**Coming of Age**

**This final six-week unit focuses on the genre of the novel, and uses "coming of age" as a unifying theme.**

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**Overview**

* + In this unit, students choose one of many exemplar novels to study, using all the strategies and skills learned up until this point in the year. Coming of age is a learning process that endures beyond novels to informational text, film, and real life, and students compare and contrast characters’ experiences to come up with their own definition for “coming of age novels.” Students research the historical context behind a novel, such as the Great Depression as the historical context for *Bud, Not Buddy* by Paul Christopher. The culminating project is for students to create their own coming of age multimedia presentation with an introduction that answers the essential question.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RL.5.3:** Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).
    - **RI.5.6:** Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.
    - **RF.5.4:** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
    - **W.5.6:** With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.
    - **W.5.8:** Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.
    - **SL.5.5:** Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.
    - **L.5.3:** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
    - **L.5.3 (a):** Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
    - **L.5.3 (b):** Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Define the term “coming of age novel.”
    - Compare the treatment of coming of age in a variety of novels.
    - Compare and contrast novels and movies versions of the novels.
    - Read and respond to literature and poetry in a variety of ways.
    - Compare and contrast how characters in a story respond to challenges and what they learn from their experience.
    - Generate interview questions; conduct a “mock” interview.
    - Research the steps that would be involved in turning a hobby or interest into a career.
    - Compare fiction and non-fiction books about the Great Depression, such as the historical context for *Bud, Not Buddy* (Paul Christopher)*.*
    - Write and publish a multimedia coming of age presentation.
    - Participate in group discussions.
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Stories**

*General*

* + - *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* (Grace Lin) (E)
    - *M.C. Higgins, the Great* (Virginia Hamilton) (E)
    - *The Secret Garden* (Frances Hodgson Burnett) (E)
    - *Tuck Everlasting* (Natalie Babbitt) (E)
    - *Then Again, Maybe I Won’t* (Judy Blume)
    - *Flying with the Eagle, Racing the Great Bear: Stories from Native North America* (Joseph Bruchac)
    - *Cat with a Yellow Star: Coming of Age in Terezin* (Susan Goldman Rubin and Ela Weissberger)
    - *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* (Peter Sis)

*Historical Fiction, Great Depression*

* + - *Bud, Not Buddy* (Christopher Paul Curtis) (E)
    - *Out of the Dust* (Karen Hesse)
    - *A Long Way From Chicago* (Richard Peck)
    - *A Year Down Yonder* (Richard Peck)
    - *The Journal of C.J. Jackson: A Dust Bowl Migrant, Oklahoma to California, 1935* (Dear America Series) (William Durbin)
    - *Rose’s Journal: The Story of a Girl in the Great Depression* (Marissa Moss)
    - *Survival In the Storm: The Dust Bowl Diary of Grace Edwards, Dalhart, Texas, 1935* (Dear America Series) (Katelan Janke)
    - *Christmas After All: The Great Depression Diary of Minnie Swift, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1932* (Dear America Series) (Kathryn Lasky)

**Poems**

* + - “Freedom” (William Stafford)
    - “I’m Nobody! Who are you?” (Emily Dickinson) (EA)
    - “Dreams” (Nikki Giovanni) (EA)

**Informational Texts**

**Informational Text**

*General*

* + - *The Kid's Guide to Money: Earning It, Saving It, Spending It, Growing It, Sharing It* (Scholastic Reference) (Steve Otfinsoki) (E)

*Careers*

* + - *Gorilla Doctors: Saving Endangered Great Apes* (Scientists in the Field) (Pamela S. Turner)
    - *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo: An Expedition to the Cloud Forest of New Guinea* (Scientists in the Field) (Sy Montgomery and Nic Bishop) (E)
    - *Setting Career Goals* (Stuart Schwartz and Craig Conley)
    - *Getting Ready for a Career As…*series

*Great Depression*

* + - *The Great Depression* (Cornerstones of Freedom) (Elaine Landau)
    - *Kids During the Great Depression* (Kids Throughout History) (Lisa A. Wroble)

**Informational Text (Read Aloud)**

* + - *Children of the Great Depression* (Russell Freedman) (EA)
    - *Children of the Dust Bowl: The True Story of the School at Weedpatch Camp* (Jerry Stanley)
    - *Dust to Eat: Drought and Depression in the 1930s* (Michael L. Cooper)

**Art, Music, and Media**

**Film**

* + - *Akeelah and the Bee* (2006)
    - *Old Yeller* (1957)
    - *Wizard of Oz* (1939)

**Music**

* + - Marsha Norman and Lucy Simon, *The Secret Garden* (musical) (1991)
    - Artie Shaw and His New Music, “Whistle While You Work” (No date)
    - Jack Yellen and Milton Ager, “Happy Days Are Here Again” (1929)
    - E.Y. “Yip” Harburg and Jay Gorney, “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” (1931)
    - Duke Ellington and Irving Mills, “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing)” (1931)
    - Jerome Kern and George Gard “Buddy” DeSylva, “Look for the Silver Lining” (1920)

**Art**

* + - Edward Hopper, [*Railroad Sunset*](http://www.artchive.com/web_gallery/reproductions/165001-165500/165399/size1.jpg) (1929)
    - Hugo Gellert, [*The Working Day, no. 37*](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/goldstein/19.jpg) (c. 1933)
    - Conrad A. Albrizio, [*The New Deal*](http://www.nps.gov/archive/elro/images/fdrl_federalprog1_27-0595a.jpg) (1934)
    - Blanche Grambs, [*No Work*](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/at0066.4s.jpg) (1935)
    - Bernard Joseph Steffen, [*Dust Plowing*](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/goldstein/54.jpg) (c. 1939)
    - Alexandre Hogue, [*Dust Bowl*](http://www.kgs.ku.edu/Publications/OFR/2006/OFR06_11/gifs/fig3.jpg) (1933)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + *Teacher Notes: Students choose a coming of age novel to read. Discussion groups are based on the novel chosen by each student.*

**Class Discussion**

What is meant by the term “coming of age novel”? *(Teacher Note: Prompting may be needed and answers would include: a story where a main character “grows up” by gaining knowledge or life experience; a story where we see a character transition from childhood to adulthood; a story where characters take on ‘adult’ responsibility or learn a lesson, etc.)* Let’s create a class chart of characters we read about and ways they “grow up” in stories we read. After reading our novels, we will see if we can generate our own definition that will enable us to write our own coming of age novel. (SL.5.1a, b, c, d)

**Literature Response**

Keep a journal about your coming of age novel that specifies:

* + - The main character
    - The characteristics that enable him/her to overcome obstacles
    - The obstacles faced
    - The character’s internal responses and external behaviors to these obstacles
    - The events that lead up to climax, and, ultimately, the character’s growth
    - Notes about varieties of English (dialects, registers) or other literary techniques used in the novel (L.5.3)

After reading your novel, create a “coming of age” comic strip that outlines the key events and supporting details that the main character went through to “grow up.” (RL.5.2, W.5.8)

**Graphic Organizer**

As a class, we will keep a chartwith the following categories of the novels we’ve read. As the chart is filled in, and at the end of the unit, we will use this information to make comparisons and generalizations about characters (and people) who undergo changes in their development:

* + - Setting
    - Main character who undergoes a change, and adjectives that describe him/her
    - Obstacles faced by the main character
    - Climax (where the main character resolves the conflict)
    - Resolution (how the story ends; what the character learns)

**Class Discussion**

Be prepared to compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events across novels, drawing on specific information from the each novel. What did you learn about yourself from these characters? Your teacher may ask you to write a personal response to this last question on a Post-It note or in your journal before the class discussion begins. (SL.5.1a, b, c, d, RL.5.3, RL.5.6, RL.5.9, RL.5.10, RF.5.4)

**Comparing Movies and Literature**

As an alternate means of examining the elements involved in coming of age stories, select a movie version of one of the stories to watch and discuss the elements from the graphic organizer (listed above). Did the novel or movie address a question or issue that you (or a friend) have struggled with? (RL.5.7)

**Poetry Response**

Read and discuss the connection between the two people in Emily Dickinson’s poem “I’m Nobody! Who are you?” Relate the experience of the characters in the poem to the characters in your coming of age novel. Which characters can you see having a similar conversation? Justify your answer, citing specific details from the text. With whom has the main character in your book connected? Is the character an outsider? Your teacher may ask you to write a personal response to this last question on a Post-It note or in your journal and share responses with a classmate before the class discussion begins. (SL.5.2, SL.5.1a, b, c, d, e, L.5.6)

**Partner Conversation**

Pair up with a partner who read a different coming of age novel than you did. Collaboratively generate interview questions, and then participate in "mock" interviews where you pretend to be the main character in the book you read (such as Mary Lennox from *The Secret Garden*, Sal from *Walk Two Moons¸* or Mayo Cornelius from *M.C. Higgins, the Great)*. Write about what you learned from your interview, and then have your partner check it for accuracy. (Alternately, write interview questions for the author of your book, and conduct research online to see if you can find answers to your questions for the author.) (L.5.3a, b, RL.5.3, SL.5.6)

**Research Project/Presentation**

Part of “coming of age” means moving into adulthood and getting a job. Read informational text about people who followed their interests and turned them into careers, such as Lisa Dabek in *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo*. What challenges did they encounter as part of their work? Conduct research about what steps you need to take to be ready for the profession(s) in which you are interested. Include visual displays in your presentation, as appropriate. Share your findings with the class. (RI.5.6, RI.5.10, RL.5.6, W.5.7, SL.5.1a, b, c, d, L.5.1a, b, c, d, e, L5.2a, b, c, d, e, L.5.3a, b, L.5.6)

**Research**

Research the “coming of age” experience of a favorite author or illustrator from this unit.  For example, read the [biography of Peter Sis](http://www.petersis.com/content/about.html) from his website and listen to the [interview with Peter Sis](http://www.bookexpocast.com/authors-studio/2007/the-wall-by-peter-sis/) about his memoir, *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* (Peter Sis). Read informational text about communism in order to better understand the challenges, personal and artistic, that he encountered because of the Communist form of government under which he lived. Conduct research about what was involved in seeking asylum in the United States, and how that experienced changed him in his mid-thirties. Include visual displays in your presentation, as appropriate. Share your findings with the class. (RI.5.6, RI.5.10, RL.5.6, W.5.7, SL.5.1a, b, c, d, L.5.1a, b, c, d, e, L5.2a, b, c, d, e, L.5.3a, b, L.5.6)

**Researching Historical Context**

Coming of age novels are “timeless” because they take place in a variety of contexts and settings. For example, *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis takes place during the Great Depression. We have learned this year that knowing the historical context increases our understanding and appreciation for historical fiction. Research an event from the Great Depression, focusing on how that event affected people of the time. What lessons did people/society learn from the Great Depression? Present your findings to the class so we can generate a better understanding of that historical period. (W.5.7, RI.5.3, W.5.2a, b, c, d, e, SL.5.4, L.5.1a, b, c, L.5.2a, b)

**Essay**

Look back to what you learned during the “America in Conflict” unit (4), and compare it to what you learned about life during the Great Depression. How did life change for African-Americans between the beginning of the Civil War to the end of the Great Depression? How did it stay the same? (RI.5.2, W.5.8)

**Music/Art Appreciation**

View art and listen to music from the Great Depression (see Art, Music, and Media). Discuss how art and music can provide insight into historical events. What do you learn about these events by listening to music and looking at art? How do the arts provide comfort and solace in times of conflict? Your teacher may ask you to write your own response on Post-It notes, on a white board, or in your journal before discussing as a class. (SL.5.1a, b, c, d)

**Narrative/Multimedia Presentation**

A culminating project is for you to write your own coming of age multimedia presentation. You can create an iMovie, write a poem, write a song, start a blog, etc. Create a character with an obstacle to overcome. How does he/she overcome it? The presentation should begin with an introduction that answers the essential question (“How can literature help us understand what it means to ‘grow up’?”). Use a variety of words that we’ve learned and studied throughout the year, and work with your classmates revise, edit, and publish your work online. (W.5.3a, b, c, d, e, W.5.6, W.5.8, W.5.9a, b, RI.5.10, SL.5.5, SL.5.6, L.5.3, SL.5.5, L.5.1, L.5.2a, b, c, d, e, L.5.3a, b, L.5.6)

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**Additional Resources**

* + [Once They’re Hooked, Reel Them In](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/once-they-hooked-reel-995.html): Writing Good Endings (ReadWriteThink) (W.5.3, W.5.4)

Note: This lesson encourages students to recognize literary techniques and use them in their own writing to create a conclusion that will keep readers hooked until the end of the story. By exploring endings from children’s literature, students learn that a good ending leaves the reader with something to think about and that it often refers back to the beginning through repetition of words or ideas.

[Creating Family Timelines: Graphing Family Members and Significant Events](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/creating-family-timelines-graphing-870.html) (ReadWriteThink) (RI.5.7)

Note: In this lesson, students interview family members and then create a graphic family timeline which includes illustrations or photographs.

[Literature as a Jumping Off Point for Nonfiction Inquiry](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/literature-jumping-point-nonfiction-845.html) (ReadWriteThink) (RL.5.9)

Note: This lesson uses text sets, collections of multiple text genres with a single focus, to facilitate student inquiry inspired by a fiction book they have read.

[Actor Sidney Poitier was born in 1924](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/actor-sidney-poitier-born-20441.html) (ReadWriteThink) (W.5.1)

Note: Ask students to write in their journals about any barriers that might impede them in the future (e.g., language, class, disability), and about how they can break through those barriers now.

[Web-Based Thematic Unit: *Bud, Not Buddy*](http://www.eduscapes.com/reading/bud/index.htm)(Edusapes)

[The Impact of the Great Depression on Family and Home](http://www.novelguide.com/a/discover/egd_01/egd_01_00173.html) (Novelguide.com)

*Headin’ for Better Times: The Arts of the Great Depression* (Duane Damon)

[A New Deal for the Arts](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/new_deal_for_the_arts/index.html) (The National Archives)

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**Terminology**

* + - climax
    - dialogue
    - foreshadowing
    - idioms, such as:
      * “act your age”
      * “at the tender age of…”
      * “ripe old age”
    - imagery
    - resolution
    - style
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**Making Interdisciplinary Connections**

* + **This unit teaches:**
    - **Economics:** Money (e.g., finding a job or building a business, banks, budgets, taxes, investments, etc.)
    - **History/geography:** The Great Depression (*as the historical context for* Bud, Not Buddy*)* (e.g., Wall Street Stock market crash, mass unemployment, “Hoovervilles,” “Dust Bowl,” etc.)

**This unit could be extended to teach:**

* + - **Science:** (*as an extension of* The Secret Garden*)*: Plant structures and processes (e.g., vascular and non-vascular plants, photosynthesis, plant cell structures, classification, etc.)
    - **Mathematics:** Money (e.g., solving multiplication problems with money, savings and checking accounts, etc.)