

RIISING GRADE 9 KNOWLEDGE

Teacher Unit Guide



A **Lavinia** Literacy Program

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Red Thread™

A Lavinia Literacy Program



SAMPLE

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UNIT OVERVIEW



SAMPLE



Introduction

Kwame Alexander's Newbery Medal-winning book The Crossover is an incredible coming-of-age story, especially suited for students on the cusp of childhood and young adulthood. The novel, written entirely in verse, tells the story of Josh Bell through an accessible yet sophisticated examination of what it means to lose things and people; what it means to grow up; and what it means to sort out who you really are. Leveraging basketball as both a literary backdrop and central metaphor, the novel questions whether life, like basketball, has rules—and what those rules should be.

While this story engages students with relatable characters, situations, and themes, the novel presents a meaningful opportunity for students to embrace verse as a medium for storytelling. Alexander's poems offer a tremendous display of how diction, rhythm, structure, and imagery can amplify a narrative's meaning and its emotional resonance and cohesion. Students will gain a deeper appreciation for the power of poetry to create uniquely moving and rich reading experiences.

In both content and form, The Crossover is not just the study of a transitional chapter in the fictional life of Josh Bell but also a platform for young readers to transition themselves: They will “crossover” to become deeper and more deft critics—of verse, sports, and life.

Knowledge-Building Connections

The accompanying RISE Close Reading for Meaning unit for Rising Grade 9 supports students in developing their understanding of the key themes and topics explored in The Crossover. The unit includes informational texts about famous athletes and topics like grief and loss, alongside poetry and fiction stories that highlight the importance of coming of age and family relationships. This thoughtful integration of nonfiction, poetry, and fiction helps students strengthen their comprehension skills while exploring the complex themes developed in The Crossover.

Essential Question and Themes

Throughout this unit, students will grapple with the Essential Question below. As they explore the novel, they will use their growing knowledge to develop robust ideas.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do the challenges we face shape who we become?

As students read The Crossover and engage in rich discussions, they will uncover the themes of the novel. By the end of the novel, students will be able to articulate and explain the following themes:

- Coming of age:** The Crossover explores the complex process of growing up—navigating shifting relationships, identity, and responsibility. The novel captures the moment when childhood certainty gives way to emotional complexity as Josh reckons with change, conflict, and maturity. The theme speaks to the challenge of holding on to who you’ve been while stepping into who you’re becoming.
- Loss:** Loss in the novel is both emotional and physical. Josh experiences what it means to lose connection, lose control, and ultimately, lose someone he loves. The novel invites readers to reflect on how we respond to grief, how relationships evolve or break under pressure, and how healing can begin after rupture.
- Life and basketball:** Basketball is more than a sport in this novel—it becomes a metaphor for expression, connection, discipline, and self-discovery. Through the rhythm and rules of the game, Josh learns about freedom, struggle, teamwork, and self-worth. The novel thus elevates the significance of basketball—not just as a competition to be played but also as a vehicle for meaning-making regarding our human experience, especially in our youth.

Reading and Writing Knowledge

Throughout this unit, students will also become stronger readers, writers, and thinkers. The key reading and writing goals for this unit follow.

Reading

Students will apply narrative reading strategies to develop their ability to gain insight from a novel. They will study:

- How an author develops characters across a novel.
- How to read and interpret poetry.
- How an author uses character development, plot, and literary devices to develop themes.

Writing

Students will write Literature Responses to strengthen their writing skills and to convey their understanding of the content and ideas studied in this unit. They will study:

- How to craft a strong claim in response to a prompt.
- How to support a claim with relevant evidence and insightful explanation.

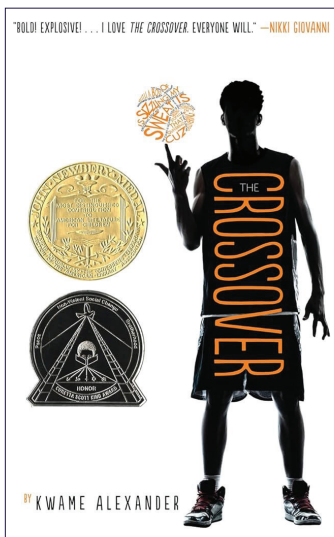


Preparing To Teach: Getting To Know Your Literature and Planning Your Unit

Getting To Know Your Literature

Before launching the unit, study the core texts carefully to ensure you thoroughly understand them and have internalized how they fit together to support student learning. You should also consider student, school, and community needs and values to determine if any language or content will require additional consideration when using these texts in your classroom.

Core Texts



In his award-winning novel, written entirely in verse, Kwame Alexander tells the story of Josh Bell, a twelve-year-old basketball phenom. At the novel's start, Josh's life is straightforward: He loves basketball and adores his family, especially his twin brother, JB, who rivals his talent on the court. But as the novel progresses, Josh's world begins to change. Josh struggles to navigate life without his twin brother, who has fallen for a new girl at school. At the same time, Josh becomes aware that his beloved dad, Chuck, has serious health issues. When Josh lets out his frustration on the basketball court and breaks his brother's nose, he's benched for the season. With a distant brother, a sick dad, and no basketball season, Josh is left to wonder who he has—and who he will—become.

Planning Your Anchor Charts

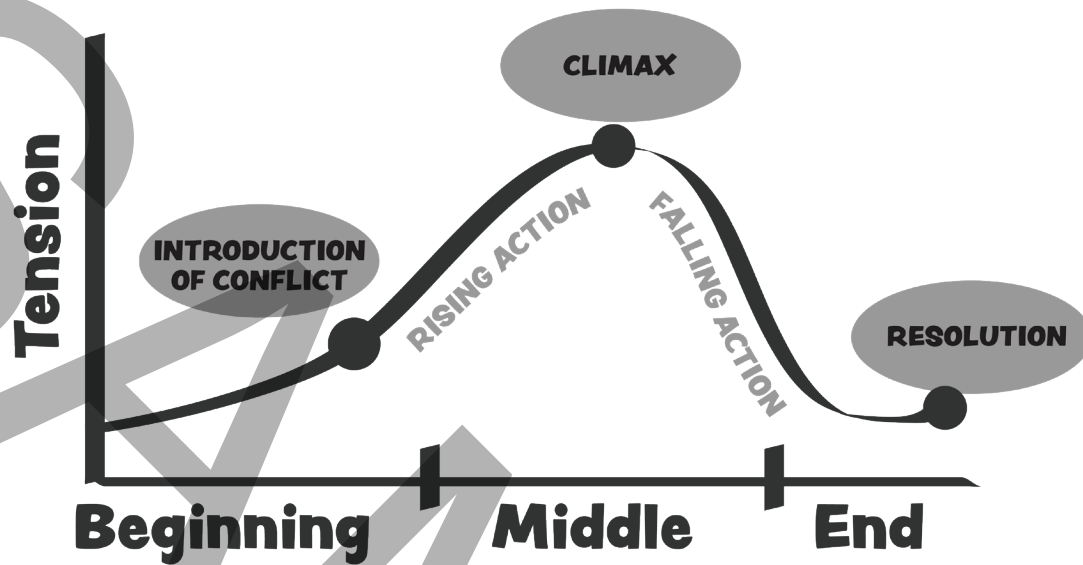
Before the Unit

Before the first lesson, prepare and post the following anchor charts:

- A chart for the unit's Essential Question
- A chart for the unit's vocabulary words
- "Genre Frames" anchor chart
- "Plot Arc" anchor chart

GENRE FRAMES	
Genre	Frames
Nonfiction	• What is the topic? • What is the text teaching me about the topic? • What is the author's perspective on the topic?
Fiction	• Who are the characters, and what have we learned about them? • What is the conflict? • What is the resolution? • What is the theme?
Poetry	• What is the literal meaning? • What is the deeper meaning?

“Plot Arc” Anchor Chart



Additional Resources

The following recommended resources can be used to facilitate student discourse throughout the unit. They can be found in the RedThread RISE Knowledge Implementation Guide.

- [“Ask Protocols”](#)
- [“Tips and Prompts for Facilitating Discourse”](#)
- [“Discourse Norms and Guidelines”](#)
- [“Strategies for Sharing Student Work”](#)



Unit at a Glance

LESSON	PAGES	TEACHING POINT
Week 1 - The Crossover		
1	3–20	Fiction readers focus on getting to know the protagonist. They pay close attention to how particular lines or details from the text reveal aspects of the character.
2	23–43	Poetry readers analyze how a poem's structure influences its meaning and impact on the reader.
3	44–65	Fiction readers make connections across scenes or moments in a story to identify the conflict. They ask themselves, "How does this new scene build on what I already know? What conflict is developing?"
4	N/A	Writers identify the qualities of a strong Literature Response and include those qualities in their own responses.
5	66–85	Fiction readers know that authors develop themes throughout a novel. As they continue reading, readers identify ideas that are repeated to determine if they develop into central themes.

LESSON	PAGES	TEACHING POINT
Week 2 - The Crossover		
6	89–99	Fiction readers analyze how the narrative point of view contributes to their understanding of the story.
7	100–112	Readers analyze how an author’s word choice creates the tone of a poem and helps convey the characters’ emotions.
8	113–122	Readers make inferences about the characters’ feelings and motivations as they read by using clues from the text and their own background knowledge.
9	N/A	Writers carefully consider what the prompt is asking them, then think about everything they have read in a text so far to help them develop a claim that accurately states their idea.
10	123–134	Fiction readers pay attention to internal and external conflict to better understand the themes of the text.
Lesson A (Optional)	N/A	Creators study a Mentor Project in order to understand the qualities of an engaging and compelling project.
Week 3 - The Crossover		
11	137–154	Fiction readers analyze the author’s word choice and figurative language to deepen their understanding of characters’ emotions.
12	155–169	Readers notice structural differences in poems and compare how the author’s structural choices help develop their meaning.
13	170–182	Readers connect details across a text to infer how a character’s thoughts or feelings are changing.
14	N/A	Writers identify evidence from the text that most closely supports their claim.
15	183–196	Readers notice turning points in a character’s journey and think about how these moments help develop the themes of the story.
Lesson B (Optional)	N/A	Creators sketch a design of their project to convey their character’s perspective and identity.
Lesson C (Optional)	N/A	Creators draft their Designer’s Statements to explain how their design choices represent their character.

LESSON	PAGES	TEACHING POINT
Week 4 - The Crossover		
16	199–211	Readers pay attention to the story's point of view. They ask themselves, "How does a character's point of view shape our understanding of the story? How might the story change if the point of view were to shift?"
17	212–222	Fiction readers consider how the author begins to resolve conflicts at the end of a novel. They ask themselves, "How do the character's actions help bring the story to a close?"
18	225–237	Fiction readers reflect on how a novel ends. They ask themselves, "What do the final scenes reveal about what the characters have learned? What messages does the author want us to take away?"
19	N/A	Writers include an explanation to show how their evidence supports their claim.
20	N/A	Fiction readers reflect on how authors use recurring elements to develop characters and themes. They ask themselves, "How do these repeated elements take on new meaning by the end of the novel?"
Lesson D (Optional)	N/A	Creators revise their work to strengthen their explanations and finalize their projects.



Student Outcomes: Key Artifacts of Learning

Setting Your Vision for Student Writing

Literature Responses

Students will write in response to various prompts at strategic points throughout the unit. An example of a Literature Response for this unit follows.

Mentor Piece

Literature Response Prompt: What is one idea the poem “Five Reasons I Have Locks” develops about Josh?

The poem “Five Reasons I Have Locks” develops the idea that Josh’s hair helps him feel strong in his identity. In listing reasons why he has locks, Josh says, “[I]t helps people know / that I am me and not JB.” This shows that his locks help him feel like an individual, separate from his twin. Then, Josh says that when he watched a clip of his dad dunking, “his / long twisted hair like wings / carrying him / high above the rim,” he “knew / one day / [he’d] need / [his] own wings / to fly.” In this metaphor, Josh compares his and his dad’s hair to wings, showing that Josh sees his hair as part of what lifts him up on the court and in life. Both examples show that his locks are not just about looks—they represent his pride in his identity.

Rising Grade 9 Criteria List for Literature Responses

SCORE	CRITERIA
2	• Answers all parts of the prompt with a valid claim. • Includes relevant and specific evidence. • Includes an insightful explanation of how the evidence supports the claim. • Is organized and logical.
1	• Answers some parts of the prompt. • Includes mostly literal events or details from the text. • Includes some relevant evidence, but the evidence is either not the best or insufficient. • Attempts to explain evidence, but the explanation does not clearly connect to the claim. • Is somewhat organized and logical.
0	• Answers the prompt inaccurately. • Is disorganized. • Contains grammatical or conventions errors that interfere with understanding.

Setting Your Vision for Project Work

In addition to Literature Responses, you may choose to have students engage in project work as an authentic assessment of student learning.

A suggested Project Lesson sequence is provided in the Unit at a Glance, based on the text students should have read before each lesson. Should you wish to use them, project lessons have been included in a separate section of the Teacher Guide and Unit Portfolio.

Signature Moves, Signature Shoes

In this project, students will design a custom basketball shoe for one of the secondary characters in the novel The Crossover. Students should draw their design freehand, though you may offer the option of adding cut-out materials (e.g., magazines, fabric) or designing it digitally using a tool like Google Slides or Canva, if available. You may offer a **printed shoe outline** for students who need support with structuring the shoe.

A suggested Project Lesson sequence is provided in the Unit at a Glance, based on the text students should have read before each lesson. You may wish to adjust the timing, but ensure students have read through the section “Second Quarter” before Project Lesson A and through the section “Third Quarter” before Project Lesson B.

Signature Moves, Signature Shoes Project Prompt: In The Crossover, Josh Bell drives the story—his perspective is always center court. But the people around him are in the game too, each with a unique perspective, personality, and voice, even if we don’t always hear from them directly. Now it’s your turn to step into their shoes, figuratively and literally. In this project, you’ll design a custom basketball shoe that shows the personality, emotions, and perspective of Alexis, JB, or Chuck. You’ll use symbols, colors, words, and creative design choices to express their perspective and voice, then you’ll provide an explanation of your choices as the designer.

In this project, you will:

- Design a custom basketball shoe that represents your character’s personality, emotions, and perspective. Your shoe should include:
 - Colors that symbolize your character.
 - Images, symbols, or shapes that show who they are or what they care about.
 - Words, phrases, or quotes that connect to their voice or experience.
- Write a Designer’s Statement that answers:
 - Why did you choose this character?
 - How do your design choices connect to the character’s personality and perspective?

Showcase of Learning

At the end of their project work, have students present their projects before an audience. Consider the following ideas to help you plan for how students will showcase their work:

- Having students apply their designs to real, plain white shoes for display.
- Creating a “shoe wall” reminiscent of a retail shoe display.
- Organizing displays by the character perspectives represented in each shoe design to help visitors connect student work to the project task.
- Preparing audience questions—such as “How does your shoe represent your character?”—and having students actively share their learning through presentations or guided tours.
- Involving community members to enrich the event and broaden the audience.
- Partnering with art teachers to offer additional creative opportunities connected to the project.

Mentor and Exemplar Student Piece

The following Mentor Student Signature Moves, Signature Shoes Project demonstrates the type of work that students can be expected to produce in response to this project prompt. While this piece may be used in Project Lessons to model specific concepts or skills, you are strongly encouraged to create your own piece when preparing to teach the unit and to use it as an example during lessons.



Designer's Statement

I designed this shoe for Josh's mom. The three hearts on the ankle represent Josh, JB, and Chuck—her family, whom she protects and supports through everything. Her family is the most important thing to her—they are her heart—so I chose to represent them using heart symbols. The basketball on the tongue represents her family's love for the game and her involvement in it as a supportive wife and mom. Even though she doesn't play ball herself, she shows up to every game and cheers from the sidelines. The wedding ring near the toe represents her commitment to her marriage to Chuck. She loves Chuck dearly, and they have a strong marriage that serves as the backbone of the Bell family. The book and pencil designs on the heel stand for her role as an assistant principal and her belief in education. She emphasizes the importance of school to her sons, ensuring they don't toss their educational responsibilities to the side for basketball. I added the words "Team Bell" on the sole to show she holds the family together, even when things are hard. Even when she disagrees with Chuck or her sons' decisions (like Chuck's refusal to see a doctor or when Josh hits JB with the ball), she still acts as part of her family's team, supporting them all. Finally, the shoe is designed using calm, cool colors—light blue and off-white—to emphasize her presence as a calming force in the family.

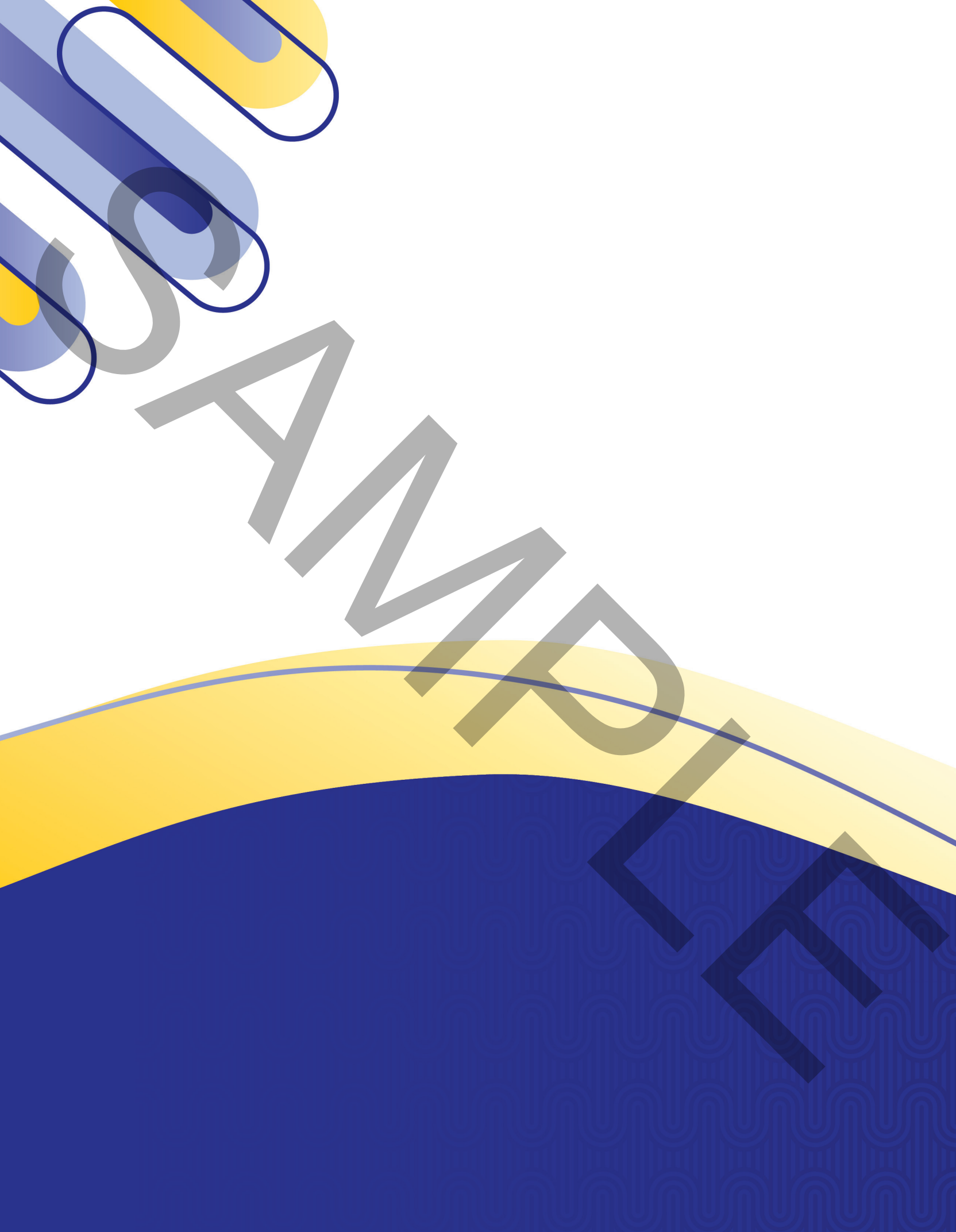
Rising Grade 9 Criteria List for Signature Moves, Signature Shoes Projects

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	SCORE
Ideas	- Focuses on one character's perspective. - Demonstrates a deep understanding of the character, including their personality and thoughts on specific events from the text.	
Details	- Includes relevant and specific symbols, colors, and/or words on the shoe to represent the character's perspective. - Includes sufficient, relevant, and varied explanations in the Designer's Statement to support at least three of the design choices.	
Organization and Style	- Groups similar information together in a logical and/or creative way. - Organizes information with a structure that builds seamlessly to show the idea. - Explains how each design choice is connected to the character's perspective.	

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	SCORE
Process	- Includes evidence of thorough planning in the final product. - Includes evidence that self-reflection or feedback was taken into account and that thoughtful revisions were made in response. - Uses models and examples as inspiration for their own creativity rather than as a blueprint.	
Quality of Work	- Is neat, clear, and easy to understand. - Responds clearly and thoughtfully to all components of the task. - Uses grade-level grammar, punctuation, and spelling conventions in all writing.	

OVERALL SCORE

SCORING KEY			
4 All Criteria Met	3 Most Criteria Met	2 Some Criteria Met	1 Criteria Not Met



SAMPLE

DAILY LESSON PLANS



Lesson 3: Reading**LESSON OVERVIEW****TEACHING POINT:**

- Fiction readers make connections across scenes or moments in a story to identify the conflict. They ask themselves, “How does this new scene build on what I already know? What conflict is developing?”

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

- Literature Response

KEY VOCABULARY:

- conflict
- plot
- resolution

MATERIALS:

- The Crossover, pages 44–65
- “Genre Frames” anchor chart
- “Plot Arc” anchor chart

UNIT PORTFOLIO:

- **Folio 3:** “Lesson 3: Reading”
- **Folio 28:** “Plot Arc”

SUGGESTED AGENDA

45 min.

3 min.	Engage
15 min.	Launch
10 min.	Independent Reading
10 min.	Literature Response
5 min.	Whole-Class Discourse
2 min.	Closing

Notes for Lesson Differentiation

TO SUPPORT:

- Launch and Independent Reading: To support students in making connections across the text, have them track the plot of the story on the “Plot Arc” graphic organizer from the Differentiation Toolkit. Continue to have them use this graphic organizer in future lessons.
- Literature Response: To help students begin writing, provide the following sentence frame: “A potential conflict that is emerging in The Crossover is ...”

TO ADVANCE:

- Whole-Class Discourse: Encourage students to make a prediction about what may happen in the novel based on the emerging conflicts by asking, “Now that we’ve seen how Josh and JB’s relationship is changing, what do you predict might happen next?”

LANGUAGE AND MLL SUPPORTS:

- Reading Support: If students need support tracking the conflict, provide a graphic organizer with columns for the poem title, the conflict, and who is involved. Students may add to this organizer over the course of the text and take notes in their home languages.
- Speaking and Listening Support: If students need support participating in discourse, provide translated sentence prompts from the “Discourse Norms and Guidelines” to aid comprehension. Encourage students to use English versions of the prompts during discourse.

Lesson 3: Reading

Teaching Point: Fiction readers make connections across scenes or moments in a story to identify the conflict. They ask themselves, “How does this new scene build on what I already know? What conflict is developing?”

Engage

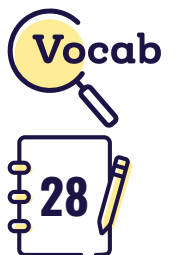
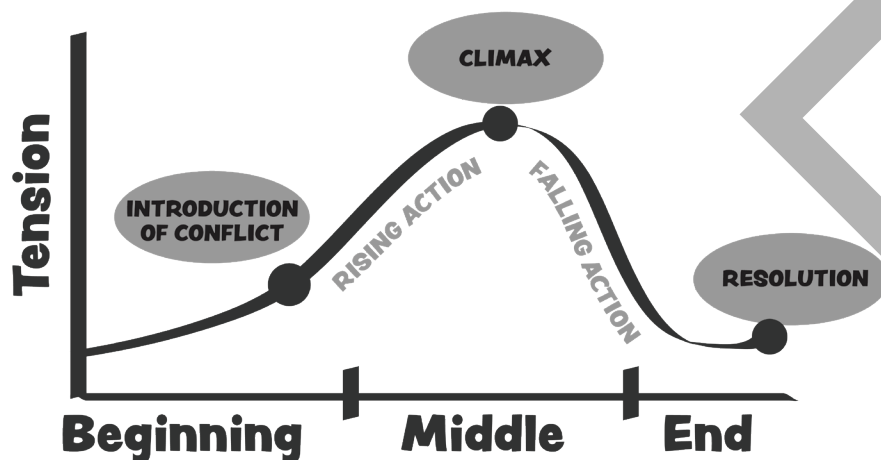
In our previous lesson, we began the section “First Quarter” of *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander. We analyzed how a text’s structure influences its meaning and impact on the reader. This thinking supported our understanding as we read several poems that detail an important event in the story—Josh’s haircut. Today, we’ll return to “First Quarter” to think about how the structure and **plot** develop our understanding of the novel’s big ideas.

Launch

Display the “Genre Frames” anchor chart, and review the genre frames for fiction.

The guiding questions, or genre frames, for fiction connect to the **plot**, which is the connected sequence of events in a story. Typically, fiction stories follow a **plot** arc where characters encounter a problem or **conflict** they have to solve or resolve.

Display and introduce the “Plot Arc” anchor chart.



Vocab

The **conflict** is the problem or struggle that drives a story's **plot**, character, and thematic development. We can think of the **conflict** as a challenge the protagonist faces or something the protagonist wants but does not yet have. Usually, the conflict intensifies or evolves as the story continues, during the rising action, before it reaches its most climactic moment. The **resolution** is the point in a story, typically at the end, when loose ends are often tied up and a sense of closure is reached. The **conflict** and **resolution** work together to help readers determine what the characters learn by the end of the story.

Ask:

Thus far in the novel, what **conflicts** has Josh encountered?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- Josh lost a bet and had to cut off his hair, which is an important part of his identity and his connection to his dad. Having to cut it off was like having to cut off a part of himself.
- The author also foreshadows another **conflict**: Josh's distancing relationship with his brother. Despite the incident with Josh's hair and JB's distraction with girls, Josh and JB are still close and getting along, so this isn't a clearly defined **conflict** yet.

*In novels, there can be more than one **conflict**, or often, the initial **conflict** deepens into something more complex. Today, we'll consider how the **plot** and **conflict** continue to develop as we read on. **Fiction readers make connections across scenes or moments in a story to identify the conflict. They ask themselves, "How does this new scene build on what I already know? What conflict is developing?"***

In this part of the lesson, you will read from the poem "The inside of Mom and Dad's bedroom closet" on page 44 to the end of the poem "pul-chri-tu-di-nous" on page 55 of The Crossover by Kwame Alexander.

Model jotting as you read and/or as students share.

As I read aloud, read along in your books and think about connections you can make to what we've already read.

Read from the poem "The inside of Mom and Dad's bedroom closet" on page 44 to the end of the poem "pa-tel-lar ten-di-ni-tis" on page 49.

⋮ **Think Aloud:** Let's consider how these two poems build on what we already know and the **conflicts** they develop in the story. These two poems deepen our understanding of Chuck Bell, Josh and JB's dad. From previous poems, we know that the boys have a close relationship with

their dad and that he is part of their inspiration for playing basketball. We know that he used to play basketball and had to stop, but we don't know why.

But now, the boys, and the reader, are learning some new information about Chuck's past: When he played basketball, he received a letter asking him to try out for the Los Angeles Lakers. He also had patella tendonitis that he decided not to have surgery for, which ended his basketball career.

These poems deepen our understanding of Chuck's past. We're left wondering—along with Josh—why Chuck “never had surgery / on his patella tendinitis.” As readers, we get the sense that the reason behind Chuck's decisions might be important to more fully understanding his character and a main **conflict** in the text.

Read to the end of the poem “Basketball Rule #2” on page 51.

Ask:

How does “Basketball Rule #2” connect to “Basketball Rule #1”? How does it deepen our understanding of Chuck?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- The poem “Basketball Rule #2” is a text Josh receives from his dad that shares advice for basketball and life. It connects to “Basketball Rule #1” by showing another example of how Chuck guides his sons.
- This poem causes the reader to wonder why Chuck made the choice to end his basketball career: Did he take his own advice to “Hustle dig / Grind push” when he opted out of surgery, or was his decision necessary for him to “live smarter”?

Read to the end of the poem “pul-chri-tu-di-nous” on page 55.

Ask:

How does this series of poems develop the **conflict** growing between JB and Josh?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- In these poems, we see that the new girl is getting a lot of attention from Josh's friends, and now she's talking to JB. This makes us wonder if Josh will become jealous of JB, or if JB will start spending more time with girls than Josh.
- These poems develop our understanding of JB's distraction with girls. Josh previously noticed that JB has been more into girls lately, and we wondered if this distraction may potentially cause a rift, and in turn, a **conflict**, between the brothers.



Independent Reading

Now, you will read to page 65 independently. While you read, remember that **fiction readers make connections across scenes or moments in a story to identify the conflict. They ask themselves, "How does this new scene build on what I already know? What conflict is developing?"**

Circulate, notice trends, and coach students in their understanding of the day's Teaching Point as students read. As needed, you may choose to read this portion of the text aloud with a small group.



In this part of the lesson, have students read from the poem "Practice" on page 56 to the end of the poem "Dad Takes Us to Krispy Kreme and Tells Us His Favorite Story (Again)" on page 65 of The Crossover. They should take notes in their Unit Portfolios as they read.

Key Ideas To Look For (Related to the Teaching Point):

- "Walking Home": This poem reveals that Josh is thinking a lot about his dad, including why he didn't have knee surgery and why he can't eat foods with too much salt. His focus on his dad's health suggests there may be an upcoming **conflict** related to this.
- "After we win": This poem implies that JB will continue to grow closer to the new girl, causing the reader to wonder how this might cause **conflict** with Josh in the future.
- "Dad Takes Us to Krispy Kreme and Tells Us His Favorite Story (Again)": At the beginning of the poem, JB says, "Didn't Mom say no more doughnuts?" suggesting that he, too, is concerned for Chuck's health. This concern is short-lived though because the rest of the poem emphasizes Chuck's love for his sons, which helps the reader understand that perhaps his love for his family is greater than his love for the sport.

Back-Pocket Questions To Scaffold:

- How does the poem "Walking Home" build on what we know about Josh's concern for his dad?
- How can we describe JB and Josh's relationship? Is it the same or different from earlier in the story?
- How does the poem "After we win" build on our understanding of JB's preoccupation with girls? What might this scene foreshadow?
- What **conflict** is this scene connected to?

Literature Response



Literature Response Prompt: What potential **conflicts** are emerging at this point in the text?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- A **conflict** may be developing between Josh and JB. Josh is worried about his brother's infatuation with girls and how that might impact JB's relationship with Josh and basketball. Now, a new girl is introduced, and JB appears to be interested in her. This makes Josh's earlier concerns seem real: His brother now has a specific love interest.
- A **conflict** may be developing around Chuck's health. Previously, the reader knew that Chuck's basketball career ended early. Now, the reader learns that that was because of his decision not to have surgery on his knee issue. This decision has been kept secret from the boys, making them wonder why he is keeping this truth from them.

Whole-Class Discourse



Prompt: What potential **conflicts** are emerging at this point in the text?

Back-Pocket Questions To Scaffold:

- How do these poems develop your understanding of a potential **conflict** between Josh and JB?
- How do these poems develop your understanding of a **conflict** in Chuck's past?
- How do these poems develop your understanding of a **conflict** among Chuck and his boys?

Closing

*Through our reading today, we were better able to understand how scenes build on each other throughout a story. Remember that **fiction readers make connections across scenes or moments in a story to identify the conflict. They ask themselves, "How does this new scene build on what I already know? What conflict is developing?"** Keep these ideas in mind as we continue reading the story.*

Lesson 14: Literature Response

LESSON OVERVIEW

TEACHING POINT:

- Writers identify evidence from the text that most closely supports their claim.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

- Literature Response

KEY VOCABULARY:

- N/A

MATERIALS:

- “Qualities of a Strong Literature Response”
- “Qualities of Relevant Evidence”
- Mentor Literature Response prompt
- “Mentor Literature Response Evidence Evaluation”

UNIT PORTFOLIO:

- **Folio 14:** “Lesson 14: Literature Response”

SUGGESTED AGENDA

45 min.

3 min. Engage

10 min. Launch

15 min. Literature Response

10 min. Writers' Circle

5 min. Revise

2 min. Closing

Notes for Lesson Differentiation

TO SUPPORT:

- Literature Response: Provide students with a clear claim so they can focus on identifying the most relevant and accurate evidence and explaining how it supports the claim.
- Literature Response: To help students begin writing, provide the following sentence starter: "Josh's description of the game in the poem 'The Second Half' shows that he ..."

TO ADVANCE:

- Literature Response: Push students to compare multiple possible pieces of evidence and explain which one most clearly supports their idea, and how. For example, ask, "What other quotes did you consider using, and why did you choose this one? How does this quote do a better job supporting your idea than others?"

LANGUAGE AND MLL SUPPORTS:

- Reading Support: If students need support analyzing how Josh's language signals a change in character, preview key words (e.g., "jealous," "mature," "supportive") with visuals and definitions.
- Writing Support: If students need support gathering evidence or forming a claim, provide a chart with one column for examples of Josh's earlier jealousy and another for his support in "The Second Half." Have students use the chart to explain how his language shows a change in character.

Lesson 14: Literature Response

Teaching Point: Writers identify evidence from the text that most closely supports their claim.

Engage

In a previous Literature Response Lesson, we learned the importance of understanding what a prompt is asking and of writing clear responses with a claim that answers all parts of the prompt.

Today, we will focus on the process that writers go through to ensure they have the best evidence to support their claims.

Launch

Display and review the “Qualities of a Strong Literature Response.”

*When we write Literature Responses, we include text-based evidence to prove our idea, or claim. The evidence we select helps convince our readers that our ideas about the text are accurate. **Writers identify evidence from the text that most closely supports their claim.***

Display and read the “Qualities of Relevant Evidence.”



QUALITIES OF RELEVANT EVIDENCE

1. **Direct Connection to Claim:** The evidence directly relates to the idea in the claim.
2. **Specific:** The evidence includes specific details, examples, or quotes that further support the claim.
3. **Accurate:** The evidence accurately represents what is happening in the text.

We will evaluate the “Mentor Literature Response Evidence Evaluation” that was created in response to the Mentor Literature Response prompt. Then, we’ll consider whether each piece of evidence supports the claim with relevant details. Finally, we will identify how we can apply this learning to our own responses.

Display and read the Mentor Literature Response prompt.

Literature Response Prompt: What is one idea the poem “Five Reasons I Have Locks” develops about Josh?

Teacher’s Note: Highlight, underline, or bold the most significant words from the prompt, and explain that annotating the prompt ensures you understand what is being asked.

Display and review only the claim from the “Mentor Literature Response Evidence Evaluation.”

MENTOR LITERATURE RESPONSE EVIDENCE EVALUATION	
Claim: The poem “Five Reasons I Have Locks” develops the idea that Josh’s hair helps him feel strong in his identity.	
Sample Evidence #1	“Some of my favorite rappers have them: / Lil Wayne, 2 Chainz, and Wale”
Sample Evidence #2	“it helps people know / that I am me and not JB”
Sample Evidence #3	“I watched / the clip of Dad / posterizing / that seven-foot Croatian center / on ESPN’s <i>Best Dunks Ever</i> ”
Sample Evidence #4	“his / long twisted hair like wings / carrying him / high above / the rim—I knew / one day / I’d need / my own wings / to fly”

Ask:

What is the idea in the claim that the mentor writer will need to prove with relevant evidence?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- The mentor writer will need to prove the idea that Josh’s hair helps him feel connected to his identity.

Now, let's explore some sample pieces of evidence. We will ask ourselves if they align with the "Qualities of Relevant Evidence" and if they accurately support the mentor writer's claim.

Reveal the sample evidence from the "Mentor Literature Response Evidence Evaluation." Encourage students to reference the "Qualities of Relevant Evidence" as they evaluate the evidence.

Ask:

Which pieces of evidence best support the claim? Why?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- Evidence #2 and #4 best support the claim because they show examples of how Josh's hair gives him confidence in who he is/his identity.
- Evidence #1 and #3 do not necessarily best support the claim because they do not show examples of how Josh feels more confident in who he is because of his hair. These pieces of evidence name facts about his interests and a moment he recalls from the past.

The mentor writer should incorporate Evidence #2 and Evidence #4 into their response because these pieces of evidence are relevant to proving the idea in their claim. They also align with the prompt.

Whenever you write a Literature Response, you must plan your response by generating a strong idea or claim. Then, ask yourself, "How did I get my idea? What specific details from the text helped me understand this idea?" You will find many details in the text that relate to the prompt or your claim, but you must evaluate the evidence to ensure it is relevant to the idea you are trying to prove.

Let's review the prompt we will work with today.

Display and read the Literature Response prompt for this lesson.

Literature Response Prompt: How does Josh's description of the second half of the game in the poem "The Second Half" signal a meaningful change in his character?

Ask:

What is this prompt asking? What do we need to do in order to answer it?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- This prompt is asking us to explain how Josh's description of the game in the poem "The Second Half" shows that he has changed.
- We need to think about how Josh behaves in this poem, compare that with how he acts earlier in the novel, then name the change. We can pay attention to how he describes the game in this poem to how he describes previous basketball games he doesn't play in.
- We need to include evidence from the text that shows how his feelings or reactions have evolved (evidence that supports what his behavior is earlier in the text and evidence that supports what his behavior is now) and reasoning that explains how this behavior reveals a change in his character.

Now that we understand what the prompt is asking, let's think about our ideas and plan our responses.

Have students briefly discuss their ideas with their partners before beginning to write.



Literature Response



Literature Response Prompt: How does Josh's description of the second half of the game in the poem "The Second Half" signal a meaningful change in his character?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- Josh's description of the second half of the game shows how much he has matured over the course of the novel. In earlier descriptions, Josh often watches his brother play with jealousy. But here, his language is fully complimentary: There is not a single word or phrase that undercuts JB's play or that signals Josh's desire to be back on the team.
- Part of Josh's maturity is his changed attitude toward Alexis. Toward the end of the poem, Josh says, "Coach / and Alexis / and me / we're his choir." These lines show that Josh is not simply fully supporting his brother but is also doing so alongside Alexis. In prior poems, he often looks at Alexis with jealousy or scorn.

Writers' Circle

Use the "Strategies for Sharing Student Work" from the RedThread RISE Implementation Guide to facilitate a discussion of student work that highlights the trends you noticed.

For this lesson, you may want to highlight or provide feedback on:

- Evidence, and whether it:
 - Directly connects back to the claim.
 - Includes relevant, specific details from the text.
 - Demonstrates an accurate understanding of the text.
 - Includes direct quotes from the text.

Revise

Direct students to revise their writing based on the discussion.



Closing

*Today, we talked about how **writers identify evidence from the text that most closely supports their claim**. Every time we write a Literature Response, we must remember to include a claim that answers the question being asked, at least two pieces of textual evidence to support that claim, and reasoning that shows how our evidence proves the idea in our claim.*