

Introductory - What Is America?

Start day: 1

Meetings: 28 days

Skills and Concepts

- Understand the complex nature of America as both a nation and a nationality through a variety of texts—poems, songs, cartoons, interviews, speeches, etc.—reflecting a diversity of voices.
- Identify and explore specific “American” words and icons, analyzing their relationship to America and how individual perceptions may differ.
- Develop an initial understanding of the stages of critical thinking (Bloom’s taxonomy)—i.e., what it means to comprehend, understand, analyze, apply, synthesize, and evaluate information.
- Understand the concept of a threshold event and apply it to existing understanding of American history.

Content

Name	Description	Type
Common Core Standards	Common Core Standards	label.contentType.weblink

Unit Summary

In this unit, students are introduced to a variety of American voices—past, present, and future—to explore the complex and diverse nature of our nation and ourselves. The unit begins with a focus on the words, images, and icons we associate with America; emphasis is placed on students’ own perceptions and beliefs about America and their place as Americans in a global society. The focus shifts to historic and contemporary songs, cartoons, interviews, and other texts that, in turn, challenge and deepen students’ understanding of America. Finally, using 9/11 as a model, students explore threshold events in American history and consider their impact on our nation in the past, present, and future.

Essential Questions

- ***What defines America as a nation today, and how has it been shaped by the past?***
- *What is an American?*

- *What is the American Dream?*
- *How have past events shaped our future?*

Learning Progressions

Academic Vocabulary Tier II

Exploring the connotation and denotation of select Tier 1 and Tier 2 words as selected by students.

Domain Specific Vocabulary

Denotation

Connotation

Threshold Events

Literary Texts

- Images, objects and artwork from a variety of print, electronic, and other media (i.e., American icons)
- Selections from *Working*, Studs Terkel
- “God Bless America,” Irving Berlin
- “This Land is Your Land,” Woody Guthrie
- “Little Boxes,” Malveena Reynolds/Pete Seeger
- “Coming to America,” Neil Diamond
- “Fast Car,” Tracy Chapman
- “Born in the USA,” Bruce Springsteen
- “American Life,” Madonna
- “Dear Mr. President,” Pink
- “American Idiot,” Green Day
- Political cartoons from 9/11

Informational Texts

Suggested Interims - Benchmarks

1. Bloomin' Words Assignment

End of Unit Common Task

Learning Plan Instructional Strategies

- a. Reading: reading for understanding—before, during, and after reading (American Songs, *Working*), comparing and contrasting related texts (American Songs), graphic organizers (American Songs, *Working*, Threshold Events), summary and analysis (American Songs, *Working*), denotation and connotation (American Icon), notetaking
- b. Writing: short informative writing (American Icon, Threshold Events), writing to learn (Bloomin' Word)
- c. Speaking and Listening: brief presentation (American Icon), listening guides (American Songs)

Core Shifts to be Incorporated

- 1. Reading for Meaning, Compare/Contrast, Write to Learn, Circle of Knowledge, Inductive Learning

Content

Name	Description	Type
Graphic Organizers from Core Six.docx	Graphic Organizers from Core Six.docx	label.contentType.docx

Differentiation for Struggling Learners

- 1. Flexible grouping, mentor texts, word choice, self-reflection and personal connection

Content

Name	Description	Type
Lisa Campbell Apr 10 RIDE ELA instructional strategies for Spec Ed and All Students.ppt	Lisa Campbell Apr 10 RIDE ELA instructional strategies for Spec Ed and All Students.ppt	label.contentType.ppt

Differentiation for ELLs

Differentiation for Extension

1. Pushing students towards more complex word choices and more in-depth critical thinking for Bloomin' Words Assignment.

Common Misconceptions

- Students may perceive America as a(n) nation/idea with a static definition, portraying it in only positive terms.

Instructional Resources

Suggested and Required Text

Learning Standards

Common Core [ELAL 11-12 W] CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1.CCSS.ELA - Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.