

English Language Arts Unit Internalization Guide

PURPOSE

Teacher planning and preparation has a significant impact on student achievement. This resource provides a process for internalizing the goals of an ELA unit, getting familiar with the texts in the unit, backwards planning from what students will need to know to be successful with the assessments in the unit, and thinking through how to support students to reach the benchmark of success.

OUTCOMES

Teachers will deepen their understanding of a unit to prepare for and deliver high-quality instruction by:

- articulating the unit's focus (content and skill)
- analyzing the unit's assessments and determining what students need to know and do to be successful
- deeply examining the texts through the lens of a reader and a teacher
- planning for building background knowledge and skills that will support all students, particularly focus students¹

PROCESS

1. Analyze the unit.

Action step:

- Read the Unit Goal, Module, or Genre Study.
- Skim the text list.
- Read the Final Task or Project.
- Skim the standards within the unit, including reading foundational skills standards.

Guiding questions and considerations

In your own words, what are the big ideas or essential questions in this unit?

Notes

¹ Focus students are those students who need the greatest support to access the content being taught, relative to their classmates.

What content knowledge will students gain through reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking?	
What writing types are addressed?	
What parts of the unit directly connect to student interests or identity? What student background knowledge is necessary prior to reading the text? How can the teacher develop the students' interest in the content?	
What reading foundational skills does the unit focus on?	

2. Analyze the assessments to guide Backward Design

Action steps:

- Review the Project or Performance Task and any other formative assessment opportunities.
- Craft an exemplar student response or annotate one that is provided for the final project or task.
- What is the targeted reading foundational skills for the unit and how are they assessed?

Guiding questions and considerations	Notes
What is the Project, Performance Task, Weekly Inquiry and Research, or Wrap Up the Unit?	

What do students need to know and be able to do at the end of the unit, module, or genre study to be successful on the final project or concluding task?	
What do you think will be easy or challenging for your students? (Create a list of students that may find this challenging and students that may find this easy to create heterogeneous groups.)	
In your own words, how do the formative assessments throughout the unit scaffold toward the culminating assessment?	
Select 2-3 assessments from the unit, module, or genre study to analyze. What information will students learn to prepare them for the Project, Performance Task, Weekly Inquiry and Research, or Wrap Up the Unit?	
How are the reading foundational skills assessed within the unit assessments including the performance task?	

3. Explore the anchor text and chat with colleagues.

Action steps:

- Independently: Read and annotate the text creating anchor charts or other visuals suggested in the curriculum.
- As a group: Analyze the qualitative elements of the text.
- Align reading foundational skills with reading and writing activities

Guiding questions and considerations	Notes
Discuss the text with your colleagues as adult readers would in a book club.	

<p>As needed, use the text chat questions to guide the discussion.</p> <p>Text chat questions</p>	
<p>Discuss the experience you want students to have while reading the text and where, specifically, to focus students' attention through questioning and add notes annotations to these so they stand out during instruction.</p>	
<p>Use the questions for qualitative analysis to think about what barriers may impede students' ability to access the text. <i>Responses to these questions will influence the pedagogical decisions made during planning.</i></p> <p>Qualitative analysis questions</p>	
<p>Discuss how students apply the reading foundational skills in whole group, small group, and independent activities, including the decodable reader.</p>	

*Annotating shifts the focus from planning a lesson to reviewing, synthesizing, and internalizing lesson objectives, goals and expectations aligned to the MS CCRS. It also includes considering where your students might need extra background knowledge or where you may need to scaffold or elevate a lesson.