6th Grade Introduction to & Analysis of Various Genres
A Three Week Unit

Week 1
Snapshot: Includes characteristics of adventure, fantasy, children's literature, historical fiction with accompanying online articles, science fiction, mystery

Week 2
Snapshot: Includes biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, informative & persuasive genres, speeches, opinion & editorial genres… A little more writing-intensive for students than Week One.

Week 3
Snapshot: Includes poetry & drama, myths, short story fiction, unit review & quiz (… and mini-lessons for each day, too!)

Why is this only a three-week unit?
6th graders are funny little people :) They're not quite secondary, but they're not really elementary anymore, either. Major gaps can still exist, so this unit is only three weeks long because it was only meant to serve as a way to begin the school year or as a way to provide intervention and support for those students who are still struggling with genres when reading and writing. This is a fantastic unit to use to help students understand that all reading and all writing are not the same, and good readers know how to approach each genre a little bit differently in order to comprehend the reading in the best way.

When would be a good time of the year for me to use this unit?
My favorite time of year to use this unit is during those first few weeks of school. It's not too heavy and involving for you OR for you students (so you can spend much-needed time enforcing and practicing school / classroom procedures). Plus, this unit ensures that all your students are beginning the year with the same foundation regardless of what they missed or excelled at in previous years. My second favorite time of the year for this unit is as a review towards the end of the year. I love that it provides an interactive summary of all the major genres you've taught. It's just a good way to finish out the school year and to send them on to 7th grade!

What would be a good unit to complete after this one?
If you have total freedom with what you can teach next, I would recommend moving into the Elements of Fiction / Short Story Unit since that would flow nicely after the last week of this genre unit. But really, it'll be 100% fine to move into any of the other 6th grade units because by now, students have a foundational level of working knowledge so they can make connections to new concepts!



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6th Grade Elements of Fiction & Short Stories
A Six Week Unit

Week 1
Snapshot: Plot diagram, elements of plot, setting analysis, videos to teach with

Week 2
Snapshot: Elements of characterization, conflict analysis, text evidence

Week 3
Snapshot: Theme vs. topic, short story analysis, making inferences, using text evidence

Week 4
Snapshot: Mood, tone, foreshadow, suspense, flashback, symbolism

Week 5
Snapshot: Elements of fiction writing project: plot, setting, characters, etc. (This is a two-week writing project that would make an awesome final assessment! That's how most people use it!)

Week 6
Snapshot: Elements of fiction writing project: dialogue, conflict, theme, etc. (This is where students finish the writing project. It does make for a good alternative assessment to close out the unit.)

6th Grade Elements of Plays & Drama
A Four Week Unit

Week 1
Snapshot: Form & structure of a play, reading with tone, academic vocabulary

Week 2
Snapshot: Academic vocabulary, analysis of excerpts from plays, read/analyze class play

Week 3
Snapshot: Close reading analysis, write a scene, be creative

Week 4
Snapshot: Unit test, review activities, closing / end of unit lesson



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6th Grade Elements of Poetry & Figurative Language
A Four Week Unit

Week 1
Snapshot: Figurative language analysis, introduction to analysis and close reading of poetry

Week 2
Snapshot: Author's purpose, theme, paired poetry passages, annotations, text evidence

Week 3
Snapshot: Analysis of figurative language and poetry, theme, devices, project

Week 4
Snapshot: It's the end of the unit, so we begin with two full days' worth of figurative language and poetry activities followed by review lessons (a few different options here) and two versions of a unit test. This is a full week! Really, you could even spread this week out into nearly two weeks (if you need to) or you could omit the first two days' worth of activities and move right into the review and test materials if you're crunched for time.

Do you want to stretch this unit even further into a full six weeks unit (or more)?

Check out first four weeks of the 7th grade Descriptive Unit in the Language Arts Teachers lesson plan area. Each of those weeks teaches poetry at a deeper level than what you've just covered with your sixth graders, so choose any of them to extend the poetry / figurative language unit here!



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6th Grade Elements of Media Literacy & Persuasion
A Six Week Unit

Week 1
Snapshot: Claim, argument, emotional/logical appeal, irrelevant information

Week 2
Snapshot: Advertisements, generalizations, faulty reasoning, loaded language

Week 3
Snapshot: Compare/contrast & analyze various persuasive techniques in media and in text forms

Week 4
Snapshot: Online privacy, media usage, commercials & ads, etc.

Week 5
Snapshot: Persuasive language in excerpts from famous speeches

Week 6
Snapshot: End-of-unit review activities, two versions of unit test, etc.



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6th Grade Informational Texts: Text Features & Text Structures
A Four Week Unit

Week 1

Snapshot: Introduction to text features & text structures. Close reading activities for nonfiction analysis centered around the compare / contrast organizational structure. What a great way to begin a deep-dive into reading, writing, and analyzing nonfiction texts!

Week 2

Snapshot: In-depth analysis, practice, and writing assignments centered around problem / solution and cause / effect text structures. Students will continue thinking and writing critically about why writers do what they do in nonfiction texts.

Week 3

Snapshot: In-depth analysis, practice, and writing assignments centered around description as an organizational text structure (even in nonfiction texts!) along with sequencing and chronological structures, too!

Week 4

Snapshot: Students will create an authentic, writing-rich pamphlet project centered around bringing this nonfiction unit to a close. The week starts with an engaging "brain dump" brainstorming activity and ends with a written pamphlet! Each day of the week will have students working through specific prewriting and writing activities that will guide them in the writing project using the text structures and text features they've learned about.

Do you want to stretch this unit even further into a full six weeks unit (or more)?

Check out any of the snapshots for the 7th grade Expository Unit in the Language Arts Teachers lesson plan area to extend the unit here if you need more materials, or if your students are really "getting it" and you want to push them a little more!

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7th Grade Reading & Writing Expository / Informational Text Unit

Week 1
Snapshot: Intro to the unit and the genre; fact vs. opinion vs. commonplace assertions; annotating & close reading; text features & text structures

Week 2
Snapshot: Thesis statements, various types of irony, writing summaries, reviewing simple, compound, complex sentence structures

Week 3
Snapshot: Excerpts from Helen Keller “The Miracle Worker” play; accompanying expository articles about hearing loss; expository writing reflection activities; objective vs. subjective writing

Week 4
Snapshot: Elements of autobiographies, biographies, memoirs; maintaining parallelism in writing (infinitive & participial phrases); writing concisely vs. descriptively (with purpose)

Week 5
Snapshot: Reading and writing compare / contrast text structure; using text evidence to support understanding; revising and editing

Week 6
Snapshot: Concept of online privacy and modern technology; expository passage writing responses; connection to real life issues involving online privacy and media usage

Week 7
Snapshot: Credible vs. non-credible sources for reading & research purposes; finding a topic for research; using embedded quotes from good sources to support your ideas

Week 8
Snapshot: Continuing with use of embedded quotes and how to write meaningful commentary; how to write an intro & conclusion for an essay; rough draft & final draft for research paper

Week 9
Snapshot: End of unit: two days for review activities; two versions of a unit test; follow-up writing activities for engagement & extension



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7th Grade Reading & Writing Narrative Text Unit

Week 1
Snapshot: Author's point of view, create a heart map for future writing lessons, narrative hook, theme, close reading and annotating, narrative writing comparison analysis

Week 2
Snapshot: Personal writing/storytelling, creating a setting, working with elements of plot in a narrative, realistic storytelling

Week 3
Snapshot: Using simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentence styles to enhance the narrative writing experience. Narrative stories and articles for model writing and analysis

Week 4
Snapshot: Using figurative language to enhance writing: similes, metaphors, personification, sound devices

Week 5
Snapshot: Dangling / missing modifiers (sentence clarity); deep dive into figurative language analysis building upon last week's lessons; using text evidence to support analysis of literature

Week 6
Snapshot: More dangling / missing modifiers (sentence clarity); commonly confused words; spiral back to previously taught concepts with deeper analysis of point of view, characterization, figurative language

Week 7
Snapshot: Deeper analysis of plot elements with flashback and foreshadowing; begin two-week in-class writing project focusing on daily student writing activities related to concepts previously learned

Week 8
Snapshot: Deeper analysis of plot elements with dialogue and theme; complete two-week in-class writing project focusing on daily student writing activities related to concepts previously learned

Week 9
Snapshot: End-of-Unit review games and activities; unit test; closing activities related to the overall unit



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7th Grade Reading & Writing Argument/Persuasion Text Unit

Week 1
Snapshot: Persuasive speeches in movies (appropriate movie clips), introduction to argument/persuasion vocabulary and activities

Week 2
Snapshot: Claims & arguments, persuasive role-playing, argument analysis, close-reading & annotating activities

Week 3
Snapshot: Identifying / creating a thesis; understanding audience awareness; comparing text and video mediums of persuasive elements

Week 4
Snapshot: Using evidence to support your claims, using hooks to "hook" your audience & transition words / phrases to clarify your message, parallelism, call-to-action

Week 5
Snapshot: Capitalization, punctuation, double-sided journal responses, generalizations & stereotypes, debate challenge

Week 6
Snapshot: Cyberbulling, faulty logic, task cards for discussion, types of testimonials in persuasive texts, writing prompts

Week 7
Snapshot: Comparison of two authors' viewpoints on the same issue (social media usage); annotations, analysis, questions & discussion; using direct quotes from text evidence; small group writing competition

Week 8
Snapshot: This week is all about the meaning and analysis of television commercials. Students will analyze and evaluate the colors, sounds, images, and logos behind popular brands!

Week 9
Snapshot: End-of-Unit review for test (two days) plus one day for the test (last two week days are for culminating activities and time for you to tie up loose ends in class because their's just never enough time for everything!)



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7th Grade Reading & Writing with Poetry

Week 1

Snapshot: Each week of the poetry unit looks at a particular theme within the poems, so this week's focus is on "hopes and dreams" in poetry! We'll also review figurative language, poetic elements, and strategies for analysis.

Week 2

Snapshot: This week's focus is on "choices and decisions" in poetry! After reviewing some basics last week with figurative language and themes, we're moving into the TP-CASTT strategy of analysis this week. Not familiar with TP-CASTT? No worries. Youcan learn all about it right along with your students! No background prep work needed!

Week 3

Snapshot: This week's poetry theme focus is on overcoming "challenges and setbacks". Students will engage in these highly-accessible poems, strengthening their close-reading and analytical skills by using TP-CASTT strategies. Reading, writing, high-level questioning, and critical thinking are all embedded throughout the unit.

Week 4

Snapshot: This week's focus is on "types of love" in poetry! Students will look at relationships between parents and children, etc. and use DIDLS strategies throughout the week to focus their thinking and questioning around. DIDLS = Diction, Imagery, Details, Language, Syntax. This is the end of the poetry study within the descriptive reading & writing unit.



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7th Grade Reading & Writing with Fiction / Short Stories

Week 1

Snapshot: This week, students transition from the poetry aspect of the unit to the elements of fiction and short story portion of the descriptive reading & writing unit. Mini-lessons will focus on setting, plot, irony, etc. as students engage in a short story and all the supporting activities.

Week 2

Snapshot: Elements of fiction and short stories, such as characterization (static / dynamic, direct / indirect) are the focus of lessons and activities this week. Students will look at what drives character motivations, and how different types of conflicts add new dynamics to plot and story outcome.

Week 3

Snapshot: Literary devices– mood, tone, flashback, foreshadow, symbolism (These devices are the basis for this week's activities). Students will end the week with writing a literary analysis paragraph about the story they read, using text evidence and one of the literary devices studied this week.

Week 4

Snapshot: This week's short story is a sci-fi / futuristic one called "The Chaser." Students will use this story all throughout the week to draw thematic connections across genres (myth & song relations). In addition, this story will also serve as a means through which to review other elements of fiction & literary devices (characterization, foreshadowing, etc.).

Test Week

Snapshot: We made it to the end! You have two options for a review, two options for a test, and then some lighter, creative writing activities for the last couple of days of this week. Those activities are pretty much student-directed so your class can work and you can get those tests graded!



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8th Grade Reading & Writing Expository / Informational Text Unit

Week 1
Snapshot: Intro to the unit & genre; author's purpose (inform, explain, describe); transition words/phrases; writing activities

Week 2
Snapshot: Active & passive voice; using infinitive, participle, and gerund phrases to create & maintain parallel structure in writing

Week 3
Snapshot: Deductive vs. inductive reasoning; annotation & close reading with written responses & analysis; online mini-research assignment of expository texts (7 Wonders of the World)

Week 4
Snapshot: Cause & effect in expository writing; objective summarizing, using embedded quotes effectively for support and extension in writing

Week 5
Snapshot: Compare & Contrast text structure in expository writing; objective summary; more practice in using embedded quotes correctly

Week 6
Snapshot: Students learn about finding and using credible online resources for research purposes; how to cite sources (in-text and in a Works Cited or bibliography page); how to use embedded quotes with commentary; paraphrasing & summarizing; putting together a research paper

Week 7
Snapshot: Revising & editing skills, peer presentations, expository essay comparisons vs. narrative essay writing (don't confuse one with the other!)

Week 8
Snapshot: Real-world application of expository writing: job descriptions requiring expository writing skills; resumes and cover letters; mini-research related to future career choices

Week 9
Snapshot: End of the unit; review activities & lessons; two versions of the unit test; follow-up enrichment/extension lessons



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8th Grade Reading & Writing Argument / Persuasive Text Unit

Week 1
Snapshot: Role-play for persuasion analysis / how to annotate for close reading / introduction to new academic domain-specific terms for the unit ahead

Week 2
Snapshot: Brain mapping / deeper analysis of claims & arguments in texts using current events and social events in modern times / quotes for analysis

Week 3
Snapshot: Analyzing emotional vs. logical appeals / evaluating facts used in an argument / writing prompts / comparing persuasive texts

Week 4
Snapshot: Analyzing film vs. text versions of persuasive speeches / close reading & discussion activities / begin speech writing

Week 5
Snapshot: Speech analysis from last week, revising & editing, peer review/feedback, luck & happiness articles, writing prompt

Week 6
Snapshot: Song lyrics used with analysis of articles; review of persuasive/ argumentative elements with task cards; responding to thematically linked quotes (persuasive writing); Ted Talk argument!

Week 7
Snapshot: Analyzing opposing viewpoints on the same topic; using quotes from text evidence for support; punctuation; peer revising & editing of writing assignment

Week 8
Snapshot: Students will look at persuasive text in different forms this week including political-style cartoons and print advertisements. The week ends with students creating their own persuasive cartoon and writing a persuasive reflection paper to accompany it.

Week 9
Snapshot: Famous speeches to help review unit concepts, two versions of a test review, unit test combination of multiple choice and short answer responses



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8th Grade Reading & Writing Narrative Text Unit

Week 1

Snapshot: Introduction to the unit / close reading & annotating practice / short literature reading passages with practice in using text evidence

Week 2

Snapshot: Theme vs. topic / direct & indirect characterization / using dialogue / narrative writing assignment / peer editing

Week 3

Snapshot: Words in context / creating a setting / punctuation: ellipses, etc. / writing assignments

Week 4

Snapshot: Figurative language / stretching sentences / close reading & annotations of narrative texts used as model texts for writing

Week 5

Snapshot: Reading & writing a narrative poem (videos, close reading, all reading assignments provided) with reading responses for writing

Week 6

Snapshot: Commonly confused words / peer editing / narrative poetry

Week 7

Snapshot: Student writing rubrics and publishing opportunities / brainstorming and writing of a narrative essay / peer editing & reviewing

Week 8

Snapshot: Student writing rubrics and publishing opportunities / brainstorming and writing of a narrative essay / peer editing & reviewing (continued from last week)

Week 9

Snapshot: Review games and activities / unit test / closing lessons for the end of the unit



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8th Grade Reading & Writing with Poetry

Week 1

Snapshot: We're focusing on the structure and format of the lovely "ode" poem! Students will read and write odes along with reviewing figurative language and other elements specific to the study of poetry!

Week 2

Snapshot: We're focusing on the structure and format of the lovely "sonnet" poem! Students will read sonnets and even write one! Plus, we'll review figurative language and other elements specific to the study of poetry! … And don't worry! We're not getting super-technical with the sonnets. We'll leave that complicated stuff for the high school teachers

Week 3

Snapshot: Students will read classic poems about life, death, and changing seasons (metaphorical). These kinds of poems are accessible even for struggling learners with the TP-CASTT poetry analysis system as well as the hands-on, tangible strategies embedded throughout the week in small, easy-to-learn ways. (TP-CASTT = Title, Paraphrase, Connotation, Attitude, Shift, Title (again) and Theme).

Week 4

Snapshot: Students will focus their poetry analysis on ballads. Close reading and analyzing techniques are embedded throughout the week along with read-alouds, relevant videos, and mini-lessons using text evidence and figurative language devices to make sense of poetry. Students will also use the DIDLS strategy to analyze poetry this week. DIDLS: Diction, Imagery, Details, Language, and Syntax

Week 5

Snapshot: Students continue their descriptive reading & writing unit with the study of epic poetry. We keep it fun and light with accessible poems like "Casey at the Bat" and ways to hear it and to see the video adaptation for comparison and analysis. The SOAPStone technique is used to help students understand more about how certain literary elements work together to create meaning. SOAPStone = Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, and tone.

Week 6

Snapshot: This is the end of the poetry unit. For this last week, students will use their skills with poetry analysis to analyze song lyrics and to complete close reading activities around those.



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8th Grade Reading and Writing with Short Stories

Week 1

Snapshot: Students will practice and review standard elements of short stories. This week, students will read one short story and complete engaging mini-lesson activities centered around the plot, characterization, and conflicts in that short story. Students will also complete small group and independent creative writing assignments related to the short story.

Week 2

Snapshot: This week has students reviewing all kinds of elements of literature and literary devices through Gwendolyn Brook's short story "Home." Activities include plot, theme, mood, figurative language, various opportunities for using text evidence effectively, and, of course, writing activities!

Week 3 and 4

Snapshot: I'm continuing to develop this unit, but if you need more now and don't want to wait, please feel free to check out the fiction / short story elements unit in the 7th grade lesson plans. With built-in differentiation and extension ideas already built-in, I think you'll find those resources very useful here!

Creative Writing / Extension Ideas:

Check out Weeks 5 and 6 of the 6th Grade Fiction Unit for a creative writing piece that I love to use for all grade levels towards the end of the school year. It's a two-week unit broken up day-by-day where students get to implement and apply elements of fiction to craft their own "diary style" story. Just because it's in the 6th grade unit, don't think it's going to be too easy for older students! Give it a try if you need something fresh, different, and creative for a couple weeks.



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