that the adverbial clause gives us more information about.*
 - Highlight “Mrs. Li remembered” in yellow.
 - *Now that I’ve identified what each part means, I’m going to say this sentence in simpler words to make sure I understand: At the time that I turned six, Mrs. Li remembered her promise to my mother.*
 - *My paraphrase uses simpler words and clearly shows the purpose of the adverbial clause: to show the time that the event happens.*
 - *Ask: What would happen if the adverbial clause was removed? How would the meaning of the sentence change?*

Guide (8 min.)

- Direct students to open their unit readers to paragraph 61 of “The Difficult Path.”
- Display the second mentor sentence:
 - It whispered with a quiet thunder, and when I saw the “waves made of dragon scales,” just like in one of Li Po’s poems, I gasped.
- Explain that the class will work together to deconstruct this sentence to understand it better.
- Remind students the steps of the routine:
 - Step 1: Identify challenging parts.
 - Step 2: Annotate and color code.
 - Step 3: Paraphrase.
- Lead students in a choral reading of the second mentor sentence.
- Direct students to turn and talk about Step 1:
 - What different clauses do you notice in the sentence?
 - What part of the sentence further describes an action?
 - Which clause is an adverbial clause, and how do you know?
 - Which phrase does the adverbial clause modify, or give more information about?
 - What does the adverbial clause show?
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share providing feedback as needed.
- Highlight the adverbial clause and the phrase that it modifies on the displayed sentence as directed by the students.
- Direct students to turn and talk about Step 3:
 - How would you paraphrase this sentence in simpler words?
 - Listen for: Remember to clearly show what the adverbial clause tells us.
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share.
- During the whole-group sharing, record ideas and invite students to take notes in their notebooks.
- Affirm accurate paraphrases and provide feedback to clarify any misunderstandings.

Try



5 min.

- Direct students to open to paragraph 77 of “The Difficult Path.”
- Display third mentor sentence:
 - I had thought it impossible for one to be so beautiful and so fierce at the same time, but as I gazed at Tianyi, I suddenly understood.
- Explain that students will work in pairs to deconstruct this sentence to understand it better.
- Remind students the steps of the routine:
 - Step 1: Identify challenging parts.
 - Step 2: Annotate and color code.
 - Step 3: Paraphrase.
- Release pairs to begin working.
- Students can use the following questions to support their analysis of the text:
 - What different clauses do you notice in the sentence?
 - What part of the sentence adds more description to an action or verb?
 - Which clause is an adverbial clause, and how do you know?
 - Which phrase does the adverbial clause modify, or give more information about?
 - What does the adverbial clause show?
- Circulate to monitor students’ ability to correctly identify the language feature.
 - Prompt as needed: “What word points you to the adverbial clause?” “What event does the adverbial clause give you more information about?”
 - Affirm correct work: “Great! You identified the adverbial clause and explained what it showed about the timing of events in the sentence.”
- Invite students to share with the whole group.

Apply



5 min.

- Explain that students are now ready to complete Step 4 of sentence deconstruction, apply their learning of using adverbial clauses to show time and sequence to their own writing.
- Display and read aloud the following writing prompt: Imagine what happens to Lingsi after she decides to stay with Tianyi at the end of the story. Write a sentence that describes an event that happens, using an adverbial clause to show time or sequence.
- Direct students to **think-write-pair-share** about the prompt.
- Direct listeners to check if their partner used target structure correctly.
- Monitor: Circulate to monitor students’ active and equal participation in the think-pair-share routine.
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share, affirm correct use and provide corrections as needed.

Wrap up



1 min.

- Remind students of the purpose for learning: Analyze sentences from “The Difficult Path” to identify adverbial phrases and clauses that tell when, where, how, or why something happened, and add adverbials to your writing to show time or sequence.
- Ask these closing questions:
 - How well were you able to use an adverbial clause to show time or sequence in your sentence?
 - What questions do you have about adverbial clauses and how to use them in narrative writing?

Proficiency Level Differentiation

Emerging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Model think-pair-share routines with clear expectations for each step.
- Encourage students to discuss in their home language (L1) with peers, then share in English.
- Use physical gestures, visuals, and context clues to support comprehension of unfamiliar vocabulary in sentences.
- Model oral paraphrasing multiple times; have students echo/repeat paraphrases before attempting independently.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Begin with shorter, simpler sentences before moving to complex ones; select sentences with familiar vocabulary. Support students with sentence frames: Subject + verb + [adverb]. Subject + verb + [adverbial phrase].
- Provide a word bank of common adverbial phrases used to indicate time and sequence (e.g., before, after, as, etc.).

Expanding

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Prompt students to identify challenging sentence parts before teacher explains; encourage peer discussion.
- Encourage students to paraphrase independently using academic vocabulary and complete sentences.
- Encourage students to build on partner’s responses using academic language: “I agree with ____ because ____.”

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Prompt students to expand sentences by adding multiple adverbials: “The scientist worked carefully in the lab during the evening.”
- Co-create lists of adverbials categorized by purpose (time, manner, place, cause).
- Support students in using adverbials with new topics and more complex activities or processes.

Bridging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Expect students to explain their reasoning and analysis without prompting; challenge them to justify interpretations.
- Have students compare different paraphrases and discuss which is most accurate and why.

- Challenge students to use varied sentence structures when explaining ideas.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Challenge students to use sophisticated adverbials including adverb clauses: “When the reaction completed, the scientists recorded ____.”
- Guide students to use varied adverbial structures to create stylistic variety and precision.
- Have students write 2–3 sentences about what happens to Lingsi after she decides to stay with Tianyi.



LESSON 13

Discussing With Comparison Connectives: “The Difficult Path”

ELD Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Use connectives and other academic phrases to express opinions and ideas with peers about texts and topics through collaborative conversations.

Vocabulary

connectives
comparison
similarities
differences
historical figure

ELD Lesson Objective

- ✓ Engage in a collaborative discussion about the connections between a character from “The Difficult Path” and the historical figure Madame Zheng, using comparison connectives and other discussion phrases to link ideas and communicate effectively.

ELA Lesson Connection

- ✓ This designated ELD lesson should be implemented **before** ELA Lesson 13.
- ✓ Students deepen their understanding of comparisons between Tianyi, a character from “The Difficult Path” and the real-life pirate, Madame Zheng, and the language used in academic conversations. During the prior ELA lesson, students discussed how the author of “The Difficult Path” drew from facts and folklore about the historical figure Madame Zheng to create the character of Tianyi. The discussion prepares students for the upcoming discussion on connections between “The Difficult Path” and the informational article, “Building a Powerful Self-Identity” by offering an explicit language analysis on how to use connective words and phrases to articulate relationships between characters, ideas, and texts.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review think-pair-share routine (Appendix).

Materials

- “The Difficult Path” by Grace Lin

Teaching Notes (cont.)

- Prepare and display Comparison Connectives (Appendix).
- Students will use their written responses and notes from ELA Lesson 12.
- Review and adapt the support suggestions for each PLD level in the Proficiency Level Differentiation section based on the needs of your students.

Activate

3 min.

- Review: Prompt students to reread their text response from their ELA lesson which answered this question: **What traits do Tianyi and the real-life Madame Zheng have in common?**
- Introduce the purpose for learning: Engage in a collaborative discussion about the connections between a character from “The Difficult Path” and the historical figure Madame Zheng, using comparison connectives and other discussion phrases to link ideas and communicate effectively.



Teach

12 min.

Review the rules for discussions (2 min.)

- Review the types of connectives used for the lesson. Consider modifying the phrases and words used based on student proficiency. More connective words and phrases can be found in the Appendix.
- Review the rules for discussions and explain students' responsibilities.
 - Engage:
 - Monitor your amount of speaking and listening.
 - Bring the conversation back to the topic or text as needed.
 - Track the conversation, follow along in the text, and take notes.



- Speak:
 - Support ideas with evidence from the text.
 - Speak in a collaborative, positive, and respectful tone.
 - Pose questions that drive discussion and elicit elaboration.
- Listen:
 - Listen respectfully with the intention of understanding.
 - Understand that others have different opinions and experiences from you.
 - Acknowledge when alternate ideas or interpretations modify your own opinion or understanding.
- Check: Ask students to describe what the discussion should look like, sound like, and feel like.

Learn to use comparison connectives (5 min.)

- Explain that during a discussion, speakers use language to help express their ideas and better understand each other. Asking and answering questions are two ways to participate in a discussion:
 - Questions: Asking questions allows us
 - to understand ideas better.
 - to clarify confusion or get more details.
 - to push the conversation deeper and help us think more.
 - Responses: Responding to another speaker’s comments allows us
 - to show we are listening and engaging with others’ ideas.
 - to agree, disagree, or add on with our own thinking.
 - to help build a shared understanding of the topic.
- Explain that connectives are specific words and phrases that can be used when asking or answering questions. Using connective words and phrases allows us
 - to link our ideas to someone else’s thinking.
 - to show how ideas relate (e.g., agreement, contrast, cause, example).
 - to make the conversation flow and stay focused on the topic.
- Explain that there are several different kinds of connectives: cause/effect, comparison, evidence, sequence. Clarify that in today’s lesson they’re going to focus on comparison connectives, but remind students many different kinds are likely to be used in discussions.



Consider asking students if they know or use familiar comparison connective words or phrases in their home language. Have them share with the class.

- Direct students to the displayed Comparison Connectives. Explain the purpose of comparison connectives is to help make connections between texts and ideas.
- Point out the examples and the sample sentence frames for this type:
 - Examples: similar to, different from, in contrast, like, in the same way, although, while, likewise, both, unlike
 - Sample sentence frames:
 - Both ____ and ____ ____.
 - ____ and ____ are similar because ____.
 - Just as ____, ____ also ____.
 - ____ is different from ____ because ____.
 - Unlike ____, ____.
 - One key similarity/difference in the way ____ is ____.

Model (5 min.)

- Explain that you are going to model a brief conversation about the following question: **What do we learn about Tianyi from learning about the historical figure, Madame Zheng?**
- Instruct students to listen and take notes about the questions, responses, and especially the comparison connective words or phrases they notice the speakers using in their questions and responses.
 - Speaker A: I think that one important thing I learned about Tianyi was the power and authority she had, and how rare it was for a female pirate to be a captain. Like Madame Zheng, Tianyi had so much power that she was feared by all of the crew members on the ship.
 - Speaker B: I agree that they both held positions of power as leaders of pirate fleets. However, Tianyi is also different from Madame Zheng because she is shown to have a weakness: she needs Lingsi’s help to learn how to read.
 - Speaker A: Are you suggesting that Tianyi was weaker than Madame Zheng? I don’t think we have enough information to know whether Madame Zheng could read or not. Based on the time period, it seems unlikely that she could.
 - Speaker B: No, I’m suggesting that, unlike the video about Madame Zheng, the story “The Difficult Path” illustrates Tianyi as a more complicated character. She is a very strong leader, but she’s also searching for more. She wants to learn how to read.
 - Speaker A: That makes sense. I think learning about Madame Zheng made me look more closely at all of Tianyi’s traits. The au-

thor may have based her on Madame Zheng, but she’s definitely unique.

- Speaker B: Yes. Although they were both powerful female leaders, the author gave Tianyi very relatable human characteristics.
- Direct students to think-pair-share about the following questions:
 - What connectives did you hear the speakers use?
 - How did these connectives help the conversation and your thinking about the text?
- Invite a few pairs to share key ideas.

Try

5 min.

Guided practice: whole-class discussion (5 min.)

- Explain that students are going to participate in a brief whole-class discussion about the following question: How does learning about the similarities between Madame Zheng and Tianyi add to your understanding of the end of the story?
- Remind students of the connective words and phrases and the provided sentence frames.
- Remind students to use vocabulary from the text during their conversation.
- Facilitate the brief discussion by prompting students to ask questions and expand responses using the displayed discussion frames.
 - How can you use “however” or “although” to add to that?
- Ask the class the following questions to debrief:
 - What connectives did you hear?”
 - How did the connectives help the discussion?
 - What evidence from the text did they use?



If students require more support, have them use the following academic discussion protocol to help them structure their discussion:

- Student A: Provide initial idea in response to the question or prompt.
- Student B: Ask questions to clarify ideas and understanding.
- Student A: Respond by elaborating on their first response.
- Student B: Supports ideas in response to the question or prompt.



- Student C: Ask questions to clarify ideas and understanding.
- Students: Compare ideas and determine which response is the most supported by the text.

Also consider displaying and reminding them about some discussion question frames that can be used during discussion. Also find additional discussion frames in the Appendix:

- “Can you say more about ____?”
- “Can you explain what you mean by ____?”
- “What does ____ mean in your statement?”
- “I’m not sure I understand _____. Could you give an example?”
- “Why do you think ____?”
- “What makes you say that?”

Apply

8 min.

Independent practice: partner discussion (8 min.)

- Explain that now they are going to participate in a discussion with a partner about the following question: Do you think that Lingsi will become a powerful leader, similar to Tianyi and Madame Zheng? Why or why not?
- Direct students to review their written text response, adding notes or additional evidence, and write an additional sentence that uses a comparison connective.
- Instruct students to form pairs and discuss the question using their text responses.
- Remind students to use vocabulary from the text during their conversation.
- While student pairs discuss, circulate and listen for use of the targeted connectives.
- Invite 1–2 pairs who demonstrated effective use of connectives during their discussion to share part of their conversation.
- Ask the class the following questions to debrief:
 - What connectives did you hear your partner use?
 - What connectives did you use?
 - How did the connectives help the discussion?
 - What evidence from the text did you use?
- Affirm strong examples and address misconceptions if needed.



Consider pairing students who share a home language (L1) so they can clarify in their home language first before transitioning to English.

Wrap up



1 min.

- Remind students of the purpose for learning: Engage in a collaborative discussion about the connections between a character from “The Difficult Path” and the historical figure Madame Zheng, using comparison connectives and other discussion phrases to link ideas and communicate effectively.
- Ask these closing questions:
 - How well were you able to discuss connections between Madame Zheng and Tianyi?
 - What questions do you have about using comparison connectives in discussions?

Proficiency Level Differentiation

Emerging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Display and explicitly teach applicable connectives and Sentence Frames for Collaborative Discussion (Appendix). Model each phrase, have students chorally repeat, then practice using it in context. (Activate, Teach)
- During the model discussion, pause after each connective use and have students identify which connective was just used. (Teach)
- Allow students to choose one connective to use multiple times during; provide a laminated card with their chosen connective and matching sentence frame they can hold and reference. (Apply)
- Pair emerging students with expanding-level partners who can model connective use fluidly; the expanding partner serves as a model while the emerging student focuses on using connectives accurately. (Apply)
- Provide a simple discussion protocol card showing turn order: “Partner A: State idea using connective. Partner B: Ask clarifying question. Partner A: Respond with evidence. Switch roles.” (Apply, Try)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Focus on 2-3 high-frequency connectives; post these visibly and point to them when prompting students to use them. (Teach, Try)
- Provide complete sentence frames with connectives already embedded and blanks for content only. Laminate frames on individual cards students can hold during discussions. (Try, Apply)

- Provide sentence starters that require students to choose the logical connective. Students must analyze which connective fits the logical relationship they’re building. (Apply)

Expanding

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Explicitly prompt students to use discussion phrases when responding to peers: “Before you add your idea, use one of our phrases to affirm or question.” (Try, Apply)
- Require students to make multiple contributions during each discussion phase. (Try, Apply)
- Require students to demonstrate all three discussion moves: at least one clarifying question, one agreement and extension, and one respectful challenge. (Apply)
- After each partner shares an idea, the listening partner must paraphrase before responding: “So you’re saying _____. I think _____ because _____.” (Apply)
- Prompt students who are repeating the same connective to use other options. (Apply)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Teach 4–5 connectives from the target language feature and create a chart organizing them by purpose. (Teach, Try)
- Provide sentence starters requiring students to select and insert the appropriate connective: “The author argues _____. [Choose: Therefore/However/For example], this shows _____.” Pause to have students justify their choice to their partner. (Try, Apply)
- Explicitly teach how each connective creates a specific logical relationship (e.g., “therefore” signals result, “consequently” signals outcome); have students explain why they selected their connective during discussion. (Teach, Apply, Share)

Bridging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Have students predict which connectives will be most useful for today’s discussion prompt based on the prompt type. (Activate)
- Expect students to sustain extended discussion turns that layer multiple ideas, cite specific textual evidence, and build on or challenge previous contributions. (Try, Apply)
- Challenge students to both affirm and challenge peers’ ideas within the same turn: “I agree with your point about _____, and I’d extend that by _____. However, I’d push back on _____ because _____.” (Teach, Apply)
- Require students to cite specific textual evidence using appropriate connectives. (Apply)
- Co-create a word bank of vocabulary from the text and connectives students should use during discussion (Try, Apply)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Expect students to use multiple connectives fluidly without sentence frames, varying them for rhetorical impact. (Apply, Share)
- Expect students to layer 2-3 connectives within single extended turns to show complex logical relationships: “Although the text suggests ____, nevertheless ____ because _____. For instance, _____. Thus, _____.” (Apply)

Sample



LESSON 16

Sentence Deconstruction: “Amigo Brothers” (Paragraphs 19, 20, and 26)

ELD Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Analyze complex sentences to identify language features, determine meaning, and apply those features in speaking or writing.

Vocabulary

prepositional phrase
adverb
dialogue

ELD Lesson Objective

- ✓ Analyze sentences from “Amigo Brothers” to identify adverbial clauses and prepositional phrases, and use these in your writing to make your writing more descriptive.

ELA Lesson Connection

- ✓ This designated ELD lesson should be implemented **before** ELA Lesson 16.
- ✓ Students deepen their understanding of how to use adverbs and prepositional phrases to make their narrative writing more descriptive, which they will be challenged to do in the upcoming Mid-Unit Assessment narrative writing task. This explicit language analysis will help them prepare for the narrative writing task by having them focus on including adverbs and prepositional phrases in their writing.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review think-pair-share routine (Appendix).
- Students will use their written responses from ELA Lesson 11.
- Review and adapt the support suggestions for each PLD level in the

Materials

- “Amigo Brothers” by Piri Thomas

Teaching Notes (cont.)

Proficiency Level Differentiation section
based on the needs of your students.

Activate

5 min.

- Review:
 - For the upcoming Mid-Unit Assessment, you will continue to demonstrate how you can write narratives.
 - How comfortable do you feel writing narratives that have descriptive details?
 - Do you remember some ways we can add description to our writing?
- Review the following terms as needed:
 - prepositional phrase
 - adverb
 - dialogue
- Introduce the purpose for learning: Analyze sentences from “Amigo Brothers” to identify adverbial clauses and prepositional phrases, and use these in your writing to make your writing more descriptive.



Teach

14 min.

Model (6 min.)

- Direct students to open to their reader to p. 30, and to look at paragraph 19.
- Display first mentor sentence:
 - Felix tapped Antonio gently on the shoulder. “I don’t mean to sound like I’m bragging, bro. But I wanna win, fair and square.”
- Review the **sentence deconstruction** routine:
 - Step 1: Identify challenging parts.
 - Step 2: Annotate and color code.



- Step 3: Paraphrase.
- Step 4: Apply to own writing or speaking.
- Explain that the function of adverbs and prepositional phrases is to add details about when, where, how or why something is done. Point out that dialogue is used in a narrative to share key information with the reader and develop relationships between characters. Adverbs and prepositional phrases can be added to sections with dialogue to help readers visualize how the characters are speaking and interacting with one another.
 - In the dialogue: He turned angrily to face his sister. “Stop annoying me!” He quickly got up, ran to the door, and let it slam behind him,” the adverbs “angrily “ and “quickly “ help show the speaker’s feelings toward his sister. They also add more details about his actions as he speaks with his sister, and help the reader to more clearly visualize the scene.
- Explain that you will think-aloud to model the first three steps to deconstruct this sentence to understand it better.
 - *First, I read through the sentences and identify any parts that are confusing or complex. I notice that the first sentence shows me details about how Felix is acting as he speaks to Antonio. It says that he taps his friend “gently on the shoulder.” The word “gently” is an adverb to describe how Felix taps his friend. He taps him lightly and carefully, showing his respect and care for his friend. The fact that he taps him on the shoulder develops the close relationship between the two friends. These details help introduce the dialogue that comes after: “I don’t mean to sound like I’m bragging, bro. But I wanna win, fair and square.” This helps the reader understand that even though Felix wants to win the fight, he cares for his friend and doesn’t want to hurt their relationship.*
 - Circle “gently.” Draw an arrow from the adverb to the verb “tapped.” Draw another arrow to the dialogue.
 - *Now I’m going to use color to help me see the pattern.*
 - *I’ll use green to highlight the adverb.*
 - Highlight “gently” in green.
 - *I’ll use yellow for the verb and orange for the dialogue.*
 - Highlight “tapped” in yellow and “I don’t mean to sound like I’m bragging, bro. But I wanna win, fair and square.” in orange.



- Before choral reading, practice difficult words together, clapping syllables or saying them slowly.
- During choral reading, emphasize challenging sound patterns so students can hear and produce them with support.
- Pause during choral reading if many students struggle with a word, and practice it together before continuing.

- *Now that I've identified what each part means, I'm going to say this sentence in simpler words to make sure I understand:*
 - *Felix cared about his friend and he didn't want to hurt him. He tapped him on the shoulder in a gentle way to show that he cared. Then he said, “I don't mean to sound like I'm bragging, bro. But I wanna win, fair and square.”*
- *My paraphrase uses simpler words and explains what the adverb shows the reader.*
- *How might the reader understand the scene in a different way, if the dialogue appeared on its own without the description?*

Guide (8 min.)

- Direct students to paragraph 20 of “Amigo Brothers.”
- Display the second mentor excerpt:
 - Antonio nodded quietly. “Yeah. We both know that in the ring the better man wins. Friend or no friend, brother or no . . .”
- Explain that the class will work together to deconstruct these sentences to understand them better.
- Remind students the steps of the routine:
 - Step 1: Identify challenging parts.
 - Step 2: Annotate and color code.
 - Step 3: Paraphrase.
- Lead students in a choral reading of the second mentor excerpt.
- Direct students to turn and talk about Step 1:
 - Which word is an adverb?
 - What verb does the adverb describe?
 - How does the adverb help you understand the dialogue?
 - What does this detail show you about the character?
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share providing feedback as needed.
- Highlight the adverb and verb on the displayed sentences as directed by the students:
 - Antonio nodded quietly. “Yeah. We both know that in the ring the better man wins. Friend or no friend, brother or no . . .”
- Direct students to turn and talk about Step 3:
 - How would you paraphrase this sentence in simpler words?
Listen for: Remember to show what the adverb shows us about the dialogue and the two friends.

- Invite 2–3 pairs to share using the following questions to help students think about the impact of the language choices:
 - What does the word “quietly” show about the verb “nodded”?
 - What does the adverb show about Antonio’s dialogue?
- During the whole-group sharing, record ideas and invite students to take notes in their notebooks.
- Affirm accurate paraphrases and provide feedback to clarify any misunderstandings.

Try

5 min.

- Direct students to paragraph 26 of “Amigo Brothers.”
- Display third mentor sentence:
 - Tony scratched his nose pensively. “Yeah, it would be better for our heads.” He held out his hand, palm upward. “Deal?” “Deal.” Felix lightly slapped open skin.
- Explain that students will work in pairs to deconstruct this sentence to understand it better.
- Remind students the steps of the routine:
 - Step 1: Identify challenging parts.
 - Step 2: Annotate and color code.
 - Step 3: Paraphrase.
- Release pairs to begin working.
- Students can use the following questions to support their analysis of the text:
 - Which words are adverbs?
 - What verbs do the adverbs describe?
 - How do the adverbs help you understand the dialogue?
 - What do these details show you about the characters?
- Circulate to monitor students’ ability to correctly identify the language feature.
 - Prompt as needed: How does the word “pensively” change the meaning of the sentence? What does the word “lightly” show about the relationship between the two friends?
 - Affirm correct work: Great! You identified the adverbs and explained how they added detail to the dialogue.



- Invite students to share with the whole group.

Apply

5 min.



- Explain that students are now ready to complete Step 4 of sentence deconstruction, apply their learning of using connecting words and phrases to their own speaking.
- Display and read aloud the following writing/speaking prompt:
 - Review the narrative you wrote in ELA Lesson 11 in response to the prompt:
 - Write a short narrative that provides an alternate conclusion to “The Difficult Path” and that is consistent with your understanding of Lingsi’s character.
 - Add two lines of dialogue to your narrative. Include at least two adverbs to describe how the characters are speaking or acting during the dialogue.
- Direct students to **think-pair-write-share** about the prompt.
- Direct listeners to check if their partner used target structure correctly.
- Monitor: Circulate to monitor students’ active and equal participation in the think-pair-share routine.
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share, affirm correct use and provide corrections as needed.

Wrap up

1 min.



- Remind students of the purpose for learning: Analyze sentences from “Amigo Brothers” to identify adverbial clauses and prepositional phrases, and use these in your writing to make your writing more descriptive.
- Ask these closing questions:
 - How well were you able to use adverbs when creating dialogue?
 - What questions do you have about how to use adverbs in your narrative writing?

Proficiency Level Differentiation

Emerging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Support students with sentence frames: “The text shows that _____. Based on _____, I can infer _____.”
- Use yes/no questions to scaffold inference-making before expecting students to express inferences.
- Prompt students to point to specific textual evidence when expressing inferences.
- Model analyzing word choice effects through think-alouds: “How does this word make you feel? What does it make you think?”
- Support students with sentence frames: “The word _____ makes the audience feel _____. The phrase _____ creates a _____ effect.”

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Provide explicit instruction on simple adverbials: adverbs (quickly, carefully), prepositional phrases (in the morning, at school).
- Model how adverbials answer when, where, how, and why: “She ran quickly (how) to the store (where).”
- Support students with sentence frames: “Subject + verb + [adverb]. Subject + verb + [prepositional phrase].”
- Use familiar activities and processes when teaching adverbial expansion.
- Prompt students to add details by asking: “When did this happen? Where? How?”

Expanding

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Encourage students to use a variety of verbs when expressing inferences: “suggests that,” “leads to,” “implies,” “demonstrates.”
- Co-create lists of inference verbs appropriate for different types of texts and situations.
- Support students in expressing conclusions that synthesize information.
- Prompt students to explain the reasoning behind their inferences, not just state them.
- Encourage students to analyze how phrasing and word choice create shades of meaning: “stingy” vs. “economical.”
- Guide students to consider the author’s purpose when analyzing language choices.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Encourage students to use an increasing variety of adverbials for different purposes: time, manner, place, cause.
- Prompt students to expand sentences by adding multiple adverbials: “The scientist worked carefully in the lab during the evening”

- Co-create lists of adverbials categorized by purpose (time, manner, place, cause).
- Support students in using adverbials with new topics and more complex activities or processes.
- Guide students to position adverbials appropriately in sentences for clarity.

Bridging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Challenge students to use precise academic verbs that match the strength of their evidence: “indicates that” (strong), “suggests that” (moderate).
- Guide students to express nuanced inferences: “While X indicates Y, this evidence also influences our understanding of Z.”
- Support students in distinguishing between what the text directly states versus what they infer.
- Prompt students to evaluate which inferences are most strongly supported by evidence.
- Support students in explaining how language choices reflect and shape audience attitudes.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Challenge students to use sophisticated adverbials including adverb clauses: “When the reaction completed, the scientists recorded....”
- Guide students to use varied adverbial structures to create stylistic variety and precision.
- Support students in using adverbials to elaborate on complex, unfamiliar activities and processes.
- Prompt students to choose adverbials that provide the most relevant details for their purpose.



LESSON 17

Close Reading: “Amigo Brothers” (Paragraphs 92–103)

ELD Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Read closely to analyze how word choice is used to develop character relationships and convey a theme, and write sentences using the same technique to demonstrate understanding.

ELD Lesson Objective

- ✓ Analyze how Thomas uses word choice in “Amigo Brothers” to develop character relationships and convey a theme, and write sentences using the same technique.

ELA Lesson Connection

- ✓ This designated ELD lesson should be implemented **after** ELA Lesson 17.
- ✓ Students deepen their understanding of how word choice and descriptive language help to develop characters and convey a theme, which they encountered as they wrote their Mid-Unit Assessment narratives focused on an alternative ending for “Amigo Brothers” during ELA Lesson 16. This explicit language analysis supports students’ comprehension when they read and analyze complex narrative texts and will help them revise their narratives to add descriptive language and precise word choice.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review think-pair-share routine (Appendix).
- Students will use their Mid-Unit Assessment narratives.

Materials

- “Amigo Brothers” by Piri Thomas
- Annotation tools (highlighters, colored pencils)

Vocabulary

diction

Teaching Notes (cont.)

- Review and adapt the support suggestions for each PLD level in the Proficiency Level Differentiation section.

Activate

3 min.

- Review: Prompt students to share what they read and discussed in their ELA lesson, using the following questions:
 - What is one important way that you changed the ending of “Amigo Brothers” for your Mid-Unit Assessment narrative?
 - How do you think your ending will change the reader’s experience of reading the story?
- Introduce the purpose for learning: Analyze how Thomas uses word choice in “Amigo Brothers” to develop character relationships and convey a theme, and write sentences using the same technique.



Teach

22 min.

Review the text (2 min.)

- Direct students to open and review “Amigo Brothers.”
 - Look at the title, headings, images, and text features.
 - Notice how long the text is and how it’s organized.
- Recall any information from the text when you read it during ELA class

First read (6 min.)

- Review the **close reading** routine:
 - Step 1: Close read #1 with text-dependent questions.
 - Step 2: Close read #2 with text-dependent questions.
 - Step 3: Close read #3 with text-dependent questions.
 - Step 4: Apply to own writing or speaking.
- Explain that the first read is to gain a basic understanding of what the text says, or its literal meaning.



- Direct students to open to p. 43 of “Amigo Brothers.”
- Read aloud paragraphs 92–103 modeling prosody by using appropriate emphasis, expression, and tone.
- While reading, pause to reflect on words and phrases related to the questions. Depending on student needs, invite students to share their ideas or model a think-aloud while reading to respond to the following questions:
 - Check: What does the description “it had been tic-tac-toe” show about the match up to this point?
 - Listen for: I notice that the author, Piri Thomas, uses a noun (the game “tic-tac-toe”) as an adjective in this sentence to describe the match. The game tic-tac-toe involves two players taking turns recording x’s or o’s in a grid to see who will be the first to place three of their x’s or o’s in a line. The text says, “Up to now it had been tick-tack-toe, pretty much even.” I can infer that this means that Antonio and Felix were going back and forth hitting each other equally, kind of like two players playing tic-tac-toe, and that no one was winning or losing.
 - Check: How does the reaction from the crowd change in paragraph 96, and how does this detail impact the reader?
 - Listen for: Let me look at paragraph 96 to find this detail. The text says, “The sounds of their blows were loud in contrast to the silence of a crowd gone completely mute.” This is a change from earlier in the story, when the crowd was enjoying the match. Now they are completely silent. Let me look for more details in the paragraph to figure out what this means, and how this impacts my reading. The paragraph before shows that the two friends are continuously pounding each other. It says “Felix’s left eye was tightly closed. Claret red blood poured from Antonio’s nose.” Then, after the description of the mute crowd, it says “The referee was stunned by their savagery.” These details help me understand that the feeling of the boxing match has changed. Now Antonio and Felix are hitting each other aggressively, without stopping. The change in the crowd’s reaction makes me worry that Antonio and Felix will hurt each other. It also makes me wonder how the match will end. Will one of them seriously injure the other? This builds suspense for the reader.

- Check: What is your interpretation of what happens at the end of the story?
 - Listen for: Let me look back at the story to figure out what happens in the final paragraphs. I see that the bell rings to signal the end of the match, but Antonio and Felix keep pounding each other. Finally they stop and hug each other. The text says, “the two amigos embraced.” The referee starts to announce the winner, but when he turns to point to the champion, the two friends are already gone. I wonder why the writer would make the choice to end the story in this way. I remember that both Antonio and Felix were obsessed with being champions and with winning the match. Why would they walk away before the winner was announced? Let me look more closely at other details in these final paragraphs. I see that the story says, “No matter what the decision, they knew they would always be champions to each other.” This helps me infer that they leave the ring before the winner is announced because they already know that they’re both champions. They gave their all in the match and respected each other as boxing opponents, and now they don’t need to know who won or who lost.
- Model underlining key words and phrases and taking notes as students follow along in their texts. Emphasize the importance of taking notes for reference later in the lesson.
- Monitor: Ensure students follow along in their texts and take notes during the interactive read-aloud.
- As students respond, listen for specific text evidence and vocabulary from the text to support their responses.
- Provide sentence frames for discussion:
 - The word ____ makes me feel like ____.
 - This word/phrase ____ creates a ____ effect/mood by ____.
 - I think the author uses word/phrase to make the reader feel/question/wonder about ____.
 - I think the author uses word/phrase to ____.

Second read (8 min.)

- Explain that the second reading of the excerpt is to analyze decisions the author has made by examining elements such as vocabulary, word choice, structure, and syntax.

- Again, read aloud paragraphs 92–103.
- While reading, pause to reflect on words and phrases related to the questions. Depending on student needs, invite students to share their ideas or think aloud while reading to respond to the following questions.
 - Check: What does the sentence “the crowd ate it up” mean in paragraph 92?
 - Listen for: I know this isn’t a literal expression because the crowd isn’t actually eating anything. It must be an idiomatic expression. I can look at the sentences around the phrase to figure out what it means. The story describes how Antonio “drove Felix hard against the ropes” and “Thus far the two had fought with mucho corazón.” These details help me understand that “the crowd ate it up” means that the crowd is enjoying the intense, passionate boxing match.
 - Check: What is the impact of the word “savagery” in paragraph 96?
 - Listen for: I notice that right before this word is used, the author uses diction like “charging,” “barrage of punches,” and “drove hard against the ropes.” She also describes the injuries of the two boxers: “Felix’s left eye was tightly closed. Claret red blood poured from Antonio’s nose.” This diction helps me understand why the word “savagery” would be used. It seems like the two friends are fighting without any restraint, or control. They are unleashing all of their force on each other without stopping. This word is somewhat shocking as a reader because I’ve seen earlier in the story how the two friends care about each other, and how positive they are. This makes me think that they must act very differently in the ring.
 - Check: What does the word “champions” in the last sentence show about the outcome of the match?
 - Listen for: Let me look at the last sentence again to figure out why the word “champions” is used. The story says, “Arm in arm, the champions had already left the ring.” I notice that the word is in plural. This refers to both Antonio and Felix as champions. This is interesting because up to this point, both characters believed that there could be only one champion. Each fighter wanted to be the champion. This shows that they have learned that ultimately they are both champions,

no matter what the referee decides. They fought well and gave it their all.

- Model underlining key words and phrases and taking notes as students follow along in their texts. Emphasize the importance of taking notes for reference later in the lesson.
- Monitor: Ensure students follow along in their texts and take notes during the interactive read-aloud.
- Direct students to turn and talk with the questions so they can practice discussing their analysis of the text.
- Invite students to share with the whole group. Push students to cite specific text evidence and vocabulary from the text to support their responses.
- Provide sentence frames for discussion:
 - The word ____ makes me feel like ____.
 - This word/phrase ____ creates a ____ effect/mood by ____.
 - I think the author uses word/phrase to make the reader feel/question/wonder about ____.
 - I think the author uses word/phrase to ____.

Third read (6 min.)

- Explain that the third reading allows us to think about how the author’s use of language impacts our understanding of the text and the meaning it creates.
- Again, read aloud paragraphs 92–103.
- While reading, pause to reflect on words and phrases related to the questions. Depending on student needs, invite students to share their ideas or model a think-aloud while reading to respond to the following questions:
 - Check: What is the impact of the contrasting diction between paragraphs 93–96, and 100–103?
 - Listen for: Let me look back at these paragraphs to identify what kind of diction is used, how it contrasts or is different, and how this might impact the reader. I notice that the diction used in paragraphs 93–96 emphasizes the intense fight between the two friends. The author uses words like “charging,” “braced,” “barrage,” “attack” and “pounding.” This makes me think that they are



- As you read aloud, use your finger or pointer to track under each word from left to right to model directionality and one-to-one word correspondence.
- Pause briefly at punctuation marks (commas, periods, question marks) and explain how punctuation guides how we read and understand meaning.
- Read the same sentence 2–3 times with different emphasis to model how phrasing and intonation affect meaning.
- Exaggerate natural phrasing by grouping words into meaningful chunks.
- After reading, have students echo-read the sentence or passage to practice fluency with your model.

fighting very intensely and aggressively. Now let me look at paragraphs 100–103 to see how the diction is different. I notice the author uses words and phrases like “wave upon wave of cheering,” “amigos,” “embraced,” and “arm in arm.” The diction has changed from being intense and aggressive, to being joyful and friendly. This makes me think that the two friends weren’t actually trying to hurt each other. They were just respecting each other and treating each other like real boxing opponents. Now that the match is over, they share their joy as champions. It also makes me think that their friendship has become stronger.

- Check: What greater theme is shown by the decision of the two friends to leave the ring before the champion is announced?
 - Listen for: The story shows that Antonio and Felix have spent a lot of time thinking about and training to be champions. I wonder why the writer would end the story by showing them walking away, not caring about the outcome of the match. If I look back at the diction used to describe the match, I notice phrases like “toe to toe,” and “neither gave an inch.” This helps me understand that the two fighters have fought with all of their strength, and haven’t backed down. They’ve proven to be completely equal in their effort and their abilities. What greater theme, or universal message about life, is shown through this ending? I can infer that it shows that being a champion is not defined by winning, it’s defined by the effort and care you put into something.
- Model underlining key words and phrases and taking notes as students follow along in their texts. Emphasize the importance of taking notes for reference later in the lesson.
- Monitor: Ensure students follow along in their texts and take notes during the interactive read-aloud.
- Direct students to turn and talk with the questions so they can practice discussing their analysis of the text.
- Invite students to share with the whole group Push students to cite specific text evidence and vocabulary from the text to support their responses.
- Provide sentence frames for discussion:
 - I think the author uses ____ to ____.
 - I think the author’s use of ____ is effective because ____.

- Based on ____, I can infer that ____.

Apply



10 min.

- Explain that students will now demonstrate their understanding by responding to a prompt.
- Display and read aloud the prompt:
 - The author used diction to develop the relationship between Antonio and Felix at the end of the story. Add 2–3 sentences to your Mid-Unit Assessment narrative drafts to more fully develop a character using diction.
- Direct students to **think-write-pair-share** about the prompt.
- Monitor: Circulate to monitor students’ active and equal participation in the think-pair-share routine.
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share, affirm correct use and provide corrections as needed.

Wrap up



2 min.

- Remind students of the lesson focus: Analyze how Thomas uses word choice in “Amigo Brothers” to develop character relationships and convey a theme, and write sentences using the same technique.
- Ask these closing questions:
 - How did reading this text multiple times help you understand it better?
 - What did you notice on the second or third read that you missed the first time?
 - How well were you able to produce sentences of your own using similar language?

Proficiency Level Differentiation

Emerging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Allow students to process text in primary language; provide bilingual glossaries. (All Read Alouds)
- Provide complete sentence frames for all responses. (All Read Alouds)
- Focus First Read on basic who/what/where/when; limit to 1–2 questions. (First Read Aloud)
- Provide images of vocabulary words (such as bulldozer).
- Provide a word bank of vocabulary and encourage students to use the words during discussion. (All Read Alouds)
- Have students conduct close reads two and three in pairs.
- Have students take notes on a two-column graphic organizer (Column A: Text Details; Column B: Significance). (Teach)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Use shorter passages; pre-highlight language features. (Second Read Aloud)
- Focus on one language feature at a time. (Second Read Aloud)
- Provide model response and word bank for Apply. (Apply)
- Support students with lists of sensory adjectives (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell) for expanding nouns.
- Prompt students to add one or two adjectives to nouns before expecting more complex expansion.

Expanding

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Provide limited modeling in read-alouds two and three. (Second and Third Read Alouds)
- Provide partial sentence frames; expect responses with text evidence. (Second, Third Read Alouds)
- Provide a word bank of vocabulary and encourage students to use the words during discussion. (All Read Alouds)
- Encourage building on partner’s ideas during discussion. (All Read Alouds)
- Have students take notes on a two-column graphic organizer (Column A: Text Details; Column B: Significance). (Teach)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Analyze multiple related language features. (Second Read Aloud)
- Expect students to explain HOW and WHY language creates effects. (Second, Third Read Alouds)
- Encourage students to expand noun phrases in a variety of ways: comparative/superlative adjectives, prepositional phrases.

- Prompt students to add details that enrich meaning: not just any adjective, but ones that add important information.
- Co-create examples of expanded noun phrases for different purposes and text types.

Bridging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Have students read a longer excerpt and conduct the three read-alouds in pairs. (First, Second, Third Read Alouds)
- Expect sophisticated analysis without sentence frames. (Second, Third Read Alouds)
- Challenge students to evaluate effectiveness and suggest alternatives. (Third Read)
- Have students conduct the close reads independently or in pairs with minimal modeling.

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Analyze sophisticated features: nominalization, embedded clauses, rhetorical devices. (Second Read Aloud)
- Compare how different authors use similar techniques. (Third Read Aloud)
- Challenge students to expand noun phrases with general academic adjectives and complex embedding. (Apply)
- Guide students to use sophisticated noun phrase expansion: multiple modifiers, embedded clauses, appositives. (Apply)
- Support students in choosing noun phrase expansion that serves their purpose: precision, emphasis, elaboration. (Apply)



LESSON 23

Vocabulary Frayer Model: Student Research

ELD Student Learning Outcome

- ✓ Analyze and apply academic vocabulary to deepen understanding of key concepts for engaging in effective research.

Vocabulary

plagiarism
search term
authenticity

ELD Lesson Objective

- ✓ Use the Frayer Model to define, analyze, and apply key vocabulary to explain how to research a poem using connecting words.

ELA Lesson Connection

- ✓ This designated ELD lesson should be implemented **after** ELA Lesson 23.
- ✓ Students deepen their understanding of key research concepts, which they encountered while researching a poem relevant to their personal experience and to the topic of choices during ELA Lesson 23. This explicit language analysis supports students' comprehension when they engage in future research and will help them understand and explain key concepts of effective research.

Preparation

Teaching Notes

- Review think-pair-share routine (Appendix).
- If needed, review the example Frayer Model (Appendix).
- Research morphology for each word: word origins, prefixes, suffixes, and roots.

Materials

- Frayer Model graphic organizer (one per student)
- Visual supports (pictures, realia)

Teaching Notes (cont.)

- Identify cognates in students' first languages (L1).
- Prepare a large Frayer Model for display and teacher modeling.
- Prepare sentence frames and application sentences appropriate for your students.
- Review and adapt the support suggestions for each PLD level in the Proficiency Level Differentiation section based on the needs of your students.

Activate

3 min.

- Review: Prompt students to share what they read and discussed in their ELA lesson, using the following questions:
 - What is one word or phrase that you underlined during your annotation of "The Road Not Taken"?
 - How does that word or phrase connect to a theme from the poem?
- Introduce the purpose for learning: Use the Frayer Model to define, analyze, and apply key vocabulary to explain how to research a poem using connecting words.



Teach

18 min.

Model (12 min.)

- If students require further support, consider modeling the Frayer Model using the word: "plagiarism."

Guide (6 min.)

- Display the target vocabulary word: search term.
- Say the word aloud together (choral reading).



- Explain that the class will work together to complete the Frayer Model for this new word.
- Remind students the steps and each section of the organizer:
 - Step 1 – top row: “Word”
 - Step 2 – top left: “Definition”
 - Step 3 – top right: “Word Parts & Characteristics”
 - Step 4 – bottom left: “Examples”
 - Step 5 – bottom right: “Non-Examples”
 - Step 6 – bottom row: “Use the Word”
- Write the word in the top row of the displayed Frayer Model.
- Direct students to turn and talk about Step 2: What do you think this word means? Use your own words.
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share providing feedback as needed. Record class definition of displayed Frayer Model.
- Direct students look up and share the dictionary definition. Add to top left box on displayed Frayer Model.
- Ask the following questions to help students compare the definitions:
 - How does the dictionary definition different to my own definition?
 - What details does it add?
 - What details does my own definition make clearer or miss?
- Direct students to turn and talk about Step 3:
 - How does knowing the meaning of each word in the phrase help you understand its meaning?
 - What words look or sound like a word in your home language? Is there a cognate?
 - What are other characteristics, traits, or qualities of this word/ concept?
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share. Add to top right on displayed Frayer Model.
- Ask: What are some examples of effective search terms in English or your home language?
- Record 3–4 examples in the bottom left box on displayed Frayer Model.



- Emphasize how letter combinations produce specific sounds (e.g., “Notice how these letters “xc” in “exceptional” make the /ks/ sound as in “axe”).
- Pause on multisyllabic academic words and model how to break them into syllables (e.g., “Let’s say this together: li-ABLE”).
- Show how the same letter combination can sound different in different words (e.g., “Compare “crouch” and “would” - the “ou” makes different sounds in either word”).

- Ask: What are some non-examples of search terms in English or your home language?
- Record 3–4 non-examples in the bottom right box on displayed Frayer Model.
- Use the **think-pair-share routine** with the following questions:
 - How does our definition and examples help you understand how this term could be used in research?
 - How would you use this word in a sentence with a connecting word to show its purpose? Think about how the word functions and where it might appear in your writing or speaking.
- Invite 2–3 students to share sentences; provide feedback on usage.
- If students need help thinking of a sentence, provide an example: To research the date and time of the basketball game, she used specific search terms such as the name of the team and the arena where the team was playing, so that she could find accurate information quickly.

Try

5 min.



- Distribute blank Frayer Model graphic organizers to students.
- Display the target vocabulary word: authenticity.
- Say the word aloud together (choral reading).
- Read aloud the sentence from the text where the word appears.
- Explain that students will work in pairs to complete a Frayer Model for this new word.
- Remind students the steps and each section of the organizer:
 - Step 1 – top row: “Word”
 - Step 2 – top left: “Definition”
 - Step 3 – top right: “Word Parts & Characteristics”
 - Step 4 – bottom left: “Examples”
 - Step 5 – bottom right: “Non-Examples”
 - Step 6 – bottom row: “Use the Word”
- Release pairs to begin working.
- Circulate to monitor students’ progress.

- Prompt with questions as needed:
 - What word parts do you notice?
 - What is the word in your first language?
 - Is it similar to the word in English, or different?
 - How does this word function in a sentence? Remember to use a connecting word to clarify its meaning and purpose.
- Invite students to share with the whole group.

Apply

4 min.

- Explain that students will now demonstrate their understanding by using today's vocabulary in sentences of their own.
- Display and read aloud the chosen prompt:
 - Explain what it means to do effective research, using at least one of the terms from the lesson. Your explanation should show that you understand what the word means and how it functions, and should use at least one connecting word.
- Direct students to **think-pair-share** about the prompt.
- Direct listeners to check if their partner used vocabulary word correctly.
- Monitor: Circulate to monitor students' active and equal participation in the think-pair-share routine.
- Invite 2–3 pairs to share, affirm correct use and provide corrections as needed.



Wrap up

1 min.

- Remind students of the purpose for learning: Use the Frayer Model to define, analyze, and apply key vocabulary to explain how to research a poem using connecting words.
- Ask these closing questions:
 - How well were you able to use one of the vocabulary words in your discussion?
 - What questions do you have about the words you learned today?



Proficiency Level Differentiation

Emerging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Model how to use the Frayer Model organizer using a word from the text. (Model)
- Provide extended processing time; allow students to discuss word meaning with partners in L1 before sharing in English. (Model, Guide)
- Use visuals, realia, gestures, and pictures to illustrate word meaning, examples, and non-examples. (Model, Guide, Try)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Focus on basic word meaning with explicit cognate instruction; highlight cognates in the students' first languages prominently. (Model, Guide)
- Accept examples in students' first language as valid contributions; record L1 examples alongside English examples. (Guide, Try)
- Provide complete sentence frames for writing: "____ means _____. An example is _____. I can use this word to _____." (Apply)

Expanding

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Encourage peer-to-peer conversations about word parts and cognates; use think-pair-share for morphological analysis. (Guide, Try)
- Students record responses on their own Frayer Model with peer support; teacher facilitates discussion. (Try, Apply)
- Prompt students to explain their thinking: "How does the prefix help you understand the meaning?" or "What does the cognate tell you about this word?" (Guide, Try)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Include explicit morphological analysis (prefixes, suffixes, roots) and connect to word families. (Model, Guide)
- Expect student-generated examples with attention to how the word functions grammatically in sentences. (Teach, Try, Apply)
- Provide partial sentence frames that require students to complete with appropriate syntax: "____ is important because _____. In my writing, I can use it to _____." (Apply)

Bridging

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

- Students analyze morphology independently and lead partner discussions about word origins and

relationships. (Guide, Try)

- Students record responses independently; teacher monitors and challenges thinking about nuanced usage. (Try, Apply)
- Limit modeling and guided practice; encourage independent completion of the graphic organizer. (Guide, Try, Apply)

Part II: Learning About How English Works

- Have students work on the first example in pairs rather than providing direct instruction. (Teach)
- Analyze word relationships, connotations, and nuanced meanings; compare how words function differently in various contexts. (Model, Guide)
- Expect sophisticated application showing understanding of the word's syntactic function (e.g., using a transition to connect complex ideas). (Try, Apply)
- Provide minimal or no sentence frames; expect varied, complex sentences demonstrating precise vocabulary usage and appropriate syntax. (Apply)

Appendix

Assessments and Language Objectives

ELA Rubrics

ELA Instructional Routines

Example Text Responses

Graphic Organizers

Sentence Frames

Connectives

Sample