

Rationale

My unit's theme is "The American Justice System: Does it Work?" The six-week unit was created for eighth graders at Lilburn Middle School in Gwinnett County, GA. The centerpiece of my unit will be *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers, a novel that is already part of the eighth grade curriculum in Gwinnett. In this novel, a 16-year-old African American teenager is on trial for murder. The teenager, Steve Harmon, who was taking a film class in high school before his arrest, decides to make a movie about his experiences in prison and in the courtroom. *Monster* is his record of the events that occur during his murder trial, written as a movie script. The otherwise impersonal – though riveting – script is interspersed with diary entries from the defendant. The novel unfolds like a courtroom drama; the reader feels like a spectator at a trial. One of the most fascinating aspects of the novel is that the reader is in the dark about Steve's guilt or innocence.

Why should eighth graders care about the justice system in the United States? I would argue that it could be a matter of life or death. As the novel makes very clear, the justice system has awesome powers: the power to arrest, convict, incarcerate and even kill. Based on the votes of 12 people, Steve Harmon could spend the rest of his life in prison or walk free. No one ever wants to think he could be a Steve Harmon, but the truth is he could.

As part of this unit, I want my students to explore the issues of guilt and innocence and the disparities that sometimes occur in the justice system based on a defendant's race and economic status. Unlike what many middle schoolers believe, guilt and innocence are anything but black and white, a fact that *Monster* captures amazingly well. Steve's role in the robbery and murder is very fuzzy and his innocence is less than certain. The novel raises many questions: What role did Steve's race play in his arrest and trial? Would he have been treated differently by the police and the courts if his family lived in an affluent suburb, rather than Harlem, N.Y.? Did Steve's known associations with gang members influence the state's decision to prosecute him for murder, even though the crime he was suspected of was being a "lookout" for a robbery gone bad? And most importantly, was the verdict rendered fairly? This question is much harder to answer when the defendant's innocence is unknown, as in Steve's case. It also requires students to construct their own conclusions about the case. There is no "right" answer fed by the teacher. "The teacher's role would shift from asking questions to ensure that students arrive at the 'right' meaning to creating prompts that encourage students' exploratory talk" (Gavelek & Raphael, 183). I think *Monster* is the type of "prompt" that can lead to these discussions.

The justice system in America has a history of injustices, from the Jim Crow laws of the late 1800s to the countless overturned death sentences that make the headlines today. It is imperative that students understand how the justice system works and its past failures and use "that knowledge to act responsibly for a more equitable, democratic and dynamic society" (Smagorinsky, 61). The students in middle school today are the future jurors, lawyers and judges of our country, who can work to correct the disparities that occur in our courts.

While some may think America's spotty record on justice is all in the past, we only have to look to Jena, LA to know that dissatisfaction with the justice system still exists. I plan to use the case of the six high school students arrested for attempted murder in the beating of a white student as another focal point of this unit. Students will read newspaper articles and watch news documentaries about the case. This case is an example of why it is so imperative that students

understand the powers of the justice system. The problems of race and our justice system are **current** and **relevant** today.

I think it is important for *all* students to understand how the justice system works and to be aware of the injustices that have occurred and still continue to occur in this system. With that said, I think this issue is of especial importance to my students. I teach in a very diverse middle school, with a population that is roughly 55 percent Hispanic, 35 percent African American and 10 percent other races. Over 80 percent of the students at my school receive free or reduced lunch and the school has a 53 percent high school graduation rate. Inside of that already challenging picture, I teach the students who are most “at risk.” Most of my students either qualify for special education services or failed the Math or Reading CRCT (Criterion Referenced Competency Test) in seventh grade, meaning nearly all of my students read below grade level and are in danger of failing the 8th Grade Reading CRCT and the 8th Grade Writing Test, both of which are required for promotion to 9th grade. My students face the exact obstacles that could put them at risk of being mistreated by the court system.

I also think my students will be very interested in this theme. Dr. Peter Smagorinsky said, “...if one of our goals is to make school learning something that students view with anticipation, then we should consider what they find interesting when evaluating topics of inquiry” (Smagorinsky, 44). I think finding topics that are interesting to students is something all teachers should do, and with my students, I have found it absolutely imperative. If the topic doesn’t appeal to them, and they are not engaged in the issue, I will face more discipline problems and will have more difficulty keeping students on task.

Sadly, some of their interest in this topic stems from that fact that some of my students have already experienced the justice system firsthand, either themselves or through their parents or siblings or friends. These students should know their rights in the United States and beware of the risks they take when they engage in “risky” behavior such as fighting, drug use, or associating with gangs. Right or wrong, these behaviors could put them in the mercy of a justice system that may not have their best interests in mind. Thirteen and 14-year-old teenagers often have trouble weighing the consequences of their actions, and this unit may help them see where these actions could lead.

In addition to its civic importance, its relevance to today’s social issues, and its high-interest level, I believe the theme “The American Justice System: Does it Work?” can be used to effectively teach writing skills in my classroom. All of my students need to pass the eighth grade writing test, which requires them to write a persuasive or expository essay. I plan to open the unit with The Murder Trial Activity, which is described in *Teaching English Through Principled Practice*. This activity allows students to act as the jury in a murder case. After reviewing the testimony in the case to try to determine what happened, each student will write an essay defending their judgment, which will be excellent practice for writing a persuasive essay. In case I sound very test-oriented here, I should note that I think learning to write an effective persuasive essay is an important life skill, test or not. That said, if my students do not get to ninth grade, they will be more likely to drop out of school.

One fear I have is that this unit could have the potential to jade my students about the justice system. A lot of my students, many of whom are immigrants, are already suspicious of the government. However, if this jadedness is justified, I think the students have every right to know about the country’s sometimes checkered past with justice. Also, this unit will allow students to draw their own conclusions about the justice system, based on facts and in-depth class discussions rather than perceptions or rumors. Still, I don’t want my students to complete

this unit feeling as if they are simply victims, destined to face discrimination if they ever end up in the courts. Therefore, I plan to introduce literature that will not only help them recognize problems in the system, but inspire them to change the system. The students will read about the protests in Jena, LA and the impact they have had on those defendants' cases. This case is a good example of how people can change the outcome of a case. While I still worry about feeding into the anti-American perceptions I have observed in my classroom, the sad fact of history is that often the justice system has been wrong or unequal. Sugar-coating that for my students simply for the sake of national pride would not be justified.

America's justice system is a large and complicated issue. While I cannot hope to touch on all aspects of it, I hope this unit will give my students a general understanding of how the justice system works and an in-depth look at the inequalities that have plagued the system in the past and still threaten it today.

Works Cited

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- Myers, Walter Dean. (1999). *Monster*. New York:Harper Tempest,
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- Megan Kingsley

Introductory Activity – 3-5 Days (Week #1)

Day #1 Monday (Note: Class Time=70 minutes)

Target Time: (10-15 minutes) *Note: For Target Time (required by Gwinnett County Public Schools), the students do a short activity/assignment on a topic that they have had difficulty grasping, typically grammar. Usually, one topic lasts a week or two. I check the students' Target Time assignments each Friday for the week. This week for Target Time, we will be working on Homonyms. Homonyms are words that sound alike but have different meanings. There are 5 sentences written on the board. You must fill in the blank for each of the sentences with one of the choices given.*

1. The music was so loud, I could not (here, hear) anything she was saying.
2. It will warm up when the (son, sun) comes out.
3. (Are, Our) you ready to go?
4. At lunch, I (ate, eight) a sandwich, chips and (ate, eight) cookies.
5. I like to (meat, meet) new people.

Main Lesson:

1. (5 minutes) Announce that class has been selected to serve as the jury in a murder trial.

Dive the class into 3 “juries” of approximately 7 students each. (Desks will already be arranged in three blocks). Explain that there are three charges each jury can consider for the defendant: murder, voluntary manslaughter, and self-defense.

2. (10 minutes) Give students a handout detailing each charge and examples and read aloud together (See Attachment #3).

3. (30 minutes) Give students the following examples of crimes and have students decide which charge fits best. Each group will have two minutes to discuss the charge and decide which category it fits in. A spokesperson for the group will announce the group’s decision. As a class, discuss the conclusions each group reached and explain why they are or are not appropriate.

Examples:

A. Bob carjacks a woman and shoots her in the head when she tries to jump out of the car, killing her. (Murder)

B. Sheila has been calling Trey for weeks, harassing him because he broke up with her for her sister. She follows him home from work one night and she gets out of the car and screams obscene and lewd insults about him and his girlfriend, just inches from his face. Trey pushes her to the ground and she hits her head on the pavement and dies. (Voluntary manslaughter)

C. Kent walks up to George and punches him in the face. George tries to back away and repeatedly tells George, “C’mon man, I don’t want to fight.” Kent keeps hitting and kicking George in the head. Kent pulls out a gun and shoots George in the leg, killing him. (Self-defense)

5. (10 minutes) Tell students they will begin reviewing testimony from the case the next day. Go over the facts of the case as a class. (See Page 427 of *Teaching English Through Principled Practice* by Peter Smagorinsky). Give each student a copy of the court testimony (P. 427-432 of *Teaching English Through Principled Practice*). Have each group select roles for reading. (All students must read. One or two students may have to read two roles.) The students will begin reading the testimony aloud in their groups on Day #2, with each student reading the role he/she selected.

The roles are:

A. David Rodriguez, 42, detective, Gang Crimes Division, City Police

B. Chau Vuong, 37, detective, Violent Crimes Division, City Police

C. Jerry Knight (cousin of the deceased), 22, unemployed and a member of the gang Juker. Criminal record: assault and battery (6 months probation) and petty theft (30 days in city jail)

D. Michael “Speedy” Clark, 21, part-time attendant at Broadway Car Wash, a member of the Cobra gang. Criminal record: Reckless driving (\$150 fine), Possession of cocaine (3 months probation), Armed Robbery (2 years in the state penitentiary) Possession of Marijuana and Amphetamines (6 months probation)

E. William “Beano” Rose, 19, part-time worker at O’Rourke Cleaners, a member of the Juker gang. Criminal record: Petty Theft (90 days, juvenile detention center), Auto Theft (8 months city jail), Drunk and Disorderly Conduct (10 days, city jail)

F. Hank Evans, 46, owner and bartender at Hank’s Tavern

G. Jeff “Ace” Johnson, 21, unemployed, member of the Cobra gang. Criminal record: Illegal Possession of a Handgun,

Each student will receive a graphic organizer with all of the characters’ names listed so they can take notes as the testimony is read. (See Attachment #4)

TUESDAY

Target Time: (10-15 minutes) Homonyms: Some of the most confusing Homonyms are contractions like *there*, *their* and *they’re* or *were* and *we’re* or *its* and *it’s*. When you have a contraction in a word, remember it is actually two words. Ex. They’re=They are and We’re=We are and It’s=It is. There are five sentences on the board. Choose the homonym that best fits each sentence.

1. (Its, It’s) too late for you to go outside.
2. I would like to go (there, their, they’re) but I don’t want to go alone.
3. The dog dropped (its, it’s) leash.
4. The two boys left (there, their, they’re) coats at school.
5. Where (were, we’re) you when I called last night?

Main Lesson:

1. (5 minutes) Ask for volunteers to summarize the activity the class began yesterday.
2. (5 minutes) Review the three types of charges the students may select (murder, voluntary murder and self-defense).
3. (45 minutes) Okay, now you will begin reading the testimony I gave you yesterday. Remember, you have already selected roles to read. Today you will take turns reading your roles in your groups. When you read aloud, remember there will be two other groups reading so try not to read too loudly.

WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY (Depending on how long negotiations take)

Target Time: (10-15 minutes) – Continue work on Homonyms.

Day #3 - Read the paragraph on the board and find five homonyms that are incorrect. Write the correct homonym on your paper.

Day #4 – In pairs, students will pick a homonym (such as to, too, two) out of the hat. They will write a sentence for each word.

Main Lesson:

1. (5 minutes) Jury Foreman – Each jury must select a Jury Foreperson. This person will act as the jury’s spokesperson and is responsible for making sure all of the jury members have the opportunity to voice their opinions without any one member dominating the discussion. The Jury Foreperson also must make sure that the other jurors consider all the evidence and testimony in the case and that the defendant’s actions are judged according to the law and not the jurors’ personal feelings.

2. (50-90 minutes) Deliberations - The students should have completed reading the testimony yesterday. Today, they will begin deliberations as a jury. Each jury must try to figure out what really happened and how to classify the killing. The jury's decision must be unanimous. In order to find the defendant guilty, he must be determined guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. This means the evidence must be overwhelming.

FRIDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes) Today, during Target Time, we will have a quiz on homonyms. (See Attachment #5)

Main Lesson

1. (30 minutes) When the juries have reached a decision, they must write a one-page essay* explaining their decision (as a group). They must explain why it meets the criteria for the type of killing they selected and why it does not meet the criteria for the other two types.
2. Each of the jury forepersons will read their essays to the class.
3. The class will discuss the verdicts reached and the punishments that each verdict would entail.

*Note: This is not the persuasive essay each individual student will write as a follow-up to this activity.

Week #2

This week's lesson follows the Introductory Activity of the Courtroom Case, which lasted 4-5 days. (Note: Class Time=70 minutes)

MONDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Verb tenses – (See Attachment 6) Read slides 1 and 2 aloud from the PowerPoint. Model, using the “think aloud method,” two or three examples from slide 3. Have student partners (they have an assigned “partner” each quarter) edit the remaining examples on that slide. Discuss the answers as a class. (Teacher will check Target Times at the end of the week.)

Main Lesson:

1. **(10-15 minutes)** - Today, you will begin writing a persuasive essay defending your verdict in the Courtroom Case. Although you reached your verdict in a group, you will write your essay individually (except for the Introductions). Review the purpose of a persuasive essay (Students first wrote persuasive essays in the first quarter of the year). The purpose of a persuasive essay is to persuade or convince the reader of your position. Show two examples of effective persuasive essays on the overhead projector. Talk about

what makes them effective. Why are they good? How could be better? Discuss as a class.

2. **(20 minutes)** - To begin brainstorming, you will fill out a graphic organizer. (Pass out graphic organizers.) The graphic organizers have three categories: murder, voluntary manslaughter and self-defense. In each column, you will circle either Yes or No, depending on your group's verdict. Then below that, you will write three reasons explaining why or why not that verdict fits. Example: If you chose murder for your verdict, circle "Yes" and explain the main reasons why you chose a verdict of murder. Then in the other two categories, circle "No" and write the main points for why the evidence did not meet the criteria for those categories. (See Attachment #7)

3. **(20 minutes)** – Now that you have brainstormed, you must organize your ideas. Remember it is important that your essay have three parts: an Introduction, a Body and a Conclusion. You will use the Essay Map (Attachment #8) to organize your main ideas and decide what each paragraph will be about. Make sure you have a paragraph that addresses WHY you didn't select the other two categories. Once you have the essay map completed, it is easier to begin writing.

TUESDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Verb Tenses- Read Slide 4 aloud from the PowerPoint (Attachment #4). Have students individually write three sentences using present tense verbs. Students will then edit the sentences with their partner. (Teacher will check Target Times at the end of the week.)

Main Lesson:

1. **15 minutes** - Today we will begin writing your persuasive essay. The first paragraph in your essay is the Introduction, which typically contains two things: a hook and a position statement. Review different types of "hooks." Ex. Anecdotes, Interesting Statements or Statistics, Questions, or Vivid Descriptions. Show them examples of each type of "hook" on the overhead screen from various essays.

2. **25 minutes** - Then have students return to their original groups or juries. As a group, have them write three different types of introductions (using three of the "hooks").

3. **15 minutes** – Have a spokesperson from each group share the group's favorite introduction with the rest of the class.

WEDNESDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Verb tenses – Read slide 5 aloud to students. The teacher models, using the "think aloud" method, how to edit one or two sentences on slide 6. With their partners, students edit the remaining sentences on that slide.

Main Lesson:

1. **(55 minutes)** - Today we will begin writing your persuasive essays. You may use one of the introductions your group came up with yesterday for your first paragraph if you want, or you can make up a new Introduction. Then you should begin writing the Body of the essay using your Essay Map as a guide. Remember each paragraph should have one main argument that you need to back up, or support, with evidence from the trial. For example, if you say “This crime meets the criteria for Murder,” you must explain WHY. Also, you should have at least one paragraph addressing why it doesn’t meet the criteria for the other two charges.

THURSDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Verb tenses- Read slide 7 aloud to students. Students will write three sentences using past tense verbs. Then, they will edit the sentences with their partners.

Main Lesson

1. **(10 minutes)** – Review the purpose of a conclusion in a Persuasive Essay. The purpose is to summarize your position and something called “A Call for Action.” This is your last chance to persuade the reader to believe in your position. Teacher will show several examples of effective Conclusions on the overhead projector.
2. **(30 minutes)** – You will have 30 minutes to finish your essays (including the Conclusion).
3. **(10 minutes)** – Tomorrow we will edit our essays. To prepare for that we will review the Rubric that will be used to grade your essay. (Attachment #1) Review categories of the Rubric and answer any questions.

FRIDAY

Target Time (10-15 minute): Verb tenses – Read slide 8 aloud. Students write three sentences using future tense, then edit the sentences with their partners.

Main Lesson

1. **(30 minutes)** - Peer Editing Activity – Divide the students into groups of 5 students each. (Desks are already grouped in this position in preparation for the activity.) Have each student pick a “role” out of the hat. The roles are Grammar, Organization, Strength of Arguments, Organization, and Conclusion. If you have the “Grammar” role you will be in charge of editing the four other essays in your group for spelling, punctuation, capitalization, run-on sentences and fragments. The “Strength of Arguments” person will read the arguments in the essay and make recommendations on how they could be stronger. This person is also responsible for making sure each writer addressed the opposing arguments. The group member with the “Organization” role will read the four other essays to make sure that each essay has the three required parts: Introduction, Body and Conclusion. This member also will check that each paragraph has a clear idea and is easily understandable. Finally, the person with the “Conclusion” role will read the

conclusions carefully and make recommendations on how they could be better.

2. **(25 minutes)** – Now you should read over the comments/recommendations on your essay and begin writing your final draft. The final draft is due Monday and should be completed at home. (Note: It must be in either black or blue pen or typed in 12-point font.)

Week #3

MONDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Prefixes, Suffixes, and Root words. Show Power Point slides 1-3 (See Attachment #14). Answer question on Slide 2 as a class. Have students in pairs complete Slide 3. (Students can use their literature books to find words.)

Main Lesson:

1. **(6 minutes)** - Show two television clips about the protests that resulted from the noose-hanging incident at a high school in Jena, LA at

<http://edition.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/11/16/justice.rally/index.html#cnnSTCVideo>

2. **(10 minutes)** – Ask students what they know about this incident. Write their ideas on the whiteboard.

3. **(20 minutes)** - Hand out an article about the “Jena Six” from the National Public Radio Web site (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12353776>) that outlines how the incident began and where it stands now. (Attachment #5). Have volunteers read it aloud to class.

4. **(20 minutes)** – In their Writing Journal, have students respond (a minimum of half a page) to this question: *Do you think the six African American students who beat up the white student should have been charged with attempted murder? If not, explain what should have happened to them instead. Should the white students who hung the noose have been arrested?*

TUESDAY

Target Time (10- 15 minutes): Prefixes, Suffixes, and Root words. Show PowerPoint slides 4 and 5 (Attachment #14). Answer slide 4 as a class. Students work with partner to find the prefixes in slide 5.

Main Lesson:

1. **(15 minutes)** – To begin class, have students respond to the following question in their Writing Journals. *Is it possible to change a law you don't agree with? If yes, HOW?*

2. **(10 minutes)** – Explain that ordinary people have changed many laws in the United States throughout history. Ask students to think of people who have helped change laws and write their thoughts on the board. (Possible answers may include Martin Luther King Jr., Susan B. Anthony etc.)

3. **(10 minutes)** – Today we are going to read about a woman named Rosa Parks. Who has ever heard of Rosa Parks? What do you know about her? (Draw a bubblegram on

the board to record their ideas.)

4. **(20 minutes)** – Read a short biography on Rosa Parks (from <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/par0bio-1>) as a class, asking for volunteers to read.

WEDNESDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Show slides 6 and 7 from PowerPoint (Attachment #14). Have students do activity on slide 7.

Main Lesson: (Note: Laptop computers will be set up in the classroom for student use.)

1. **(10 minutes)** - Assign students to small groups (4 students each). Give each group a long piece of butcher paper. Explain that today we will create a timeline of Rosa Park's life. Students will write down significant things from Park's life, along with the dates they occurred, starting with her birth and ending with her death. Two students in each group will be in charge of research and two will be in charge of art/design. The research students will be responsible for finding information on the Internet about Rosa Parks and deciding which facts are important. The art/design students are responsible for creating the timeline.
2. **(30 minutes)** – Students will have 30 minutes to create a timeline. They may use markers, colored pencils, magazines, glue etc. All supplies are provided.
3. **(15 minutes)** – If there is time, students will briefly present their timelines to the class, describing which events they chose to include on the timeline.

THURSDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Prefixes, Suffixes and Root Words. Show PowerPoint slide 8. (Attachment #14) Model examples of words that contain these three suffixes. Have students write other words that contain these suffixes.

Main Lesson:

1. **(15 minutes)** - Today we will begin reading the novel *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers. This novel fits very well into our theme, “The American Justice System: Does it Work?” This novel is written from the perspective of a 16-year-old African American teenager who is in jail. Before being arrested, he took a film class at his high school and he decides to record everything that happens to him in jail and during his trial as if it were a film. Because of that you will see some camera directions such as Cut To, CU (Close Up), VO (Voice Over), Fade Out and Fade In. (Discuss as a class what each of these mean and write them on the white board so students can refer to them as we read.)
2. **(10 minutes)** – Before we begin reading, I want each of you to fill out the Anticipation Guide (Attachment #9). All you have to do is write true if you agree with the statement or false if you disagree with it.
3. **(15 minutes)** – Number 1-10 on the board and write True and False at the top. Ask how many students wrote True for number one and record the number. Then ask how many wrote False and record that number. Continue with all of them. Pick the

statement that had the largest split and ask students to explain why they selected True or False. After the discussion, ask the students if anyone had changed their minds. Write the new totals under that number.

4. **(15 minutes)** – Read pages 1-19 in *Monster*. The teacher will serve as the narrator (or voice over) and will also read Steve’s journal entries. Ask for volunteers to read the parts of: Steve Harmon, Prisoner Sunset, Defense Attorney Kathy O’ Brien, Guard 1, Prosecutor Sandra Petrocelli, the Judge, Asa Briggs, and Mr. Sawicki.

FRIDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Prefixes, Suffixes and Root Words. Show PowerPoint slides 9 and 10 (Attachment #14). Model examples of root words and their meanings. Have students complete activity on slide 10.

Main Lesson:

1. **(30 minutes)** - Ask for a volunteer to summarize where we left off in the novel *Monster* yesterday. Today we will read from page 19-43. Ask for volunteers to read the parts for today: Steve Harmon, Defense Attorney Kathy O’ Brien, Prosecutor Sandra Petrocelli, the Judge, Lawyer Asa Briggs, Mr. Sawicki, Jose Delgado, Sal Zinzi, Tony.
2. **(25 minutes)** – Pass out Character Graphic Organizer. This Graphic Organizer has a list of characters (including some we have not read about yet) from the novel. Fill out as much as you can at this point. (Attachment #10) In the box next to each character’s name, write a brief description of the character. Ex. Asa Briggs- Lawyer for Steve’s co-defendant, James King. Make sure you punch holes in your graphic organizer and keep it in your Language Arts notebook. We will be referring to it periodically as we read the novel.

Week #4

MONDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Prefixes, Suffixes and Root Words. Show PowerPoint slide 11 (Attachment #14) and have students use the reading selection on P. S17 in Language of Literature book to complete the assignment.

Main Lesson:

1. **(35 minutes)** – Today we will read pages 45-64 in *Monster*. Ask for volunteers to read the parts for today: Wendell Bolden, James King, Steve Harmon, Peaches, Johnny, Prosecutor Sandra Petrocelli, the Judge, Lawyer Asa Briggs, and Jerry.
2. **(15 minutes)** – Have students fill in their Character Graphic Organizers with descriptions of some of the new characters that were introduced today.

TUESDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Prefixes, Suffixes and Root Words. Show slides 12 and 13 from PowerPoint (Attachment #14). Have students complete the activity on slide 13 with a partner.

Main Lesson:

1. **(20-25 minutes)** - The novel we are reading, *Monster*, uses a lot of legal terms and other words that we may not be familiar with. With a partner, I want each of you to complete the Magic Squares for *Monster*. Match each vocabulary word to its definition and write the corresponding number in the box. (Attachment #11) When you are finished, add up the numbers in each row. The total of each row should equal the SAME number. This is your magic number. If your rows don't add up to the same number, you have one (or more) wrong. Use the novel and dictionaries in the classroom to find the definitions.
2. **(25-30 minutes)** - Today we will read pages 65-88 in *Monster*. Ask for volunteers to read the parts for today: Officer 1, Officer 2, Prosecutor Sandra Petrocelli, the Judge, Lawyer Asa Briggs, Defense Attorney O'Brien, Detective Karyl, Detective Williams, Older Prisoner, Prisoner 2, Prisoner 3, Steve, Freddy Alou, and Osvaldo Cruz.

WEDNESDAY

Target Time (10- 15 minutes): Prefixes, Suffixes and Root Words. Show slides 14 and 15 from PowerPoint (Attachment #14). Do activity on slide 15.

Main Lesson:

1. **(25 minutes)** - Today we will read pages 89-116 in *Monster*. Ask for volunteers to read the parts for today: Steve, Prosecutor Sandra Petrocelli, the Judge, Lawyer Asa Briggs, Defense Attorney O'Brien, Mr. Harmon, and Osvaldo Cruz.
2. **(25 minutes)** – There is a lot going on in this novel and because of the way it's written, there is a lot we don't know. We will learn a lot of those things as we keep reading, although we may not know everything. What are some things we still don't know? Write down the students' responses on the white board. (Ex. Is Steve guilty or innocent? What happened in the convenience store?) Then divide students into pairs and give each pair a KWL Chart (Attachment #12). First students will fill out the K column (What I Know). Here, students should write things they know about the novel. (Ex. Steve is on trial for murder.) Then, they should fill out the W column (What I Want to Know). Here, they can write questions they have about the novel, such as the ones we came up with on the board. (Ex. Was Steve in the store when the man was shot?) Students should hole punch their charts and put them in their binders, as we will continue to work on it in the next two weeks.

THURSDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Prefixes, Suffixes and Root Words. Show slides 16-18 (Attachment #14) and have students complete activity on 18.

Main Lesson:

1. **(30-35 minutes)** - Today we will read pages 117-151 in *Monster*. Ask for volunteers to read the parts for today: Woman 1, Woman 2, Newscaster, Neighborhood Resident, Steve, Mrs. Harmon, Mayor Giuliani, Detective Williams, City clerk Allen Forbes, Prosecutor Sandra Petrocelli, King, and Dr. James Moody.
2. **(15-20 minutes)** – Now we will take about 20 minutes to work on our Character Graphic Organizers. Write down descriptions of the new characters we have read about.

FRIDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Prefixes, Suffixes and Root Words. Give quiz on prefixes, suffixes and root words.

Main Lesson:

1. **(40 minutes)** - Today we will listen to pages 153-200 in *Monster* on tape. You must follow along in your books as the tape plays.
2. **(15 minutes)** – In your reading journals, draw a picture of the scene we just read. You can draw the entire courtroom, or select just one or two characters.

Week 5

MONDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Daily Grammar Practice. Have students write the following sentence, “our family had a picnic on labor day” without any capitalization or punctuation. Today they will identify parts of speech including noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunction, gerund, participle, infinitive and article. (See Attachment #15)

Main Lesson:

1. **(10 minutes)** – Explain *Monster* Skit. For the next two days we will be working in groups to prepare and perform a skit from *Monster*. You will be divided into 3 groups and each group will be assigned a chapter from the novel. Group 1 will perform pages 201-214, Group 2 will do pages 215-238, and Group 3 will do 238-267. Each of you will select a role: actor, costume designer, director and set designer. There will need to be several actors in each group; you will have to look at your part to see how many you need. You can have more than one part. For example, the costume designer may also have a small acting part. Each group will have today and Tuesday to prepare their skits. The groups will perform them (in order) on Wednesday and Thursday. (Note: Students do not have to memorize their roles.)
3. **(20 minutes)** - Read the chapter. Each group will need to read their chapter, either aloud as a group or silently.
4. **(5 minutes)** – Select roles
5. **(15 minutes)** – Plan how you will perform the skit. What will each character wear? Where will they stand (or sit)? What should the set look like? What props can you use in the classroom?

TUESDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Daily Grammar Practice. Using the same sentence from Monday, have students identify complete subject, simple subject, complete predicate, verb, direct object, indirect object, and object of preposition.

Main Lesson:

1. **(55 minutes)** – Groups will work on their skits. (Teacher will circle room, assisting as needed.)

WEDNESDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Daily Grammar Practice. Using same sentence as Monday, have students identify clauses, sentence type and sentence purpose.

Main Lesson:

1. **(25 minutes)**- Group 1 will perform pages 201-214.
2. **(30 minutes)** – Group 2 will perform pages 215-238.

THURSDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Daily Grammar Practice. Using the same sentence as Monday, have students add capitalization and punctuation.

Main Lesson:

1. **(30 minutes)** – Group 3 will perform pages 238-267.
2. **(15 minutes)** – Now you will each fill out the Peer Review (Attachment) that I will give you. You will grade each of your group members as Good, Fair or Poor. If the group member worked hard and contributed to the group, they should get a Good. If they only helped a little and let most of the other members do the majority of the work, they should receive a Fair. If they didn't contribute at all, give them a Poor.
3. **(10 minutes)** – We will use the last 10 minutes to update our Character Graphic Organizers. These should be complete at this point. They are due tomorrow.

FRIDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Daily Grammar Practice. Give students a quiz with the same sentence and ask them to identify five things (object of the preposition, verb etc.)

Main Lesson:

1. **(15 minutes)** – Today we will finish reading *Monster*. Today we will read pages 269-

281 in *Monster*. Ask for volunteers to read the parts for today: Steve, Guard, O'Brien, Petrocelli, and Clerk.

2. **(20 minutes)** – Take out your KWL charts. Under the K column, list facts that you now know. In the W column, write any questions you still have. Then in the L column, write the answers to the questions in the W column that you can now answer.

3. **(10-15 minutes)** - Ask who still had questions that they couldn't answer about the case. Discuss these questions. Why do you think the author left some questions unanswered?

4. **(5 minutes)** – Collect KWL charts and the Character Graphic Organizers.

Week 6

MONDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Daily Grammar Practice. Have students write the following sentence, “each student must bring his book paper and pencil to class” without any capitalization or punctuation. Today they will identify parts of speech including noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunction, gerund, participle, infinitive and article. (See attachment #16)

Main Lesson:

1. **(5 minutes)** – Today you will make a Body Biography. You will work in groups of 4 (announce group assignments) you will draw the outline of a boy on the butcher paper on the tables. (Desks will be in groups of four with a 6 foot piece of butcher paper on each foursome.)

2. **(50 minutes)** Each group will create a Body Biography of Steve Harmon, the main character in *Monster*. Your Body Biography must contain the significant events involving Steve that occurred, visual symbols, original text and three important lines from the story. (These requirements will be written on the board.) Then, decide where each of these things should be placed. Ex. The loneliness he feels might be placed over his heart. Also think about the character's most admirable and least admirable characteristics. Color is very important too. How can it be used to symbolize how Steve felt during the trial. Finally, think about how he changed through the trial. Please be as creative as you want.

3. **(2 minutes)** Please bring in the lyrics to a song you like. No inappropriate lyrics!

TUESDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Daily Grammar Practice. Using the same sentence from Monday, have students identify complete subject, simple subject, complete predicate, verb, direct object, indirect object, and object of preposition.

Main Lesson:

1. **(25 minutes)** – Today, you will present your Body Biographies to the class. Each group will have 5 minutes to describe their creation and explain why they wrote/drew what they did.
2. **(5 minutes)** – Now, I am going to play you the song “American Skin: 41 Shots” by Bruce Springsteen. This song is about an immigrant from West Africa who was shot 41 times by police as he reached for his wallet.
3. **(25 minutes)** – Pass out *Monster* Song Graphic Organizer (Attachment #13) Over the next few days, we are going to begin create our own song about Steve Harmon in *Monster*, using the format of the song you brought in. (I will have lyrics to a song available for students who did not bring any in.) You may work with a partner if you like. First, on the graphic organizer I gave you, you will write down 10 events that occurred in the novel, Steve’s response to those events, and your own response to the event. (Model one example on the white board: Steve is arrested. He is in shock and scared to death. I wondered whether he really was guilty.) Next, you will write down 5 key phrases from the novel. Think about phrases that really stuck in your head. Finally, I want you to write – in a sentence or two – what you think the theme of this novel was. The theme is the message of the book – such as: Innocence always prevails, Justice isn’t always fair, etc. As a class, brainstorm some possible themes of the book.

WEDNESDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Daily Grammar Practice. Using same sentence as Monday, have students identify clauses, sentence type and sentence purpose.

Main Lesson:

1. **(20 minutes)** –Yesterday, we began working on our *Monster* songs. Review the graphic organizers they completed yesterday. Later today, you will use this graphic organizer to write a new song following your song’s format. In order to do that, you will need to understand rhyme, rhyme scheme, stanzas, and more. Review stanzas, rhyme, internal rhyme, end rhyme, and rhyme scheme. Review these terms on the board. Now, using your Literature Book (pages 187-190) if needed, write the rhyme scheme of the song you brought in. (Walk around and help as needed.)
2. **(10 minutes)** – We will begin writing our new songs shortly. First I want to review the rubric with you (Attachment #2) so you understand how it will be graded.
3. **(25 minutes)** - Now, following the same format as your song, you will use your graphic organizer to write a new song. (Show example using the song, “You’re Beautiful” by James Blunt on overhead.) The theme must be part of the chorus and at least 3 events from the novel must be in the stanzas. Your new song should follow the same format as the original song in terms of length, rhyme scheme and style. It should also show a solid understanding of the novel’s theme and plot and characters.

THURSDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Daily Grammar Practice. Using the same sentence as Monday, have students add capitalization and punctuation.

Main Lesson:

1. **(15-20 minutes)** – You will have about 15 minutes to finish your *Monster* Song.
2. **(35 minutes)** – Using the laptops I give you, type the new lyrics next to the original lyrics. (Show example on overhead and explain how to use the two-column format in Microsoft Word.)

FRIDAY

Target Time (10-15 minutes): Daily Grammar Practice. Give students a quiz with the same sentence and ask them to identify five things (object of the preposition, verb etc.)

Main Lesson:

1. **(20 minutes)** – Would anyone like to share the songs they created yesterday? (Have volunteers come to the front of room and either read or sing/rap their new songs.)
2. **(5 minutes)** - Collect songs
3. **(30 minutes)** - Today is our final day of our six-week unit, “The American Justice System: Does it Work?” In your reading journals, write one page answering this question. Remember to explain WHY or WHY NOT you think it works. Also include ideas on how we can make it better.

Attachment #3

MURDER

The charge for taking someone’s life is murder if one of the following is met.

1. A person intends either to kill or to injure another person critically or knows that the act he or she intends to commit could cause death.

Example: Joe fires a gun at Bob with the intention of killing him. **Warrant:** The act is murder because it is intentional and the killer has knowledge that it could cause death.

Contrasting Example: Joe believes his gun is not loaded. He playfully aims it at Bob and pulls the trigger, killing him. **Warrant:** The act is unintentional and therefore not murder.

2. A person knows that the act he/she commits creates a strong probability of death or serious injury.

Example: Bob puts arsenic in Joe’s coffee, knowing that the poison will probably kill him.

Warrant: Because the act is intentional and Bob is aware of the consequences, it satisfies the criterion.

Contrasting Example: Bob puts sugar in Joe's coffee, not knowing that Joe has a lethal allergy to sugar. **Warrant:** Bob is unaware of the consequences of his act; therefore, his action is not murder.

3. A person attempting a forcible felony, such as kidnapping, hijacking, arson, armed robbery or rape, kills a person in the process.

Example: Joe, in robbing a bank with a loaded gun, shoots and kills a guard, who had shot first at Joe. **Warrant:** The act takes place during a felony and therefore is murder.

Contrasting Example: Joe observes Bob shoplifting clothing from Joe's store and begins to chase him. When Joe catches him, Bob pushes him down, causing Joe to strike his head on the ground and die from a severe concussion. **Warrant:** Although Bob killed Joe while he was committing a crime, the crime was not a felony and so the act that caused the death is not murder.

VOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER

Taking someone's life is voluntary manslaughter if one of the following criteria is met.

1. A person acts with sudden and intense passion after being seriously provoked by the person killed.

Example: Joe, in his car, is being followed and harassed by Bob, who is using his car to bump and swerve into Joe's car. Bob, angry because Joe has married his ex-wife Sally, forces Joe's car off the road. They both get out of their cars and argue heatedly. Bob makes lewd and obscene remarks about Sally and about Joe's mother. Joe punches Bob, killing him. **Warrant:** The combination of the threatening actions with the car and the insults to his wife and mother have provoked Joe to a sudden and intense passion, so the act is voluntary manslaughter.

Contrasting Example: Bob's car runs into Joe's at an intersection. They get out of their cars and argue about whose fault it is. When Bob accuses Joe of running a stop sign, Joe strikes him with a tire iron, killing him. **Warrant:** The initial situation was not serious enough to be called "seriously provoked" so this is not voluntary manslaughter.

2. A person acts with a sudden and intense passion after being seriously provoked and tries to kill the person provoking him/her but accidentally kills someone else.

Example: Joe breaks into Bob's house and begins to shatter Bob's collection of priceless Ming vases. Bob's mother tells him to stop, but he continues and then threatens her with bodily harm, calls her obscene names, and spits in her face. This enrages Bob, who pulls out a gun and fires at Joe. He misses, and the bullet accidentally kills the butler. **Warrant:** Because the combination of destruction of precious property and the disrespect and threats to the mother provoked Bob to a sudden and intense passion, the act is voluntary manslaughter.

Contrasting example: Joe makes fun of Bob's haircut. This enrages Bob, who pulls out a gun, shoots at Joe and misses. The bullet accidentally hits an innocent bystander. **Warrant:** The insult is about a minor issue; therefore, Bob has not been seriously provoked. This is not

voluntary manslaughter.

3. A person incorrectly but honestly believes that if he/she does not kill the other person, his/her own life will be in danger.

Example: Joe shoots and kills Bob, who had been threatening him with a gun. Joe finds out later that Bob's gun was not loaded. **Warrant:** Because he honestly believed his life was in danger, Joe has committed voluntary manslaughter.

Contrasting example: Bob owns a store. Joe enters, looking very suspicious and seeming to have a gun in his coat pocket. Bob, thinking that Joe might rob and kill him, pulls out a gun and kills Joe. **Warrant:** Because the threat is not certain, this is not voluntary manslaughter.

SELF-DEFENSE

Taking someone's life is done in self-defense if one of the following criteria is met.

1. A person reasonably believes that he/she is in imminent danger of death or great bodily harm and has exhausted every reasonable means to escape the danger other than by using deadly force.

Example: Sally is threatened with rape in a deserted part of a city. She first screams for help. The attacker tackles her and begins to pull off her clothing. She tries to physically resist the attacker, but cannot. She finally shoots her attacker when she has no other means of defending herself. **Warrant:** Because she has tried several means of escape and is still greatly threatened, this act is one of self-defense.

Contrasting Example: Joe asks Sally for the time when she is walking in a dangerous part of the city. She walks faster and he follows. When he taps her on the shoulder, she turns and shoots him fatally. **Warrant:** Because she has only tried one means of escape, this is not considered self-defense.

2. If two people are involved in a physical confrontation and one person withdraws from physical contact with the other person and indicates clearly to the other person that he/she wishes to withdraw and stop the use of force, but the other person refuses and continues to use force, any action by the person wishing to withdraw is self-defense.

Example: During a heated argument and knife fight, Joe offers to stop fighting, but Bob refuses and attacks again. Joe then stabs Bob to death. **Warrant:** Because Joe has done everything possible to end the conflict, his act of stabbing is one of self-defense.

Contrasting Example: During a heated argument and knife fight, Joe backs off to catch his breath. Bob then attacks and Joe stabs him to death. **Warrant:** Joe did not pause to end the conflict but only to rest, so Joe's act is not self-defense.

MURDER

YES or NO

(circle one)

WHY or WHY NOT?

1.

2.

3.

VOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER

YES or NO

(circle one)

WHY or WHY NOT?

1.

2.

3.

SELF-DEFENSE

YES or NO

(circle one)

WHY or WHY NOT?

1.

2.

3.

For each of the following characters, list

1. Main points you want to remember

2. Questions you have about the testimony

David Rodriguez (Detective)

1. Main points you want to remember

2. Questions you have about the testimony

Chau Vuong (Detective)

1. Main points you want to remember

2. Questions you have about the testimony

Jerry Knight (Juker)

1. Main points you want to remember
2. Questions you have about the testimony

Michael “Speedy” Clark (Cobra)

1. Main points you want to remember
2. Questions you have about the testimony

William “Beano” Rose (Juker)

1. Main points you want to remember
2. Questions you have about the testimony

Hank Evans (Bar Owner)

1. Main points you want to remember
2. Questions you have about the testimony

Jeff “Ace” Johnson (Cobra)

1. Main points you want to remember
2. Questions you have about the testimony

Donna James (X-Ray Tech)

1. Main points you want to remember
2. Questions you have about the testimony

Character	Brief Description
Steve Harmon	
Sandra Petrocelli	
Kathy O' Brien	
James King	
Richard "Bobo" Evans	
Oswaldo Cruz	
Lorelle Henry	
Jose Delgado	
Mr. Sawicki	
Asa Briggs	
Dorothy Moore	

10 Important Events from *Monster*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

5 Key Lines from <i>Monster</i> (Write lines exactly as they appear in the novel.)	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Overarching Theme from <i>Monster</i>	

Additional documents are available at
<http://english.byu.edu/Novelinks/reading%20strategies/Monster/Monster.htm>

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ELAN 7408

Goals and Assessment Rubrics

Major Projects:

The unit will consist of a persuasive essay, a song-writing project and a skit.

Goals The student will:	AKS (Academic Knowledge and Skills)	Assessment
Acquire an understanding of how the criminal justice process and jury deliberations work	Social Studies AKS 47 – Analyze the role of the judicial branch in Georgia state government	Persuasive Essay
Negotiate with a group and reach a consensus	Language Arts AKS 2 – Present impromptu and formal speeches to inform,	

<p>Write an essay with details that support his/her position and address the opposing side's concerns</p> <p>Organize an essay so that his/her points make sense and are effective</p> <p>Edit an essay for grammatical errors</p>	<p>demonstrate and persuade</p> <p>Language Arts AKS 25 – Prewrite, draft, revise and edit writing to improve fluency, content, organization and style</p> <p>Language Arts AKS 27 – Produce writing that establishes an organizational structure appropriate to purpose, audience and type of composition</p> <p>Language Arts AKS 26 – Edit for spelling, fragments and run-on sentences</p>	
<p>Demonstrate an understanding of the plot, theme and characters in novel <i>Monster</i> by Walter Dean Myers</p> <p>Be challenged to think about the equality of the criminal justice system, particularly in terms of race and income</p> <p>Use a graphic organizer to organize your ideas and acquire a better understanding of the novel</p> <p>Create an original piece of writing in the form of a song about the novel</p>	<p>Language Arts AKS 21 – Identify messages and themes from books in all subject areas</p> <p>Language Arts AKS 6 – Read for a variety of purposes in all content areas and expect reading to make sense, to answer questions, or to stimulate ideas</p> <p>Language Arts AKS 9 – Evaluate information from common graphic features</p> <p>Language Arts AKS 27 – Produce writing that produces an organizational structure appropriate to purpose, audience, content and type of composition</p>	<p><i>Monster</i> Song</p>

Demonstrate an understanding of figurative language and rhyme scheme	Language Arts AKS 14 – Explain and analyze the effects of sound and figurative language	
Demonstrate an understanding of the plot, theme and characters in the novel <i>Monster</i>	Language Arts AKS 21 – Identify messages and themes from books in all subject areas	<i>Monster</i> Skit
Understand the film-making process and the different roles involved (director, set designer etc.)	Language Arts AKS 11 – Read, identify and compare characteristics of various genres including genres including drama, novels, short stories, poetry, nonfiction, technical writing, satire and parody	
Gain experience in oral presentations/oral expression	Language Arts AKS 2 – Present impromptu and formal speeches to inform, demonstrate and persuade	

Description of Major Assessments:

Persuasive Essay

For the first major assessment in the unit, you will write a persuasive essay following the “Courtroom Case Study” activity outlined in *Teaching English Through Principled Practice* by Peter Smagorinsky. In this activity, you and your peers will act as the jury in a murder trial. You will work in small groups of 6-7 students as the jury, to review the possible charges against the defendants (murder, voluntary manslaughter and self-defense) as well as all the testimony of the case. After reviewing all the evidence, each jury will try to determine what actually happened and which type of charge applies. The jury must reach a unanimous decision. Then, each member of the jury will write a persuasive essay justifying his/her verdict. In your essay, you should be able to explain why the evidence meets the criteria for the verdict you selected and also address why the evidence does not meet the criteria for the other two classifications.

In order to be promoted to ninth grade in Gwinnett County, students must pass a writing test, which requires them to write either a persuasive or expository essay. Therefore, it is

imperative that you know how to select a side in an issue and adequately defend it, while also refuting the opposing arguments.

Rubric:

See Attachment #1

Monster Song-Writing Project

For this project, which follows the completion of the novel *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers, you will create an original song about the novel. First, each of you will fill out a graphic organizer. In the graphic organizer, you will write down 10 events that occurred in the novel, the main character’s response to those events, and your own personal responses to the events. You also will write down five key phrases from the novel and the book’s overarching theme. Then, you will select a song you like and bring in a copy of the lyrics. Using the completed graphic organizer, you will write a new song following the same format as the existing song. The theme must be part of the chorus and at least three events from the novel must be in the stanzas. The students will type the lyrics to the new song next to the existing song’s. (The teacher will show the students an example using the song “You’re Beautiful” by James Blunt.)

Rubric:

See Attachment #2

Monster Skit

This assessment will be done while we are reading *Monster*. For the skit, you will be divided into three groups of roughly 7-8 students each. Each group will be assigned an upcoming chapter in the novel *Monster*. Each student in the group will have a role such as: Actor (Usually 3-5 per chapter) Director
Costume Director Set Designer

The groups will have two days to read the chapter and prepare to perform it for the class. In addition to knowing their lines, the actors must follow the script in terms of when, where and how to move. The director will be in charge of making sure the actors follow the script instructions. The costume designer will decide what each character should wear, and the set designer will determine how the scene should be set up.

Rubric:

Peer Review (30 Points)	Student receives a “good” from majority of group members	Student receives a “fair” from majority of group members	Student receives a “poor” from majority of group members
Technicality (40 points)	Group follows stage directions (set-up, character positions)	Group has some errors in following stage directions and	Group disregards all stage directions and seems

	etc.) and demonstrates a strong familiarity with dialogue (notes/book can be used)	demonstrates hesitation with dialogue	uncomfortable with dialogue
Creativity (30 Points)	Group demonstrates creativity in stage design, costumes and in acting	Group demonstrates little creativity or effort in stage design, costumes and in acting	No stage design or costumes/Acting is flat