

Perfection Learning’s *Literature & Thought* Program and New York Learning Standards for English Language Arts Intermediate Level

Introduction

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 (unit) questions. Students explore these questions through reading relevant and challenging fiction and nonfiction selections.
- As students read, they analyze, interpret, compare, and synthesize information.
- Students react to the cluster questions through writing, group discussions, and independent projects.
- At the end of the reading experience, students respond to the essential question.

Several of the 22 thematic anthologies are especially suited to the intermediate language arts curriculum.

Free at Last: The Struggle for Civil Rights
From There to Here: The Immigrant Experience
A House Divided: America’s Civil War
Voices of the Holocaust
On the Edge of Survival

The Best of Friends
Decisions, Decisions
Family Matters
To Be A Hero
Who Am I?

| New York Language Arts Standards | Literature & Thought Intermediate Titles |
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| <p>Standard 1 Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.</p> <p>Performance Indicators – Listening and Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret and analyze information • Compare and synthesize information • Select, organize, and categorize information • Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information and between fact and opinion • Relate new information to prior knowledge • Understand and use text features <p>Performance Indicators – Speaking and Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce oral and written reports • Establish an authoritative stance and provide references to establish validity • Organize information • Use the writing process • Use standard English correctly | <p><i>Literature & Thought</i> incorporates reading, writing, and discussion activities to enable students to think critically about an essential question that is relevant to young adults, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How do we achieve the ideal of equal rights for all?</i> • <i>Should we keep America’s Immigration Door Open?</i> • <i>Could a Holocaust happen Here?</i> • <i>What is the value of friendship?</i> • <i>Who can be a hero?</i> • <i>How do I make a decision?</i> <p>Using writing to explore a theme is a strong feature of <i>Literature & Thought</i>. Students use writing to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • demonstrate what they have learned. <p>Students respond to 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.</p> |

| New York Language Arts Standards | <i>Literature & Thought Intermediate Titles</i> |
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| <p>Standard 2 Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.</p> <p>Performance Indicators – Listening and Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and view texts and performances from a wide range of authors, subjects, and genres • Understand and identify the distinguishing features of the major genres and use them in their interpretation and discussion of literature. • Identify significant literary elements and use those elements to interpret the work • Recognize different levels of meaning • Read aloud with expression, conveying the meaning and mood of a work • Evaluate literary merit based on an understanding of the genre and the literary elements. <p>Performance Indicators – Speaking and Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present responses to and interpretations of literature, making references to the literary elements and connections with their personal knowledge and experience • Produce interpretations of literary works that identify different levels of meaning • Write stories, poems, literary essays, and plays that observe the conventions of the genre • Use standard English effectively. | <p>Each <i>Literature & Thought</i> anthology has a wide variety of genres, including short stories, poetry, essays, articles, book excerpts, letters, and other primary source materials.</p> <p>The authors represent a multicultural group of diverse voices such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Studs Turkel, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rita Dove, Yoshiko Uchida, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Elie Wiesel, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Emily Dickinson, and Gary Paulsen.</p> <p>A focus on a specific literary skill is included with every selection. Skills covered include symbolism, foreshadowing, irony, rhyme, mood, tone, voice, contrast, writing style, and others. This knowledge enables students to read on different levels of meaning, including literal and interpretative.</p> <p>A writing prompt at the end of each <i>Literature & Thought</i> cluster (unit) requires students to interpret the selections and relate the information to the essential question of the book.</p> <p>Project choices to display how students respond to the essential question include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research • speaking and listening (poems, debates, songs, speeches) • creative writing (short stories, newspaper articles, poems, etc.) • artistic expression (poster, leaflet, editorial cartoon, painting, cover design, etc.). |

| New York Language Arts Standards | <i>Literature & Thought Intermediate Titles</i> |
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| <p>Standard 3 Students will listen, speak, read, and write for critical analysis and evaluation.</p> <p>Performance Indicators – Listening and Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze, interpret, and evaluate information, ideas, organization, and language from academic and nonacademic texts • Assess the quality of texts and presentations • Understand that within any group there are many different points of view • Evaluate their own and others’ work based on a variety of criteria and recognize the varying effectiveness of different approaches <p>Performance Indicators – Speaking and Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present clear analyses of issues, ideas, texts, and experiences, supporting their positions with well-developed arguments • Develop arguments with effective use of details and evidence that reflect a coherent set of criteria • Monitor and adjust their own oral and written presentations according to the standards for a particular genre • Use standard English, precise vocabulary, and presentational strategies to effectively influence an audience. | <p>The reading instruction in <i>Literature & Thought</i> is centered on teaching students to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • recognize the value of reading literature to help understand the real world. <p>Students are directly taught specific critical thinking skills that they apply in their reading, writing, and speaking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyzing • evaluating • synthesizing • comparing/contrasting • defining • generalizing • classifying <p>Students write an essay at the end of their reading, reflecting, and discussions that responds to the essential question of the book. This requires students to synthesize information and data from all the fiction, nonfiction, and primary source selections in the text.</p> <p>Students can also choose to present their ideas in an oral format.</p> <p>Rubrics in the teacher guides focus the students on specific criteria for a strong, coherent written or oral response.</p> |

| New York Language Arts Standards | <i>Literature & Thought Intermediate Titles</i> |
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| <p>Standard 4 Students will listen, speak, read, and write for social interaction</p> <p>Performance Indicators – Listening and Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen attentively to others and build on others’ ideas in conversations with peers and adults • Express ideas and concerns clearly and respectfully in conversations and group discussions • Learn some words and expressions in another language • Use verbal and non-verbal skills to improve communication with others. <p>Performance Indicators – Reading and Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate language and style for the situation and the audience • Read and discuss social communications and electronic communications of other writers and use some of the techniques of those writers in their own writing. | <p>The structure of the questioning/inquiry method in <i>Literature & Thought</i> relies strongly on sharing ideas and responding to other’s responses and questions. Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on interpreting and synthesizing what they read • challenge and contribute to others’ ideas • modify initial opinions as evidence demands • value and learn from their peers • become a community of learners and thinkers. <p>Discussion occurs throughout the students’ reading about and exploration of the essential question. There are discussion guidelines for teachers to follow in the teacher guide.</p> |