



From Sandy to Sudan: Childhood in Crisis
A Unit on Global Literature and Engagement

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“If children are tough enough to be bombed and starved,
then they are also tough enough to read about it.”

- Deborah Ellis

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Essential Questions

Essential Questions:

1. What does it mean to be a child in the face of extreme difficulty and crisis? In other words, is a child still a child when living in crisis?
2. How does regional conflict affect children specifically?
3. What special perspective do children have about regional conflict?
4. What are the various levels of crisis?
5. Is it possible to relate to people living in crisis across the globe? How?

Teacher's note: I really appreciated the distinction that Smagorinsky makes between a conceptual unit versus a "collection on texts on the same topic." He explains that a conceptual unit "involves students in a conversation that deepens as they progress through the texts, activities, and discussions" (112). The unit must be worthy of the time and effort that both the teacher and students give to the "deepening conversations." I decided to pursue a topic that I would enjoy spending months discussing and planning, since Smagorinsky advises teachers to teach topics and books that both you *and* your students will enjoy (135). My passion for education in crisis areas guided the initial reflections on this conceptual unit. I want my students to "come to a better personal understanding" (112) about what it is like to be a child living in regions affected by war, genocide, and injustice, so that they can "build an understanding of the many dimensions of human experience" (NCTE). These essential questions will engage students in discussions about what it means to be a child and what it means to be a child living in crisis.

UNIT GOALS

I. Students will understand

- A. The human experience is multidimensional (NCTE 2)
- B. How a young adult might feel while living in crisis
- C. That reading crisis texts gives us a perspective on our own childhood, privilege, conflicts, resilience, and growing up.

II. Students will know:

- A. The catalysts and consequences of the crisis that they study
- B. The significance of point of view & perspective in crisis literature
- C. Tense and how it functions in the story (Language)

III. Students will be able to:

- A. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text (CCSS-RL.8.2)
- B. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences (CCSS-W.8.3)
- C. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes (CCSS-R.9)
- D. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact) (CCSS-L.8.3.A)
- E. Reflect on their own ideas about crisis, their stereotypes or conceptions of people living in crisis, and crisis and challenges in their own life.
- F. Understand the perspective of a character and write in the voice of a new character.

UNIT RATIONALE

What is this topic of study?

This unit explores the lives of young people living in crisis around the world. We will read both fictional and nonfictional accounts of young people who have lived during genocide, war, natural disaster, and/or human rights abuses. This unit discusses the ways of defining childhood versus young adulthood, power imbalances in crisis areas, and maintaining human rights during crisis (RL.8.2). Important questions include: What does it mean to be human? How does crisis change children? What special perspective do children have during crisis? Is it possible to remain innocent throughout crisis? What even *is* innocence? It focuses specifically on young peoples' experiences during crises like Hurricane Sandy, 9/11, Baltic genocides, the rise of the Taliban, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Hurricane Sandy, and the Sudanese Civil War. Additionally, we will investigate the historical context and implications of specific crises (W.7) and write narratives from the perspectives of the involved people (W.8.3).

Why will students be interested in this?

There is an inherent interest in how children—like them—grow up differently. This unit will give 8th graders a chance to wonder how they might handle what these children in crisis face. It asks students to examine their own childhoods and their own privileges to better understand how they can relate (and are different from) children in other parts of the USA and the world.

This unit also interests students because it plays on their curiosity of the taboo. In most homes and classrooms, kids are highly aware of the “taboo” and that timidity extends to the literature that they read. Children are afraid to ask what seems like voyeuristic questions that seem insensitive, such as “what exactly did refugees die from?” or “how did the Lithuanians shoved in cattle cars use the bathroom?” The English classroom is the perfect environment to address the simple and the dramatic because we explore humanity.

Additionally, a subject does not have to be pleasant in order to be interesting. Most of the time, we adults are drawn to the most dramatic news stories, not the “normal” ones. What interests us about these stories is how unbelievable or “different” the story is; it plays on our humanity. Students like to read “crisis literature” not because they enjoy reading about sad or horrible topics like genocide; they enjoy reading it because it touches on a part of their humanity that otherwise is not attended to.

The way this unit is taught also interests students. Literature circles are “small, peer- led discussion groups whose members have chosen to read the same story, poem, article, or book” (2). In these circles, readers respond to literature, can express their views on texts in relation to their own life experiences and philosophies, and have “an opportunity for enjoyable reading experiences” (Kim, 2004, p. 145). In addition, literature circles can increase students’ motivation to read (McElvain, 2010) and a stronger degree of inferential thinking (Jewell & Pratt, 1999). Students have choice, which increases engagement and “ownership” during the unit, and there is room for student-led discussions, which touches upon Common Core standards for speaking, listening, and coming to discussions prepared.

Why do students need to study this?

Our students live in a world of easy, riskless connections with their peers—through both social media and in their structured, day-to-day classroom time. For the most part, their peers are similar to them, so our students only get to learn from their immediate experiences. Other than by sneaking glances at the news, students may never create a connection with young people who live outside of their immediate experience. Our students need to read these stories because they deserve to enter into a global conversation that they wouldn’t otherwise have. In terms of stereotypes and preconceptions about “other” people, multicultural literature can “dispel cultural myths and give students opportunities to view issues from the perspectives of different individuals and groups” (Finkle 29-30).

It is valuable to search for meaning in the stories of young adults who have lived through unimaginable circumstances. Aside from the value in being informed on current events, reading crisis literature gives students an opportunity to find meaning in a circumstance that would otherwise seem hopeless. This unit gives students a chance to glean some insight into what it means to remain hopeful and to persist in spite of crisis and conflict. Marcel Proust, the French novelist, observed that, "the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new lands but in seeing with new eyes " (Picardo). Reading about other adolescents in crisis may inspire students to persevere in the midst of their own challenges. Lori Fredericks conducted a study with the graphic novel *Persepolis* (one of our book club books) and found that students felt that they became more resilient when reading about the revolution and political changes in Iran. One student said, "We are reading *Persepolis* now, and it helped me to be more resilient. To be more experienced. It's like what we are facing. I feel that I am facing some difficulties in my own life. Such events, I think that they further can help me to overcome every difficulty I face" (Fredericks 494-504).

Additionally, multicultural crisis literature allows teachers to engage in cross-curricular activities. Historical literature allows students to study literature in context, where they experience an integration of social studies and English. While thinking about history, it is crucial that our students gain insight and think deeply about concepts and themes like imbalances of power, injustice, perseverance, and what it means to grow up.

In terms of standards, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) encourages teachers to introduce literature that "builds an understanding of the many dimensions of human experience." Students can only understand what it means to be human if they explore the "many dimensions" of humanity across the world. As for social-emotional learning, reading crisis literature helps students to become more reflective decision makers. Students will learn that critical thinking in a diverse society leads to a deeper understanding and knowledge of cultures, religions, or perspectives, which, in turn, results in deeper reflective thinking (ISBE Goal 3).

Why teach this unit now?

During the past several months, young adults have had easy access to YouTube videos of ISIS extremists beheading American journalists and Syrian preschoolers crying amidst rubble. When their parents turn on CNN over breakfast, chances are that students will heard mention of death tolls and bombed schools and military interventions across the world. They are hearing about immigrant children who have crossed borders without their parents and are now integrating in

classrooms like their own. Still, these stories remain distant. Unless they read about these children, students will have little access to a true understanding of what it is like to survive the unimaginable. Now, more than ever, it is crucial that children recognize that there are *real* children—just like them—living in the midst of chaos and conflict.

I admit there is also a selfish motive behind this unit. Peter Smagorinsky advises teachers to teach topics and books that both you *and* your students will enjoy (135). My passion for education in crisis areas guided the initial reflections on this conceptual unit. I remember the first time I read a piece of “crisis literature”—it was about the Holocaust—and how it piqued my interest and made me think deeply about my world. The trouble was that I was too embarrassed by my interest in this horrible subject to ask for guidance and clarity about the topics explored between the pages. I want my students to “come to a better personal understanding” (112) about what it is like to be a child living in regions affected by war, genocide, and injustice, so that they can “build an understanding of the many dimensions of human experience” (NCTE).

There is real value in finding meaning in the stories of young adults who have lived through unimaginable circumstances. Whether or not the individuals “overcome” the crisis is irrelevant—my students will find meaning in the story, and when they do, I will be there to help them process it.

Works Consulted

Common Core State Standards. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010. Web. <www.corestandards.org>.

Finkle, Sheryl L., and Tamara J. Lilly. *Middle Ground: Exploring Selected Literature from and about the Middle East*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2008. Print.

Fredricks, Lori. "The Benefits and Challenges of Culturally Responsive EFL Critical Literature Circles." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 55.6 (2012): 494-504. Print.

Jewell, T., and D. Pratt. "Literature Discussions in the Primary Grades: Children's Thoughtful Discourse about Books and What Teachers Can Do to Make It Happen." *Reading Teacher* 52 (1999): 542-850. Print.

Kim, Myonghee. "Literature Discussions in Adult L2 Learning." *Language and Education* 18.2 (2004): 145-66. Print.

McElvain, Cheryl Marie. "Transactional Literature Circles And The Reading Comprehension Of English Learners In The Mainstream Classroom." *Journal of Research in Reading* 33.2 (2010): 178-205. Print.

"NCTE / IRA Standards for the English Language Arts." *NCTE Comprehensive News*. National Council of Teachers of English, n.d. Web. 21 Sept. 2014.
<<http://www.ncte.org/standards/ncte-ira>>.

Picardo, Jose. "Why Students Need a Global Awareness and Understanding of Other Cultures." *The Guardian Teacher Network*. N.p., 25 Sept. 2012. Web.

Smagorinsky, Peter. *Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry out Instructional Units*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008. Print.

Book Club Books

Ellis, Deborah. *The Breadwinner*. Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001. Print.

Eleven-year old Parvana is forced to be her family's sole provider in secret in a war-torn, Taliban-era Afghanistan. Deborah Ellis has written dozens of stories about Middle Eastern children living in crisis which can be alternatives to *The Breadwinner*, such as *The Cat at the Wall*, which tells the West Bank crisis from the perspective of a cat. This book is suited for struggling/young readers, students interested in the Middle East (but not fans of graphic novels), or those who enjoy series (since *The Breadwinner* has follow-ups).

Brown, Skila. *Caminar*. Berryville, VA: Candlewick, 2014. Print

Set in 1981 Guatemala, a lyrical debut novel tells the powerful tale of a boy who must decide what it means to be a man during a time of war. Carlos joins a band of guerillas to warn the "Communist Rebels" about the soldiers who have invaded his village. This is a fictional take on the real-life crisis in Guatemala, and is an engaging representation of what crisis looks like in Latin America. Best suited for students who love poetry, are Hispanic or interested in Latin America, or are interested in political uprisings and rebellions. An alternative text is *Emilio: Through my Eyes* (see below for more information on the *Through my Eyes* series).

Park, Linda Sue. *A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story*. Boston: Clarion, 2010.

Print.

In comparison to other books about Sudanese lost boys, Park's *A Long Walk to Water* stands out for his dual storytelling of both a Lost Boy and a modern-day Sudanese girl who watches a well being dug in her neighborhood. Alternative titles are *Lost Boy Lost Girl*, *The Good Braider*, and more.

McCormick, Patricia. *Never Fall Down*. New York: Balzer Bray, 2012. Print.

Based on the true story of Arn Chorn-Pond, and told from his perspective as a child, *Never Fall Down* details the rise of the Khmer Rouge regime and their brutal treatment and manipulation of children and families. This book is appropriate for on-level readers, but requires some careful monitoring, due to mature content.

Satrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis*. New York, NY: Pantheon, 2003. Print.

An autobiographical graphic novel set during the Iranian revolution, *Persepolis* details Satrapi's childhood and her adolescent perspective on cultural and social changes. Satrapi uses comics to demonstrate her unique understanding of what it meant, as a child, to wear a veil, go to a gender-segregated school, and see violent demonstrations in the streets. Appropriate for struggling readers, fans of graphic novels, or students interested in the Middle East.

Sepetys, Ruta. *Between Shades of Gray*. New York: Philomel, 2011. Print.

Of all the book club books, this one is the most "historical," as it addresses what life was like for Lithuanians living under Stalin's terrifying regime. It follows a young girl named Lena as she and her family are deported from Lithuania and sent to a labor camp in Siberia (later known as the Genocide of the Balkan people). Author Ruta Sepetys says that she wrote this story from a perspective of a young adult because she met many survivors who were teenagers themselves during the crisis, and noticed that they had a unique perspective and will to live than their adult counterparts. As such, this book introduces some interesting discussions about the ways that children negotiate crisis in comparison to adults. A longer novel, this is best suited for advanced readers or those interested in WWII or the Holocaust, since it presents a side of the story that they probably have never heard before.

Alternatives:

Alvarez, Julia. *Before We Were Free*. New York: A. Knopf, 2002. Print.

Set in the Dominican Republic, *Before We Were Free* details a child's perspective of a terrifying dictatorship. This novel is an advanced alternative to *Caminar*. I really wanted to include this book in the curriculum because it represents a Latin American crisis, and Julia Alvarez is a widely respected author. Despite its challenging content and prose, *Before We Were Free* is a great choice for excerpts, as it is told from a teenager's perspective and details the "eye-opening" that most children in crisis experience. As a part of a high-school English class, this text would be more appropriate; however, advanced readers (or Hispanic readers interested in their heritage) may enjoy it. Excerpts from this novel will appear throughout the unit.

Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner*. New York: Riverhead, 2003. Print.

If this unit were to be adapted for high school, *The Kite Runner* would be an obvious anchor text or book club option. However, I can use excerpts in my 8th grade classroom, or direct advanced students to read it independently.

Hosseini, Khaled. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. New York: Riverhead, 2007. Print.

See above. This text is especially appropriate for lessons focusing on women in crisis, or as a supplement text for *Persepolis* and *Breadwinners*, which feature female protagonists living in Muslim countries.

Powers, J. L., and Lyn White. *Amina: Through My Eyes*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2013. Print.

The *Through my Eyes* series follows children living during war, and *Amina* follows a young Somali girl living during civil war. J.L. Powers also wrote *The Mad Game*, an anthology of crisis short stories that will also feature heavily during this unit. It's worth mentioning that the [Through my Eyes series](#) is also an option for teachers conducting a childhood in crisis unit, since it features 6 titles, each addressing a different foreign crisis. However, it centers heavily in the Middle East, so the variety of the previous titles may be helpful. If I had discovered this series earlier on in the design of my unit, I would have considered offering each of those texts as options.

Children's Books

Mali Under the Night Sky: A Lao Story of Home, Youme Landowne

This is the true story of a Laotian artist whose family was forced to flee Laos due to civil war. After her family is thrown into a Thai jail, Youme reflects on her experiences and makes the horrors of civil war and incarceration accessible to young readers. This text can be used early in the unit, when transitioning from national crisis to international crisis. Students can compare and contrast this text with other children's books about American crisis; for example, *Story of a Storm* (see below)

Story of a Storm: A Book About Hurricane Katrina, Reona Visser

A fifth grade teacher from Mississippi asked her students to draw pictures to help them deal with their experiences during Hurricane Katrina. This project involves children ages 5-13 and details the devastation from a child's perspective. This text is helpful to use early in the unit, to demonstrate how children have a unique perspective on crisis.

Poetry

[Landays by Afghan Women](#)

A teenage Afghan girl, Zarmina, wrote forbidden poetry and fatally burned herself in protest. Zarmina wrote *landays*, twenty-two syllable two-line poems that Pashtun women write. This work features a selection of *landays*. Students can practice writing their own *landays* to summarize their feelings about their book club book or to learn more about the lives of women living in crisis. See below for the documentary "[Death and Love: Poetry of Afghan Women](#)." To use poetry to shed light on childrens' perspectives of crisis, look at [Terezin Children's Holocaust poetry](#).

"Sudan." *UniVerse: A United Nations of Poetry*. Web. 1 Dec. 2014.

[<http://www.universeofpoetry.org/sudan.shtml>](http://www.universeofpoetry.org/sudan.shtml).

A series of poems by Sudanese Lost Boy Onam Liduba, who is now an adult. This will feature as a supplement during the small group lesson for the *A Long Walk to Water* group. See poem "Child Cry of War" by Onam Liduba.

Excerpts from:

Alvarez, Julia. *Before We Were Free*. New York: A. Knopf, 2002. Print.

See above.

Barakat, Ibtisam. *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007. Print.

A memoir set in Ramallah during the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War. Excerpts featuring memories of explosions, escape, and life in a refugee camp make this a meaningful and effective supplement.

Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner*. New York: Riverhead, 2003. Print.

If this unit were to be adapted for high school, *The Kite Runner* would be an obvious anchor text or book club option. However, I can use excerpts in my 8th grade classroom, or direct advanced students to read it independently.

McCormick, Patricia. *Sold*. New York: Hyperion, 2006. Print.

- McCormick, Patricia. "What You Hear." *Sold*. New York: Hyperion, 2006. Print.
- McCormick, Patricia. "Police." *Sold*. New York: Hyperion, 2006. Print.

We will be returning to this text often to model reading and writing strategies. The content is mature--the story follows a child who has been sold into human trafficking--but the graphic content is not sensationalized, and it is quite subtle. Written in a series of poems, this text is an appropriate anchor text. It features in a reading lesson about making inferences.

Powers, J. L. *That Mad Game: Growing Up in a Warzone : An Anthology of Essays from Around the Globe*. New York: Cinco Puntos, 2012. Print.

An anthology of personal narratives from children who grew up during war and crisis. This text explores the universal and personal experiences of children who come of age in a crisis zone, and as such, is beneficial to use throughout the unit. It features stories across the globe-- "From the cartel-terrorized streets of Juárez to the bombed-out cities of Bosnia to Afghanistan under the Taliban, from Nazi-occupied Holland to the middle-class American home of a Vietnam vet" (Amazon)-- and will provide real-life context for young readers. Teachers can use this text to introduce a whole class to a particular crisis, even when some will not be reading about it in their book club books. Side note: I contacted J.L. Powers for advice on putting together this unit, and she responded quickly and in much depth, providing me with professional perspective on teaching crisis to young adults. She also put me in contact with Merna Hecht, an author of crisis literature.

Reedy, Trent. *Words in the Dust*. New York: Arthur A. Levine, 2011. Print.

Fictional story about an Afghan girl with a cleft palate; follows her life after the Taliban have left, and the way that she finds hope with poetry. This is a fantastic supplement to *The New York Times* article about Afghan women and *landays* (see below).

Tarshis, Lauren, and Scott Dawson. *I Survived Hurricane Katrina, 2005*. New York:

Scholastic, 2011. Print.

This elementary text is great for modeling reading and writing strategies, since it contains sensory language, relevant descriptive details, and more. I use an excerpt from this text for a reading lesson on making inferences.

Yousafzai, Malala, and Christina Lamb. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*. Little, Brown, 2013. Print.

This is a popular memoir amongst middle schoolers, and many students will have read this already or at least have heard of Malala. Students will read excerpts to foster discussions about resilience; additionally, we will read current event articles about Malala.

Media:

Candles and Gas Masks. Save the Children, 2014. Film.

This YouTube commercial will feature predominantly during a discussion lesson about children's perspective during crisis, and the ways that crisis affects childhood.

Girl Rising. The Vulcan Productions, 2013. DVD.

This film is an extraordinary illustration of how girls in crisis-torn countries rise above terrible circumstances with the help of education and support. Clips from this film will be featured during lessons on voice and resilience, and finding meaning in crisis. It is also an effective "space-holder" if a teacher wanted to hold mini writing conferences during class time as the final assessment draws near. The clip "Melka's Story" will feature during Lesson 15.

Griswold, Eliza. "Why Afghan Women Risk Death to Write Poetry." *The New York Times* 27

Apr. 2012: MM38. Web. 1 Jan.

2014. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/29/magazine/why-afghan-women-risk-death-to-write-poetry.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>>.

This is an excellent article following young women who congregate to share honest, controversial poetry with one another in secret. One Afghan teenager, named Zarmina, committed suicide after her family forbid her to write poetry. Griswold travels to Afghanistan to meet with Zarmina's family and fellow poets, and traces the effects of

crisis and oppression on women's artistic expressions and liberties. A lesson about the ways that children cope during crisis--or resilience following crisis--would feature this article, along with clips from its accompanying documentary (see above) and excerpts from *Words in the Dust* by Trent Reedy (see above for notes about this novel).

The Kite Runner. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2008. Film.

More appropriate for high school students, although clips from the earlier parts of the film can be used as textual supplements in middle school.

Lost Boys of Sudan. Docurama, 2004. DVD.

See above. Clips are helpful as a textual supplement, and the entire film can be assigned to the Lost Boys book club book.

Manning, Lauren. "Excerpt: Against All Odds, a Story of Survival on 9/11." *Time*. Time Inc., 31 Aug. 2011. Web. 11 Dec. 2014.

This text will be used early in the unit, when discussing national crisis. This excerpt is available on Time Magazine in both written and audio versions. This will be an important resource to return to when discussing the relationship between crisis and resilience, and the ways that adults deal with crisis differently than children.

"THE POETRY OF AFGHAN WOMEN: Landay, A Twenty-two Syllable Two-Line Poem." *The Poet by Day: The Uncollected Poems of an Accidental Poet Sometimes Not Poems*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Dec.

2014. <<http://musingbymoonlight.com/2013/05/26/the-poetry-of-afghan-women-landay-a-twenty-two-syllable-two-line-poem/>>.

Journalists and filmmakers team up to investigate the effects of *landay* poetry on Afghan womens' daily lives in the midst of military involvement and crisis. It features Zarmina, an Afghan teenager who wrote forbidden poems and fatally lit herself on fire in protest. (See below for the accompanying *The New York Times* article).

Websites

www.storybird.com

Features in Lesson 13 “Tough Talk.” Students will read examples of crisis poetry and then create their own for their book club book.

Literary Criticism

Landt, Susan M. "Multicultural Literature And Young Adolescents: A Kaleidoscope Of Opportunity." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 49.8 (2006): 690-97. Print. This article rationalizes the inclusion of multicultural literature into the ELA curriculum. Landt suggests titles for classroom reading and describes the “six purposes” of multicultural literature in the curriculum (695). Teachers can use this article as both a supplement or support to their rationale, as a book list, and as a list of resources to turn to, since Landt explores multiple studies in depth (ie. Campbell and Wittenberg [1980]).

Noor, Ronny. "The Kite Runner." *World Literature Today* 78.3/4 (2004): 148. Print.

Use as a model for writing a book review at the end of the unit; students will have learned in a previous unit how to write a book review, and this is an effective formative assessment, especially if a teacher needs more grades for a student. Can also be an effective extra credit option.

Teacher Resources

Bean, Thomas W. "Global and Multicultural Literature for Young Adults." *Teaching Young Adult Literature Developing Students as World Citizens*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2014. Print. http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/54139_Chapter_12.pdf

This a fantastic resource for teachers to find crisis texts (I discovered most of my supplemental texts through this chapter). It addresses the importance of teaching global literature to young helps to help them become engaged world citizens.

Daniels, Harvey. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups*. 2nd ed. Portland, Me.: Stenhouse, 2002. Print.

Refer to this text for guidance and practical application of literature circles and book clubs. This text is full of resources and ideas for the classroom teacher to implement literature circles during this unit.

Fredricks, Lori. "The Benefits and Challenges of Culturally Responsive EFL Critical Literature Circles." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 55.6 (2012): 494-504. Print.

This research follows a classroom that read books like *The Kite Runner* and *Persepolis* in literature circles, and demonstrated how reading crisis texts in literature circles can help students become more empathetic and resilient.

FINAL ASSESSMENT

The **WHAT**: Put yourself in the shoes of a child living during the crisis that you studied. Using your novel and resources from class (plus your own research), create a new character (an adolescent) that lives during that crisis. Compose a letter in that child's perspective, explaining the crisis and then detailing a moment from "your" harrowing experience. Narrate this moment using relevant descriptive details, sensory language, and a variety of active/passive verbs. You are *not* simply recounting a plot point told in your book of choice; instead, you are to use that as inspiration and create a new character and story.

In this letter, you will:

1. Introduce your new character and intention for writing this letter
2. Give a brief summary of the crisis and its historical context (the how, what, when, where, why, and how).
3. Share a moment from your experience using the narrative tools that you worked on in class—using sensory language, variety of active/passive verbs, and relevant descriptive details.
4. Return to your intention for writing this letter—why did you share that moment? What message do you want your friend to take away?

Other requirements:

- Be creative and use details that contribute to a reader's enjoyment.
- Proofread diligently so that the reader isn't distracted.
- Implement the strategies taught during this unit; in particular: writing from a character's perspective and in their voice, sensory language, relevant descriptions, and using active/passive voice effectively.
- Maximum: 4 pages

The **WHEN**: Due _____

The **WHY**: To continue the journey of fully understanding the "many dimensions" of human experiences, this project addresses the following unit goals:

- o **Writing**: Write narratives with strong details and sensory language (W.8.3.D)
- o **Reading**: Understand what it might be like to live in crisis (UG.B; KG.A)
- o **Language**: Use verbs in the active and passive voice (L.8.3.A)

Final Assessment Rubric

Category	4	3	2	1
Historical Context (25)	The narrative is related to the assigned crisis and elaborates to help the reader to learn a lot about the crisis.	Most of the narrative is related to the assigned crisis. The story wanders, but the reader can still learn something about the crisis.	Some of the narrative is related to the assigned crisis but a reader does not learn much about the crisis.	No attempt has been made to relate the narrative to the assigned crisis. No historical context has been given for the crisis.
Sensory Language (20)	Many vivid, descriptive words are used to tell when and where the story took place. Features strong relevant descriptions and sensory language.	Some vivid, descriptive words are used to tell the audience when and where the narrative took place. Some relevant descriptions and sensory language.	Descriptions may not be relevant, and sensory language focuses on one or two strategies. The reader can figure out when and where the story takes place.	The reader has trouble figuring out when and where the story took place. Little to no relevant descriptions or sensory language.
Perspective (25)	The writer has successfully and effectively taken on the perspective of the character; the character has a distinct voice.	The writer has taken on the perspective of the character and tries to write in the character's voice.	The writer has tried to write from the character's perspective, but needs work to capture the voice	The writer has not written from a character's perspective or voice, and there is little evidence of effort.
Language (15)	Uses a variety of active and passive verbs to achieve optimal effects with emphasis and focus on action vs. actor.	Some variety with active and passive voice and some effect with emphasis.	Little variety with active and passive voice, and when used, the verbs don't have a strong effect with emphasis.	No variety of active and/or passive voice, and there is no effect with emphasis or focus.
Requirements (7)	All of the written requirements (intro, context, narrative moment, meaning, etc.) were met.	Almost all (about 90%) the written requirements were met.	Most (about 75%) of the written requirements were met, but several were not.	Many requirements were not met.
Conventions (7)	There are no spelling or punctuation errors in the final draft.	There are 2-3 spelling or punctuation error in the final draft.	There are 4-5 spelling and punctuation errors in the final draft.	The final draft has more than 5 spelling and punctuation errors.

Total Points Available: 99

LESSON SEQUENCE

Lesson 1: ILPE

(See ILPE lesson)

Lesson 2: Personal Crisis/ Writing Benchmark

Mini lesson on personal crisis. How does a personal crisis differ from a personal “challenge”? Ask students to, “Pull out your quick-jot about the challenging moment in your life. Describe that moment as best as you can in a narrative form (think of it almost like you are writing a scene from your book about the experience). Use details and sensory language. 2-3 paragraphs.” Refer back to this to compare and contrast their growth between this and their final assessment.

Lesson 3: Crisis in our Backyard Examples of writing about crisis in America

The other day we spent some time discussing personal crisis and what it feels like to be a young adult going through a hard time. We’re making a transition now into a larger scope of crisis--the kind that affects an entire community, region, and country. Listen to *Unmeasured Strength* audio; read excerpts from *I Survived Hurricane Katrina*; discuss the similarities and differences between the two. Add to class definition of crisis.

Lesson 4: Global Crisis: (Second set of scenarios) and discussions

Give students the second set of crisis scenarios (the first are from the ILPE) and discuss why rankings change depending on their geographical location/when students received more information and context. Tonight, students watch book talks on ShadowPuppet app and select their top choices via SurveyMonkey. *A Long Walk to Water* (Sudan genocide); *Persepolis* (Iran revolution/ graphic novel); *Between Shades of Gray* (Stalin repressions in Balkans); *Never Fall Down* (Cambodian genocides), *Sold* (human trafficking in Nepal)

Lesson 5: Candles and Gas Masks (Discussion)

(See discussion lesson)

Lesson 6: Book clubs

Mini lessons on how to work effectively as a group; Group standards/expectations, self-facilitated KWLs, assigning reading schedule, etc. (reading to begin over the weekend!) HW: As you read, start to record questions you want to answer in your KWL.

Lesson 7: Making Inferences While Reading

(See reading lesson)

Lesson 8: What's behind it? Addressing the "W" in KWL

(See small group lesson)

Lesson 9: Sensory Language:

Students must describe objects based on the 5 senses (bring in objects that feature in the stories, like rocks, water pouring into a cup, hot sand, freezing cold ice, rope, fur, tattered clothes, etc. Students will read examples of sensory language from a crisis text (*Sold* poem) . Finally, Students spend 10 minutes revising their *Benchmark piece* from Lesson 1.

Lesson 10: Taking Perspectives

Today we are discussing how to take perspectives while writing. After seeing an "unexpected event" (the egg explosion activity), every student will write from a particular perspective (assigned beforehand). We will then discuss strategies we used to write from that perspective.

Lesson 11 Voice in Writing

(See writing lesson)

Lesson 12: Relevant Descriptions

We will participate in the [menu activity](#) from *Teacher Channel* to learn about relevant (versus irrelevant) details in writing. Then, we will workshop our Benchmark pieces to ensure that the sensory language/details are *relevant*. (Should this lesson come before sensory language lesson?)

Lesson 13: Tough Talk

Students will discuss in reading groups the "nitty gritty" of the crisis. Questions include, "What is most troubling for you so far in your story? What don't you understand?" Then, students will create a [Storybird](#) poem/free verse about the most difficult moment in their story. (If tech

is not available: found poems from the most difficult scene/chapter) Here is a *A Long Walk to Water* [storybird example](#).

Lesson 14: Passive/active voice

(See language lesson)

Lesson 15: Resilience in Crisis

Students will read *The New York Times* article about Afghan women and poetry (or watch the accompanying YouTube clip) and then read an excerpt from *Words in the Dust*. Discussion in small groups about the ways that people living in crisis cope (in comparison to personal, communal/national, and other crises).

Lesson 16: Workshop

Final mini-conferences on final assessment in class (watch entire *Girls Rising* or other film). Discussion of the film will occur during the last lesson, as a way to wrap up.

Lesson 17: Workshop

Finish *Girls Rising* film (or other film); continue mini conferences on final assessment.

Lesson 18: Out of the Crisis Zone (Discussion)

Final discussion (“Now that we know, what do we do?”) and collaborative activity (“puzzling” together our crisis unit). Reflect on *Girl Rising* and make connections with our crisis texts.



Lesson I: Investigating Learner's Previous Experience (ILPE)

Teacher: Ms. Wrinn

Grade Level: 8

Date of lesson:

Content Standards: Using the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

- While reading the five scenarios, students will *"analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation"* (CCSS-ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.9).
- After students rank their scenarios, they will *"write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence"* (CCSS-ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1).
- Small group discussions allows students to *"engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly"* (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1).
- As the class creates a working definition of crisis, students will *"acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented"* (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.D).

Lesson Context: This is the opening lesson in a unit on childhood in crisis. This lesson will lead into discussions about defining crisis, the difference between a hard time and a crisis,

and when/where crisis occurs. We will start with personal crisis narratives, then communal/national crisis model texts, and global crisis literature. I will transition into tomorrow's focus on personal crisis by asking students to write their own "scenario" (modeled after the ones we read in class today) of a crisis in their life. Eventually, we will return to the scenario rankings and replace them with a second set of scenarios, to gauge their evolving definition of crisis (See Appendix B).

Learner Background: As eighth graders, the students have worked collaboratively before and understand the expectations regarding small group work. In previous units, students have created "working definitions." However, I anticipate that my students will struggle to understand that there can be a difference between a crisis and a challenge or a difficult time. I want students to think critically and specifically about what constitutes a "crisis." Our previous unit focused on personal narratives, so I am hoping that it will bridge the personal into larger focus areas (communal, national, and global crisis). My classroom is 80% white, so I am anticipating some cultural barriers as we learn about crisis in other countries. I am concerned that students will just associate "different" with "bad" since we are studying crisis in other countries. As a result, I will spend several days focusing on crises that happen in their own backyard.

Student Learning Objective(s):

- Be able to examine five scenarios and rank them according to "crisis level."
- Be able to differentiate between a crisis and a challenge
- Create a working definition of crisis
- Understand that crisis appears in a variety of contexts (personal, communal/national, and global).

Assessment:

- Each group submits their ranking sheet and votes in online poll
- Tonight's assignment: create list of challenging moments in their life and pick one to write about. Students will write about the challenge and whether or not they consider it a crisis.

Materials/Resources:

- Five scenarios of challenges (optional: a sixth "crisis" challenge to add later on in the lesson).

- Poll Everywhere link (for students to submit their rankings).
https://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/dXRRrGrdN4aoatD/web (See Appendix C for poll results)
 - **Options:** students either send a representative to teacher computer to submit rankings or can do so individually via cell phones/text message or classroom chromebooks, iPads, etc.
- Transparency of handout (or use SmartBoard)
- Prompt for tonight's homework: *Brainstorm a list of challenges that you have faced in your life. Would you consider any of them a crisis? Write about one.*

Multicultural Education: The scenarios consider diverse economic, social, and contextual backgrounds. Later on (lesson 3) we will discuss how these scenarios might become more "crisis"-like depending on where they occur in the world and the people involved.

Learning Activities:

Initiation (Whole group)

Today we are beginning a unit that is very important to me. This unit is centered around one very important--and contested--word. Most people disagree on the meaning of this word, so today, we will try to define it. Each of you probably already has an idea of what this means. (5)

- Write the word CRISIS on the board. *What do you think of when you hear this word?* Write down some short words/phrases on the board. Probe for deeper understandings--"Why do you say that?" "What made you think of that?" "What exactly do you mean by ___?"

Lesson Development (whole group → small groups → whole group) :

Model the thinking that you would like students to engage in. Project the scenarios using the transparency and think aloud. *Ex: "My first instinct is to choose number 3 because it was really hard when my mom was diagnosed with cancer. But her doctor caught it early so it wasn't as scary for us as it is for some families. So I think I'll go with..."* Remind students that it is okay to disagree and that if that happens, you should talk about it together. Students are ranking scenarios in terms of the most difficult.

Guided Practice

Pass out the scenarios worksheet (see Appendix A) and write the *Poll Everywhere* link on the board. The small groups rank the scenarios together (SL.8.1) (RI.8.9) and rank their #1 on *PollEverywhere.com* (link given on worksheet).

Whole group: Reveal poll responses. Class discussion comparing rankings and identifying assumptions, pre-judgments (ie. if it was your mother who lost her job, versus your father, etc.) and the “suppose...” stuff that would change your answer. (SL.8.1)

- What factors would have to be in play for your answer to change? Ask them if their answer changes and why or why not (SL.8.1.D)
- Identify any group disagreements on rankings.

Class Discussion: What is the difference between a “crisis” and a challenge? Does it depend on the person, the place, the time? (SL.8.1)

Closure (whole group)

The purpose of this lesson was for us to start thinking about what we mean when we call something a “crisis” versus calling it a challenge. Tomorrow, we will discuss the different levels of crisis (personal, national, global) and explore the first one: personal crisis. See homework below:

- Differentiation for gifted students: Brainstorm a list of challenges in your life and pick one. Analyze the challenge’s affect on you physically and emotionally. Would you call it a crisis? Why or why not?
- Differentiation for struggling students: Brainstorm a list of challenges in your life and pick one. What do you remember most about it? Would you call it a crisis? Why or why not?
- Middle of the road: Brainstorm a list of challenges in your life and pick one. Describe the event and its effect on your life. Would you call it a crisis? Why or why not?

Individuals Needing Differentiated Instruction:

Which students may struggle?	Why?	How will you differentiate instruction in this lesson to support student learning?
Mariana	ELL	Give student worksheet in his/her own language (since translation difficulties would prevent them from thinking deeply about the topic and engaging in thought and discussion).
Jason	Dyslexia; tends to think in broad terms	Scenarios are kept short; not a lot of writing.
Chris	Hearing	Allow Chris' group to sit in the hallway for their discussion if the classroom gets too loud. Also, wear hearing aid connector (available in most districts)
Which students will need enrichment?	Why?	How will you differentiate instruction in this lesson to support student learning?
Madeline	High reading comprehension and reads quickly	Homework: See above; analyzing instead of remembering. Place in a discussion group of critical thinkers (other "creators" and "analyzers," like Clara and Justin).
Clara	Leadership; an effective collaborator	Homework: See above. Place with other effective collaborators so that she has a fruitful discussion.
Justin	General intellectual thinking; enjoys hypothesizing	Homework: See above Group with other students who hypothesize and think broadly, not literally (like Jason)

Lesson 1 // Appendix A: **Scenarios #1**

Name: _____ Date_____ TOC #__

Each of the following scenarios involves an individual facing a tremendous difficulty. In a small group of four students, read each one carefully. Then, as a group, rank the obstacles according to their “crisis level”--that is, by how much of a “crisis” you think it is. For example, if you think that Scenario A. is the most difficult, then put it next to #1. If you think that Scenario E. is the second most difficult, put it next to #2. You must rank all five scenarios--no ties.

- A. Your father loses his job.
- B. Your best friend doesn't come to school for 2 weeks and you have no idea why. You know that he has trouble at home.
- C. Your mother suddenly falls terribly ill.
- D. A hurricane destroys your house. You do not have insurance.
- E. There have been a lot of protests in your neighborhood and some people have even been hurt, but some soldiers arrive to restore the peace.

Rank the scenarios by “crisis level” below, then submit your answer on *PolleEverywhere*.

https://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/dXRRrGrdN4aoatD/web

- #1
- #2
- #3
- #4

Lesson 1 // Appendix B: **Scenarios #2**

*For your reference, here are the altered scenarios to be used later on

Name: _____ Date: _____ TOC # _____

Return to the scenarios that you ranked on the first day of this unit. Glance at it to refresh your memory. Thinking back to our discussions about crisis, read this next set of scenarios. You will notice some similarities between this set and the first set, and you should also notice some key differences. I have underlined what remains from the first scenarios. Based on this new knowledge...do you want to change your rankings?

1. Your father loses his job. Now you must work to help support your family. A strange man arrives at your house. He gives your father a handful of bills and then he takes you away. You have no idea where you are going or what kind of “work” you will be doing.

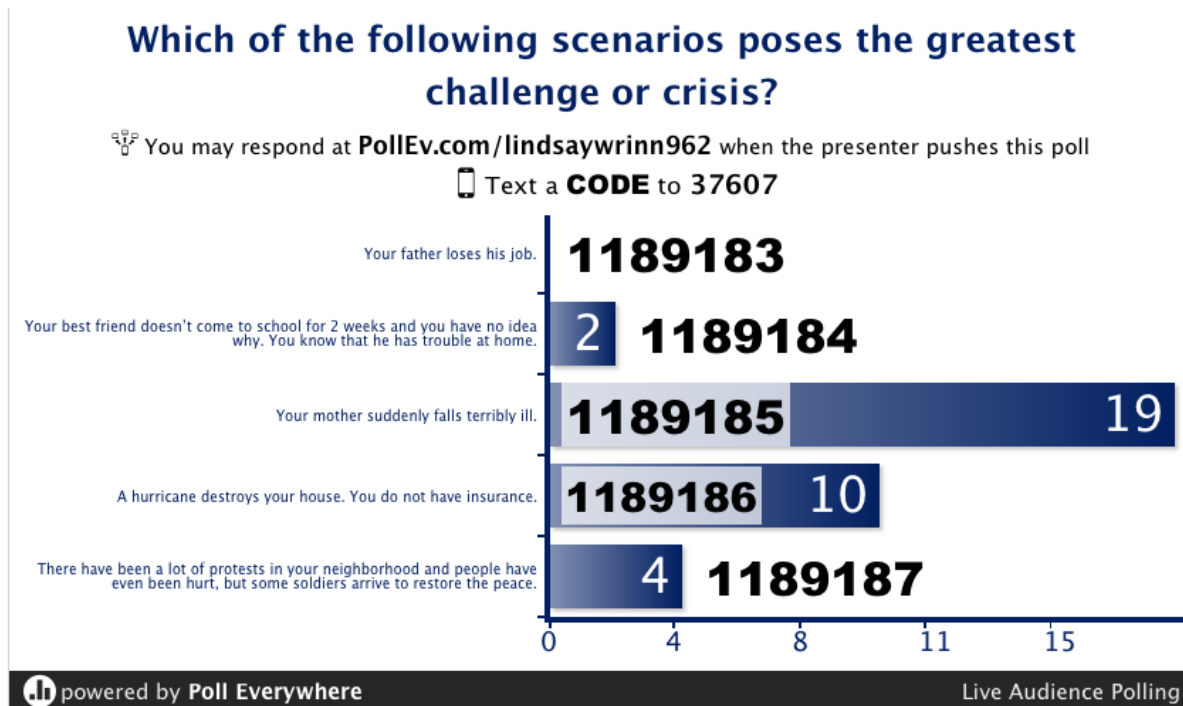
1. Your best friend doesn't come to school for 2 weeks and you have no idea why. You know that he has trouble at home. You have heard that the government is rounding up people, shoving them on trucks, and sending them out of the country. Your friend's father has been a target, and fear that they will not return home.

1. Your mother suddenly falls sick with a terminal illness after days of being on the run from rebel forces who are destroying your neighborhood. You are starving, tired, and feeling ill yourself. There are no other adults and you are afraid that your siblings will become sick, too. Even though she is weak, you need to keep moving to stay alive. There is no guarantee of safety.

1. A hurricane destroys your house and you do not have insurance.The neighborhood is wrecked and your parents are missing. No one from the government is coming to help you and you are stranded on your roof with no food, water, or supplies. There is no guarantee of survival.

1. There have been a lot of protests in your neighborhood and some soldiers arrive to restore the peace. They impose strict curfews, violent punishments, and tell the girls that they cannot go to school. They kill anybody who resists and there is no help in sight.

Lesson 1 // Appendix C: Poll Results (Sample)





Lesson 5: Relating to Children Across the World (Discussion)

Teacher: Ms. Wrinn

Grade: 8

Date:

Content Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.A: Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.D: Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2: Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats and evaluate the motives behind its presentation
- ISBE Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships via discussions, recognizing the perspectives of others, and recognizing individual and group similarities and differences.

Lesson Context: In this lesson, students will watch a [video](#) entitled “Candles and Gas Masks: War from the Perspective of a Child,” which shows what crisis would look like in a developed country. Students will then discuss the themes presented in the video as a whole group, with an emphasis on how crisis affects children and our perceptions of what it is like to live in crisis. This lesson appears in the first week of the unit and follows a series of lessons on personal and national crisis (aka “Crisis in Our Own Backyards). In the previous lesson, students revisited a set of “crisis scenarios” that have been altered to reflect current global crises; students have been asked to “rank them” like they did in Lesson 1 ILPE. This lesson follows that one in ensuring that students do not begin to separate themselves from children living in global crisis, ie. “us versus them.” After this lesson, students will prepare to meet with their literature circles and start reading their crisis texts.

Learner Background: My students (90% white, upper/middle class Americans) struggle to take risks, especially in discussions, and I often have to “pull” original answers from them. My biggest struggle in this lesson will be to create an environment where students can take risks and ask “real” questions; personally, it will also be a challenge for me to avoid making evaluative comments and simply paraphrase (McCann et. al. 30). A recurring concern in this unit is that my students will revert to an “us versus them” mentality while reading global crisis texts. This lesson specifically serves to combat that mentality.

Student Learning Objectives:

- Students can describe the ways that people are similar and different to one another
- Students are able to examine and evaluate the “pillars” of their childhood
- Students understand what it means to relate to another person
- Students are able to examine their current conceptions of or stereotypes about crisis in other countries and develop these conceptions

Assessment:

- Participation guides
- Journal response: Pick a memory from your childhood. How would it be impacted by crisis, just like the little girl’s birthday was impacted by violence?
- Journal response to discussion: What is something that you agreed with? Didn’t agree with? (See appendix)

Materials:

- “Candles and Gas Masks” video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lKLvkq-6-xo>
- Chairs arranged in a circle
- Writer’s notebooks

Multicultural Education: This lesson asks students to consider and discuss how we relate (or don’t) to children around the world, and asks students to consider why we don’t often identify with children living in crisis. This initial video prompt shows what it would be like if civil war came to Great Britain (or any Western country). Prompted by the Syrian civil war, it includes images of a little girl experiencing the confusion, deportation, and sickness that millions of Syrian children have experienced. It is an accessible “text” because it is not overly graphic and is seen through the eyes of a child. Student discussion has a multicultural bent because students will be asked to consider their perceptions of children who are different

from them. Additionally, discussions of this nature rely on students' ability to listen and respond to others' ideas respectfully and meaningfully. Ultimately, this lesson seeks to cultivate awareness about stereotypes and encourage students to have empathy for those living in crisis.

Learning Activities:

Entry

Today we will be discussing what it means to be a child and how crisis changes that. My hope is that by the end of today's discussion, you will have thought more about how we can relate to children living in crisis across the globe. What makes them similar to us? What makes them different? Keep this focus in mind today.

1. *What are some memories from your childhood, in a few words? Give them an example: "birthday candles" or "sleepovers."* Write their answers on the board.
2. *What do you think it means to be a child?*

This clip gives us a picture of a normal childhood that is changed by crisis. Watch the clip (1:33)

Ask students to take a few moments and write down their initial reactions.

Discussion

What about the little girl's life in the beginning seems similar to your own?

(Responses may include "birthday party," "mom and dad," "playing in the backyard," etc.)

What does it mean to connect with someone?

What are some emotions/fears that a child in crisis might have?

Is this a girl that you can relate to? (Or, is this a girl that you can connect with? Emphasize with? Understand?)

- Some will say yes--Why?

- Some will say no--Why? A lot of what we have on the board (about our own lives) is similar to hers. What makes her unrelateable? Students who say “no” are probably thinking about the “crisis” aspect of her story.

What makes her someone that you can't relate to?

“She has gone through war,” “she has lost her family,” etc.

So, it sounds like you guys are saying that if someone goes through something really hard, then we can't relate to them. Is that true?

- “Yes, but...” → “But you just said earlier that there were parts about her life that are similar to your own. What changed?”
- “No.” → “Okay, then what are you saying?” Challenge students to reach for the best words to explain their thoughts and the paradox presented in this clip.

Why is it often difficult for us to relate to people that have gone through different things than we have? Or have gone through something that we have never gone through?

Can you think about a time when someone you knew went through something really difficult, and you felt like you couldn't relate to them or help them?

But let's remember... there is so much about this girl that you have things in common with. So much that you can relate to.

This little girl had a lot in common with many of you. Do you think you could relate to a “real” child living in crisis-torn countries, like Syria? A child who doesn't look or talk like you?

How about stereotypes? What stereotypes do you think exist about people living in countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria? Or maybe immigrants coming from South America?

Prompt students to think about the woman in the clip who said, “They deserve to get shot.” Who was she talking about? Why do you think she said that?

Is it possible for us to relate to those people? How?

If you met this little girl today, what would you want to say to her? Give students a few moments to journal about this question first.

How do you think this girl is feeling? What do you think she's wishing for on her birthday?

Closure

Teaching point: "Even though crisis may look different in other parts of the world, the people, the emotions, and the challenges are all similar. No matter if its a personal crisis, a national crisis, or a global crisis--like the ones we will read about--it always involves people who are afraid, confused, and struggling...people just like us."

"As you prepare to begin your crisis texts, I want you to keep today's discussion in mind. What do these stories have to do with us? Tonight, I would like you to react/respond to today's video and discussion in a short, one page response. Good readers and writers don't stop asking questions once the book is closed; if any, they are left with more questions. Let's stay in that place for a while longer."

Individuals Needing Differentiated Instruction

Student needing support	Evidence for need	Strategy
Marianna	ESL	Provide Marianna with a translated list of focus questions; ask her to signal you when she would like to be called on (and when she <i>does</i> raise her hand, definitely call on her!) This clip is ESL-friendly because it focuses on images/emotions, not words. Provide discussion questions the day before so she can prepare.
Dylan	Hearing/auditory	Use the personal FM system (D carries it from class to class) and remind students to speak clearly and loudly. I will ensure that I am paraphrasing student responses loudly and clearly.

Lily	Asperger's	Provide Lily with a step-by-step agenda for the day, along with my list of focus questions. Create a signal for Lily to use if she would/would not like to be called on for a question
Student needing enrichment	Evidence for enrichment	Strategy
Xavier	High task engagement	Ask Xavier to be the student who keeps the "impactful moments" tally at the beginning of the discussion
Maggie	Strong critical thinker	Having Maggie answer the "Why would the filmmakers..." question may help keep the class on track.
Kennison	Effective communicator/synthesizer	Have Kennison sit by Marianna this class period and ask her if she would be okay with answering some questions mid-conversation if they arise. Ask Kennison to summarize the clip when it is over.

Appendix: Journal Prompts

Great discussion today. It's important that we always reflect on why we identify with some people but not others. Tonight, I would like you to do the following in your journals:

1. Pick a moment from your childhood (it could be reoccurring, just as the little girl's birthday was reoccurring). How would it be affected by crisis? For example, my father is a police officer. If

my home was affected by crisis/violence, he would probably be out of the house a lot or might not even be alive.

2. Next, think back to today's discussion. Share one idea expressed by another person that you agreed with and one idea that you disagreed with (no need to identify the person). Why did you agree and/or disagree? How would you have responded?



Lesson 7: Making Inferences While Reading

Teacher: Ms. Wrinn

Grade: 8

Date:

Content Standards:

- Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis (CCSS.RL.8.1)

- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story reveal more about a character (CCSS.RL.8.3)
- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content of a text (CCSS.RL.8.6)
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (CCSS.SL.8.1)
- Predict others' feelings and perspectives in a variety of situations (ISBE Goal 2a.3a)

Lesson Context: This unit requires students to understand the perspective of characters living in crisis. The final assessment asks students to write from the perspective of a child living in the crisis that they studied. Before students can write from a child's perspective, they must learn to understand perspective while reading their anchor text and supplemental texts. Good readers know that they can better understand a text if they put themselves in the character's shoes and make inferences. Yesterday, students focused on understanding a character's context by learning the "5Ws" of their focus crisis. In this lesson, students will learn to make inferences while reading to better understand the characters and the crisis featured in the text. I will teach students ways to "stop and think" at certain points in the text and to make inferences about feelings and thoughts when it is not explicit in the text. I will teach students that those thoughts, feelings, and motives make up the character's perspective. Students will use a graphic organizer (See Appendix C) to record their inferences and organize/hold their thinking. After this lesson, students will learn strategies to write from the perspective of another person.

Learner Background: Students have a growing knowledge of the historical context of their focus crises. In the past, students have struggled to think more deeply about a character's perspective. They have suggested that a character "seems sad," rather than "feels hopeless about getting out of the situation, and probably thinks that she is stuck in it forever." My job is to help students to make inferences about a character's thoughts and feelings when it is not stated explicitly in the text. My class is 80% white, so throughout this unit, I have anticipated cultural barriers and an "us versus them" mentality. I'm hoping that if students can understand a character's perspective and make personal connections, they will engage with the text and with the unit theme.

Student Learning Objectives:

- Students will know what an inference is
- Students will understand that good readers make inferences to make sense of a confusing scene or unclear character thoughts and feelings.
- Students will be able to better understand character's perspective by making inferences

- Students will be able to follow the steps of making an inference: forming a question, identifying key words, relying on observations/prior knowledge/personal experience, and forming a conclusion.

Assessment:

- This journal is a part of the student’s final “childhood in crisis” portfolio. All entries must be completed for full credit, and I have given students the checklist for the final portfolio already.
- Tonight’s homework: completing a “It says--I say--and so” journal for the first chapter of your crisis text
- Exit poll: “What is an inference?”

Materials/Resources:

- Copies of Page 2 from *I Survived Hurricane Katrina*
- Copies of “Police” from *Sold* (page 159)
- Crisis Texts: *A Long Walk to Water*, *Between Shades of Gray*, *Never Fall Down*, *Persepolis*, *Before We Were Free* (Alvarez)
- “It says-I say-and so” graphic organizer
- Highlighters, pens, etc.
- ShowMe “Making Inferences While Reading” <http://www.showme.com/sh/?h=WarCcCG>

Multicultural Education: In this lesson, I am asking students to put themselves in the shoes of someone who is very different from themselves (my American class is 80% white and the characters in the model texts are African-American and Nepalese). Adopting the perspective of another person allows students to practice the type of tolerance and deep thinking that I want them to practice outside of my classroom in their greater communities. For example, one of the model texts introduces a Nepalese girl who has been sold into human trafficking. It asks students to imagine her thoughts and feelings and to understand her perspective. By reading texts from around the world, students become more globally aware and culturally sensitive. Additionally, I will have translations of the texts for ESL students.

Learning Activities:

Entry

“Today we will practice noticing our character’s thoughts and feelings while reading. Most of the time, it’s not obvious, so we have to make some inferences.”

“When we read, sometimes we have to make inferences about what our characters are thinking or feeling, or what is happening in a confusing scene. We have to act like detectives and notice key words--our clues--to infer what the character thinks or feels.”

Modeling

Model how to fill in the graphic organizer and make an inference.

- Read and model: excerpt from *I Survived Hurricane Katrina* (pg 2) (See Appendix A). The question is “What is happening in this scene?”
- OR Play ShowMe video to model <http://www.showme.com/sh/?h=WarCcCG>

Guided Practice

Student practice in pairs with “Police” from *Sold* (pg 159) (guided learning) (See Appendix B):
Question: Why is Mumtaz giving that money money? (When students have finished, read aloud the rest of the passage so they can see if they got it “right”).

- Students create one more inference from “Police” (individual).
 - For students who need more support--give them a starting question. Example: Who is that man? What do you think a goonda is? How does Lakshmi feel when she sees this happen? etc.
 - For gifted students--ask them to make a prediction about what will happen next based on their inference.

Closure

“Why is it important for us to make inferences as readers? How can this help us better understanding our characters?”

Great job making inferences today. As you continue to read your crisis book, you will find yourself making many inferences, sometimes without you even knowing that you are doing it. If you find yourself stuck on an unfamiliar word or confusing scene, try out the steps that we did together today--question, it says, I say, and so. Tonight, I would like you to make 3-5 inferences as you read the next few chapters of your crisis book. See you tomorrow!”

Individuals Needing Differentiated Instruction

Child needing extra support:	Why this child will need support:	How will I differentiate?
Marianna	ESL	Translation of poems
Dylan	Dyslexia	Provide Dylan with a starting question for the individual practice
Victor	Hearing impairment	Provide notes. Also, provide ShowMe of the modeling process that Victor can access at home if he needs clarification.
Child needing enrichment:	Why will this child need enrichment?	How will I differentiate?
Clara	Reads quickly	Her crisis text is <i>Between Shades of Gray</i> , which has very nuanced language. Also--I will ask Clara to "predict what will happen next based on your inference." I will ask Clara (or one of her classmates with a similar revision) to share their idea with the class.
Devon	Creative and "big" thinker	See above. Also, if Devon finishes early, ask her (and others) to sketch their interpretation of the scene.
Michael	General intellectual strengths	See above

Lesson 7 // Appendix A: Excerpt from *I Survived: Hurricane Katrina, 2005* (page 2)

Wind howled around him. Rain hammered down. And all Barry could see was water. Swirling, foaming, rushing water. The way had washed away his whole neighborhood. Pieces of it had floated by. In the dirty gray light, Barry saw jagged hunks of wood, shattered glass, a twisted bicycle, a refrigerator, a stuffed penguin, a mattress covered with a pink blanket. He tried hard not to imagine what else was in that water or what had happened to all his neighbors...and his mom and dad and little sister, Cleo. What if they'd all fallen into the water, too?

Lesson 7 // Appendix B: "Police" from *Sold*, by Patricia McCormick

Tonight I saw a curious thing. Usually, the men give their money to Muntaz. What I saw something, as I came downstairs, was Muntaz handing a fat roll of rupee notes to a man.

He was dressed all in tan, like the man at the border, and he had a gun on his hip. While the man was counting his money, Shilpa, the aging bird girl who spies for Muntaz, spotted me and chased me away.

"Is that man a goonda?" I asked Shahanna.

"He's worse," she says. "He's a policeman."

I don't understand.

Lesson 7 // Appendix C: Inferences Graphic Organizer

Making Inferences: It Says, I Say, and So

Name: _____

Date: _____

Text	Question	It Says (Key Words)	I Say (Inference)	And So (Conclusion)
<i>I Survived Hurricane Katrina</i> (page 2)	Ex: What is happening in this scene?	“wind howled,” “rain hammered,” “water had washed away the neighborhood,” Barry sees household items floating, his family is gone	These words make me think of a flood. Plus, I remember stuff floating by my street during Hurricane Sandy. I say that this is a hurricane.	I think that this scene is showing us what it is like in the middle of Hurricane Katrina.
“Police” from <i>Sold</i> (page 159)	Why is Muntaz giving that man money?			

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Lesson 8: Addressing the “W” in KWL (Small Groups)

Teacher: Ms. Wrinn

Grade level: 8

Date:

Content Standards: Using the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and standards from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

- Conduct short research projects to answer a question (W.8.7)
- Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles (NCTE)
- Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (SL.8.2)
- Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge (NCTE; W.8.6; W.8.8)
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies (L.8.4)

Lesson Context: In this unit, students select their top choice of five titles featuring a young adult living during a crisis. These students are grouped in “literature circles” with other students who selected the same text as their first or second choice. Previously, students have established group expectations, a reading schedule, created a group KWL chart, and begun the first several chapters of their text. Before this lesson, students will have created a working definition of crisis, differentiated between a crisis and a challenge, and recognize the different “levels” of crisis as personal, communal/national, and global. Today, they will conduct collaborative research projects using supplementary texts and resources in a “station” format (aka a scavenger hunt format using QR codes) that features Gardner’s multiple intelligences. After this lesson, students will have more background knowledge about the author, historical context, and the “5 W’s” of the featured conflict, which will help them while reading individually and discussing in groups. The students will refer to their KWL and “research packets” throughout the unit, and they will use these resources to create a digital storybook (using the app ShadowPuppet). Students will feature their ShadowPuppets on the last day of the unit.

Learner Background: Students have worked in literature circles before and are familiar with using KWLs, 5 W's, and other graphic organizers to hold and organize their thinking. The scenario activities (Lesson 1 and Lesson 4) will give students context for how these events are "crises" rather than "just challenges." Students also know how to access and create QR codes (a crucial part of the lesson). However, students have little to no experience with these crises, and since my classroom is 80% white, I anticipate some cultural barriers and misunderstandings.

Student Learning Objective(s):

- Understand the social, economic, environmental, and political context of their crisis
- Know the 5 "W's" of their KWL chart: who, what, when, where, and why

Assessment:

- S-O-S Summary: Give each literature group a crisis-related statement, then ask for their opinion and ask them to support their opinion with something that they learned today (statement, opinion, support = S-O-S) (See **Appendix D** for SOS)
- Students will hand in their graphic organizer with their final presentation (culminating presentation for the last day of the unit).
- Tonight's assignment: Select chunks of text that address the 5 W's (not all will be addressed)

Materials/Resources

- Entry poll (https://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/CsRSRT8koLuMVaz/web)
- Graphic organizers (5 W's)
- Dictionaries/language translations of any text
- Cell phones/tablets/laptops (to access QR codes and links)
- The following "stations" (one of each per crisis)
 - 5 images --students must discuss and then reflect in writing on the different features of the image; i.e. people, setting, emotion evoked, etc. (**QR and/or laptop slideshow**)
 - 5 videos (**QR and laptop/headphones**)
 - 5 short news articles (**QR and paper copies**)
 - 5 paper puzzles of each country--students must assemble (**paper copies**)
 - Glue and construction paper (for students to keep the map)
 - 5 audio clips featuring the country's language, accompanied by the English translation (**QR codes, laptop [for non cell phone users], and headphones**)

Multicultural Education: Gardner's multiple intelligences sustain the argument that differences "challenge an educational system that assumes that everyone can learn the same materials in the same way and that a uniform, universal measure suffices to test student learning. Indeed, as currently constituted, our educational system is heavily biased..." (Lane). A les "Gardner approved" lesson considers the ways that students learn differently, especially if they speak multiple languages or if their culture encourages a particular method of learning. One of the stations invites students to listen to a foreign language, while another asks students to kinesthetically assemble the country and its surrounding area on a map. For my bilingual learners, there will be appropriate translations of any texts.

Learning Activities:

Entry (Whole group)

Check in and ask students for their feelings on their book choices so far--are you happy you chose the book you did? Wish you chose a different one? Have tons of questions?

If students say that they are unhappy with their choice, suggest that they identify 2-3 reasons why. See how we can address these reasons and raise student engagement and interest.

Give a quick *PollEverywhere* to see how students feel about their book choices so far (Remember, students have begun reading the first few chapters of their book). **See Appendix A for poll.**

"Most of you said that you are getting the big picture but still have questions about the crisis you are focusing on. When we read, it helps to understand the historical context and have images/sounds in mind. We are dedicating today to zooming in on the sights, sounds, and people of your focus crisis."

Give directions for scavenger hunt and pass out the graphic organizers See Appendix B for graphic organizer: "Later in the unit, your group will create a digital storybook based on the research that you do today and throughout the rest of the unit. On the last day of our unit, we will share these storybooks with the rest of the class. I will share more on that later--today, focus on understanding the contextual background of your crisis."

Lesson Development (Small group)

- Students are grouped with their literature circle.
- Model how to engage with each station and how to fill in the graphic organizer (show a sample)
- Release groups to their starting station (28 min total) See Appendix C for a sample of the sources for one of the groups.
 - Station 1: WHO: Images (7 min)
 - Students will flip through a series of images from the crisis (before and during) and jot down their thoughts. As a group, they will talk about the images using the discussion guide.
 - Station 2: WHAT: News Article (7 min)
 - Using the QR code (or paper copy), students will read the short news article and fill out the graphic organizer (who, what, when, where, why)
 - Station 3: WHEN and WHY: Video (7 min)
 - Using the QR code (laptop also provided at this station), students will watch an interview with someone who survived/was involved with the crisis. Students must note the languages used, perceptions, etc.
 - Station 4: WHERE: Country puzzle + Google Maps (7 min)
 - Students must locate the country on Google Maps and then assemble the puzzle of the country. They will glue it together. Quick talk: Do you notice anything about this country's placement? How did it's placement factor into the crisis? (i.e. Lithuania between Germans and Russians in *Between Shades of Gray*, so allies struggled to reach it).
 - Station 5: BONUS: Audio clip
 - Students will listen to an audio clip of the native language and an audio clip of a popular song from the country.

Closure (individual→ small group → whole group)

Ask students to journal individually for 3 min--"What did you already know? What is one thing that you learned? What do you still have questions about?" then discuss the last question with their group.

Whole group: Have students share how what they've learned to do affects their understanding of the story so far.

“As you continue reading, don’t forget to add to your graphic organizer. What else are you learning about the crisis? What kind of questions do you find yourself asking the most? Where can you find the answers to those questions? To fully understand a crisis, we need to keep the big picture in mind. Keep growing your picture of the crisis you are studying.”

Remind students to continue reading according to their group schedule and that they should be returning to the graphic organizers and KWL charts often to fill in information.

“Tomorrow, we will continue our research and think about what the people felt/are feeling during the crisis. Get ready to be hands on tomorrow!” (Tomorrow’s lesson is writing with sensory language/5 senses activity).

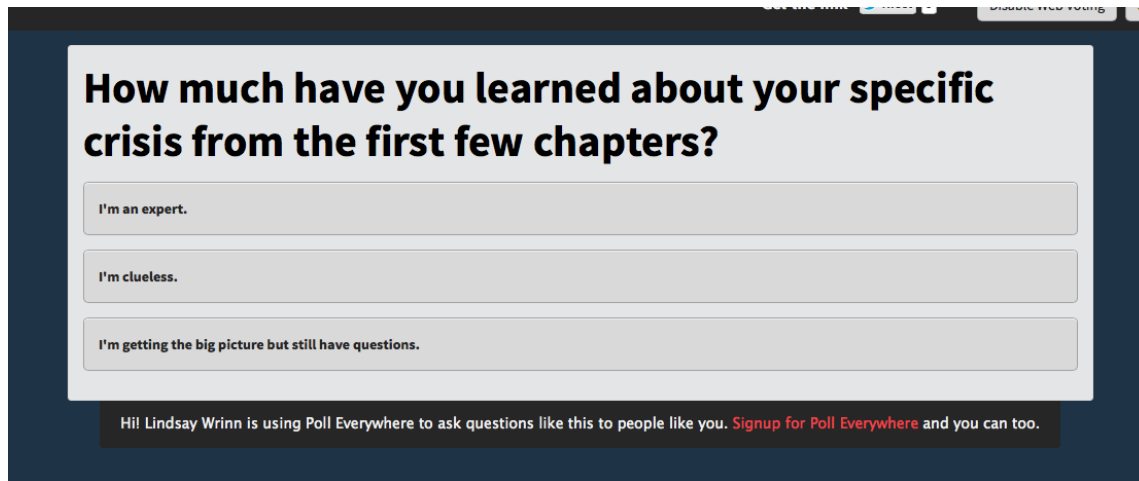
Individuals Needing Differentiated Instruction

Which students may struggle?	Why?	How I will differentiate in this lesson:
Marianna	ELL	News article & graphic organizer in own language; possible subtitles on the video? Find video with this option (or a synopsis in her language).
Frank	Visually impaired	Preferred format of news article (i.e. large print or braille); enlarged copy of images
Jason	Dyslexia	News article main points will be highlighted.
Which students may need enrichment?	Why?	How I will differentiate in this lesson:
Madeline	High reading comprehension and reads very quickly	News article in Madeline’s group will be slightly more complex (ie. more nuanced language, stronger news source, etc.); will prepare other students with a reading guide

Clara	Leadership skills and an effective collaborator	Class will have received a prior mini lesson effective collaboration; keep an eye on Clara's group to ensure that they are implementing the strategies. Also, make sure that she doesn't begin to dominate the work! Clara has also been placed in a group with other effective collaborators; the book wasn't her first choice, but at least she is with others who challenge her.
Justin	General intellectual	See differentiation for Madeline

Lesson 8 // Appendix A: Entry Poll

Link: https://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/CsRSRT8koLuMVAz/web

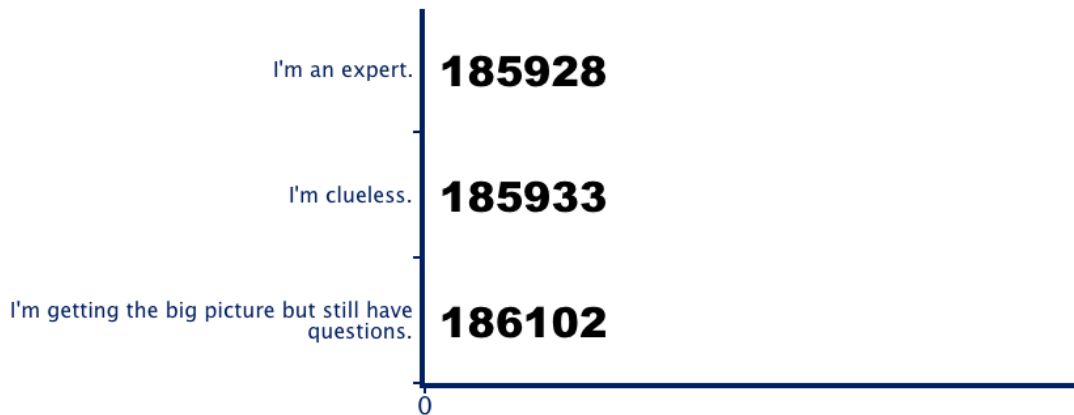


The results will appear instantaneously in a bar graph below. Students can watch it grow as results come in.

How much have you learned about your specific crisis from the first few chapters?

You may respond at PollEv.com/lindsaywrinn962 when the presenter pushes this poll

Text a **CODE** to 37607



Lesson 8 // Appendix B: Graphic Organizer

Any of the 5W's can be answered at any station. However, some stations specifically address Who, What, When, Where, or Why. Don't restrict your thinking to one of the W's at each station--feel free to answer one of the other W's even if it's not its listed station. For example: While learning the "where" at Station 4, you might gain more insight on "why" the crisis happened as a result of its geographical location.

CRISIS: _____

BOOK: _____

Station & Question	Source	What did you learn?	So what?	What questions do you still have?	Did you see this yet in the book? Where?

4.Where?	Google Maps	Lithuania is between Germany and Russia.	Since it was between the countries, allies couldn't reach it.	Why didn't the allies stop Stalin? Did they know what was going on?	Father mentions something about the Nazis and how all attention is on them (20).
1.Who?					
2.What?					
3.When?					
4.Where?					
5.Why?					

Also: For further research, what are some sources I will turn to?

Lesson 8 // Appendix C: Sample Sources

CRISIS: Sudanese Civil War and Lost Boys/Girls

BOOK: A Long Walk to Water

Station 1 (Images) : Who

- Variety from Google Images (non-graphic)

Station 2 (News Article): What

- Summary: (not news article) <http://www.unicef.org/sowc96/closboys.htm>
- More complex:
[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/01/world/africa/from-sudan-a-new-wave-of-lost-boys.html?
r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/01/world/africa/from-sudan-a-new-wave-of-lost-boys.html?r=0)

Station 3 (Video): When

- “God Grew Tired of Us” clip:
http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/activity/god-grew-tired-of-us-the-lost-boys-of-sudan/?ar_a=1

Station 4 (Maps): Where

- Google Maps:
<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Sudan/@15.7860696,30.1995791,5z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x15d91cc41072b195:0xd2bf70462a612b37>
- Fifty Largest Refugee Camps: <http://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2013/refugee-camps/>

Why: Supplementary readings:

- *My Turn*
- *Writing for my Life*, Lopez Lomong
- *America, Open Your Eyes to Syrian Refugees* (OpEd)
- Fugees Academy and Luma Mufleh (Video Clip)
- *The Good Lie* (Film)
- National Geographic:
http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/activity/god-grew-tired-of-us-the-lost-boys-of-sudan/?ar_a=1

Lesson 8 // Appendix D: S-0-S Formative Assessment

Statements:

Never Fall Down: The Khmer Rouge arrived to protect the Cambodian people from the oppression of Communism.

Persepolis: The Iranian revolution occurred after 9/11 happened.

Between Shades of Gray: Stalin's army deported Jews and war criminals to protect Lithuanians.

A Long Walk to Water: The Sudanese Civil War was caused by religious conflict.

Before We Were Free: The Dominican Republic was the only country to suffer from brutal force/dictatorship during the 20th century.



Lesson 11: Developing a character's voice

Teacher: Ms. Wrinn

Grade: 8

Date:

Content standards: taken from the Common Core State Standards

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences (W.8.3)
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text (RI.8.6)
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (SL.8.1)

Lesson Context: Today, students will learn how to develop a character's voice. Earlier in the unit, students learned how to make inferences while reading to better understand a character's perspective. In the previous lesson, students learned how to write from a different character's perspective. Today they will focus on developing and strengthening that character's voice. We will look at several model texts--including a clip from *Girl Rising*--to analyze how writers create a strong character voice. After this lesson, students will begin work on their final assessment, which is to write a narrative letter from the perspective of a child living in crisis.

Learner Background: My students have experience writing personal narratives and have some practice developing their own voice. However, I am anticipating that this lesson will be difficult for them because it requires taking on the voice of another. My class is 90% white, middle to upper class Americans, so this unit has been challenging to get my students to identify with children who live in crisis (they persist in the "us" versus "them" mentality). My goal is to help my students realize that children living in crisis are *children just like them*, and that to effectively develop their character's voice, they should think about what they would feel/do/say in a situation.

Student Learning Objectives:

- Students will know how a character's voice differs from the author's voice
- Students will understand how author's strategically choose words to develop a fictional voice
- Students will be able to create and develop a strong voice for a fictional character

Assessment:

- Students will have to develop a character's voice in their final assessment piece (narrative letter from the perspective of a child living in crisis)

- Exit poll: Choose your best sentence from your writing draft--which sentence best demonstrates your characters voice?

Materials:

- Writer's notebook
- Clip from *Girl Rising*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L320eswN47U>
- Slips of paper with different character descriptions (1 per pair of students)
- Graphic organizers (Feels, notices, is)

Multicultural Education: As mentioned before, this unit will challenge my upper-class white students because it asks them to put themselves in the shoes of someone different from themselves. At the same time, this unit asks students to find common ground with those same people. This lesson in particular requires students to develop a character's voice--their thoughts, feelings, and who they are. To model how a writer successfully does this, we will watch a clip from *Girl Rising*, a documentary that follows 12 girls from around the world whose lives have been changed by school. This clip showcases Suma, a Nepalese girl working as an indentured servant. Students have prior knowledge with Nepalese human rights violations (from their making inferences work with *Sold*). This lesson gives students the chance to learn more about a major human rights violation and to experience the voice of a teenager who is different from themselves.

Learning Activities:

Entry

Yesterday, we practiced writing from a character's perspective with our "egg drop" activity. We learned that someone's perspective directly reflects how they will write about an experience (or, in our case, how they write about a crisis). Now that we have learned how important perspective is, today we are focusing on developing strong character voices in our writing. There is a major connection with perspective and voice--when you understand a character's perspective, you can then write in their voice.

In narrative writing, a character's "voice" is very important. Voice conveys the mood and tone of the writing. It supports the author's purpose for writing.

Some ways that an author writes in a strong voice:

- Includes details that will be interesting to a reader
- Chooses the right words to reveal attitudes and feelings
- Gives the story some rhythm by varying sentence length.
- Uses punctuation to show excitement (!), fear, confusion (?), and more.

The writer must be sure to differentiate between their voice and the character's. Show example: Junie B. Jones passage. Model how I identify Junie B. Jones' voice and the strategies that the author uses.

- The writer carefully chooses each word; everything about each carefully chosen word resonates the personality, experience, age, education, values, beliefs and feelings of our point of view character.
- **Teaching point:** Good writers create a strong character's voice that reflects a character's perspective. Today, we will work on developing a voice for a fictional character.

Modeling 1

First, I want to show you a great example of a writer who wrote a narrative passage in a character's voice. Listen for how this writer gives her character a voice:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L32OeswN47U>

- "What words did the author choose to make this sound like Suma?"
- See how that author created a distinct voice for Suma? You can almost hear the regret as she is speaking. Suma's voice is honest and forthcoming. She is not afraid to tell her story. Her sentences are straightforward but clear, demonstrating that she has had some education now. Suma's voice is honest and straightforward. At the end of the passage, however, she uses certain words to sound angry-- "We know you have a kamlari working for you. You *must* set her free." She is straightforward and no-nonsense. Suma's voice is strong and righteously angry. How did the author do this?
 - Explain: The author chose precise words and punctuation. When she is angry, for example, her sentences are much shorter and demanding. She uses period marks to emphasize that her point is non-negotiable. There are no commas--this helps her voice seem stronger because she is straightforward.
 - Inquiry: What else made Suma's voice come through?
 - We are going to practice doing this today--creating voices for a character.

Modeling 2

I will give each pair a slip of paper. On it is a character description--today, you will practice developing that character's voice. Let me show you how I do this (give each pair a slip of paper with their character description).

My character description is "young mother from Lithuania being loaded onto the trucks."

- "I'm going to give her a name quickly; I'll call her Sarah. I will have Sarah be 21 years old and newly married. I'll name her baby Elise. Based on what I know about the crisis, I'll say that her husband has already been arrested because he worked at a university. **I'll make sure to choose words to reflect this.** So I bet Sarah is feeling pretty scared, but now that she has a young baby, she has to be strong, too. **I'll choose words to reflect this, too.** So I'll be sure to make that come through in her voice. I'm writing about the moment she is being loaded onto the trucks."
- Here are some things that I want to keep in mind as I write (see Appendix A for graphic organizer): After this, share the passage that I wrote (also in Appendix A)
 - I remember **what my character will feel**. She will feel scared, perhaps pretty angry and confused. **What words will show this best?**
 - I remembered **what my character will notice**. Sarah is a young mother, so she will notice her baby. Also, the soldiers are her husband's age, so she thinks of him when she notices them. I remember what my character will see based on how she is feeling. Sarah is feeling scared, so she will mostly be observing the things that scare her. **What words/adjectives will show this best?**
 - I give the reader clues into **who my character is as a person**. I write that Sarah knows that she must remain herself--her kind, gentle self--and not hate the guards for the sake of her baby and her own soul. I'm telling the reader that Sarah is thoughtful and a good person. **What words show this best? What words would Sarah herself use?**

Guided Practice (7 min)

Have each pair of students read their character description and do Feeling/Notes/Is chart.

Encourage your students to know their character through and through: What is the age, social status, personality, life experience of this character? Where does the character live, who and what does the character care about? What is the character afraid of? What does the main

character want most of all? **This is the lens through which every thought, word, and action should be crafted so that the character seems genuine and that the character's words are consistent with her/his experience, feelings, and motivations.**

Remind them that: Voice comes through in both the words chosen and HOW those words are spoken.

Independent Practice (10 min)

After each pair has worked to create a character, give them another 10 minutes to individually begin a paragraph/few sentences detailing their scene (using their graphic organizer). Project my model paragraph on the screen. If they finish, they can share their work with their partner.

Closure

The best writers are those who can write from a character's voice, so we feel like the character is talking directly to us and not through the author. This is especially important when we are writing from the perspectives of people who seem quite different from us--like a lot of the characters in our books. Voice ALLOWS a reader to understand a character's perspective. If we do not correctly write in the voice of our characters, our readers won't be able to understand or appreciate them the way that we want them to.

Differentiated Instruction

Student needing extra support in this lesson	Why they need support:	How I will provide it:
Marianna	ESL	As always, translation of any passages/worksheets that I give to my students.
Sarah	Dyslexia	I will read the writing sample aloud and underline/highlight parts that I am emphasizing. Provide Sarah with a step-by-step checklist for the day (See Appendix C)
Miguel	Dysgraphia	Will be provided a laptop/tablet with keyboard in class. Miguel also takes notes with a handheld recorder. I will also provide my notes.
Student needing enrichment in this lesson	Why they need enrichment	How I will provide it:
Charlotte	General intellectual abilities	Provide Charlotte with a more challenging character
Devon	Gifted writer	Provide Devon with a challenging character that can be elaborated on; also, see below

David	High levels of task commitment	Pair David and Devon together; both will remain engaged in the task out of high interest (Devon) and/or ability to stay focused and on-task
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Lesson 11 // Appendix A: Samples from Modeling

Writing sample

“I don’t think I’ve ever been so terrified in my life. I notice the guard’s smirking faces, and one of them looks like my husband, with soft blonde hair and blue eyes. I’m so distracted that I almost trip in the mud and drop Elise. They laugh at me, and for a moment, I really, really hate them. Then, my baby opens her eyes, and I look into the face of peace. I can’t start hating them or else it will corrupt me. It will turn me into a hard woman. And I can’t be hard--I have to be strong, yes, but I must remain *me*. So instead, I lower my eyes and walk past the barking soldiers until I reach the truck. A grimy hand lowers and I take it, letting it pull me up into the stinking truck.”

Sample graphic organizer

Developing a Character’s Voice: Feels, Notices, Is

Character: Young Lithuanian mother

Setting: Being loaded onto the trucks

Feels...	Notices...	Is...
terrified	soldiers	a young woman/mother
angry	her baby	trying to stay strong
	trucks/mud/stench	

Lesson 11 // Appendix B: Graphic Organizer

Developing a Character's Voice: Feels, Notices, Is

Character:

Setting:

FEELS...	NOTICES...	IS...

Lesson 11 // Appendix C: Checklist for Dyslexic Students

Name: _____

Date: _____

Lesson: Developing a character's voice

Step 1: Identify who your character is

- Age
- Social Status
- Personality
- Life experiences
- Values
- Fears
- What he/she wants most of all

Step 2: How would your character speak?

- What types of words? Big or simple? "Normal" or academic?

- How would your character address people?
- How often does your character speak up?
- How would your character speak *inside their head* (thoughts)?

Step 3: What are the best words to make your character come alive?

Step 4: Draft

Step 5: Share with partner

Step 6: Revise

Lesson 11 // Appendix D: Junie B. Jones Excerpt from “Junie B. Jones Loves Handsome Warren”

Chapter 2: Pigs

Lucille sits next to me in Room Nine.

I kept on being nice to her.

'Cause I wanted to meet that handsome boy, of course.

"Want to be friends again, Lucille? Huh? Want to be friends like we used to be? That would be nice of us, don't you think?"

"No," said Lucille. "You only want to be friends so you can steal my new boyfriend."

I did a big breath at her.

"Yeah, only how can I even steal him, Lucille?" I asked. "'Cause you are way beautifuller than me. Remember that? Remember how beautifuller than me you are?"

Lucille remembered.

She fluffed herself.

Then she showed me her new lacy socks.

"Eight dollars and fifty cents... *not* including tax," she said.

I bugged out my eyes at them.

"Wowie-wow-wow. Those are some fancy feet you have there, madam!" I said.

After that, I showed Lucille *my* socks, too.



Lesson 14: Using the Active and Passive Voices in Writing

Teacher: Ms. Wrinn

Grade: 8

Date:

Content Standards:

- Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice (CC.L.8.1.B)
- Use verbs in the active and passive voice to achieve particular effects, ie. Emphasizing the actor or the action (CC.L.8.3.A)
- Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes (NCTE)

Lesson Context: This lesson appears in the final week of this unit, when students have begun to draft, write, and revise their final project (narrative letters from the perspective of a child living in crisis). Before this lesson, students have spent almost a week learning how to write using sensory language, relevant descriptive details, and with a strong voice. The language lesson trails these because I wanted my students to have chunks of writing to practice the active/passive voice on. After this lesson, students will wrap up the unit by discussing some of the tough questions evoked by their crisis texts. This lesson will emphasize that knowledge of the active and passive voice allows students to “make informed and meaningful language choices...even at the sentence level” (Ehrenworth & Vinton, 2005) while writing. Without the passive and active voice, a young writer’s meaning may not transfer to the reader as they intended; the writer intended to emphasize the subject’s reaction to a troubling event, for an example, but by using the passive voice, the reader focused on the event, rather than the subject and her reaction. Knowledge of the active and passive voice gives students the power to guide and focus their reader towards their true message.

Learner Background: My students know what a subject, verb, and object is, although they have never had a lesson on the active and passive voice before. In the past, language lessons have fallen short and student work has not demonstrated success. I’m hoping that by embedding the language lesson with reading and writing, it will become more concrete and purposeful for my students. My students are familiar with the writing workshop model and with language such as “author’s craft,” “significant word choices,” and “writer’s voice.”

Student Learning Objectives:

- Students will know what a subject, verb, and object are and how they relate to the active and passive voice
- Students will understand that a writer chooses to use the active or passive way as a way to emphasize action or the actor
- Students will be able to make effective choices as writers about when to use the active and passive voice to create emphasis

Assessment:

- Exit slip asking a student to write a sentence where they chose active or passive with a brief explanation of why they chose that voice.

Materials:

- Copies of Active and Passive Voice Handout

- Writer’s Notebooks
- Whiteboards and markers

Multicultural Education: This language lesson does not emphasize standard English; instead, it focuses on the choices that young writers make to create the greatest impact in their writing. Students decide what they want to emphasize in a sentence--the action or the actor--and then draft or revise that sentence accordingly. I am not imposing a standard on my students; instead, they have the power to decide what their readers “hear” in their stories. This lesson gives them the tools to make that decision, but the student ultimately has the control. This lesson is about communicating effectively and clearly, not about standard versus nonstandard English.

Learning Activities:

Entry

“This past week, we have been practicing aspects of narrative writing, and you all have some drafts of your benchmark crisis narrative. Today we are addressing another aspect of writing which is how to emphasize the action or the actor in a sentence. You will be learning another writing tool for ensuring that you write clearly and effectively to convey your ideas. We do this by using the active or passive voice.” (Whole group)

- Good writers decide what they want to emphasize in a sentence--the actor or the action in a sentence. That decision affects how the reader interprets your writing, so it’s important to make the best choice for your writing (Whole group)
- Give an example here of a sentence that emphasizes the actor, and one the action, to show the effect and make the point.

Explain the active/passive voice (Whole group)

Model different examples of when it makes sense to use active, and when passive.

Model how students can change a sentence from active to passive and vice versa Ask students to do this in pairs with their whiteboards (pairs). Use differentiated lists of sentences. Give each group a set of sentences (See appendix A for list).

Modeling

Model how I revise my own passage by deciding which needs to be emphasized (See appendix B)

- Separate your passage into sentences. Read the sentence aloud, and think aloud as you decide whether the active or passive voice will be more best.
- “I have written a passage based on the image of the shackles. My first sentence says, ‘Shackles were slammed onto the inmates ankles by the jailer.’ If it was to be in the active voice it would say, ‘the jailer slammed shackles onto the inmates’ ankles.’ The second one sounds more dramatic because it is shorter, less wordy, and the image leaps into my mind quickly. Since this is a dramatic moment, I think I will make this sentence active.
- “Another sentence says, ‘The inmate was dragged into the square by the jailer.’ In my last sentence, I established that the jailer is my subject. It sounds like I am focusing more on the jailer’s actions than I am on the inmate at that point, and that’s okay. Since I want to continue focusing on the jailer, I’ll try changing this sentence so that it is in the active voice... ‘the jailer dragged the inmate into the square.’ This sounds better because it goes with my previous sentence.”
- “My next sentence is, ‘The jailer called out and said, ‘I will punish this man for trying to escape slavery’ The dialogue is in the active voice and the emphasis is on the jailer, not the man being punished. Actually, though, I really want to emphasize the man that is being punished, not the jailer. In this case, the passive voice is better, so I’m going to try it out. It will now read, ‘This man will be punished for trying to escape slavery.’ This sounds better to me because the focus is on the man being punished, which is what I wanted.”

Guided practice

“Now, turn to your partner and discuss my final sentence. First, identify the voice. Then, discuss where the emphasis should be in the sentence. Should I revise this or keep it as it is?”
(Allow students to discuss for about 2 min, then share).

“Now, take a look at your drafts. You all have characters who feature (actors) and something that happens (action). You must decide at the sentence level which one should be emphasized. Here is how you do this...”

- Identify your intent (what do you want to emphasize?)
- Change the sentence accordingly (active for actor emphasis, passive for action emphasis)
- Read the sentence aloud. Does it “sound” right? You should also have someone else read your passage when you are done.
- Move on to the next sentence.

Have students revise their own passages (independence)

Closure

When you write your narrative letters, keep in mind what you want to emphasize in each sentence.

It changes what a reader takes away from your writing, so it is very important.

- Why is this distinction important when writing crisis narratives? (Emphasizing the character versus the crisis; depends on the intent).
- Exit slip: Ask student to write a sentence where they chose active or passive with a brief explanation of why they chose that voice.

Individuals Needing Differentiated Instruction

Student needing extra support	Evidence for needing support	How I will provide the support:
Marianna	ESL	Handouts in language
Spencer	Dyslexia	Create a “Show Me” of the lesson strategy for Spencer to return to at home. Listening to the lesson may help him comprehend more. Also, revised handout with more symbols.
George	Autism	Provide with a list of “steps” for changing from active to passive/vice versa. Revised handout with more symbols.
Student needing enrichment	Evidence for needing enrichment	How I will provide enrichment:
Kaylee	General intellectual abilities	Ask K to work with M (see below) and give them more complex sentences during guided practice.
Dylan	Exceptionally creative/ strong writer	See above (complex sentences)
Megan	High task commitment	See above

Teacher note: sentences are scaffolded numerically (ie. group 1 has simple sentences, group 2 is manageable, group 3 more complex, etc.)

Group 1

1. Dave loves Amy // _____
 2. Ms. Wrinn walks Frankie // _____
 3. Emma completed the test // _____
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1. The poem was written by Emily Dickinson // _____
 2. The book was read by Cecelia // _____
 3. The papers were graded by Ms. Wrinn // _____

Group 2

1. Marilyn mailed the letter // _____
 2. James shared his textbook with Michael // _____
 3. Ms. Wrinn enjoyed the presentations // _____
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1. You were shocked by the news // _____
 2. The record was broken by Jenny last Saturday // _____
 3. A suspect was questioned for sixteen hours by police // _____

Group 3

1. One-third of the applicants failed the entry exam last Friday // _____
 2. She slammed on the brakes // _____
 3. The carpenters will finish the project by Monday // _____
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1. Action on the bill is being considered by the committee // _____
 2. The book is being read by the entire grade // _____
 3. Next weekend, the project must be handed in by the whole group // _____

Shackles were slammed onto the inmates' ankles by the jailer. The jailer led the inmate into the square. The jailer called out, "I will punish this man for trying to escape slavery." A loud sound was made by the surrounding crowd.

Shackles were slammed onto the inmates' ankles by the jailer.

The jailer led the inmate into the square.

The jailer called out, "I will punish this man for trying to escape slavery."

DO THIS IN PAIRS: A loud sound was made by the surrounding crowd.

