*Grade 9* ► *Unit 6*

**Literary Nonfiction – Reflection (The Memoir, The Essay, and The Speech)**

**This unit, the sixth of six, focuses on three kinds of literary nonfiction: the memoir, the essay, and the speech, with “reflection” as the common aspect of these genres.**

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**Overview**

* + The unit allows students to recognize and appreciate the effective use of literary devices in nonfiction. Students are exposed to memoirs from various cultures and look for common techniques, such as the emphasis on a particularly significant event or time period in the author’s life. Selected art works that address similar goals, such as self-portraits, are examined to compare presentation. Students also consider the ways in which essays and speeches may exhibit the same reflective qualities, whereby the authors/orators engage readers/listeners to think carefully about literature, events, or ideas in a new way.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RL.9-10.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of several word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
    - **RI.9-10.3**: Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
    - **RI.9-10.9:** Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms speech, King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”), including how they address related themes and concepts.
    - **W.9-10.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
    - **SL.9-10.3:** Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.
    - **L.9-10.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

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

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Identify and explain the characteristics of a memoir
    - Distinguish between an autobiography and a memoir.
    - Identify and explain the effect of stylistic devices used in memoirs.
    - Identify and explain the characteristics of various types of essays (e.g., literary, narrative, etc.).
    - Identify and analyze the effect of rhetorical strategies in speeches such as alliteration, repetition, and extended metaphors.
    - Apply rhetorical strategies learned in this lesson to essay writing projects of their own.
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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**

**Memoirs**

* + - *One Writer's Beginnings* (Eudora Welty)
    - *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place* (Harry E. Crews)
    - *Running in the Family* (Michael Ondaatje)
    - “A Four Hundred Year Old Woman” (Bharati Mukherjee)
    - *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens* (Alice Walker) (EA)
    - *The Woman Warrior*: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts (Maxine Hong Kingston)
    - “Learning to Read and Write” (Frederick Douglass) (EA)
    - *Notes of a Native Son* (James Baldwin)
    - “A Sketch of the Past” (Virginia Woolf)

**Essay**

* + - Excerpts from *Life on the Mississippi* (Mark Twain) (EA)

**Informational Texts**

**Speeches**

* + - “Second Inaugural Address” (E) and/or “The Gettysburg Address” (Abraham Lincoln) (E)
    - “Address at the March on Washington” and/or “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (Martin Luther King, Jr.) (E)
    - Nobel Prize in Literature Acceptance Speech 1949 (William Faulkner) (EA)
    - “Sinews of Peace Address” (Winston Churchill) and/or “Brandenburg Gate Address” (Ronald Reagan)

**Essays**

* + - “Politics and the English Language” (George Orwell) (E)
    - “The Lost Childhood” (Graham Greene)
    - Excerpts from *The 100 Most Influential Books Ever Written: The History of Thought from Ancient Times to Today* (Martin Seymour-Smith)
    - “Lear, Tolstoy, and The Fool” (George Orwell)
    - “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” (Clement Greenberg)
    - “Preface to Lyrical Ballads” (William Wordsworth)

**Art, Music, and Media**

**Prompt:  How is a self-portrait like a memoir?**

**Art**

* + - Vincent van Gogh, [*Self-Portrait*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SelbstPortrait_VG2.jpg)(1889)
    - Jan van Eyck, [*Self-Portrait*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jan_van_Eyck_091.jpg) (1433)
    - Albrecht Durer, [*Self-Portrait at the age of 13*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Durer-self-portrait-at-the-age-of-thirteen.jpg)(1484)
    - Leonardo da Vinci, *Possible Self-Portrait of Leonardo da Vinci* (c.1513)
    - Rembrandt van Rijn, [*Self-Portrait at an early age*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt_auto_1627.jpg)(1628)
    - Rembrandt van Rijn, [*Self-Portrait at the Age of 63*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt_Harmensz._van_Rijn_135.jpg)(1669)
    - Artemisia Gentileschi, [*Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ArtemisiaSelfP.jpg)(1630s)
    - Jacob Lawrence, [*Self-Portrait*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lawrence_Jacob_Self-Portrait_1977.jpg)(1977)
    - Gustave Courbet, [*The Desperate Man*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rebelscourbet.jpg)(self-portrait) (1843)
    - Louisa Matthíasdóttir, [*Self-Portrait with Dark Coat*](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_0r9KVfDbP4E/Sdo9enKk29I/AAAAAAAAC9M/6JqOtA6Ww54/s1600-h/selfportrait+with+dark+coat,+louisa+matthiasdottir.jpg) (No Date)
    - Francis Bacon, [*Self-Portrait*](http://www.artquotes.net/masters/bacon/paint_selfportrait.htm)(1973)
    - Balthus, [*Le roi des chats*](http://www.tendreams.org/balthus/LRC.htm)(The king of cats) (1935)
    - Pablo Picasso, [*Self-Portrait*](http://www.artquotes.net/masters/picasso/pablo_selfport1907.htm)(1907)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + ***Teachers Notes:*** *Page and word counts for essays are not provided, but attention should be paid to the requirements regarding the use of evidence, for example, to determine the likely length of good essays. In future iterations of these maps, links to samples of student work will be provided.*

**Memoir**

Write a memoir (after the style of one of those read—optional) recounting a specific person, place, experience, event, day, moment, work of art, or another specific thing and convey its significance to you. (W.9-10.3)

**Literary Criticism Essay**

Write an essay in which you discuss how two literary texts studied illustrate Faulkner's thesis in his 1949 Nobel Prize acceptance speech. State your thesis clearly and include at least three pieces of evidence to support it. (RL.9-10.2, RI.9-10.9, W.9-10.2)

**Speech**

Select a one-minute passage from one of the speeches here and recite it from memory. Include an introduction that explains:

* + - The occasion/context of the speech
    - Its literary and historic significance (SL.9-10.6)

**Seminar Question**

Compare Lincoln's “Gettysburg Address” with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s “Address at the March on Washington” and explain why these are both considered great speeches. Be specific and cite from the texts. Begin discussion by identifying the elements of a good speech.” The seminar question may also be used as an essay topic. (SL.9-10.1 and 3)

**Oral Presentation**

Discuss how one of the paintings studied exhibits characteristics of (self-) reflection and compare it to one of the memoirs read. State thesis clearly and include at least three pieces of evidence to support the thesis. (RL.9-10.7, SL.9-10.5)

[Scoring Rubric](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/Socratic_Seminar_Rubric_SP.doc)

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**Additional Resources**

* + [Introducing the Essay: Twain, Douglass, and American Non-Fiction](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=598) (National Endowment for the Humanities) (RI.9-10.5)

This series of lessons explores the following questions: What are the different kinds of essays and how are they based in rhetorical tradition? What are some effective strategies in persuasive writing?

[Annotated List of Memoirs](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson998/MemoirList.pdf) (ReadWriteThink)

[Online Bank of American Speeches](http://www.americanrhetoric.com)

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**Terminology**

* + - abstract/universal essay
    - autobiography
    - alliteration
    - chronological order
    - classification and division
    - compare-and-contrast essay
    - ethos, pathos, logos
    - exemplification
    - extended metaphor
    - memoir
    - objective/factual essay
    - personal/autobiographical essay
    - repetition
    - satire