
WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

WHAT IS MY EIGHTH GRADE STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 1?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

Module 1: The Poetics and Power of Storytelling

Module 2: The Great War

Module 3: What Is Love?

Module 4: Teens as Change Agents

In this first module, *The Poetics and Power of Storytelling*, students will study how we build community, understand ourselves, and explain the world around us using stories and poems. They will read a novel and poetry and ask the question: What is the power of storytelling?

OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE TEXTS:

Novel

- *The Crossover*, Kwame Alexander

Articles

- “This Is Your Life (and How You Tell It),” Benedict Carey
- “Your Brain on Fiction,” Annie Murphy Paul, *The New York Times*

Poetry

- “Nikki-Rosa,” Nikki Giovanni
- “Slam, Dunk, & Hook,” Yusef Komunyakaa
- “Sometimes Silence Is the Loudest Kind of Noise,” Bassey Ikpi

Speech

- “The Danger of a Single Story,” Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Music

- “Filthy McNasty,” Horace Silver

OUR CLASS WILL EXAMINE THESE WORKS OF ART:

- *The Block*, Romare Bearden
- *Children’s Games*, Pieter Bruegel the Elder

OUR CLASS WILL WATCH THESE VIDEOS:

- “Sometimes Silence Is the Loudest Kind of Noise,” Bassey Ikpi
- “Nikki Rosa on Def Jam Poetry,” Nikki Giovanni
- “Slam, Dunk, & Hook,” Yusef Komunyakaa
- “The Danger of a Single Story,” Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- “The Human Soul Distilled,” Reading Rockets

OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- What shapes Josh Bell’s sense of himself and his world?
- How does form shape a story’s meaning?
- What is the role of expression in storytelling?
- How do stories help us make sense of ourselves and the world?
- What does it mean to be a storyteller?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT HOME

As your eighth grade student reads, ask:

- *What do you notice and wonder?*

BOOKS TO READ AT HOME:

- *Spoon River Anthology*, Edgar Lee Masters
- *Inside Out and Back Again*, Thanhha Lai
- *Brown Girl Dreaming*, Jacqueline Woodson
- *Witness*, Karen Hesse
- *The Red Pencil*, Andrea Davis Pinkney

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSING THE POWER OF STORYTELLING:

You can talk about storytelling at any time, anywhere. Ask:

- *What's your favorite family story? Why?*
- *Tell me a story you remember from your childhood.*
- *Share a story with your eighth grader about your childhood.*

WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

WHAT IS MY EIGHT-GRADE STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 2?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

Module 1: The Poetics and Power of Storytelling

Module 2: The Great War

Module 3: What Is Love?

Module 4: Teens as Change Agents

In this second module, *The Great War*, students will study how writers and artists tell the story of World War I.

OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE TEXTS:

Novel

- *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Erich Maria Remarque (translator A.W. Wheen)

Poetry

- “Dulce et Decorum Est,” Wilfred Owen
- “In Flanders Fields,” John McCrae

Articles

- “The Peace President Goes to War,” Duane Damon
- “The War to End All Wars,” Shari Lyn Zuber
- “The Teenage Soldiers of World War One,” BBC Magazine
- “Fighting From the Trenches,” Kathryn M. Horst
- “The Forgotten Female Shell-Shock Victims of World War I,” Hannah Groch-Begley
- “Your Country Needs You: Why Did So Many Volunteer in 1914?,” Toby Thacker

OUR CLASS WILL EXAMINE THESE PAINTINGS:

- *Gassed*, John Singer Sargent
- *Soldiers Playing Cards*, Fernand Léger

OUR CLASS WILL WATCH THESE VIDEOS:

- Excerpts from *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Lewis Milestone:
 - “The Charge”
 - “Before the Storm”
 - “Forgive me, Comrade”

OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- Why did countries and individuals join World War I?
- How did the conditions on the front affect soldiers?
- How do texts inspired by World War I illuminate attitudes toward the war?
- What are the psychological effects of war?
- How does *All Quiet on the Western Front* illuminate the effects of World War I?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT HOME:

As your eighth-grade student reads, ask:

- *What’s happening?*
- *What does a closer look at words reveal about this text’s deeper meaning?*

BOOKS TO READ AT HOME:

- *War Horse*, Michael Morpurgo
- *Private Peaceful*, Michael Morpurgo
- *The Family Romanov*, Candace Fleming
- *World War I: The Cause for War*, Natalie Hyde
- *The War to End All Wars*, Russell Freedman
- *The Guns of August*, Barbara Tuchman
- *The Yanks Are Coming*, Albert Marrin
- *Soldier Dog*, Sam Angus

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSING WORLD WAR I:

Watch a movie together that tells the story of World War I, such as *Sergeant York*. Ask:

- How did the filmmaker tell the story of World War I?
- How does this film compare to the novel you read in class?
- How does this film compare to the art you examined?

WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

WHAT IS MY GRADE 8 STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 3?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

Module 1: The Poetics and Power of Storytelling

Module 2: The Great War

Module 3: What Is Love?

Module 4: Teens as Change Agents

In the third module, *What Is Love?*, students examine a question that has vexed humans—and the world’s most renowned literary authors—for generations: What is love?

OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE TEXTS:

Novel (Literary)

- *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, William Shakespeare

Short Stories

- “EPICAC,” Kurt Vonnegut

OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE ARTICLES:

- “What is Love? Five Theories on the Greatest Emotion of All,” Jim Al-Khalili, et al
- “In the Brain, Romantic Love Is Basically an Addiction,” Helen Fisher

OUR CLASS WILL EXAMINE THESE PAINTINGS:

- *Birthday*, Marc Chagall
- *Arnolfini Wedding Portrait*, Jan Van Eyck

OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- How do the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* understand love?
- What defines the experience of love?
- What makes love complicated?
- Is love real in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?
- Is love in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a result of agency or fate?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT HOME:

As your Grade 8 student reads, ask:

- What is the essential meaning, or most important message, in this text?
- What are the themes of this text?
- *Who Was William Shakespeare?*, Celeste Mannis
- *Stargirl*, Jerry Spinelli
- *King of Shadows*, Susan Cooper
- *Shakespeare's Stories for Young Readers*, E. Nesbit

BOOKS TO READ AT HOME:

- *Tuck Everlasting*, Natalie Babbitt
- *Emma*, Jane Austen
- *Who Was William Shakespeare?*, Celeste Mannis

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSING SHAKESPEARE AND LOVE STORIES:

Ask:

- Why do you think people tell and listen to/watch love stories?
- What can people learn about social or cultural norms from reading or viewing love stories?

WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

WHAT IS MY GRADE 8 STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 4?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

Module 1: The Poetics and Power of Storytelling

Module 2: The Great War

Module 3: What Is Love?

Module 4: Teens as Change Agents

In the fourth module, *Teens as Change Agents*, students examine the story of Claudette Colvin's role in the Civil Rights Movement, deepening their knowledge of American history and their understanding of how people, including teens, challenge injustice and create change. Through their reading and independent research, students ask: *How do people effect social change?*

OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE BOOKS:

Historical Account (Informational)

- *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*, Phillip Hoose

Our class will watch this video:

- "Claudette Colvin: The Original Rosa Parks"

OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE ARTICLES:

- "Social Media Sparked, Accelerated Egypt's Revolutionary Fire," Sam Gustin
- "Small Change," Malcolm Gladwell

OUR CLASS WILL EXAMINE THIS SCULPTURE:

- *Ladder for Booker T. Washington*, Martin Puryear

OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- What motivated Claudette Colvin?
- What role did Claudette Colvin and others play in the Civil Rights Movement?
- What strategies do people use to effect social change?
- How do teens effect social change?
- What is the story of the year?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT HOME:

As your Grade 8 student reads, ask:

How does this text build your knowledge of how people can effect social change? Share what you know about how people can respond to injustice in their daily lives and effect social change.

BOOKS TO READ AT HOME:

- *We've Got a Job: The 1963 Birmingham Children's March*, Cynthia Levinson
- *I Am Malala*, Malala Yousefzia
- *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*, Russell Freedman
- *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, William Kamkwamba
- *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, Trenton Lee Stewart
- *Wonder*, R.J. Palacio
- *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Wartime Sarajevo*, Zlata Filipovic
- *The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics (Young Readers Edition)*, Daniel James Brown
- *A Friend Called Anne*, Jacqueline Van Maarsen
- *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, Anne Frank
- *Endangered*, Eliot Schrefer
- *Freedom's Children: Young Civil Rights Activists*, Ellen Levine
- *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March*, Elspeth Leacock, Susan Buckley, and Lynda Blackmon Lowery
- *Ashes of Roses*, MJ Auch
- *Be a Changemaker: How to Start Something that Matters*, Laurie Ann Thompson
- *We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History*, Phillip Hoose

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSING TEENS AS CHANGE AGENTS:

Ask:

- What motivates people to create social change?
- How do people define injustice in their specific situation?
- How do different people respond to injustice and effect social change?
- Why are teens important change agents?