

# Visions of Unity Teachers' Guide

**The optional activities in this document reinforce CDE Standards for Reading, Writing and Visual Arts, based on the following guidelines.**

## **Reading (Grades 9-10)**

2. Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze organizational patterns, argument and positions advanced. (By grade twelve students read two million words annually on their own, including a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, and online information. In grades nine and ten, students make substantial progress toward this goal.

## **Literary response and Analysis (Grades 11-12)**

3.2 Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim.

3.4 Analyze ways in which poets use imagery, personification, figures of speech and sounds to evoke readers' emotions.

3.7, b. Relate literary works and authors to the major themes and issues of their eras.

3.7, c. Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical and social influences of the historical period that shaped the character, plots and settings.

## **Literary Criticism (Grades 11-12)**

3.9 Analyze the philosophical arguments presented in literary works to determine whether the authors' positions have contributed to the quality of each work and the credibility of the characters. (Philosophical approach)

## **Writing Strategies (Grades 9-10)**

1.0 Students write coherent and focused essays that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument.

### *Organization and Focus*

1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.

1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers and the active rather than the passive voice.

### *Research and Technology*

1.3 Use clear research questions and suitable research methods (e.g. library, electronic media, personal interview) to elicit and present evidence from primary and secondary sources.

1.4 Develop the main ideas within the body of the composition through supporting evidence (e.g., scenarios, commonly held beliefs, hypotheses, definitions).

1.5 Synthesize information from multiple sources and identify complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium (e.g. almanacs, new sources, in-depth field studies, speeches, journals, technical documents).

1.8 Design and publish documents by using advanced publishing software and graphic programs.

## **Written and Oral English Language Conventions (Grades 11-12)**

- 1.1 Students demonstrate control of grammar, diction and paragraph and sentence structure and an understanding of English usage.
- 1.2 1.2 Produce legible work that shows accurate spelling and correct punctuation and capitalization.
- 1.3 Reflect appropriate manuscript requirements in writing.

## **Writing Applications (Grades 11-12)**

- 2.1 Students write fictional, autobiographical or biographical narratives:
  - a. Narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to an audience.
  - b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places.
  - c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings.
  - d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate temporal, spatial and dramatic mood changes.
  - e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives and sensory details.

## **2.2 Write responses to literature:**

- a. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages
- b. Analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes and unique aspects of the text.
- c. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances and complexities within the text.

## **2.3 Write reflective compositions:**

- a. Explore the significance of personal experiences, events, conditions or concerns by using rhetorical strategies (e.g. narration, description, exposition, persuasion).
- b. Draw comparisons between specific incidents and broader themes that illustrate the writer's important beliefs or generalizations about life.
- c. Maintain a balance in describing individual incidents and relate those incidents to more general and abstract ideas.

## **2.4 Write historical investigation reports**

- a. Use exposition, narration, description, argumentation, or some combination of rhetorical strategies to support the main propositions.
- b. Analyze several historical records of a single event, examining critical relationships between elements of the research topic.

## **Suggested Language Arts Lesson Plans**

Teachers may find varying ways to integrate Visions of Unity assignments into standards-based learning. Those who seek a template for incorporating many grade-level standards into assignments that encourage Visions of Unity participation, see the following lesson plans.

### **Anticipatory Set**

The teacher will:

1. Ask two students to come forward and face each other, handing one a mirror.
2. Silently instruct the student with the mirror to hold it, mirror side out, in front of his or her face each time the other student starts to speak.
3. Instruct the second student to begin to tell of some difficult challenge in life and how he or she overcame it, asking the class to observe the interaction between the two.
4. After the first has held up the mirror at each attempt of the first to talk, ask the two to switch roles and begin the process again.
5. Ask the class for their observations. (Did the student who spoke seem to feel heard, frustrated, or as if talking to himself or herself? In each case, did this stop the process of communication? Or did the student perhaps welcome the chance to hear his or her own voice more than to hear the voice of the other?)
6. Challenge the two students to hold a dialogue in which the two compare the challenges they overcame and perhaps even draw from each others' solutions to similar or dissimilar challenges.
7. Ask the class to evaluate any new observations.
8. Challenge the two participants to compare and contrast their feelings of hope or despair during the first and second half of the experiment.
9. Suggest that students each journal a paragraph about a time when sharing a difference or dissimilar experience enriched their own life.

### **Discussion Topic**

Literature presents a window into the feelings of characters from diverse cultures, places and times.

Reading, then, deepens our understanding of diverse perspectives and feelings across cultural boundaries, ages and personality types.

Writing literature forces us to dig even deeper to explore and empathize with the feelings of others—to discover what is unique and what is universal in the human condition.

How can these processes (reading and writing literature) underscore the nonfiction research we conduct? How can it further help us identify tools for creating greater understanding in society?

Each person will read to deepen their understanding, then experiment with at least one genre (or written application) that can strengthen their capacity in this regard. Applying mastery to this process will help generate “visions of unity” as we publish our work.

### **Reading Assignment/s**

1. Based on the grade level and intended assignment, the teacher will present a reading list including some or all of the books at the end of this section.
2. Students will each select a choice for literature circles or the teacher may select passages for whole-class reading.
3. Students will identify the ways in which culture roots or cultural understanding influenced plot development, character development and denouement. They will discuss what the characters would say to members of your own community today to promote the process of understanding.
4. The teacher will incorporate the criteria listed in the relevant Reading Standards into an assessment rubric to assign a creative writing assignment that challenges students describe effective tools for change.
5. To prepare for the assignment or on a different day, the teacher will describe a one-sentence scenario on the board. An example might include one of the following:
  - a. Today is the first day of the school at a school where no one speaks the same language.
  - b. A news report on ways to prepare for an impending natural disaster has just reached your household. Since the power has been out for a day, you know you are the only ones for miles with the technology to receive it.
  - c. You are on a sinking ship together without enough life rafts to go around.
6. Working in the same small groups, according to which book or reading passage they represent, each student group will discuss how their main character will respond to the challenge.
7. As the group members speak, they must each listen to the one at their table who spoke before, paraphrase the speaker’s comments and then offer an opinion, to emphasize the process of listening as they share ideas. Their scribe writes the group’s response on paper and passes it to the next group. This activity may prepare students for looking at the intersection of cultures in a different light.
8. Each group, in turn, adds to an unfolding story, factoring in the character development and cultural strengths their characters bring to the story.

### **Writing Exercises/Assignments**

#### **Option 1: Common Concerns**

Choose two characters from different reading selections – and from different settings --- who meet outside the pages of the books. Write a poem, conversation or vignette based on their perspectives on transcending differences or better understanding their common concerns. What did each one bring to the picture? What did you learn from your

characters about how to bring about a vision of unity today? If using poetry, do your symbols, sounds, metaphors and action verbs reinforce your message?

### **Option 2: Trading Voices**

Change often requires people to step outside their comfort zone. Think of someone for whom you have not felt deep empathy – either a fictional representative of cultural group or an actual person. Try to understand more about them. Placing this person in a current setting, devise a challenge based on a misunderstanding they must overcome. Write one section of a short story in their voice and another section from your perspective. What combination of research and listening skills helped you prepare for this assignment? How did this shared perspective affect the outcome of the story? How did it affect your plans to strive for greater unity?

### **Option 3: A Moment in Time: Now**

Consider the history of change from a human relations perspective, based on current events or on the US History or World History content of your current grade level. List what you believe to be the most effective skills, traits and habits individuals can develop to aid the process of community transformation, based on your knowledge of wars fought, treaties signed, and initiatives taken. Theorize what would happen if members of your school community – starting with you – applied all that you know to promote greater levels of unity in your own community. Apply your theme to personal challenges students face or to your role in broader community challenges. For example:

- 2010 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the student lunch counter sit-ins that started the civil rights era in the United States. What lessons can we learn from those students? How can you apply those lessons to living the dream of your own vision of unity?
  
- The crown on the Statue of Liberty was reopened to the public in 2009 after being closed since September 11, 2001. How does the Statue of Liberty or September 11, 2001 relate to you living the dream of your vision of unity?
  
- Global leaders from Gandhi to Nelson Mandela to Martin Luther King have discussed the elements of social change that bring about unity. In September 2009, for the first time in recent history, the US took action to stop the arms race. The proposal resulted in the 15 member nations of the UN Security Council agreeing on a timetable for the Nuclear Arms Nonproliferation Treaty. What personal tools for change brought about this new level of consensus? Do visions of unity stem from cross-cultural human values? How does your analysis of these tools and values affect your vision and process as you interact with others?

**Follow-up:**

1. Students revise their work and prepare it in manuscript form, perhaps for a class anthology, school library oral reading or for a hallway bulletin board.
2. The teacher urges students to submit entries in the **Visions of Unity** contest before the deadline and provides the application and requirements.
3. Winners attend the reception, with encouragement from their teacher. Their work will appear in a citywide anthology.

**Reading List:**

*The Black Girl Next Door*, by Jennifer Baszile  
*How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, by Julia Alvarez  
*The Power of One*, by Bryce Courtenay  
*Woman Warrior*, by Maxine Hong Kingston  
*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, Sherman Alexie  
*Whale Rider*, by Witi Ihimaera  
*Persepolis*, by Marjane Satrapi  
*My Name is Red*, by Orhan Pamuk  
*Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*, by Dai Sijie  
*The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros  
*Black Elk Speaks*, by Black Elk  
*The Way to Rainy Mountain*, by N. Scott Momaday  
*Mountains Beyond Mountains (Strength in What Remains)*, by Trace Kidder  
*The Road from Coorain*, by Jill Kerkonway  
*Tao I Ching*, by Lao Tzu

# Visual Arts Standards for High School

## 2.0 Creative Expression

Students apply artistic processes and skills, using a variety of media to communicate meaning and intent in original works of art.

2.6 Create a two or three-dimensional work of art that addresses a social issue.

## 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists.

3.3 Identify and describe trends in the visual arts and discuss how the issues of time, place and cultural influence are reflected in selected works of art.

3.4 Discuss the purpose of art in selected contemporary cultures.

## 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

Responding to, Analyzing and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts

Students analyze, assess and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, the principles of design, and aesthetic qualities.

# Suggested Visual Arts Lesson Plans

## Anticipatory Set

1. The teacher will place three objects on a table that serve a functional purpose yet also reflect a design based on their origin, e.g., a large serving spoon or salad tongs, a food platter, a clock, a rug, etc.
2. The teacher challenges students to identify where each of the items came from. They must justify their reasons. Some may site several sources. For example, a silver spoon may have been based on an old Bavarian design based on the creatures in the scrollwork in the handle. A rug may at first glance look that one associated with a specific Navajo but may be based on more universal geometric patterns and was made in Pakistan.
3. Students theorize how household items with a specific purpose, such as a spoon or a rug, may have been used by traders to promote good will between societies and yet, at the same time, generated artistic influence from one culture onto another.
4. Students respond to the challenge to look for such objects in their everyday environment and either sketch them (if not moveable) or bring them to class for classmates to sketch. Evaluate the influence of time, place and cultural influence (context) on the item, if known. (If the objects are not antiques, emphasize the difference between production and design.

An object may exhibit the artistic influence of one country and yet later be manufactured in the country where it was least expensive to produce.)

### **Independent Research**

1. Consider the relationship of works of art versus functional art. How does each unite disparate groups? Students research examples through library, online, and museum sources and through personal experience.
2. They present their findings orally.

### **Discussion Topic**

Show modern examples of art created to advocate social change, i.e. murals, bumper sticker designs, and examples by fine artists as well. Do societies with the luxury of creating art forms for public persuasion or enjoyment see an advantage in influencing human behavior over artistic household objects that emerged from various cultures, based on the class research and opinion? Why or why not?

Do visions of unity occur over time as art unites cultures out of necessity, making them an outgrowth of both process and creative skill?

What might a piece of art look like that both conveyed and powerful message and had a unifying function?

### **Symbol Selection**

1. Students explore symbols that communicate a message without words. They each choose a symbol for an art piece that will promote human understanding or “visions of unity.” For example, one winning poster used zippers as the theme to fasten together faces representing several cultures.
2. The teacher acts as a mentor. (See the Language Arts suggestions and the contest guidelines to augment the assignment or to guide students, emphasizing originality as a primary contest criteria.)

### **Presenting Art**

1. After choosing a symbol, each student creates a work of art applying the medium best suited to their concept. All entries may appear in a school-wide gallery in art room, open for other student groups to view at an appointed time.
2. Each student judges the entries based on the principles of design.
3. The teacher encourages selected students to enter the citywide event, also based on contest guidelines.