

NATIVE LITERATURE PROGRAM DESIGN

7th GRADE



UNIT 4

Worldbuilding: Building the
Future in Literature and in Action

UNIT 4

 Yearlong Curriculum

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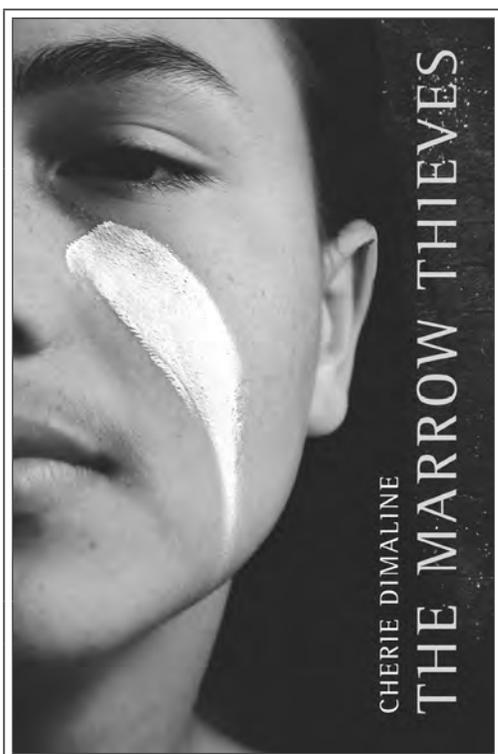


Designers: Sarah Caldwell and Kelsey Gorman

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.

UNIT 4

Core Texts:



The Marrow Thieves

by Cherie Dimaline

Genre:	Novel, Science Fiction
Story Origin:	Métis

Grade level:	8 - 12
Lexile Level:	HL810L

“Tumaki”

by Nnedi Okorafor

Genre:	Afrofuturist Short Story
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Unit Supporting Texts: Alternative Texts

-  [Interview with Suzanne Singer of Native Renewables](#) (interview)
-  [“Breakthrough: Bitter Water”](#) on Science Friday (profile of Karletta Chief’s community-focused work as a hydrologist)
-  [“Why Stories Matter”](#) by Marshall Ganz (short essay)
-  [Episode 707 of This American Life](#) (Prologue on Afrofuturism by Neil Drummond)

This unit offers several opportunities to engage with students through literature circles. Individual adapters and users of this curriculum might use the following resources to plan for their classroom's approach:

1. General Background on Literature Circles:

Harvard Graduate School of Education: [Literature Circles](#) | Harvard Graduate School of Education

2. Research on Defining Roles and Methods of Gradual Release:

[Literature Circles 2.0 Updating a Classic Strategy for the 21st Century](#) (Luis Javier Pentón Herrera & Tabitha Kidwell).pdf

3. An example of how a middle school teacher might approach literature circles:

[How to Plan for Middle School Literature Circles](#) (Kasey Kiehl: The Literacy Effect)

4. Review the Native Literature Project 6th grade resources on literature circles.

Unit 4 from 6th grade uses a similar structure.

RESOURCES/APPENDICES:

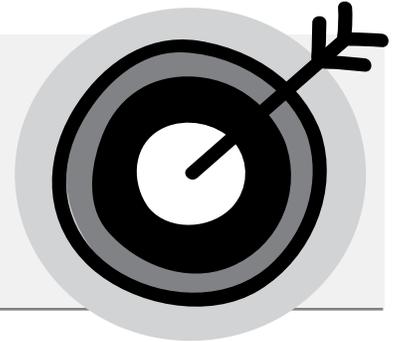
 [Resources folder](#)

-  [Appendix 1](#) - Utopia and Dytopia Definitions
-  [Appendix 2](#) - Four Windows Graphic Organizer
-  [Appendix 3](#) - Worldbuilding Graphic Organizer
-  [Appendix 5](#) - Book Club Plan for The Marrow Thieves
-  [Appendix 6](#) - Digital Character notebook
-  [Appendix 7](#) - Chapter Summaries for The Marrow Thieves
-  [Appendix 8](#) - Signposts in The Marrow Thieves
-  [Appendix 10](#) - Organizer vocabulary examples
-  [Appendix 11](#) - Personal Essay Rubric

UNIT 4 - DESIRED RESULTS

BIG IDEAS

- Worldbuilding
- Decolonization
- Movement Building



Essential Questions

(based on yearlong Big Idea)

Indigenous Identity:

- What type of world is worth building?
- How does your vision for the future draw strength from your identity, culture, and community?

Empowerment, Equity, and Justice:

- What people/organizations in your community are already working to build this future?
- What actions can we take to support them in movement building?

Analysis, Interpretation, and Synthesis:

- How do story settings shape the characters and the plot, particularly in works of speculative fiction?

Enduring Understandings

(based on yearlong Big Ideas)

Indigenous Identity:

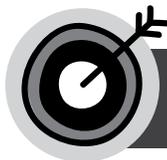
- Writers of color draw from their cultures, histories, and values to craft works of speculative fiction. The future worlds they build may offer a critique of the past and present, encouraging readers to think critically about how choices in the present may affect the future.

Empowerment, Equity, and Justice:

- Movement building allows communities to exercise their collective power and create positive change.

Analysis, Interpretation, and Synthesis:

- Worldbuilding is the process through which writers of speculative fiction create a fictional world incorporating elements such as geography, history, and ecology.



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.RL.7.3 - Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).</p>
<p>Writing</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1 - Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence</p>
<p>Speaking and Listening</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.4 - Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.3.A - Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.</p>



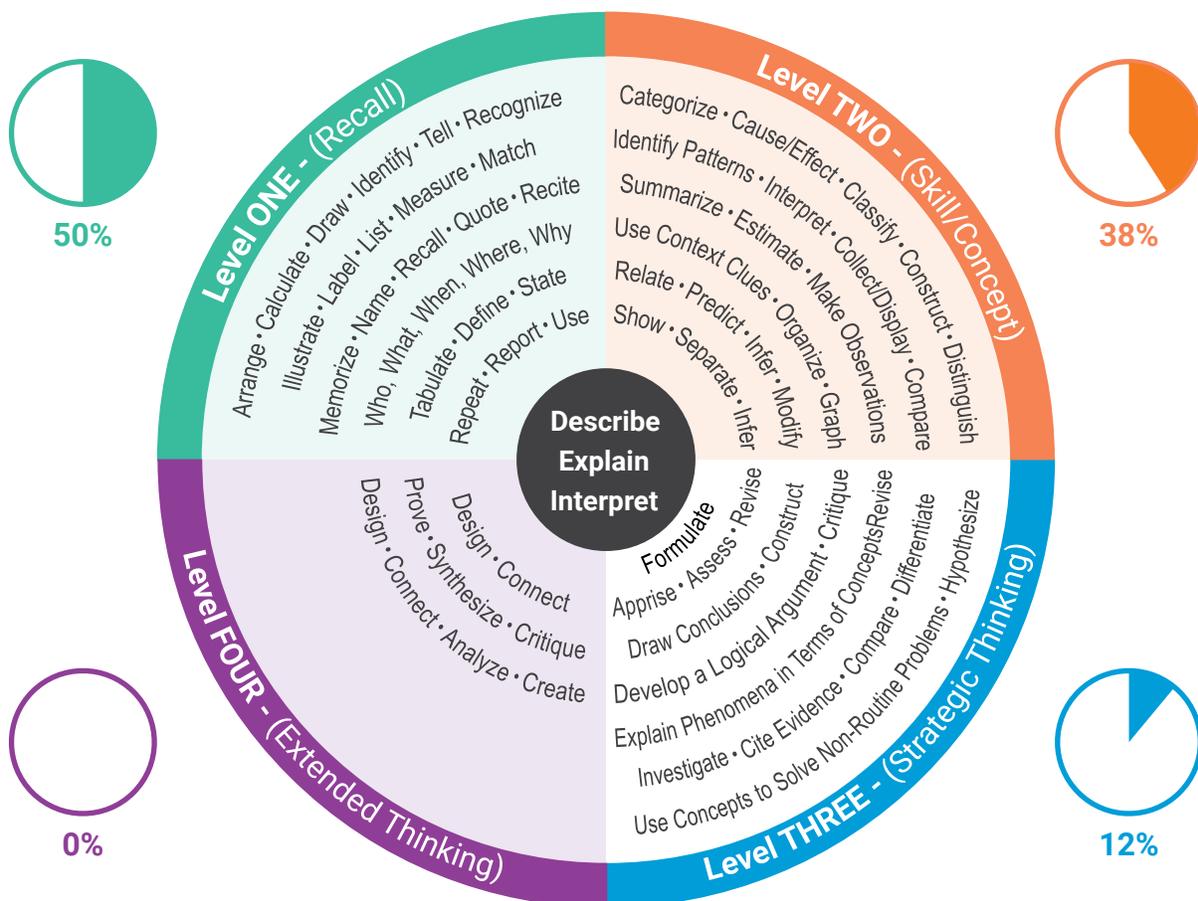
UNIT Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels

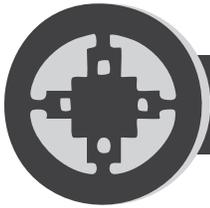
Research overwhelmingly shows a strong positive correlation between student engagement and academic success, retention, and overall student well-being. In the spring of 2025, NISN conducted an audit of the Native Lit curriculum for both Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) 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	Design Options for Welcoming Interests & Identities	Design Options for Perception	Design Options for Interaction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimize choice and autonomy Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity Nurture joy and play Address biases, threats, and distractions 	<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 	<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	Design Options for Sustaining Effort & Persistence	Design Options for Language & Symbols	Design Options for Expression & Communication
	<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 	<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 	<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	Design Options for Emotional Capacity	Design Options for Building Knowledge	Design Options for Strategy Development
	<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 	<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 	<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
	Design Options for Welcoming Interests & Identities	Design Options for Perception	Design Options for Interaction
Access	Lessons: 2–4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Lessons: 1, 2–4, 5, 6, 8, 9	Lessons: 2–4, 5, 6, 8
	Design Options for Sustaining Effort & Persistence	Design Options for Language & Symbols	Design Options for Expression & Communication
Support	Lessons: 1, 2–4, 5, 6, 8, 10*	Lessons: 1, 2–4, 5	Lessons: 1, 2–4, 5, 7*, 8
	Design Options for Emotional Capacity	Design Options for Building Knowledge	Design Options for Strategy Development
Executive Function	Lessons: 1, 5, 8, 10*	Lessons: 1, 2–4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Lessons: 5, 8



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

Transfer Statement:

We want our students to learn how to build a vision for the future, so that in the long-run, on their own, they will be able to participate in their communities to build movements for positive change.

Students will engage in a project titled “Building the Future.” This project-based culminating task will consist of a group component and individual assessment task. Students will work in groups or class periods to interview, visit, and create a multimedia profile of an individual or community organization that is working toward community transformation. (Examples in Albuquerque might include: Karuna Collectiva, La Plazita, Three Sisters Kitchen, Hiyupo Alliance, Cultivating Coders, Native Health Alliance, Red Planet Books and Comics, Fight for Our Lives). Students and families can also recommend individuals or organizations to profile. Student groups/class periods will then plan an action (e.g. fundraising, awareness-raising campaign through social media, support of an event) that will grow the work of this individual or organization. Finally, students will each write a personal essay in the style of an op-ed opinion essay sharing a vision they have for their community’s future, incorporating themes and work they have done throughout the year in Native Literature and the work of the individual/organization they partnered with.

Guiding questions might include:

- What type of future is worth building?
- You had to choose one area to focus on for this essay. Why do you think this area is particularly relevant for creating a positive future for your community?
- In what ways can you start working towards this vision of the future in the present?
- How can you draw from the strength of your identity, your elders, and your culture as you work to build the future?
- What themes/characters/events from Native Literature texts you read this year connect with your future vision?



STAGE 2



Performance Assessment (use GRASPS)

 GRASPS

Goal: To engage in the process of movement building and hone writing and speaking skills by partnering with a local organization to lift up the work they are doing.

Role: Marketer and Publicist

Audience: Your local community

Scenario: The organizer you work with is trying to build awareness and expand their impact. You will support them by creating a multimedia profile or other digital product to support them in achieving their goals (e.g. recruiting volunteers, promoting participation in an event, raising money). You will have the opportunity to present your work and receive feedback from peers and community members at the end of the unit.

Product: A multimedia profile or other other digital product.

Standards: **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4**
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

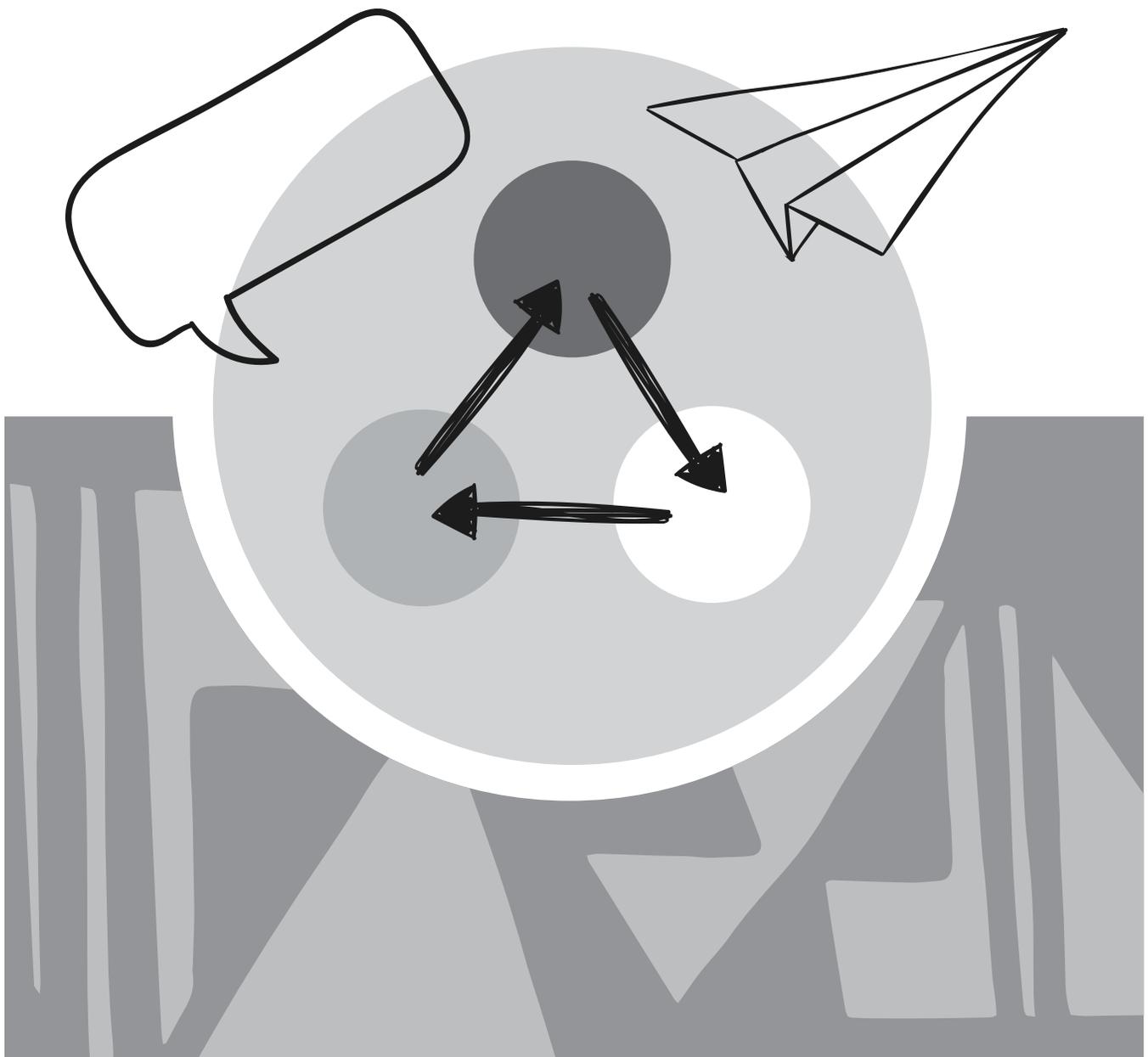
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.4

Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.5

Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

UNIT 4 - SCOPE + SEQUENCE



Lesson Narrative:

1. Say: *We are jumping into a new unit that will focus on a type of fiction called speculative fiction. Speculative fiction includes elements that do not currently exist in reality. The particular type of speculative fiction we will focus on most is science fiction. In this unit, we'll be reading science fiction by writers of color and we'll be thinking about how writers use this writing to critique and illuminate problems and injustices in our world. You'll also have the opportunity to think about your vision for the future and how you can start to work towards that vision right now. Let's do a quick web about science fiction in groups. What do you think of when you hear the word science fiction? Think of characteristics of science fiction as well as examples of science fiction in books for movies.*
2. Have each group create a web then share out with the class.
3. Play the following videos, the [👉 first](#) outlining the concept of a Utopia and the [👉 second](#) outlining the concept of a dystopia. Work with students to fill out the [👉 Appendix 1](#) Utopia/Dystopia notes.
4. Ask students: *Why do you think dystopias are more frequently represented in literature and film than utopias?*
5. Say: *Now, we're going to think about our focus on science fiction by authors of color. I want to introduce the term "Afrofuturism." Afrofuturism is a movement of black artists and creators imagining the future of black people. As we listen to this episode from the radio show This American Life take notes on your Four Windows Graphic Organizer. ([Appendix 2](#)).*
6. Make a connection to Afrofuturist works like *Black Panther* that contain elements of utopias.
7. Play the [👉 prologue](#) from episode 707 of This American Life by Neil Drumming. Ask students to define Afrofuturism and document their reactions on the graphic organizer.
8. Say: *Indigenous futurism is also a movement in Native American art and culture. We'll be thinking about how the futuristic work of native artists, writers, and creators of color connects themes from the past, present, and future with a vision for justice for their communities.*

Lesson Question(s):

- What are utopias, dystopias, and futurisms?
- Why might this genre of story telling matter?



Anchor Standard(s):

Reading:
Literature or
Informational

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.



Embedded Assessment(s):

Four Windows Graphic Organizer and Utopia/Dystopia Notes. To keep track of student thinking and notetaking, you might use a checklist or quickly annotate each students' graphic organizer as you close out this lesson.

Lesson Narrative:

1. Say: *Today we are going to begin reading an Afrofuturist story, “Tumaki”, by Nigerian American author Nnedi Okorafor. As we read, we’ll be filling out [Appendix 3](#) the Worldbuilding Graphic Organizer. What kind of world has Okorafor built as the setting for this work of speculative fiction?*
The Afrofuturist story “Tumaki” can be found in two different collections:
 - [After the End: Recent Apocalypses by Paula Guran](#) | Goodreads
 - [Kabu Kabu](#) – Nnedi Okorafor
2. Complete a K-W-L chart about Africa with students.
Say: *How is the experience of Indigenous Africans similar to and different from the experiences of Indigenous peoples of North and South America?* Highlight the common historical experience of colonialism and teach the word decolonization, providing the definition: *“the active resistance against colonial actors, and the shifting of power and self-determination to the Indigenous peoples.”*
3. Model reading and adding to the graphic organizer. Read the top information and note the portion that states, “This audio file has been automatically translated form the Igbo language.”
Say: *You might wonder if this is a fictional language, but Igbo is one of the indigenous African languages spoken in Nigeria.*
4. Read paragraph two and think aloud about words like “Ginen” and “e-legba” as well as the phrase “Most everything else was very much from earth.”
Think aloud: *The technology described here represents some type of alien technology. Are the Ginen an alien species? Add these elements to the technology section.*
5. Read paragraph 3 and note that the woman in the shop is wearing a burka. Add this to the culture section of the graphic organizer.
Say: *I know that a burka is sometimes worn by women who practice Islam. We would say these women are Muslims. There has been a lot of coverage of women in Afghanistan wearing burkas, sometimes because they are forced to by people called the Taliban. However, I also know that many people in Africa are Muslims and that some women choose to wear a burka to follow their faith. Why does the narrator dislike the burka? Why does the woman in the shop say she wears the burka on page 220 and 221?*
6. OVER THE NEXT 2-3 Days: Continue reading through the text in a guided format as a read-along. Some portions of the text are not totally linear, and students will need support in following the logic and interpreting specific elements of the speculative world. Add to the Worldbuilding Graphic Organizer as you read.



Teacher Tip: Remember to come back to the KWL.

7. After reading for multiple days and reaching the end of the story, consider the questions:
 - *What elements of this speculative world did you find compelling or interesting?*
 - *How does the setting shape the plot?*
 - *Do you think Nnedi Okarafor is trying to critique something in the present or past through the elements of this story?*
 - *How do the concepts of utopia, dystopia, and futurism apply to this story?*

8. Provide students with time to journal in response to these questions. Then, allow time for a student-led discussion on this topic. Refer to Appendix the Accountable Talk Moves Anchor Chart to prepare students for discussions. Set up expectations for participation and take notes on student engagement in the discussion. At the end of the discussion, have students add to their original journal entry to elaborate new ideas they developed as a result of their discussion participation.

Lesson Question(s):

- How does the setting shape the plot in stories?

Key Equity Term:

- decolonization



Anchor Standard(s):

Reading:
Literature or Informational

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).



Embedded Assessment(s):

 **Worldbuilding Graphic Organizer.** To help us in this process, we might want to go back to a definition of the literary term setting and think about all of the different ways that an author can develop the setting of a story. We can use the definition from  **City University of New York** to get us started.

Lesson Narrative:

NOTE: As you work with students to engage in their book groups and unit 4 projects, mapping out the sequence of learning will help you keep track of the different lines of learning that students are pursuing in this unit. 📌 [The Unit “Timeline” Graphic Organizer](#) might be a helpful tool when planning out your instruction.

1. Say: *We are now going to read the main novel for this unit, **The Marrow Thieves** by Cherie Dimaline. Like **Red Wolf**, this is a work of fiction by a Canadian author. It is a work of speculative fiction (or science fiction) set in a future Canada. Unlike **Red Wolf**, this work is by an Indigenous author.*
2. Read the first chapter of the text together with the class, collaborating to fill out 📌 [Appendix 3](#) the Worldbuilding Graphic Organizer as you read.
3. Say: *We are going to be reading this book in a book club format. You will get to work in groups of three or four and spend three class periods each week focused on reading this book. Your group will be responsible for scheduling out reading 50 pages each week. You will determine how much you plan to read in class and how much you plan to read at home. You will also collaborate to set deadlines for your group. In addition, each person in your group will have a role. The roles are: Discussion Leader and Vocabulary Collector, Summarizer, Signposts Monitor, and Characterizer. You will take notes related to your role, mostly in a digital format. Your group will share these notes. You will trade roles each week and will have a chance to take on each role. This will allow you to solidify some of the key stances toward literature that we have worked to develop this year.*

NOTE: See 📌 [Appendix 5](#) Book Club Plan for *The Marrow Thieves* for more detailed descriptions and learning content. This appendix includes role descriptions as well as discussion prompts for each of the 26 chapters in this book. In addition, refer to 📌 [Appendices 6-8](#) for digital tools that students can use for collecting and sharing their thoughts about the book related to their roles. These digital tools can be utilized as collaborative thinking spaces for each group.

For the remainder of this unit, plan to give book club groups about 3 class periods per week to work on reading and analyzing the text. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to develop greater independence with planning for and completing reading. It is also an opportunity for them to continue to develop key reading strategies and skills from the year.

For the other two lessons per week, move through the remaining unit lessons as students work toward completing the final projects.

Lesson Question(s):

- What are the problems that our community faces and how can we take action (possible solutions) to address these problems?



Anchor Standard(s):

Reading:
Literature or
Informational

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).



Embedded Assessment(s):

- Worldbuilding Graphic Organizer and other book club tools as described in [Appendix 5](#).
- Use the book club discussion prompts to formatively assess students progress in understanding their reading.
- Use the literature roles to support student accountability and to assess comprehension and vocabulary development.



Teacher Tip: In Lesson 5 consider having daily lesson questions that support the reading goals for that day, and that connect back to the unit essential questions. Also, consider modifying the embedded assessment to match your daily lesson questions.

Lesson Narrative:

1. Show students this  [Ted Talk](#) by Natsai Audrey Chieza titled “Possible futures from the intersection of nature, tech, and society.”
2. Say: *Today, you are going to engage in an activity where you will map some possible solutions related to problems you see in your community and around the world. What problems do you see?*
3. On the board, generate a list of problems. Break students up into partnerships or small groups based on shared interest. At the top of a large sheet of chart paper, ask each group to name the problem they selected, then create a t-chart labeled “Challenges posed by this problem” and “Possible solutions.” If groups are ready to deepen their analysis, add a third space around “challenges” to include “root causes.”
4. Say: *You are going to have the rest of the class period to work on your chart paper. Use your own thinking, but also feel free to do some informal research about your problem.*
5. Provide work time, reminding students that they will share their problems and solutions with the class during the next day’s lesson.

Lesson Question(s):

- What are the problems that our community faces and how can we take action to address these problems?



Anchor Standard(s):

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.



Embedded Assessment(s):

Problem, challenges, and possible solutions charts. This chart could be set up as a simple table or T-chart with 'problems' defined on the left hand side and 'possible solutions' defined on the right hand side.

Lesson Narrative:

1. Provide each group with 5 minutes to share about their problem and the possible solutions they identified.
2. Say: ***Let's explore the actions a couple of Native American scientists have taken to make positive change in their communities.***
3. Play the  **video** Protecting the Waterways of the Navajo Nation which highlights the work done by hydrologist Karletta Chief.
4. Ask students to read and annotate the  **interview** with mechanical engineer Suzanne Singer of Native Renewables highlighting her organization's work to bring solar power to the Navajo Nation.
5. Debrief with the following questions:
 - What actions are these women taking to build a movement for change?
 - How do they build support and momentum for their work?
 - What organizations do you know about locally that are working to build a better future?
6. Begin to develop a list of local organizations that are working to build better futures. (See local suggestions for organizations to contact in the performance task description in Stage 2 of the unit.).
7. Say: ***Moving forward, each class period will be identifying an organization to partner with and learn more about. You will then create a final project to support and amplify the work of this organization.***

Lesson Question(s):

- What is the problem both organizations are attempting to solve?
- What organizations are building a better future in my community?



Anchor Standard(s):

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.



Embedded Assessment(s):

Equity in voice in the classroom discussion. Also, decisions about local organizations that will support our work ahead in this unit will be identified.



Teacher Tip: Use ChatGPT to help find organizations to support the goals in this unit.

Lesson Narrative:

1. Work with your students to select an organization that the class will be partnered with to lift up the work they are doing.
2. Provide students with time to do self-directed research on the organization's website, then have students share what they have learned.
3. Ask students to generate questions they still have about the partner organization. These questions can form the basis for a conversation between students and representatives of the organization.
4. Show students Appendix 9 Building the Future Project Choice Board. Discuss each final project option with students.
Say: *These strategies used by nonprofit organizations are examples of movement-building in the twenty-first century. How can you leverage your strengths as young people with digital awareness to amplify the work this organization is doing?*
5. Provide time for students to indicate their interest about the various project options. Consider allowing students to select which group they will work in based on shared interest in a particular project choice.

NOTE: Pace project work time out in between days that students are conducting book clubs. The next step after this introduction to the Building the Future project would be to schedule a video meeting with representatives of the organization. Students could gather information and get a sense of the organization's goals for the partnership. After a video meeting, students could select their project from the choice board and begin working with their group to develop a plan for this project. Ideally, each class period would visit the physical location of the organization they are working with in order to gather video, audio, and photographs. However, if this is not possible students could do voice and video recordings over the computer and request photographs from the organization. At the end of the project, the organization could provide feedback to all student groups on the products they created. Even if the organization is not able to use all students' work, you can structure opportunities within the school setting for students to share their work and raise awareness. You might have each group schedule a presentation in a lower grades class. As students share their products with peers who did not participate in the project, they can act as change agents who are working to build a movement in support of a better future.



Teacher Tip: Consider virtual or live field trip possibilities to some of the students' organization choices.

Lesson Question(s):

- How can I bring awareness to an organization in the work they are doing that is making positive change in our community?



Anchor Standard(s):

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.



Embedded Assessment(s):

KWL completion and writing summary.



Teacher Tips:

- For the “Building the Future Project,” see the **GRASPS layout** on page 11 of the 7th Grade Yearlong Plan. Teachers should adapt this project to fit their unique context, selecting the questions and products that will best support students in demonstrating their understandings, knowledge, and skills from the 7th grade year.
- Consider starting the lesson with a start intro to each of the organizations from their class list. Then, have the students vote on the organization they want to pursue. Use a KWL to inform the next steps in this lesson.
- Consider having students write a brief persuasive statement convincing the class on why they should focus on a specific organization.

Lesson Narrative:

1. Show  [Appendix 10](#) Organizer Vocabulary example.
Say: *Today, we're going to think about how organizing is a tool for movement building. In community organizing groups of people work together to mobilize communities in ways that build power. But how do you mobilize people around an idea?*
2. Generate ideas with students. Ideas generated might include: listening to community concerns, highlighting shared interests, and storytelling.
3. Say: *In your final writing project this year, you're going to share your vision for the future in a way that incorporates storytelling. We know that stories are powerful. Over and over again in the books we've read this year, we've thought about the way that stories have held power. How did Story in The Marrow Thieves help Frenchie's group and the resistance to organize and fight back?*
4. Share two examples of storytelling with students. The first is a video of a high school student,  [Jordan Howard](#), talking about her work organizing her community to address the issue of plastic waste and an essay by Marshall Ganz, " [Why Stories Matter](#)," about his work as an organizer in the Civil Rights Movement.

Say: *As we look at these two texts, both in the style of a personal essay, let's consider what is similar and different. How do both authors use stories to convey their messages in powerful and engaging ways? What common strategies do they use?* (Personal anecdotes, stories of powerful moments and experiences that changed their perspectives, an outlook of hopefulness, emphasis on the possibility for positive outcomes of actions) *How do their tones and styles differ?* (Marshall Ganz draws more from history and philosophy. He spends more time on abstract ideas. This reflects the nature of this text as a written piece. Jordan Howard emphasizes concrete steps that she and others are able to take to immediately address the problem of plastic waste.)
5. Ask students to complete a Venn diagram chronicling these similarities and differences.
6. Say: *Tomorrow, you will embark on a piece of writing that shares your vision for the future. You will also incorporate some ideas and quotations from the literature we have read this year. Be thinking about your essay. What moves you? What do you want to share with the world?*

Lesson Question(s):

- How can we share our visions for the future to inspire action in others?

Key Equity Term:

- [Community Organizing](#)



Anchor Standard(s):

Writing:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1](#)

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.



Embedded Assessment(s):

-  [Personal Essays Rubric](#).
- Venn diagram.



Teacher Tip: Consider providing the  [Personal Essays Rubric](#) at the beginning of this unit and making it clear how it connects to the Building the Future project.

Lesson Narrative:

NOTE: As you work with students to engage in their book groups and unit 4 projects, mapping out the sequence of learning will help you keep track of the different lines of learning that students are pursuing in this unit. [📖 The Unit “Timeline” Graphic Organizer](#) might be a helpful tool when planning out your instruction.

1. Say: *You’re going to be writing a personal essay to end the year. Earlier in the year, we’ve written essays and mini-essays that have incorporated lots of evidence from texts and our analysis of that evidence in relation to a thesis. Now we’re going to write a more open-form essay. We’ll still write our essays in paragraphs. Each essay will begin with an introduction paragraph and a conclusion paragraph. Each body paragraph will start with a thesis sentence. However, we’re going to use lots of different types of support in each essay, not just textual evidence. You might use personal anecdotes, information that you have gathered through research, and some quotes or examples from books you read this year.* (NOTE: See background evidence from The Two Writing Teachers [📖 blog](#) for teaching an essay in this style.)
2. Model this writing process for students. Introduce [📖 Appendix 11](#) the Topic Brainstorm Sheet. This will serve as an essay outline. Model completing this sheet for your topic. Take an envelope and label it with the topic you plan to focus on for your vision of the future.
3. Say: *You may struggle as you are outlining your essay. If you find that brainstorming each paragraph topic is difficult, you can start by collecting the meat of your essay. This can actually help you think through your topic more deeply.*
4. Model writing information related to the main topic on notecards. This might include mini-stories or anecdotes, background information gained through research with source information, or Native Literature Text connections (quotes, paraphrased information, or a combination).
5. Show students how they can label envelopes with paragraph numbers and topic sentences and place notecards in corresponding envelopes as an organizational strategy.
NOTE: Students should continue to work on their essays over the next several weeks. In this unit students are balancing 3 tasks - *The Marrow Thieves* book club, their Building the Future projects, and these final essays. Elements of the Building the Future project will be difficult to time. There may be delays in communication with partner organizations, and different groups may move at a different pace. The personal essay will provide a work focus for students during down times in their Building the Future Project.

Have students refer to [Appendix 11](#), the Personal Essay rubric, as they work towards completing their essays. Consider having students record their essays and listen to the recording as a revision strategy. Continue to use strategies such as peer editing, writing conferences, and critique that students have relied on throughout the year to polish their writing.

When students complete their essays, consider having a publishing event such as a Ted Talk style essay reading.

Note that some students may finish all the tasks for this unit at a faster rate than others. You might consider providing additional book club or literature circle options for these students, including:

- [📖 *The March Trilogy*](#) by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell
- [📖 *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*](#) (Young Adult Version) by Trevor Noah
- [📖 *Not Your Princess: Voices of Native American Women*](#) edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale

Lesson Question(s):

- How can I craft a personal essay that incorporates many different types of evidence, including my own stories and perspectives?



Anchor Standard(s):

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.



Embedded Assessment(s):

[📖 Personal Essays Rubric.](#)