

Literature & Thought Overview **Perfection Learning Corporation**

Literature & Thought has been widely accepted by teachers across the United States. In the fall of 2004, the Jersey City School District adopted several titles for use in middle school and high school.

The *Literature & Thought Program* from Perfection Learning is designed to teach middle school and high school students to be critical readers and thinkers through a unique questioning strategy.

- Each anthology begins with an essential question and a set of related cluster questions. Students explore these questions through reading relevant and challenging fiction and nonfiction selections.
- As students read, they analyze, interpret, compare, and synthesize information from the selections, always focusing on the essential question. In addition, they identify, practice, and apply specific critical thinking skills throughout their reading.
- Students react to the cluster questions through writing prompts, group discussions, and independent projects as they read.
- At the end of the reading experience, students respond to the essential question based on what they have learned.

Reading Comprehension

The reading instruction in *Literature & Thought* is centered on teaching students to

- think as they read
- read for a specific purpose
- connect literature to their own lives
- integrate a variety of viewpoints
- identify and interpret essential information in a text
- analyze the literary features of a text
- recognize the value of reading literature to help understand the real world.

The instructional framework includes activities and strategies that help readers connect with a text.

Before Reading

- tapping prior knowledge through an anticipation guide
- building a frame of reference
- practicing specific reading/thinking strategies
- identifying contextual information and ideas that relate to the essential question
- discussing concept vocabulary words
- practicing critical thinking skills – defining, analyzing, comparing, classifying, interpreting, evaluation, generalizing, and synthesizing.

During Reading

- identifying contextual information and ideas that relate to the essential question of the text
- using critical thinking skills – defining, analyzing, comparing, classifying, interpreting, evaluating, generalizing, and synthesizing

After Reading

- using contextual information and evidence to respond to the essential question

- synthesizing information
- using critical reading and thinking skills to support a hypothesis

Literary Response and Analysis

The high quality literary selections in the *Literature & Thought* program have been carefully chosen. Each selection

- extends student’s thinking about the essential question
- encourages rigorous discussion
- is of high literary quality
- is interesting and relevant to young adults
- is accessible and appropriate for the target audience.

Vocabulary

Reading, discussing, and writing about a theme is essential to vocabulary development. The *Literature & Thought* anthologies focus on vocabulary growth through

- concept vocabulary words presented at the beginning of each book. These are thematic terms and phrases that will empower students as they explore the essential question of the book.
- cluster (unit) vocabulary words that students will encounter in the selection. These words are defined and page numbers where each appears are cited so students can see the contextual usage.
- an optional vocabulary quiz for each cluster (unit) in the teacher’s resource.

Writing

Using writing to explore a theme is a strong feature of *Literature & Thought*. Students use writing to

- practice and apply critical thinking skills
- respond to cluster questions
- analyze and interpret text
- identify textual evidence to answer a question
- develop responses to their own questions about a topic
- demonstrate what they have learned.

Students respond to several targeted prompts as they read the selections and further their thinking about the essential question. The writing prompts require students to apply specific thinking skills. Frameworks and graphic organizers help students use writing as a tool for learning and testing ideas.

Listening and Speaking

Discussion is an integral component of developing critical thinking skills. Speaking and listening activities are part of the learning framework of *Literature & Thought* as students

- assess and share their knowledge of and attitudes toward the theme of the book
- share their initial ideas about the essential question
- orally analyze the meanings and impact of photographs and illustrations throughout the book
- discuss how the selections in each cluster (unit) relate to each other and to the essential question
- share their own questions and thought about the essential question and consider the viewpoints of their classmates.