



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 8: Module 1

Overview



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In this module, students will develop their ability to read and understand complex text as they consider the challenges of fictional and real refugees. In the first unit, students will begin *Inside Out & Back Again*, by Thanhha Lai, analyzing how critical incidents reveal the dynamic nature of the main character, Ha, a 10-year-old Vietnamese girl whose family is deciding whether to flee during the fall of Saigon. The novel, poignantly told in free verse, will challenge students to consider the impact of specific word choice on tone and meaning. Students will build their ability to infer and analyze text, both in discussion and through writing. They then will read informational text to learn more about the history of war in Vietnam, and the specific historical context of Ha's family's struggle during the fall of Saigon. In Unit 2, students will build knowledge about refugees' search for a place to call home. They will read informational texts that convey universal themes of refugees'

experiences across various times and cultures as they flee and find home. As they continue to move through the novel, they will focus on how particular incidents move the story forward and reveal aspects of Ha's character. Unit 2 culminates in which students examine how the universal refugee experience causes the refugee's life to be turned inside out and eventually return back again. In Unit 3, having finished the novel, students will reread critical incidents, while also working in research groups to study the experiences of refugees from one of several cultures. Students will use this knowledge to write two, free verse narrative poems that capture the universal refugee experience. Students will reread poems from the novel as mentor texts. **These free-verse narrative poems performance task centers on NYSP12 ELA Standards RI.8.1, RI.8.2, W.8.3, W.8.4, W.8.5, W.8.7, W.8.9, L.8.1, and L.8.2.**

Guiding Questions And Big Ideas

- **What is home?**
- **How do critical incidents reveal character?**
- **What common themes unify the refugee experience?**
- **How can we tell powerful stories about people's experiences?**
- *Critical incidents reveal a character's dynamic nature.*
- *Characters change over time in response to challenges.*
- *Authors select a genre of writing to fully engage the reader.*

Performance Task

Free-Verse Narrative Poems: "Inside Out" and "Back Again"

For the final performance task of Module 1, students will draw upon their study of the universal refugee experience to write two research-based poems that reflect the "inside out" and "back again" aspect of a refugee experience. Students will collaborate in Research Teams to research the experiences of refugees of a specific culture. They then will draw upon the research, and their study of the novel and the informational texts to write two poems. Of the two poems, the first, an Inside Out Poem, is based on the research conducted and the second poem, a more creative Back Again Poem, is aligned with the students individual interpretation of informational text, and their own background knowledge and experiences. For the final performance task, the students will have the opportunity to revise, edit, and share their two poems within the classroom, and with other Research Teams. This task centers on NYSP12 CCSS RI.8.1, RI.8.2, W.8.3, W.8.4, W.8.5, W.8.7, W.8.9, W.11b, L.8.1, L.8.2, and L.8.6.