

Insight Middle Courses™

ELA CORE CURRICULUM



What is Insight Middle Courses™?

Insight Middle Courses is a 6-8 core literacy curriculum that closes the knowledge gap and dramatically improves literacy achievement in middle schools through a global, thematic, and project-based approach. Students develop content knowledge as they engage with diverse and rigorous texts, themes, and topics. They apply their learning through authentic and integrated literacy and project work to develop as independent readers, writers, thinkers, and doers.

Signature Elements

Diverse and Global Texts, Topics, and Themes

Through the careful selection of texts, topics, and themes, students experience affirming mirrors that reflect their identities and communities as well as windows into new knowledge, insights, and ideas.

Knowledge-Building

Students develop deep, meaningful knowledge in order to forge connections and think critically across topics, themes, and ideas. They apply this knowledge through rich discussions, reading, writing, and project work.

Meaning-Based

Our approach supports both teachers and students to put meaning front and center in reading, writing, and critical thinking.

Rigorous Writing Instruction

Writing is central to the curriculum. Students study and closely analyze author's craft in order to hone their skills and become clear and compelling writers. They engage in a robust process of critique, feedback, and revision in every unit.

Student Choice

Part of building independence is creating opportunities for choice. Student choice is woven into meaningful project and writing work, and students take the lead in discourse and thematic independent reading.

Thematic Projects

The yearlong theme doesn't end with the core class texts, but rather, our curriculum makes authentic connections to the key projects in each unit.

Insight Middle Courses™ Themes

Insight Middle Courses™ is a 6-8 literacy curriculum that closes the knowledge gap and dramatically improves literacy achievement in middle schools through a global, thematic, and project-based approach. Below are the year-long themes covered by each grade level.

GRADE

6

IDENTITIES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Who am I and what does it mean to be human?

Our 6th-8th grade scope and sequence begins where most middle school students are deeply immersed — in a study of identities and intersectionality that allows students to engage in a yearlong exploration of themselves and their own identities while also learning about others that may be different from themselves. This lays the foundation for students to engage with themes, topics and texts throughout middle school that allow them to develop both an appreciation and respect for differences while also considering the universality of the human experience. Students study their own identities, deeply consider the various forces and factors that shape identity, and examine the research and science of human development over a lifetime.

GRADE

7

COLLABORATION, CONFLICT, AND COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT HUMAN HISTORY

What is my role in society?

In 7th grade, students shift their focus from personal and individual human development to a study of human interactions in the United States and the world throughout history. They consider how human history has been shaped by human interactions; our efforts throughout history to collaborate, the causes and consequences of human conflict, and our continued striving to be and remain in community with one another.

GRADE

8

CHANGEMAKERS IN THE ANCIENT, MODERN, AND FUTURE WORLD

What is my impact on the world?

In 8th grade, students learn about and reflect on change makers throughout history, as well as how humans continue to work to positively impact the future. Throughout the year, students both utilize and build upon knowledge they have developed throughout middle school, and continue to gain new knowledge through this lens. The focus is on how individuals have had positive impacts on the world around them, as well as how communities and groups of individuals have had an impact. The year culminates with reflection and study of how students will become changemakers in their own lives.

Why Select Insight Middle Courses™ for Your Core Curriculum?

It's comprehensive and teacher friendly.

Our curriculum includes detailed unit overviews and scripted daily lessons, making it easy for teachers and leaders to implement with a high level of quality and consistency. From novel studies to project-based lessons, we take the guesswork out of planning to free teachers up to intellectually prepare by engaging with the rich literature and content in each unit.

It reflects principles of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Our scope and sequence and content selections are intentionally designed using culturally responsive principles and practices. Across our units, we:

- select diverse texts, authors, themes, and topics which provide affirming mirrors that reflect students' experiences as well as windows into people, places, and periods that are new
- highlight topics and narratives that are often marginalized, teach a more complete and balanced history, and feature diverse representation across fields of study
- include robust courses of study that cultivate students' connections with and empathy for the shared human experience across cultural contexts
- provide daily lesson plans that incorporate essential elements of culturally responsive teaching and learning, including:
 - » Time spent on robust whole-class, small group, and partner discourse
 - » Opportunities for student choice in project work, research, published writing, and discussions
 - » Structures for collaboration and learning partnerships throughout

It supports English Language Acquisition.

Our unit design intentionally supports English Language Acquisition. Specifically, we:

- incorporate robust opportunities for group and partner discussion allowing students to practice their oral speaking skills
- give students access to information in various modalities, such as text, diagrams, maps, etc.
- create opportunities for students to learn and keep track of content-area vocabulary teach students how to organize their thinking visually using graphic organizers for notes and writing
- include read aloud work so students are able to hear models of fluent reading and discuss their ideas with classmates

Insight Middle Courses™ Scope & Sequence

Grade	Content Focus	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
6	Who Am I and What Does It Mean to Be Human?: Identities and Human Development	Identity and Intersectionality: Thematic Development in Realistic Fiction	What Makes Us Human: Argumentative Writing and Nonfiction	Individuality versus Conformity: Using Genre to Understand Theme	Identities Under Attack: Multiple Perspectives and the Search for the Truth
		<i>Look Both Ways</i> by Jason Reynolds	<i>Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science</i> by John Fleischman <i>A Really Short History of Nearly Everything</i> by Billy Bryson	<i>The Giver</i> by Lois Lowry	<i>Beyond Courage</i> by Doreen Rappaport <i>They Called Us Enemy</i> by George Takei <i>Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl</i> by Anne Frank
7	What is My Role in Society?: Collaboration, Conflict, and Community throughout Human History	Human Conflict and Peace: Thematic Development in Historical Fiction	Triumph Through Oppression: Argumentative Writing and Nonfiction	Destruction and Rebirth: Stories of the Past and Their Role in the Future	Conflict, Collaboration, and Coming of Age: Voices of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement
		<i>Peacemaker</i> by Joseph Bruchac	<i>Sugar Changed the World</i> by Marc Aronson and Marina Budhos	<i>The Last Cuentista</i> by Donna Barbara Higuera	<i>Brown Girl Dreaming</i> by Jacqueline Woodson <i>We've Got a Job: The 1963 Birmingham Children's March</i> by Cynthia Levinson
8	What is My Impact on the World?: Changemakers in the Ancient, Modern, and Future World	The Individual's Journey: Thematic Development Fiction	Technology and Social Evolution: Argumentative Writing and Nonfiction	Standing Up for Change: Irony and Tragedy in Stories of the Past	Harnessing the Power of Persuasion: The Art of Argument
		<i>The Alchemist</i> by Paulo Coelho	<i>How We Got to Now</i> by Steven Johnson	<i>Uprising</i> by Margaret Peterson Haddix	<i>We Should All Be Feminists</i> by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie <i>Strong Voices: Fifteen American Speeches Worth Knowing</i> by Tonya Bolden



Key information

- Each unit is designed to last approximately 8 weeks and includes up to 35 lessons.
- Each lesson is designed for a 90-minute reading and writing block.

