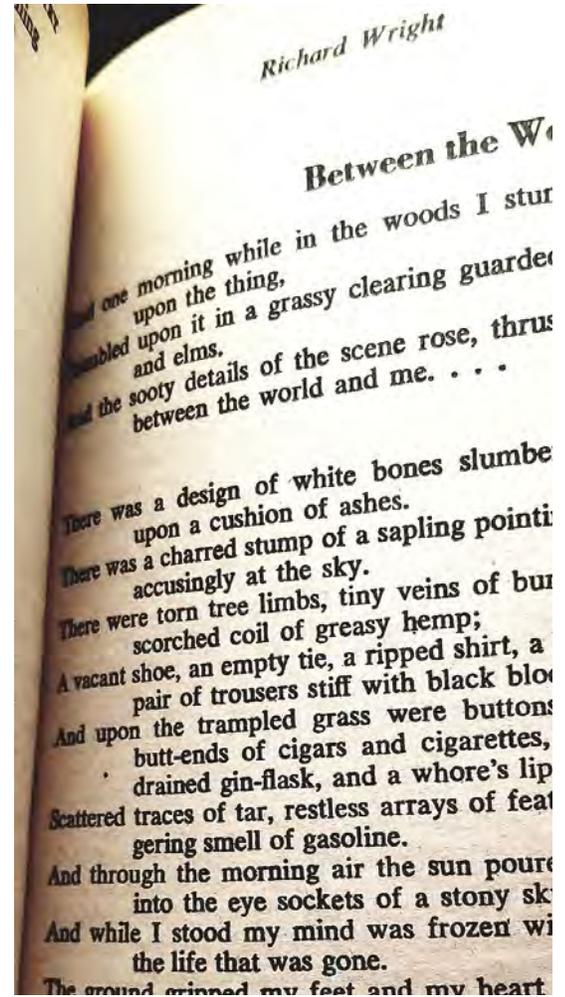
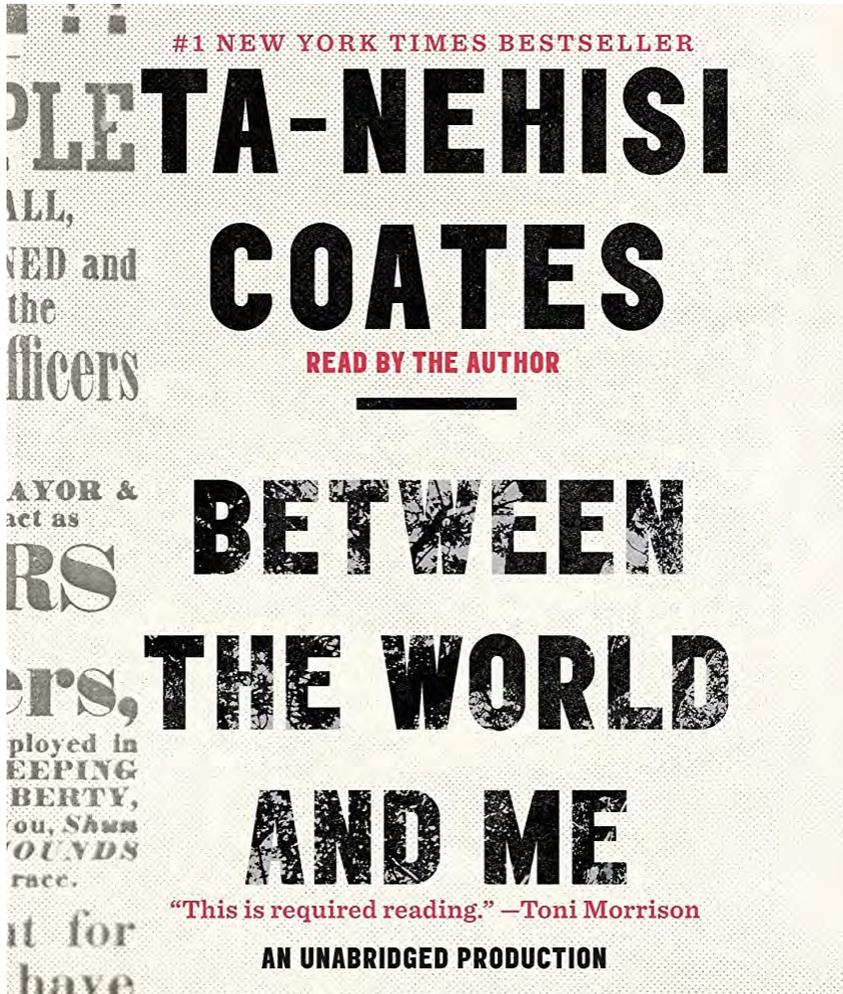


NATIVE LITERATURE PROGRAM DESIGN

11/12th GRADE



UNIT 3

Open Letter



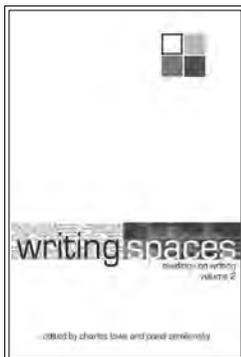
UNIT 3

Open Letter

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Core Texts:



How to Read Like a Writer (from *Writing Spaces* vol. 2)

by Mike Bunn

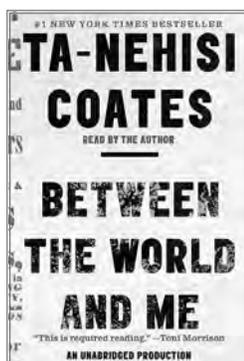
[📖 Text Link](#)



Between the World and Me

poem by Richard Wright

[📖 Text Link](#)



Between the World and Me

by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Genre:	Autobiography
Grade level:	7 - 12
Lexile Level:	1090L

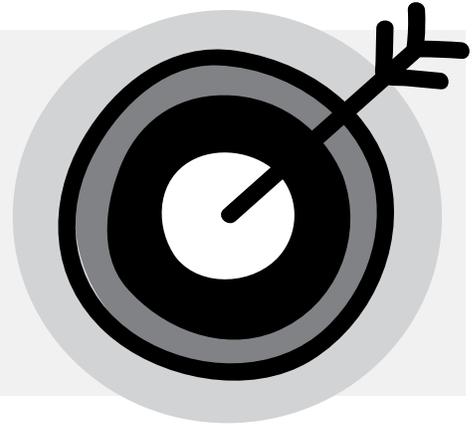
Unit Supporting Texts:

- [📖 "The Challenge of Black Patriotism" by Theodore R. Johnson](#)
- [📖 Equal Justice Initiative: The Legacy of Lynching in the United States - Lesson Plan](#)
- [📖 7 Tips on How to Write a Better Open Letter by Peter Derk](#)
- [📖 An Open Letter to White Girls Regarding Pumpkin Spice and Cultural Appropriation by Tiffany Midge](#)
- [📖 Letter from 2034" by Jason DaWayne Smith](#)
- [📖 "Teaching America's Interwoven Histories" interview with Professor Tiya Miles by Monita K. Bell](#)

UNIT 1 - DESIRED RESULTS

**BIG
IDEAS**

- Reading Like a Writer
- Original Argument
- Racial Justice
- Structural Racism



Essential Questions

(based on yearlong Big Idea)

- How can I “read like a writer” to select rhetorical strategies appropriate for a given genre and rhetorical situation?
- How does the past continue to define American educational values? How can your argument articulate the impact of structural racism on your life?

Enduring Understandings

(based on yearlong Big Ideas)

- Critical writers evaluate their rhetorical situation to make effective choices for claims, evidence, reasoning, organization and style to elicit readers’ responses.
- What happened in the past continues to impact the present American educational values.



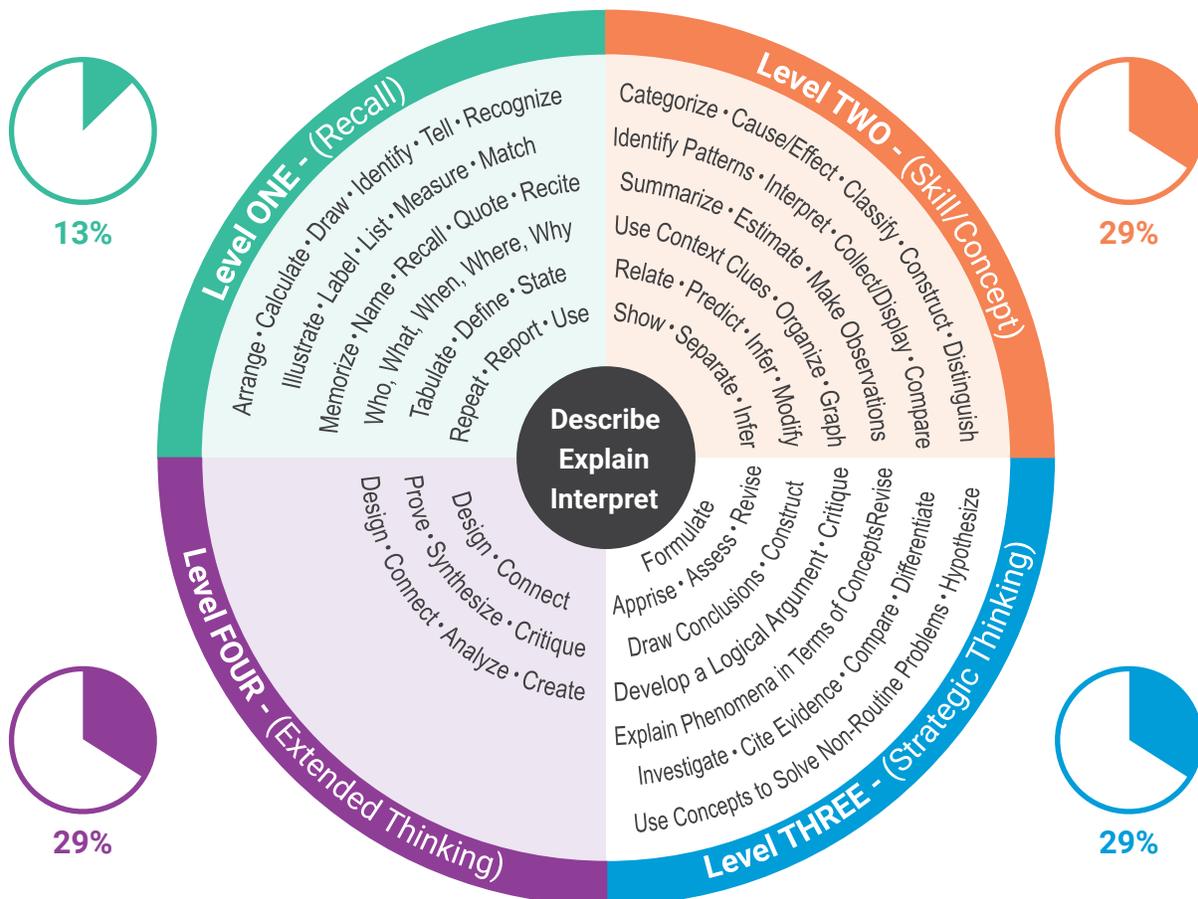
UNIT Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels

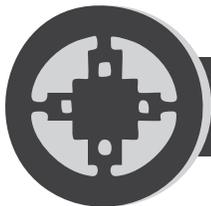
Research overwhelmingly shows a strong positive correlation between student engagement and academic success, retention, and overall student well-being. In the spring of 2025, NISN conducted an audit of the Native Lit curriculum for both Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to both inform users and teacher designers and provide opportunities for adaptation and localization to meet the needs of their students and communities.

Norman Webb developed the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) framework in the late 1990's to categorize expectations and learning tasks according to the complexity of engagement required. It is important for educators to be aware of what makes a task complex vs difficult so that teachers can manage and adjust the rigor and or depth of their academic expectations of their students. (Webb, 2023)

Reference Articles:

- [An Inside Look at Webb's Depth of Knowledge](#) / [Using Webb's Depth of Knowledge to Increase Rigor](#)





The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

What is UDL?

The UDL Guidelines are a tool used in the implementation of **Universal Design for Learning**, a framework developed by **CAST** to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. **The goal of UDL** is learner agency that is purposeful & reflective, resourceful & authentic, strategic & action-oriented.

The guidelines offer a set of concrete suggestions that can be applied to any discipline or domain to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities. The new iteration of the UDL Guidelines responds to a strong call from the field—both practitioners and researchers alike—to address critical barriers rooted in biases and systems of exclusion for learners with and without disabilities.

Citation: udlguidelines.cast.org



UDL Guidelines

	Design Multiple Means of Engagement	Design Multiple Means of Representation	Design Multiple Means of Action & Expression
Access	<p>Design Options for Welcoming Interests & Identities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimize choice and autonomy Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity Nurture joy and play Address biases, threats, and distractions 	<p>Design Options for Perception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support opportunities to customize the display of information Support multiple ways to perceive information Represent a diversity of perspectives and identities in authentic ways 	<p>Design Options for Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vary and honor the methods for response, navigation, and movement Optimize access to accessible materials and assistive and accessible technologies and tools
Support	<p>Design Options for Sustaining Effort & Persistence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify the meaning and purpose of goals Optimize challenge and support Foster collaboration, interdependence, and collective learning Foster belonging and community Offer action-oriented feedback 	<p>Design Options for Language & Symbols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify vocabulary, symbols, and language structures Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols Cultivate understanding and respect across languages and dialects Address biases in the use of language and symbols Illustrate through multiple media 	<p>Design Options for Expression & Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use multiple media for communication Use multiple tools for construction, composition, and creativity Build fluencies with graduated support for practice and performance Address biases related to modes of expression and communication
Executive Function	<p>Design Options for Emotional Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize expectations, beliefs, and motivations Develop awareness of self and others Promote individual and collective reflection Cultivate empathy and restorative practices 	<p>Design Options for Building Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect prior knowledge to new learning Highlight and explore patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships Cultivate multiple ways of knowing and making meaning Maximize transfer and generalization 	<p>Design Options for Strategy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set meaningful goals Anticipate and plan for challenges Organize information and resources Enhance capacity for monitoring progress Challenge exclusionary practices

Citation: CAST (2024). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 3.0 [graphic organizer]. Lynnfield, MA: Author



UNIT LESSONS - UDL

	Design Multiple Means of Engagement	Design Multiple Means of Representation	Design Multiple Means of Action & Expression
Access	Design Options for Welcoming Interests & Identities	Design Options for Perception	Design Options for Interaction
	Lessons: 2	Lessons:	Lessons:
Support	Design Options for Sustaining Effort & Persistence	Design Options for Language & Symbols	Design Options for Expression & Communication
	Lessons:	Lessons: 1	Lessons:
Executive Function	Design Options for Emotional Capacity	Design Options for Building Knowledge	Design Options for Strategy Development
	Lessons:	Lessons: 1	Lessons:



Teacher Tip:

- Anytime there is reading, include Text to Speech (UDL area of Interaction: 4)
- Set meaningful goals for each lesson(s) to further develop UDL area of Strategy Development: 6
- Continually using and referring back to Anchor Charts engages students in building upon prior knowledge and making connections to new learning UDL area of Expression and Communication: 5

UNIT 3 - ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Transfer Statement:

We want our students to analyze arguments that require understanding the multiplicity and complexity of history, so that in the long run, on their own, they will be able to understand and articulate the impact of structural racism on their lives.

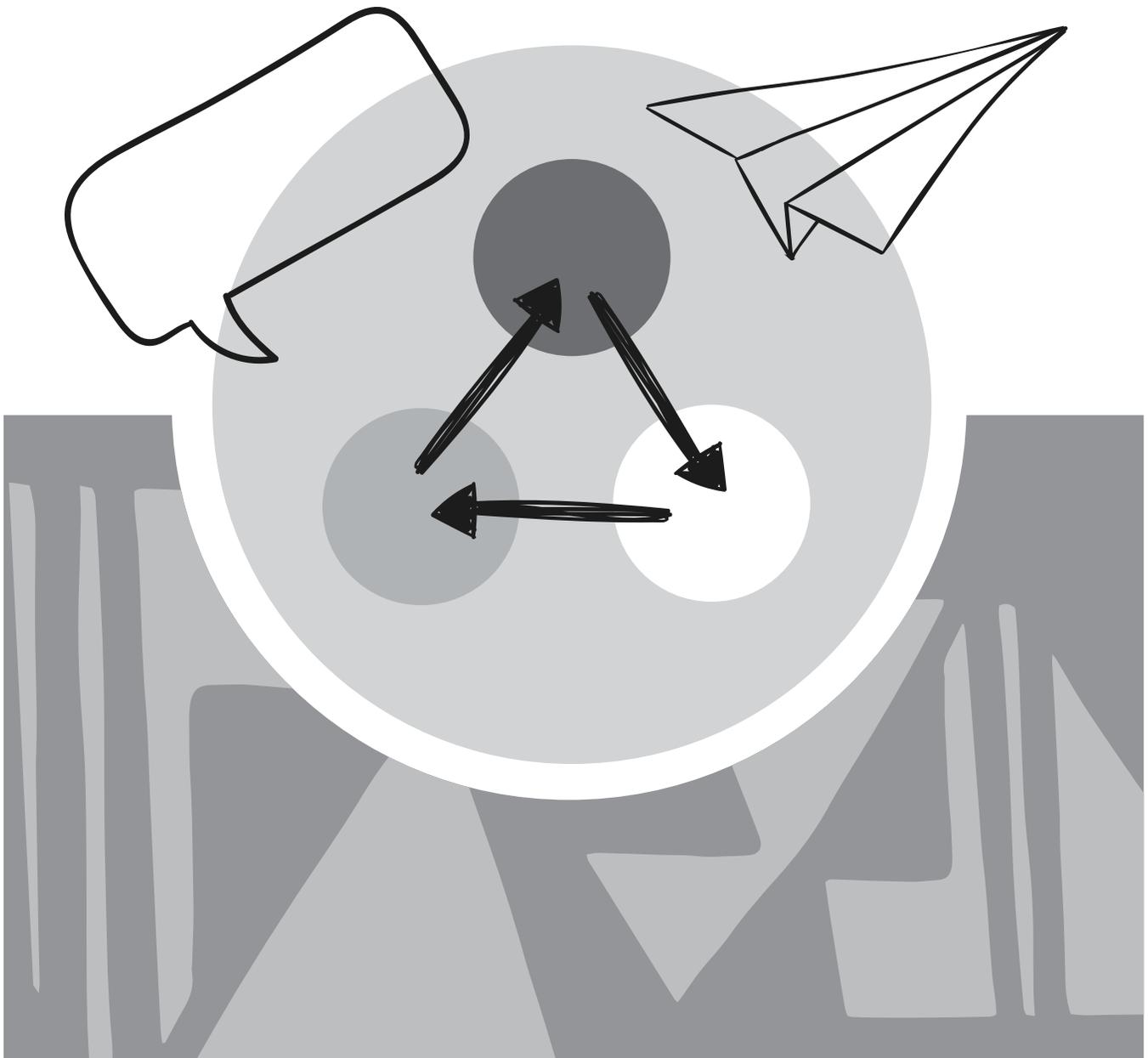


Performance Assessment

USE GRASPS

Goal:	You are writing an open letter in order to apply the rhetorical strategies analyzed to sharpen your writing voice and advocate for justice in your community.
Role:	Student as letter writer.
Audience:	Instructor, peers and determined primary/secondary audience.
Scenario:	After reading Ta-Nehesi Coates' <i>Between the World and Me</i> you will use your journal entry about how the past continues to impact the present to inform the exigence of your open letter. The remaining elements of the rhetorical situation (writer, context, audience - primary and secondary, message and purpose) will serve as a rough draft. Additionally, two other open letter models ("Letter from 2034" and "Open Letter to White Girls") will guide decisions specific to this genre and the essay "How to Read Like a Writer" will help to determine how you might select rhetorical strategies for use in your own writing. Then you will craft an open letter which considers an issue of educational justice.
Product:	A 750 - 1,000 word open letter addressing an issue of educational justice.
Standards:	See Appendix page 11

UNIT 3 - SCOPE + SEQUENCE



LESSON 1

Topical EQ to frame the lesson for students in content, skill, or both:

- Does a shift in audience and genre alter the effectiveness of Adichie’s argument? Why or why not?

Lesson Narrative:

Suggested Timeframe: 1 - 45 minute class

AIM: To move students from reading for comprehension and analysis to reading to understand that writers make deliberate and specific choices.

Mini-lesson:

Collaborative annotation using  hypothes.is

Workshop:

Active, engaged reading of the article, pausing to annotate and give students time to process ideas, ask questions and read each others’ annotations.

Closing:

All students share one engaging idea from the essay.

Homework Extension:

Complete the reading and annotations. Answer the four Discussion Questions.

Anchor Standards:

**Reading:
Informational**

 **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2**

Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

Embedded Assessment(s)

Hypothesis Annotations - high quality annotations throughout the article that offer insight (connections/ interpretation/key ideas), ask questions, and/or respond to another student's annotations.

Discussion Questions:

1. How is "Reading Like a Writer" similar to and/or different from the way(s) you read for other classes?
2. What kinds of choices do you make as a writer that readers might identify in your written work?
3. Is there anything you notice in this essay that you might like to try in your own writing?
What is that technique or strategy? When do you plan to try using it?
4. What are some of the different ways that you can learn about the context of a text before you begin reading it?

LESSON 2

Topical EQ to frame the lesson for students in content, skill, or both:

- How can I use writing as a tool for self-reflection?

Lesson Narrative:

Suggested Timeframe: 📖 [The Writer's Notebook](#) should be completed over the course of approximately 14 calendar days. There are 12 entries and students should write for a minimum of 20 minutes per entry. Aim to complete half the entries in class, and half as homework.

AIM:

1. Students continue to develop their own writing voice by writing often, and a lot.
2. To awaken student creativity and increase their sensitivity to the impact of their experiences.

Mini-lesson:

Overview of the purpose and function of a Writer's Notebook.

Workshop: Complete Entry #1

Closing:

Review grading criteria and due date for all entries, as well as the following disclaimer: I will read all of the entries. Please note that what you write is confidential. I do not share your entries with anyone unless you write about harming yourself or others, then I am obligated to report these concerns.

Homework Extension:

Half of the entries (6) will be completed independently.

Anchor Standards:

Writing	<p>📖 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.</p>
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Embedded Assessment(s)

📖 [The Writer's Notebook](#) - 12 entries, handwritten, that adhere to the daily topic, are detailed and provide evidence of thoughtfulness and effort.

LESSON 3

Topical EQ to frame the lesson for students in content, skill, or both:

- What is the structure of Theodore R. Johnson’s argument? (Skill)
- How has your perspective and/or definition of patriotism shifted? (Content)

Lesson Narrative:

Student’s closely read and analyze the structure of the argument “The Challenge of Black Patriotism” and consider how structural racism has lauded a biased notion of patriotism in the United States

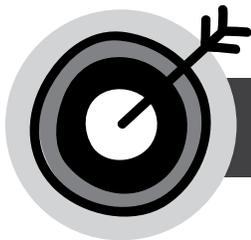
Workshop: Complete Entry #1

 **Key Equity Term:**

Structural Racism: Cultural racism refers to representations, messages and stories conveying the idea that behaviors and values associated with white people or “whiteness” are automatically “better” or more “normal” than those associated with other racially defined groups. Cultural racism shows up in advertising, movies, history books, definitions of patriotism, and in policies and laws. Cultural racism is also a powerful force in maintaining systems of internalized supremacy and internalized racism. It does that by influencing collective beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behavior, what is seen as beautiful, and the value placed on various forms of expression. All of these cultural norms and values in the U.S. have explicitly or implicitly racialized ideals and assumptions (for example, what “nude” means as a color, which facial features and body types are considered beautiful, which child-rearing practices are considered appropriate.)

Embedded Assessment(s)

Rhetorical Situation Graphic Organizer - Complete the following graphic organizer in order to establish the rhetorical situation. Provide an answer (your own words) and evidence (direct quote) from the text to support your understanding of each component.



Anchor Standards

English Language Arts Anchor Standards

As the NISN Curriculum was developed, Teacher Designers aligned content utilizing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). As an open source document, we recognize that as a user, you may not reside where CCSS are utilized. Please utilize the language from the CCSS below to find alignment with the teaching standards for your local area or consult your state’s crosswalk documents aligned to the CCSS.

<p>Reading: Literature or Informational</p>	<p> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6 Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.</p>
<p>Writing</p>	<p> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.B Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.</p>
<p>Speaking and Listening</p>	<p> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.A Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.</p>



Designers Positionality Statement

EMILY BEENEN is a white, cisgender woman from the Midwest who has been teaching at the Native American Community Academy for 15 years. She chose to apply to this particular school because she wanted to be a part of an educational system that was progressive and student focused. Her position is that of a white ally that advocates for the mission and vision of the school, which is to provide culturally appropriate curriculum that privileges the voices of Indigenous people, to prepare students with the critical skills needed for the rigor and expectation of higher education (while acknowledging the institutionalized racism of this system) and to create an environment that supports students' holistic wellness.

MICHELLE SPROUSE is a white, cisgender, heterosexual woman from the Midwest. She began her teaching career on the Navajo Nation in 2004 and later taught for nine years at the Native American Community Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Michigan where she studies English and Education. Michelle seeks ways for her students to develop literacy skills as they actively participate in on-going public conversations.

Emily and Michelle draw on their experiences as women in a patriarchal society to develop empathy for others in marginalized positions while recognizing that their white privilege shapes their world views and teaching. Both value reading and teaching diverse literatures to better understand and address the needs of their students and their communities.

The curricular framework of this course is based on the AP Language & Composition Course; however, the designers seek to center the voices of historically marginalized people rather than a traditional Western Canon as texts worthy of rigorous study. While the skills addressed in this curriculum would prepare students for the AP Language & Composition exam, the designers' primary goal is to cultivate the reading and writing skills for college success and realizing social justice.

The designers want to acknowledge the paradoxical tension that cannot be fully resolved; we are promoting and advocating for a culturally appropriate curriculum that is aligned to the standards and assessments of an inherently racist educational system. We are attempting to operate from a place that is strengths-based and values the contributions students can make to undermine oppressive systems and create a new world order.

NISN Statement on Teacher Authorship and Ownership: NISN pays teachers a stipend to design curriculum over the summer. All that NISN asks in return is permission to share the curriculum you design with other schools working to Indigenize schooling for Native American students within and outside of the network, always maintaining an indication of your authorship on curriculum documents. Likewise, any individual who is exposed to work that is generated by another affiliated individual of the NISN will indicate original source authorship. This includes the provision that no one shall use another teacher or developer's curriculum for financial profit.