

**TEACHER RESOURCE FOR *THE CROSSOVER* BY KWAME ALEXANDER**

This resource with its aligned lessons and texts can be used as a tool to increase student mastery of Ohio’s Learning Standards. It should be used with careful consideration of your students’ needs. The sample lessons are designed to target specific standards. These may or may not be the standards your students need to master or strengthen. This resource should not be considered mandatory.

**ANCHOR TEXT**

[THE CROSSOVER](#)

(Copies available at the CCS Book Warehouse)

**SHORTER LITERARY TEXTS**

Available [HERE](#)

**INFORMATIONAL TEXTS**

Available [HERE](#)

**MEDIA/VISUAL TEXTS**

Available [HERE](#)



**OHIO’S LEARNING POWER STANDARDS**

**RESOURCE FOCUS**

[RL.7.1](#), [RL.7.2](#), [RL.7.3](#), [RL.7.4](#), [RL.7.5](#)

Student learning will center on the analysis of theme including how key literary elements such as character, plot, setting, and symbolism impact its development. Because *The Crossover* is a series of poems, students will also examine the impact of figurative language and poetic form on meaning.

SAMPLE LESSON 1	SAMPLE LESSON 2	SAMPLE LESSON 3	SAMPLE LESSON 4
Prior to Reading	Pages 3-25: “Warm-Up”-“First Quarter”	Pages 3-85: “Warm-Up”-“First Quarter”	“Second Quarter”
<a href="#">THEME STATEMENTS</a>	<a href="#">THE POWER OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE</a>	<a href="#">SYMBOLISM/ALLUSION</a>	<a href="#">FAST CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THEME</a>
	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>
SAMPLE LESSON 5	SAMPLE LESSON 6	SAMPLE LESSON 7	SAMPLE LESSON 8
“Third Quarter”	“Fourth Quarter”-“Overtime”	After Reading	Extension of Standards to New Material
<a href="#">PERSPECTIVE THROUGH VOCABULARY</a>	<a href="#">CREATING LEGACY: THEME DEVELOPMENT AND POETIC FORMS</a>	<a href="#">BASKETBALL RULES</a>	<a href="#">THEME ANALYSIS OF POETRY/SHORT STORY</a>
<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>

WRITING/SPEAKING PROMPTS (TASK TEMPLATES AND RUBRICS: [LDC 2.0](#), [LDC 3.0](#), [ARGUMENT RUBRIC](#), [INFORMATIONAL RUBRIC](#), [NARRATIVE RUBRIC](#), [LDC SPEAKING & LISTENING](#), [SPEECH](#))

**Argument**

-Sometimes, children make better decisions than their parents. In the novel *The Crossover*, Josh wishes his father would go to the doctor to get checked for his medical conditions. Write a well-defended paragraph that answers the focus question: “Should parents sometimes have to listen to the advice of their children?” Use evidence from the text to support your reasoning and include your own perspective.

-What motivates jealousy? In a well-defended paragraph, analyze what motivates a character’s disloyalty and envy of the ones they love. Argue whether or not the author should have included the sibling rivalry in the novel. Was it necessary for the development of plot, theme and/or characters?

-*The Crossover* won the Newbery Medal for Literature in 2015. Research the criteria for The Newbery Medal and argue whether or not *The Crossover* deserved to win this writing award.

**Informative/Explanatory**

-Listen to the [NPR Interview with Kwame Alexander](#), the author of *The Crossover*, and determine how his writing is making a difference in the lives of young people. Which target audience is he hoping to address? How is his writing influencing change?

- Using the poems “Second-Person,” “Third Wheel,” “tip-ping point” (pages 114-119), and any others from “Second Quarter,” determine Josh’s tipping point. Explain the connection between his tipping point and his character traits in the novel. Explain the connection between his tipping point and a theme topic for “Second Quarter.” Support your explanations with evidence from the text.

-Kwame Alexander’s *The Crossover* contains ten basketball rules poems that apply to life. Using those poems, determine a theme of the novel and analyze its development throughout the text. Be sure you are using a theme statement and not a theme topic. Use any of the following to support your analysis of theme development: characterization, figurative language, word choice, symbolism, poetic form, etc.

**Narrative**

-Examine the symbolism and significance of the way “crossover” was used in the novel. Compare/contrast the use of the word from the beginning of the novel to the end. Write a narrative poem from Josh’s dad’s perspective on the meaning of the word.

-Write a eulogy for Josh’s dad from the perspective of another character. How would Josh’s eulogy differ from J. B.’s?

- Using any of the poems in *The Crossover*, have students create a story that has all of the narrative elements including, dialogue, descriptive language, and action.

## SAMPLE LESSON 1 (THIS LESSON IS ALIGNED WITH PART A OF RL.7.2.)

Prior to Reading *The Crossover*

Be sure students understand that “theme” is the moral or lesson of the story and how it differs from main idea. You can use [THIS CHART](#) to demonstrate the difference, if needed. *Sample Lesson 1: These Themes* will be a reference point for students in determining and analyzing theme in subsequent sections of the novel.

### THEME STATEMENTS

**MINI-LESSON:** Students need to understand the difference between a theme topic and a theme statement.

Show "[The Only Way You Will Ever Need to Teach Theme](#)" video to the class. It illustrates how one teacher distinguishes between topics and themes and gives instructions for an activity for getting textual supports for themes. The video contains four steps to use to determine a theme statement.

Next, hand out, share digitally, or have students copy the steps from the [How to Write a Theme Statement in Six Steps](#) document (below and [HERE](#)) into their own notebooks. It broadens the four steps from the video into six steps that include a pre-step (Step 1) concerning knowing the difference between theme topics and theme statements and a final step (Step 6) for supporting theme statements with text. When going over Step 1, you can connect to this extensive [Theme Topic List](#) online or share a [digital](#) or hard copy with students to add to their notebooks for future reference.

Practice the Six Steps together using a common story such as *Frozen* or by reading a picture book to students.

## How to Write a Theme Statement in Six Steps (...and not just a theme topic!)

### 1. Understand that a theme topic is NOT a theme statement.

**Examples of Theme Topics:** Love, Justice/Injustice, Family, Struggle, the American Dream, Wealth, Inhumanity

### 2. Finish a text OR a section of the text (not just a chapter).

*Hint: Theme cannot be developed in just a chapter.*

### 3. Create a list of theme topics that can be supported with evidence from the text and choose ONE topic that is best demonstrated by the text.

*Hint: The great thing about theme is that there can be multiple theme topics that can be supported by the evidence.*

### 4. Write a sentence about what the author believes about that topic.

**Example:** In *Finding Nemo*, the author believes that a person should learn how to trust themselves and others.

*Hint: Don't use character names or specific details...keep it universal by using "a person" or "one" instead!*

*Hint: Don't be too vague! "Family is important" is not a theme statement, but "One should put family before all others" is a theme statement.*

### 5. Cross out “the author believes that” and revise the sentence.

**Example:** In *Finding Nemo*, ~~the author believes that~~ a person should learn how to trust themselves and others.

**Theme Statement:** A person should learn how to trust themselves and others.

### 6. Support with evidence!

**Hint:** *You should be able to support your theme statement with at least three details from the text to be a strong theme statement.*

**STUDENT WORKSHOP:** Have students work in pairs to practice writing a theme for a common text. Give each pair a blank sheet of paper and a different colored marker or allow them to work in a shared Google doc. This activity is detailed at the end of "[The Only Way You Will Ever Need to Teach Theme](#)" video.

**Step One:** Pass out or share digitally a different Disney/Pixar picture from the [Choice Sheet](#) (below on page 4 and [HERE](#)) or let pairs choose one they know.

**Step Two:** Have pairs write the movie title at the top of a blank piece of paper or Google doc. They will need to use the steps from the [How to Write a Theme Statement in Six Steps](#) document to create a theme statement for their movie choice. For Step Six, have them only add one support their theme statement. The teacher can rotate around the room and check theme statements to make sure students are using the steps.

**Step Three:** Have each pair trade papers or share their Google doc with another pair to check the theme and add another piece of evidence. The new piece of evidence should be written in a different color than the first.

**Step Four:** Have each pair trade papers or share their Google doc with another pair to check the theme and add another piece of evidence. The new piece of evidence should be written in a different color than the first two.

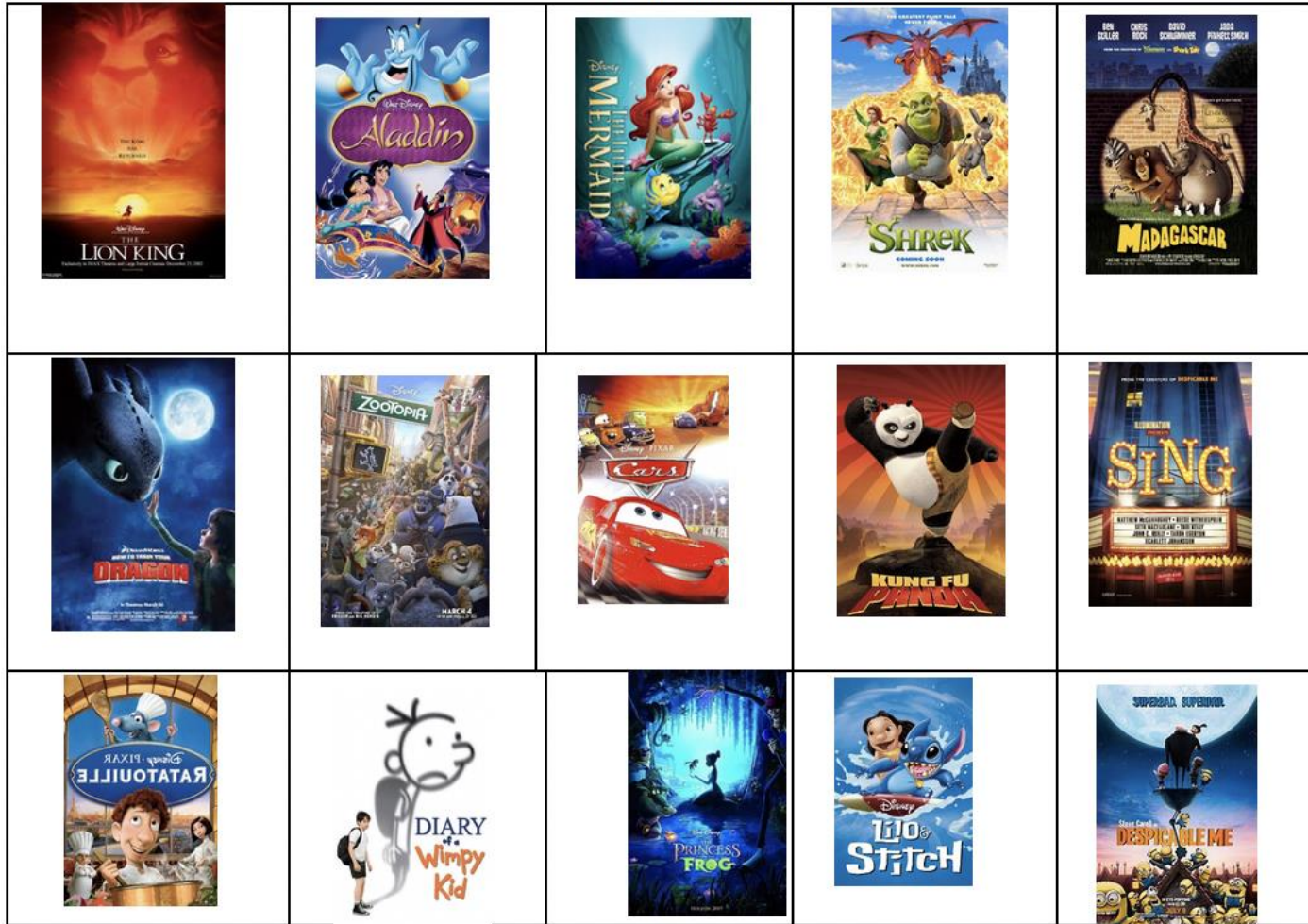
**Step Five:** Then, trade papers or share docs again to check the theme and add another piece of evidence. The new piece of evidence should be written in a different color than the first three. There should be three newly added pieces of evidence (four total) for each theme statement.

**Step Six:** Finally, have the students tape the various theme statements to the wall or add them all to a shared digital folder to serve as model theme statements.

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Individually, have students compose a theme statement for a common text. This common text could be a film choice from the [Choice Sheet](#) they did not use earlier, a novel read together in class from earlier in the year, or a picture book read as a common text. Use the [Theme Statement Rubric](#) (below on page 5 and [HERE](#)) to assess each student's understanding of writing a supported theme statement. Each theme statement needs to be supported by one piece of evidence.

## Disney/Pixar Movie Choice Sheet

### Disney/Pixar Movie Choice Sheet



**Theme Statement Rubric**

	<b>THEME STATEMENT – NOT A THEME TOPIC</b>	<b>THEME IS UNIVERSAL</b>	<b>THEME IS SUPPORTED BY EVIDENCE</b>	<b>TEACHER COMMENTS/ STUDENT GOALS</b>
<b>3</b>	Clearly a theme statement that is based on a theme topic	The theme statement is connected to the text but could be used for anyone in any situation	Includes strong evidence that clearly links the theme to the text	
<b>2</b>	More a theme topic than a theme statement	The theme statement is connected too much to the text and not applicable for anyone in any situation	Includes evidence that somewhat links the theme to the text	
<b>1</b>	A theme topic – not a theme statement	The theme statement is connected to the text and not universal	Includes no evidence or the connection between the text and the theme is weak.	
<b>TOTAL POINTS:</b>				

## SAMPLE LESSON 2 (THIS LESSON IS ALIGNED WITH RL.7.4.)

Prior to lesson, students should read pages 3-25: “Warm-Up” and “First Quarter.”

The Mini-Lesson can be done to help introduce students to the figurative language that will be encountered in the novel and how the poet uses the language to paint a picture. Before the Student Workshop, students should read pages 3-25 which spans the *Warm-Up* through the beginning of *First Quarter*.

### THE POWER OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

**MINI-LESSON:** Have students watch three Def Poetry Jam videos: [“I Wanna Hear a Poem” by Steve Coleman](#), [“Somewhere There is a Poem” by Gina Loring](#), and [“The Ball, the Rim and Him” by Al Letson](#). Before watching each poem, ask students to listen to the way each poet uses language to paint the picture. Watch each video a second time and ask the students to record any examples of figurative or rhythmic language (metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia, alliteration, repetition, personification, hyperbole, rhyme/rhythm) that helps the reader “experience” the poem on a [Def Poetry Jam Recording Sheet](#) (below and [HERE](#)). Poems can be viewed in stations or in small groups on Chromebooks or iPads or in whole class sessions. *Note: This Mini-Lesson can be taught in three smaller mini-lesson sessions if you want to focus on the specific types of figurative language in each lesson. You can also divide the mini-lesson into smaller chunks to be used in conjunction with in-class reading of the novel.*

Next, have students get into groups of three and choose a piece of figurative language displayed on their [Def Poetry Jam Recording Sheet](#) from any poem and analyze the impact it has on the poem. For example, how does Gina Loring and Al Letson’s use of the onomatopoeia “shhhh” impact the poem? Ask each group to share their analysis with the class.

Metaphor	Simile	Onomatopoeia	Alliteration	Repetition	Personification	Hyperbole	Rhyme/Rhythm
example: “small circular piece of Olympia”	example: “touching the ball like an ancient relic of Africa”	example: “Shhhhh...” “Slam”	example: “rumble like a rumba”	example: “I wanna hear a poem” “and then, and then, and then”	example: “where ideas kiss similes so deeply that metaphors get jealous”	example: “fly with the gods”	example: “This poem comes from somewhere deep Somewhere where the angels sleep Where pixies dance and mermaids weep”

**STUDENT WORKSHOP:** For this workshop, students will be using the following four poems from *The Crossover*: “Dribbling” on page 3, “Filthy McNasty” on page 10, “At the End of Warmups, My Brother Tries to Dunk” on page 24 and “The Show” on page 30. Students can work in pairs, teams of three, or individually. The teacher can assign one of the listed poems to each group or you can have the students choose one of the four poems.

**Step One:** Students should find examples of figurative language used in their assigned/selected poem and analyze how the figurative language impacts the meaning.

**Step Two:** Students will practice their poem as a Spoken Word poem – complete with hand gestures, emphasis, body language in preparation for a class performance.

**Step Three:** Students will also create an inferential question for the class about the impact of one example of figurative language they found in their poem.

**Step Four:** Each group will perform their poem and “teach” the class about the impact of a piece of figurative language by posing an inferential question to them to answer. Classmates not presenting should use this [Spoken Word Rubric](#) to score the performance. You can make copies of the rubric to hand out or share it digitally.

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Have students separate from their groups and respond to this prompt: How does Kwame Alexander use figurative language in his poems to move the story forward (within single poem and/or collectively). You can have students respond using spiral/digital notebooks or as a Google classroom assignment.

**\*Note:** This same lesson can be used at a later time in the reading of the novel with the addition of these poems: “Man to Man” on page 59, “Showoff” on page 94, “Fast Break” on page 149, “The Second Half” on page 181 and “The Last Shot” on page 221.

### SAMPLE LESSON 3 (THIS LESSON IS ALIGNED WITH RL.7.4.)

Prior to lesson, students should read pages 3-25: “Warm-Up” and “First Quarter.”

#### SYMBOLISM/ALLUSION

**MINI-LESSON:** Select a common text and have students pair up to draw and label all of the important objects from that common text. The common text could be something you have read as a class this year or you can choose a movie from the [Choice Sheet](#) from the Sample Lesson 2. If students are unsure if an object is **important**, tell them that items repeated or emphasized are generally important. An example from *Ratatouille* could be the chef’s hat or from *The Lion King* could be water or the sun. Have students share their objects in a discussion and create a class list.

Next, pass out or share digitally [Symbolism Made Easy](#) (below and [HERE](#)). As a class, read through the document pointing out the examples from *Cinderella*.

As a class, choose one or two of the objects from the lists they created earlier and work through the steps listed in [Symbolism Made Easy](#). It could be helpful to have students use their [Theme Topic List](#) from the Sample Lesson 1 to see a list of ideas that can be linked to objects.

NOTE: This mini-lesson is based on Sarah Johnson’s [The Only Way You Will Ever Need to Teach Symbolism](#) video.

### Symbolism Made Easy!

#### 1. A SYMBOL is an idea that is represented by an object or thing. In other words, it is something ABSTRACT represented by something CONCRETE.

-Universal symbols exist in multiple texts from diverse times and authors.

Examples Universal Symbols: ♻️ = Luck    ❤️ = Love    💡 = bright idea

-Text-specific symbols only exist in one text.

Example of Text-specific Symbols: the apple in *Snow White* = death

#### 2. Draw and label the important objects in a text.

Items repeated or emphasized are generally important.

#### 3. Write down three sentences that show how the characters feel or react to the object.

**HOWEVER THE CHARACTERS FEEL OR REACT TO THE OBJECT, IS HOW THEY FEEL OR REACT TO THE IDEA IT REPRESENTS.**

Example from *Cinderella*:

*The stepsisters desperately want the glass slipper to fit them.*

*The prince is searching everywhere for the owner of the glass slipper.*

*Cinderella loses her glass slipper in an attempt to leave before midnight.*

#### 4. Substitute an IDEA in for the object in each of the three sentences that fits the text.

Example from *Cinderella*: What does the glass slipper represent—what fits all three sentences?    Power?    Justice?    Happy ending?

*The stepsisters desperately want the happy ending to fit them.*

*The prince is searching everywhere for the owner of the happy ending.*

*Cinderella loses her happy ending in an attempt to leave before midnight.*

**-So, glass slipper is a symbol from *Cinderella* that represents happy ending.**

**STUDENT WORKSHOP:** For this workshop, students will be using the following six poems: “Five Reasons I Have Locks” on page 14-15, “The Bet, Part One” on page 32, “Ode to My Hair” on page 33, “In the Locker Room” on page 38, “ca-lam-i-ty” on page 39 and “Missing” on page 43. Students can work in teams of three.

**Step One:** Have each team read the six poems twice. During the second read, ask them to pay particular attention to an object in all six of the poems: Hair.

**Step Two:** Ask each team to use the [Symbolism Made Easy](#) sheet to determine symbolism for hair. They should complete Steps 3 and 4. Then, ask them to support the idea they chose as a symbol of hair in these poems with evidence from the text.

**Step Three:** Share or project the story of “[Samson and Delilah](#).” Read through it as a class, asking the class to pay particular attention to the same object they looked at in the poems: hair.

**Step Four:** Ask students to compare Josh’s hair to the role hair plays in the story of “[Samson and Delilah](#).” Have students make a connection between the story of Samson and Josh. Ask them if they think that Josh’s hair is an allusion to Sampson’s hair, i.e. does Josh’s hair refer or connect to Sampson’s hair. Use the [What is an Allusion \(Not Illusion\)](#) page to serve as reference for understanding the term “allusion.” It is included below and in a sharable version [HERE](#).

### **What is an Allusion? (Not Illusion)**

**1. An ALLUSION is a reference within a text to something famous outside of that text such as a person, place, event, story, work of art, literature, music or pop culture.**

**2. Why would an author use an ALLUSION?**

**Allusions allow readers to connect new information or ideas about characters, setting, plot, theme, etc., to something already known.**

**3. How can you pick out an ALLUSION?**

**If something doesn’t “fit” the rest of the text, it could be an allusion. (If it doesn’t fit, question it 😊)**

**In *Aladdin*, the Genie says “Et tu Brute?” after talking about a Caesar salad. This a reference to a line spoken by Caesar in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*.**

**In *A Raisin in the Sun*, the line “Good night, Prometheus!” is a reference to a character in Greek mythology.**

**The entire movie of *Gnomeo and Juliet* is an allusion to Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*.**

**4. What are the top three places from which authors pull allusions?**

- **The Bible**
- **Shakespeare**
- **Greek/Roman mythology**

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Have students answer the following focus question in their digital/spiral notebooks or in Google classroom: How does the author use the symbol of Josh’s hair to represent him? Analyze what this symbol tells the reader about Josh’s character through both symbolism and allusion. Support your answer with details from the text.

**\*Note:** An extension for this lesson could be to compare Josh’s symbol of “hair” with the song “[I Am Not My Hair](#)” by India Arie featuring Akon.



#### SAMPLE LESSON 4 (THIS LESSON IS ALIGNED WITH RL.7.2 AND RL.7.3.)

Prior to Lesson, students should read “Second Quarter.”

#### FAST CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THEME

**INTRODUCTION:** Pass out, display, or share digitally the [FAST Characterization Chart](#) ([below](#) and [HERE](#)). Take time to go over the acronym FAST, explaining that it can be used when determining characterization. Demonstrate to students on the SmartBoard, dry erase board, or shared document that Feelings and Thoughts are internal and therefore hidden from the other characters using the [Iceberg Characterization](#) sheet. Explain that characters have an internal life (Feelings and Thoughts) and an external life (Actions/Behaviors and Sayings/Dialogue). They are like icebergs where only part of their “character” is seen (external) and the rest is hidden beneath the water (internal). As a class, list Feelings, Actions, Sayings, and Thoughts from *The Crossover* for Josh on the [FAST Characterization Chart](#).

After filling in the [FAST Characterization Chart](#) for Josh, have the students turn and talk to a partner. During their talk, they are to come up with three character traits for Josh using what the class added to the [FAST Characterization Chart](#). To distinguish between character traits and character emotions, you can display, hand out, or share digitally the [Character Emotions vs Character Traits Chart](#) ([below](#) and [HERE](#)). Some examples of character traits that define Josh could be: loyalty, determination, egotistical, etc. This INTRODUCTION can be done individually, in pairs, triads or as a whole class.

**STUDENT WORKSHOP:** This workshop will examine character development through theme analysis in the “Second Quarter” section of *The Crossover*. Based on what they have discovered about Josh’s character traits in the INTRODUCTION, have the students make a class list of all possible Theme Topics for the “Second Quarter” of *The Crossover* and have students evaluate the list to determine the BEST three Theme Topics. Examples of BEST Theme Topics for this section of the novel could be: family, identity, loss of innocence, etc. It could be helpful to have students use their [Theme Topic List](#) from the Sample Lesson 1.

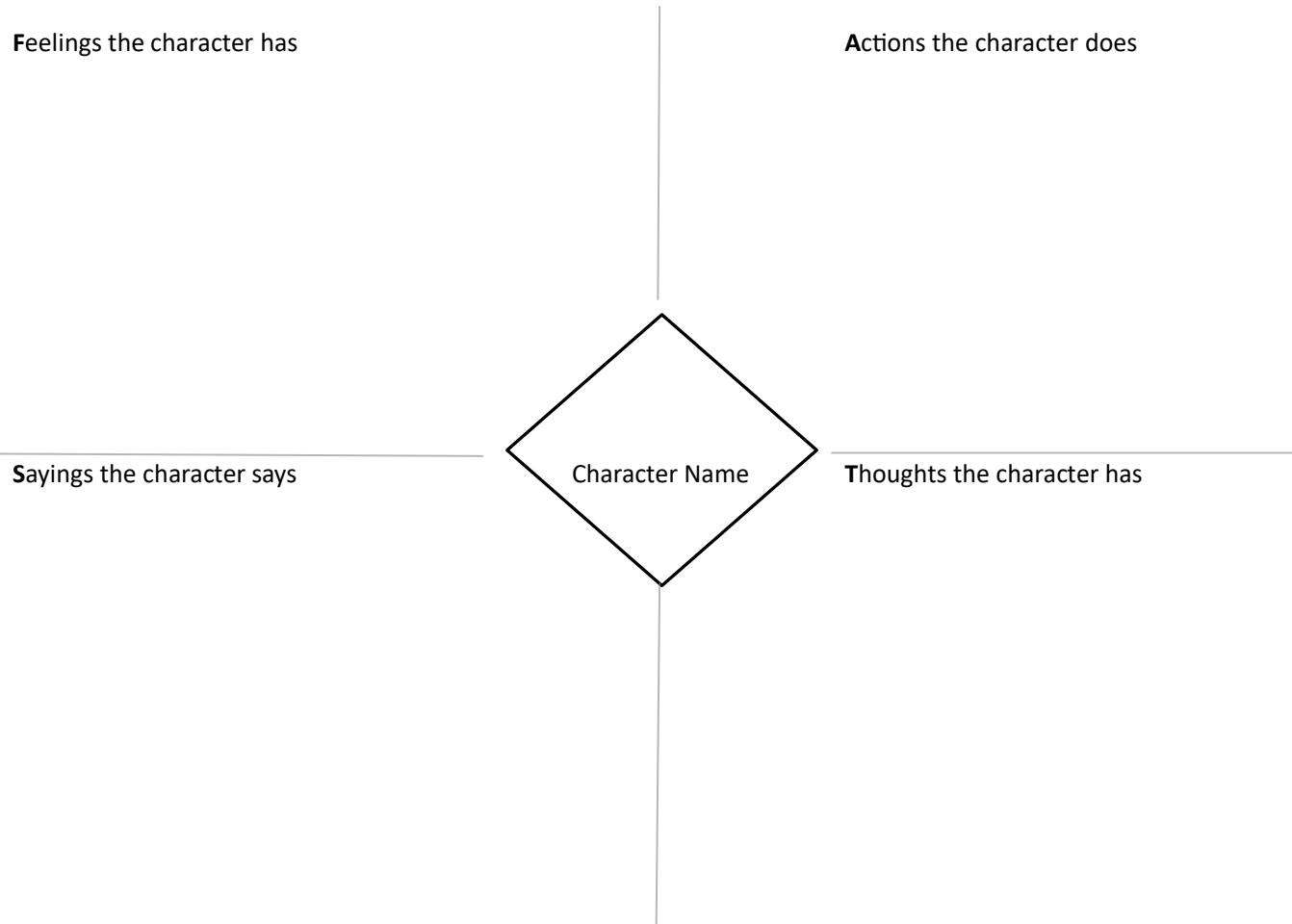
#### Choose One of These Options:

- **Evidence Carousel:** Write each Theme Topic (you can use more than three if desired) at the top of a sheet of chart paper or have them at the top of an electronic document. Place the charts or electronic devices with open documents around the room. Have students work in teams of two or three. Give each team a different color of Post-It or assign them a different color of text. Tell them to refer to their [FAST Characterization Chart](#) and the novel to write down any evidence that supports the theme topic. You can make this a timed activity and have a “winner” with the most evidence that supports or assign different teams different topics.
- **Pass-Around Rotations:** This option depends on the size of your class and works well if you don’t have access to the chart paper and Post-Its. For a large class (28 or more) divide the class into 4 sections and have a “recorder” in each section write each theme topic on a piece of printer paper or on a shared document if using electronic devices. For a smaller class, you can divide it into thirds or in half and follow the same process. In each section, you can distribute different colored pencils or pens and have students work in pairs or trios to write down evidence to support the theme topic at the top of the paper. After 5 minutes, have each team switch and repeat the process until all groups have seen all three theme topics.

Have the whole class look at the theme topic sheets to determine the BEST evidence used support each theme topic. Ask them to explain the connection of each theme to Josh’s character traits. To deepen students’ understanding, have them determine a symbol for this section of the novel that best exemplifies Josh’s character development and the theme development. Some examples could be: sweet tea, doughnuts, the color green (jealousy), bloody nose, etc. After choosing a few symbols for this section of the novel, ask them to decide which of the three theme topics would this symbol best represent?

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Using the poems “Second-Person,” “Third Wheel,” “tip-ping point” (pages 114-119), and any others from “Second Quarter,” determine Josh’s tipping point. Explain the connection between his tipping point and his character traits in the novel. Explain the connection between his tipping point and one of the theme topics for “Second Quarter.” Support your explanations with evidence from the text.

## FAST Characterization Chart



## Character Emotions vs Character Traits

EMOTIONS	TRAITS
Emotions describe how a character feels at a certain time.	Traits describe the character's personality.
Ask: <b>How does the character feel right now?</b>	Ask: <b>How does the character usually behave?</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Examples:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Scared</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Surprised</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Angry</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Upset</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Embarrassed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jealous</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Excited</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Impatient</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Calm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Loved</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Abandoned</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Justified</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Inferior</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Like a Boss"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Appreciated</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Examples:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Kind</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bossy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Determined</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Outgoing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mean</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Friendly</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reckless</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Brave</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Generous</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Selfish</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Energetic</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Confident</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Compassionate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hardworking</p>

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## SAMPLE LESSON 5 (THIS LESSON IS ALIGNED WITH RL.7.4.)

Prior to this lesson, students should read “Third Quarter.”

### PERSPECTIVE THROUGH VOCABULARY

**MINI-LESSON:** For this mini-lesson, students will see how the connotation of a word or phrase can change based on the character’s perspective. This lesson will be based on the following poems (and any others students choose from the beginning of the book through the “Third Quarter”:

- “Josh Bell” pages 4-5
- “How I Got My Nickname” pages 6-7
- “At first” pages 8-9
- “Filthy McNasty” page 10
- “Boy walks into a room” page 112
- “I run Into Dad’s room” pages 165-167

Have students reread these poems with this focus question in mind: **How does each character view Josh’s nickname?** While they are reading, you can play the song that inspired Josh’s nickname “[Filthy McNasty](#).” Have the following characters written on the board or in a shared electronic document [HERE](#): Josh, J.B., Dad, Mom, Miss Sweet Tea, and The Team/Coach. Have students write on the board, on Post-Its, or type into shared document to answer the focus question for each character. Below is an example for each character with supporting text. You can also find these examples in the shared electronic document [HERE](#).

Josh	J. B.	Dad	Mom	Miss Sweet Tea	The Team/Coach
Example: He views his nickname as a moniker for his basketball skills. “Folks call me that / ‘cause my game’s acclaimed”	Example: He views the nickname as a way to make fun of Josh. “my nickname / some dirty punchline”	Example: He views the nickname as greatness personified. “I’m dedicating this next song to you . . . / Only the best song. / “FILTHY McNASTY.”	Example: She views the nickname literally. “it fits you perfectly . . . / You never clean your closet”	Example: She views he nickname as a joke. “and my nickname, some dirty punch line”	Example: They view the nickname as a rallying cry. “My teammates gather around / to salute. / FILTHY, FILTHY, FILTHY, FILTHY, they chant.”

In a class discussion, examine how the perspective of Josh’s nickname changes based on the character. Support each perspective with evidence from the text. You could do this in a scored discussion where the students get one or two pieces of tape each. They write their names on the pieces of tape. When a student is able to give evidence from the text for a given perspective, the teacher takes one of their pieces of tape and awards them points. The example is then written under the character’s perspective.

As a wrap-up of the MINI-LESSON and a pre-cursor to the STUDENT WORKSHOP, have students practice determining the connotation of words based on the perspective of different people. Tell the students that just as Josh’s nickname had a different meaning depending upon character perspectives, regular everyday words have differing connotations depending upon whose perspective is using them. Use these two examples to make your point. Have students discuss how the meaning of the words change based on the perspectives of the groups listed.

- Snow Day-perspectives of students, parents, teachers, superintendent, principals
- Money-perspectives of someone who is rich, someone who is broke, an adult, a kid, someone who was robbed, the robber

**STUDENT WORKSHOP:** This lesson will examine the connection between different characters’ perspective and the author’s vocabulary choice. Throughout this novel, the author presents us with many words or phrases that are seen through a particular character’s perspectives. This workshop allows students to see the same words

through other characters' perspectives. Although the word may only appear in the text in the perspective of one or two of the characters, students will have to find text that could offer an idea of how that same word would be seen in other characters' perspectives. Pass out the [Perspective Through Vocabulary](#) sheet ([below](#) or [HERE](#)). Using the example of "volcanic," add evidence from the text for each character that supports the definition/connotation for that word from their perspective. There are many ways to use this sheet with students:

- Cut the sheet into strips and give teams one strip to write their connotation and support it with evidence. This could be a jigsaw activity where each team teaches their word/phrase through different perspectives.
- Have a team of students work on one character. They would need to focus on one character to explain that person's connotation of all of the words. This could also be a jigsaw activity to teach to the class.
- You can have students make an inference of their word connotation and then trade papers to add the evidence to support.

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Reflect on Josh's relationship with his dad. In a journal entry, have the students write about the type of father Chuck Bell is. Do the words "father," "dad," and "daddy" mean the same when used to describe Chuck? What connotations do those words have for you? If some students are struggling with the final question due to absent father figures, you can show them the poem "[Knock Knock.](#)" This poem is very empowering for students. You can have them compare/contrast Chuck Bell with the father in this poem instead

## PERSPECTIVE THROUGH VOCABULARY

Word/Phrase	Josh's Connotation/ Perspective	J. B.'s Connotation/ Perspective	Mom's Connotation/ Perspective	Dad's Connotation/ Perspective	J. B. 's girlfriend's Connotation / Perspective
<b>Volcanic (137)</b>	Example: festering The silence in the car is heavy and gurgling like hot lava below the surface just waiting to explode.	Example: erupting The blood coming from his nose after Josh's foul	Example: continually heated Her frustration with Dad because he's not taking care of his health	Example: hot-tempered His temper during the games when he is yelling at the referees	Example: Avoidance, like hot lava Her disgust with Josh over hurting J. B.
<b>Churlish (138, 142, 143, 175)</b>					
<b>Wildfire (148)</b>					
<b>Ironic (153)</b>					
<b>Profusely (153, 154)</b>					

<b>Words/Phrases</b>	<b>Josh's Connotation</b>	<b>J. B.'s Connotation</b>	<b>Mom's Connotation</b>	<b>Dad's Connotation</b>	<b>J.B.'s Girlfriend's Connotation</b>
<b>empty as fired cannons (156)</b>					
<b>bitter (sweet) (170)</b>					
<b>Pulchritudinous (171)</b>					
<b>Estranged (186, 187)</b>					
<b>Pulse (196)</b>					

## SAMPLE LESSON 6 (THIS LESSON IS ALIGNED WITH RL.7.2 AND RL.7.5.)

Prior to this lesson, students should read “Fourth Quarter” and “Overtime.”

### CREATING LEGACY: THEME DEVELOPMENT AND POETIC FORMS

**MINI-LESSON:** This MINI-LESSON will continue this resource’s focus on Standard 2. Have students respond to the journal question: **What is a “legacy” and how does a person create a legacy?** Then, have students use that journal entry to create a class list of adjectives that describe a “legacy” or a “legend” on the board and generate a class list of verbs that explain the actions of creating a legacy. Have students conduct a Think/Pair/Share to answer this question: **Has the character Chuck “Da Man” Bell created a legacy?** To do this, each student will independently write a response to the question below their journal entry. Then, they will turn to a partner and share each of their responses and finally, they will share out as a class.

Next, have students work through Steps 4 through 6 from the [How to Write a Theme Statement in Six Steps](#) using the theme topic “Legacy.” Remind them to add evidence to support their theme statement. This can be done individually for a student check for understanding or in partners or small groups for struggling students. To model best themes, have students leave their names off their theme statements; instead have each student write their Student ID number on the paper. Place students in Read-Around Groups of 3-5 depending on the size of your class and randomly pass out the student-written theme statements. Tell students not to shout out if they see their own paper or a friend’s paper. Be sure students can also access the [Theme Statement Rubric](#) from Lesson 1 to use as reference of the criteria that makes a good theme statement. Have each group rank the theme statements they were given from “best” to “needs improvement.” They can use Post-Its to write suggestions to improve the theme statement/evidence or make specific praises about the theme statement/evidence. Have each team share out their “winning” theme statement and explain to the class what made it so successful. This strategy will give your struggling students an exemplar model for theme that you can copy and have them add to their notebook and will give your higher-level learners ways to make their theme statements/evidence stronger and more specific.

**STUDENT WORKSHOP:** Throughout the novel, there are many different poetic forms, styles, and structures used by the author to tell the story. Among these are:

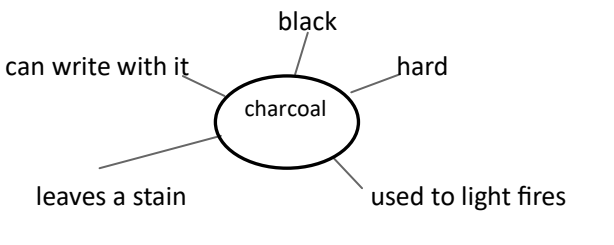
- Epistolary Poem & Apology Poem: “Dear Jordan” (159)
- Free Verse Poems: “On the way to the game” (13), “At the End of Warm-Ups, My Brother Tries to Dunk” (24–25), “The game is tied” (36), “Missing” (43), “Sundays After Church” (50)
- List Poems: “Five Reasons I Have Locks” (14–15), “Things I Learn at Dinner” (172), “Mom, since you asked, I’ll tell you why I’m so angry” (204)
- Tanka Poem: “Tanka for Language Arts Class” (212)
- Tercet: “JB and I” (23)
- Text Poems: “Text Messages from Mom, Part One” (179–180), “Text Messages from Vondie” (205), “Text Messages from Mom, Part Two” (218)
- Two Word Poem: “At Noon, in the Gym, with Dad” (194–196)
- Unrhymed Couplets: “Conversation” (17, 123) “Suspension” (138)

Display and share digitally the [Poetry in \*The Crossover\*](#) slides. Talk through each of the poem types, explicitly showing their defining attributes. Have students choose one type of poem type from the slides and read and reflect on the poem(s) written in that form/structure. Ask them to choose one of the theme topics of this novel to create a poem in the type they have chosen. It could be helpful to have students use their [Theme Topic List](#) from the Sample Lesson 1 and/or direct them to lists that were created in class from previous lessons or journal entries. You can choose to have students use vocabulary words from *The Crossover* ([HERE](#) and [HERE](#)) in their poems. They could have a designated number of words, e.g. three you choose and three a partner chooses, that must be included in their poems in order to add depth of vocabulary and use of figurative language. If students are struggling with adding figurative language into their poems, teach them to web the vocabulary words (see example [below](#) and [HERE](#)). Students should follow the [Poetry Analysis Rubric](#) (shown [below](#) and [HERE](#)) to be sure they are meeting the required elements.



**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Have students write a modified [Generative Sentence](#). Explain that they will need to write one sentence that contains exactly 15 words and includes the words “legacy” and “father” and answers this focus question: **Explain why the author ends *Fourth Quarter* with a basketball game.** This is a modified Generative Sentence because you are not specifying the location of the words they must include.

### Webbing Words to Produce Figurative Language

<u>Web a Vocabulary Word</u>	<u>Which Use/Purpose of the Word BEST Fits the Poem</u>	<u>Think Outside the Box</u>
	<p><b>If the poem was about love...</b>  <i>He wrote his initials in charcoal on my heart</i></p> <p><b>If the poem was about abandonment...</b>  <i>She left my soul as black as charcoal</i></p> <p><b>If the poem is about anger...</b>  <i>His words were charcoal...smoldering a fire of hate in my chest</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A heart can be “stitched” together with “needle” and “thread”</li> <li>• An enemy can pretend to be your best friend by delivering a “bouquet” of “bullets”</li> <li>• The “dusk” can melt into the ocean like a child’s unwanted “popsicle”</li> <li>• Lies can taste like bitter fruit.</li> </ul>

### Poetry Analysis Rubric

	RELATES TO THE TOPIC ASSIGNED	INCLUDES FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE	EXPLORES A POETRY TYPE	COMMENTS/THINGS TO CONSIDER
3	The poem completely connects to one of the theme topics	The poem has ample figurative language based on the Vocabulary lists	The poem is clearly modeled after one of the poetry types	
2	The poem somewhat connects to one of the theme topics	The poem has some figurative language based on the Vocabulary lists	The poem is loosely based on one of the poetry types	
1	The poem does not connect to one of the theme topics	The poem is missing figurative language	The poem is not related to any of the poetry types.	

TOTAL POINTS:

## SAMPLE LESSON 7 (THIS LESSON IS ALIGNED WITH RL.7.2 AND RL.7.3.)

Prior to this Lesson, students should have completed the novel.

### BASKETBALL RULES

**MINI-LESSON:** Throughout the novel, the author uses basketball to teach life lessons. Pass out the compilation of the [Basketball Rules Poems from \*The Crossover\*](#) ([below](#) and [HERE](#)) for student use during this lesson. This lesson will help students see the connection between plot and characters. For each basketball rule poem, students will connect a plot event and the character(s) associated with the rule using the [Basketball Rules Chart](#) ([below](#) and [HERE](#)). On the Chart, there is an example you can work through as a whole class. There are different ways you can use this mini-lesson to reinforce how literary elements interact:

- Students can work individually to choose a Basketball Rule and make the connection between plot event and characters & support with evidence.
- Students can rotate through stations with each Basketball Rule poem at a station to complete in small groups or with partners.
- Students can complete the plot event and character connection in teams and trade with other teams to provide evidence to support the connections.

Students can share their connections and evidence as a whole class through a jigsaw or quiz each other about the connections.

**WRITING WORKSHOP:** This workshop will ask students to determine a theme in *The Crossover* using the items from the MINI-LESSON. Have students take out their completed [Basketball Rules Chart](#) ([below](#) and [HERE](#)), the [Basketball Rules Poems from \*The Crossover\*](#) ([below](#) and [HERE](#)), their [Theme Topic List](#) from the Sample Lesson 1, the [How to Write a Theme Statement in Six Steps](#) document, and any other items they have worked on during their reading of *The Crossover* that deal with theme. They will use them to answer the following prompt in a fully developed essay. They should write this essay electronically in their CCS WRITING PORTFOLIO folder.

- **Kwame Alexander's *The Crossover* contains ten basketball rules poems that apply to life. Using those poems, determine a theme of the novel and analyze its development throughout the text. Be sure your theme is a theme statement and not a theme topic. Use any of the following to support your analysis of theme development: characterization, figurative language, word choice, symbolism, poetic form, etc.**

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Have students evaluate their essays using the [LDC Reading Standard Rubric for RL.7.2](#). This will show them if their essay is meeting or not meeting the Grade 7 Standard Reading Literature Standard for Theme. After they finish revising, use your editing tools in Google docs to give them feedback. (Note: If you also want to assess their essays for Writing Standard 2, you will need to add additional Writing Workshops with mini-lessons addressing what aspects of Writing Standard 2 you will be assessing. You may want to use a [Summary Document](#) and [LDC Informative Explanatory Rubric](#) to help with progress and assessment.)

## Basketball Rules Poems from *The Crossover*

### Basketball Rule #1

In this game of life  
your family is the court  
and the ball is your heart  
No matter how good you are,  
no matter how down you get,  
always leave  
your heart  
on the court.

### Basketball Rule #2

(random text from dad)

Hustle dig  
Grind push  
Run fast  
Change pivot  
Chase pull  
Aim shoot  
Work smart  
Live smarter  
Play hard  
Practice harder

### Basketball Rule #3

Never let anyone  
lower your goals,  
Others' expectations  
of you are determined  
by their limitations  
of life.  
The sky is your limit, sons.  
Always shoot  
for the sun  
and you *will* shine.

### Basketball Rule #4

If you miss  
enough of life's  
free throws  
you will pay  
in the end.

### Basketball Rule #5

When  
you stop  
playing  
your game  
you've already  
lost.

**Basketball Rule #6**

A great team  
has a good scorer  
with a teammate  
who's on point  
and ready  
to assist.

**Basketball Rule #7**

Rebounding  
is the art  
of anticipating  
of always being prepared  
to grab it.  
But you can't  
drop the ball.

**Basketball Rule #8**

Sometimes  
you have to  
lean back  
a little  
and  
fade away  
to get  
the best  
shot.

**Basketball Rule #9**

When the game is on  
the line,  
don't fear.  
Grab the ball.  
Take it  
to the hoop.

**Basketball Rule #10**

A loss is inevitable,  
like snow in winter.  
True champions  
learn  
to dance  
through  
the storm

### Basketball Rules Chart: Connecting Plot and Character in Poetry

Basketball Rules	Connection to Plot Event	Connection to Character	Evidence to Support
#1	<p>The connection to the plot event is the author introducing Josh’s family to the reader. It shows how important his family is to him.</p> <p>He uses basketball to describe his family because he loves basketball.</p>	<p>This poem connects to Josh’s entire family: Josh, J. B., Mom, and Dad.</p>	<p>“My job now is to take care of this family” (17).            “. . . but honestly, right now I’m fine coaching this house and keeping up with you and your brother” (18).            “You boys ought to treasure your mother’s love” (16).</p>
#2			
#3			
#4			
#5			
#6			
#7			
#8			
#9			
#10			

**SAMPLE LESSON 8 (THIS LESSON IS ALIGNED WITH RL.7.2, RL.7.3, AND RL.7.4.)**

Extension of Standards to New Material: This lesson will allow students to demonstrate mastery with the standards of determining theme, interpreting and applying symbols and analyzing the impact of figurative language using text not related to *The Crossover*.

**EXTENSION OF STANDARDS**

**INTRODUCTION:** The aim of this lesson is for students to apply the skills developed through this unit by analyzing new material. Many of the lessons have focused on determining theme, interpreting and applying symbols, and analyzing the impact of figurative language. This lesson will expand students' ability by having them apply these skills to a Maya Angelou poem, compare that Maya Angelou poem to a William Wordsworth poem, and analyze the short story "[The Gift of the Magi](#)".

Have students read the poem "[Still I Rise](#)" by Maya Angelou at least twice to get a good understanding of the poem. They may mark up the poem to fully analyze it using any protocols you used during the reading of *The Crossover* or this [Unlocking Poetry](#) sheet. [HERE](#) is the poem in a sharable doc. Individually, have students refer to their [How to Write a Theme Statement in Six Steps](#) and their [Theme Topic List](#). Have them use the six steps to write a theme statement for the poem. Using this theme statement, have them complete the [Literary Elements Theme Connection Sheet](#) ([below](#) and [HERE](#)). Having students complete this individually will allow you to determine if students have achieved mastery on these standards.

Have students write their theme statements around the room. Students can conduct a gallery walk and evaluate the theme statements of their classmates. Students should be able to see that there can be more than one correct theme statement, as long as it can be supported by the text. Have students take down the theme statements and group theme statements that are the same or similar. You can use hula hoops, tape, or draw circles on your board or on a shared doc to make visuals for students to group connected theme statements. When all theme statements are grouped, students can work in pairs or triads to support them with evidence from the text. These can be written as an assignment in Google Classroom, on paper/post-its, on a shared doc, etc.

**STUDENT WORKSHOP:** Have students read the poem "[Daffodils](#)" by William Wordsworth three times. [HERE](#) is the poem in a sharable doc. Have students refer to the [Quizlet Vocabulary](#) for this poem during a first reading. During a second reading, have students determine what the symbol of a daffodil represents based on the use in the poem. A third reading should have students using the personification in the poem to determine the meaning the poet intends. Hold a class discussion for students to demonstrate their understanding of the poem after the three readings. They may mark up the poem to fully analyze it using any protocols you used during the reading of *The Crossover* or this [Unlocking Poetry](#) sheet.

Have students use this discussion to write a theme statement for the poem in small groups. The theme statement should be created based on their [How to Write a Theme Statement in Six Steps](#) and students' [Theme Topic List](#). The theme should be supported by evidence from the text.

Students should compare the theme statements from "[Still I Rise](#)" by Maya Angelou ([sharable version](#)) to "[Daffodils](#)" by William Wordsworth ([sharable version](#)). How are the poems similar in meaning and technique? In what ways are the themes related? In what ways do the themes differ? How can you prove this analysis?

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** As an assessment, have students read "[The Gift of the Magi](#)" by O. Henry ([below](#) and [HERE](#)) and respond to the Literary Elements questions at the end of the text.

LITERARY ELEMENTS THEME CONNECTION SHEET  
THEME/FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE/SYMBOLISM

POSSIBLE THEME TOPICS



THE AUTHOR BELIEVES THAT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

THEME STATEMENT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE FROM THE TEXT THAT SUPPORTS THE THEME STATEMENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this figurative language support the theme statement?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SYMBOL FROM THE TEXT THAT SUPPORT THE THEME STATEMENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this symbol support the theme statement?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

O. Henry

## The Gift of the Magi

(1) One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the look-out for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

(5) The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. To-morrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling - something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 Bat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its colour within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out of the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

(10) So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet. On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she cluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: 'Mme Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds.' One Eight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the 'Sofronie.'

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.



(15)"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand.

"Give it to me quick" said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation - as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value - the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 78 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task dear friends - a mammoth task. Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

(20) "If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do - oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops. Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please, God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two - and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face. Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again - you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice-what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

(25)"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet, even after the hardest mental labour.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously. "You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you - sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year - what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

(30) Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table. "Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs - the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise-shell, with jeweled rims - just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!" And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to {lash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

(35) "Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men - wonderfully wise men - who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

### **Connection Question**

Explain the connection between the "wise men – wonderfully wise men – who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger" and the couple, Jim and Della. Support your answer with a detail from the text.

### **Character Question**

What aspect of the couple's character is revealed in this passage? Support your answer with a detail from the text for **each** character.

### **Theme/Setting Question**

Identify the theme of this text. Explain how the setting helps the reader identify the theme. Support your answer with a detail from the text that would connect the theme to the setting.

### **Plot Question**

In paragraph 10, how do the following words/phrases "*nervously and quickly*," "*faltered*," "*tear*," and "*on went her old brown hat*" all move the plot of the story forward? Support your answer with a detail from the text.

### **Symbolism Question**

Determine how "magi" is a symbol in this text. Support your answer with details from the text.

## SHORTER LITERARY TEXTS FOR PAIRING

### “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night”

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light

### “Nothing Gold Can Stay”

Nature’s first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf’s a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

### Excerpt from “Two Kinds” by Amy Tan

I had assumed that my talent-show fiasco meant that I would never have to play the piano again. But two days later, after school, my mother came out of the kitchen and saw me watching TV. "Four clock," she reminded me, as if it were any other day. I was stunned, as though she were asking me to go through the talent-show torture again. I planted myself more squarely in front of the TV. "Turn off TV," she called from the kitchen five minutes later.

I didn't budge. And then I decided, I didn't have to do what mother said anymore. I wasn't her slave. This wasn't China. I had listened to her before, and look what happened she was the stupid one. She came out of the kitchen and stood in the arched entryway of the living room. "Four clock," she said once again, louder.

"I'm not going to play anymore," I said nonchalantly. "Why should I? I'm not a genius. She stood in front of the TV. I saw that her chest was heaving up and down in an angry way. "No!" I said, and I now felt stronger, as if my true self had finally emerged. So this was what had been inside me all along. "No! I won't!" I screamed.

She snapped off the TV, yanked me by the arm and pulled me off the floor. She was frighteningly strong, half pulling, half carrying me towards the piano as I kicked the throw rugs under my feet. She lifted me up onto the hard bench. I was sobbing by now, looking at her bitterly. Her chest was heaving even more and her mouth was open, smiling crazily as if she were pleased that I was crying. "You want me to be something that I'm not!" I sobbed. "I'll never be the kind of daughter you want me to be!"

"Only two kinds of daughters," she shouted in Chinese. "Those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind! Only one kind of daughter can live in this house. Obedient daughter!"

"Then I wish I weren't your daughter, I wish you weren't my mother," I shouted. As I said these things I got scared. It felt like worms and toads and slimy things crawling out of my chest, but it also felt good, that this awful side of me had surfaced, at last. "Too late to change this," my mother said shrilly. And I could sense her anger rising to its breaking point. I wanted see it spill over. And that's when I remembered the babies she had lost in China, the ones we never talked about. "Then I wish I'd never been born!" I shouted. "I wish I were dead! Like them." It was as if I had said magic words. Alakazam!-her face went blank, her mouth closed, her arms went slack, and she backed out of the room, stunned, as if she were blowing away like a small brown leaf...

Excerpt from “[Hoops](#)” by Walter Dean Myers

One of the things my father used to say was how his days were piling up on him. When I told him I didn’t know what that meant, he said one day I would.

“Right now,” he said, “you got your days filled up with playing and going to school. Then after a while you gonna start dreaming about this and that, and you gonna lay your days out in front of yourself like an imaginary road. That’s what I did.”

“Then what happened?” I asked.

“Then they started piling up on me,” he said. He looked away and didn’t say anything else, and I knew the conversation was over. When he looked away like that, there wasn’t any use to keep on talking.

After he split, I stayed around the house a lot. I did most of the things I was supposed to do, like making the school scene and helping out around the house. I got a little job at the Grant, a little run-down hotel, when I got to be sixteen. That was really okay. I could earn a few bucks, and I could crash there when my moms got on my back too much. By my senior year she was on my back just about all the time, too. Something had come up between us that put an edge on everything we did. It wasn’t anything I could really lay out and say, “Hey, there it is,” as much as it was a feeling. I’d be sitting in the kitchen eating and she’d come in and make some remark about how late I was staying out or something, and I just wouldn’t want to hear it. So I’d finish eating as soon as I could and then bust over to the Grant to spend the night there and cool out.

When I thought about it, I knew it wasn’t so much that I had changed, or even that she had changed, but the situation was different than it had been, and we couldn’t talk about it. When I was younger, I used to tell myself I was going to do this or do that and I believed it. Now I didn’t know. For a long time Moms hung on to that old stuff, about me going to college and making something of myself. When I would lay in bed at the Grant, waiting for the next day to roll around, I was also waiting for something to happen, something to change my life. It was like I was running in a marathon and suddenly forgot where the finish line was. But I knew I still had a place to get to, even if I couldn’t see it, and I knew I was scared to stop running.

All along, though, I had my game. My game was my fame, and I knew it was together. From the first time I played basketball in grade school I was good. I was good, but I was short then. Some of the older guys used to call me runt. “You got a sweet game for a kid, runt,” they’d say.

### INFORMATIONAL TEXTS FOR PAIRING

[“Helping boys become respectful men through their love of basketball”](#) a NewsELA.com article

[“Dads, daughters on firm footing at these dances”](#) a NewsELA.com article

[“Letters Between a Black Father and Son”](#) a Time Magazine article

[“I Am Still The Greatest”](#) a *This I Believe* essay from Muhammed Ali

### MEDIA/VISUAL TEXTS FOR PAIRINGS

[YouTube video of basketball crossovers](#)

[Kwame Alexander homepage](#)

[PBS Newshour interview with Kwame Alexander](#)

[The art of Father’s Day](#)

**RL. 7.1**

**CITE SEVERAL PIECES OF TEXTUAL EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ANALYSIS OF WHAT THE TEXT SAYS EXPLICITLY AS WELL AS INFERENCES DRAWN FROM THE TEXT.**

**Essential Understanding**  
 -Reading comprehension  
 -Draw inferences  
 -Cite specific textual examples and details to support inferences and text meaning  
 -Analyze the text  
 -MLA formatting for in-text citations and works cited pages

**Academic Vocabulary/Language**

-analyze/analysis  
 -cite  
 -drawn  
 -explicit  
 -inference  
 -MLA formatting  
 -several  
 -textual evidence

CCR ANCHOR: READ CLOSELY TO DETERMINE WHAT THE TEXT SAYS EXPLICITLY AND TO MAKE LOGICAL INFERENCES FROM IT, CITE SPECIFIC TEXTUAL EVIDENCE WHEN WRITING OR SPEAKING TO SUPPORT CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE TEXT.

**\*Extended Understanding**  
 -Evaluate the strength of textual citations

**ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE: REASONING**

**BROAD LEARNING TARGET:**

The student can cite several pieces of textual evidence to support an analysis of what the text says and inferences it makes.

**Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:**

The student can recognize textual evidence.

The student can recognize inferences.

**Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:**

The student can analyze text to cite textual evidence that is explicitly stated.

The student can analyze text to cite textual evidence that is inferred.

**Underpinning Product Learning Targets:**

The student can use correct MLA format for in-text citations.

The student can use correct MLA format for works cited pages.

**RL. 7.2****ANALYZE LITERARY TEXT DEVELOPMENT.**

- A. DETERMINE A THEME OF A TEXT AND ANALYZE ITS DEVELOPMENT OVER THE COURSE OF THE TEXT.
- B. INCORPORATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A THEME AND OTHER STORY DETAILS INTO AN OBJECTIVE SUMMARY OF THE TEXT.

CCR ANCHOR: DETERMINE CENTRAL IDEAS OR THEMES OF A TEXT AND ANALYZE THEIR DEVELOPMENT; SUMMARIZE THE KEY SUPPORTING DETAILS AND IDEAS.

**Essential Understanding**

- Reading comprehension
- Recognize and understand theme
- Trace and analyze theme development
- Summarize a theme of a text by including development and story details.
- Avoid putting opinion or judgment into objective summaries

**\*Extended Understanding**

- Types and uses of details, literary elements, and figurative language

**Academic****Vocabulary/Language**

- analyze
- central idea
- details
- determine
- development
- incorporate
- judgment
- objective
- opinion
- story details
- summarize/summary
- theme

**ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE:  
REASONING**

**BROAD LEARNING TARGETS:**

**The student can analyze literary text development.**

**The student can determine a theme and analyze its development over the course of the text.**

**The student can incorporate the development of a theme and other story details into an objective summary of the text.**

**Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:**

**The student can define, understand, and recognize theme and summary.**

**The student can follow the progression of theme in a text.**

**The student can recognize story details to be included in a summary.**

**The student can summarize the theme in a text.**

**Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:**

**The student can distinguish between textual facts and opinions.**

OHIO'S LEARNING STANDARDS-CLEAR LEARNING TARGETS  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS-READING LITERATURE, GRADE 7

<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; margin-bottom: 10px;"><b>RL. 7.3</b></div> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;"><b>ANALYZE HOW PARTICULAR ELEMENTS OF A STORY OR DRAMA INTERACT (E.G., HOW SETTING SHAPES THE CHARACTERS OR PLOT).</b></p>	<p><b><u>Essential Understanding</u></b>  <b>-Understand and identify author's choices in regards to literary elements such as plot line &amp; characterization</b></p> <p><b>-Understand and identify varied literary elements and storytelling techniques</b></p> <p><b>-Analyze the impact of author's choices on development of and relationships between literary elements in a story or drama</b></p>	<p><b><u>Academic Vocabulary/Language</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-analyze</li> <li>-develop</li> <li>-figurative language</li> <li>*See your adopted textbook's glossary for grade-level appropriate literary elements as they are too numerous to list here.</li> <li>-impact</li> <li>-literary elements (plot, theme, setting, tone, diction, characterization, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p>CCR ANCHOR:ANALYZE HOW AND WHY INDIVIDUALS, EVENTS, AND IDEAS DEVELOP AND INTERACT OVER THE COURSE OF A TEXT.</p>		

<p><b>ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE: REASONING</b></p>	<p><b><u>BROAD LEARNING TARGETS:</u></b></p> <p><b>The students can analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.</b></p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:</u></b></p> <p><b>The student can understand and identify varied literary elements (plot, theme, characterization, etc.) and storytelling techniques (deus ex machina, unreliable narrator, flashback, etc.) in a text.</b></p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:</u></b></p> <p><b>The student can analyze how elements of a story or drama are developed and/or interrelated.</b></p>
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**RL. 7.4**

DETERMINE THE MEANING OF WORDS AND PHRASES AS THEY ARE USED IN A TEXT, INCLUDING FIGURATIVE AND CONNOTATIVE MEANINGS; ANALYZE

THE IMPACT OF SPECIFIC LANGUAGE CHOICES, SUCH AS SENSORY WORDS OR PHRASES, ON MEANING AND TONE, INCLUDING RHYMES AND OTHER REPETITIONS OF SOUNDS (E.G., ALLITERATION) ON A SPECIFIC VERSE OR STANZA OF A POEM OR SECTION OF A STORY OR DRAMA.

CCR ANCHOR: INTERPRET WORDS AND PHRASES AS THEY ARE USED IN A TEXT, INCLUDING DETERMINING TECHNICAL, CONNOTATIVE, AND FIGURATIVE MEANINGS, AND ANALYZE HOW SPECIFIC WORD CHOICES SHAPE MEANING OR TONE.

**Essential Understanding**

- Interpret words and phrases
- Determine figurative and connotative word meanings in a text
- Identify and analyze varied sound repetitions in poetry and prose
- Understand how word choice (diction), figurative language, and sound repetition impact meaning and tone
- Interpret sensory words and phrases

**\*Extended Understanding**

- Identify and analyze rhetorical repetitions

**Academic Vocabulary/Language**

- analyze
- connotation/denotation
- diction
- figurative language  
(See your adopted textbook's glossary for grade-level appropriate figurative language devices or <https://literarydevices.net/figurative-language/>.)
- phrases
- sensory language
- sound repetition (rhyme, rhyme scheme, alliteration, assonance, anaphora, epistrophe, epanalepsis, sibilance, etc.)
- stanza
- verse

**ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE: REASONING****BROAD LEARNING TARGETS:**

The student can determine the figurative, literal, and connotative meanings of words and phrases based on how they are used in a text.

The students can analyze the impact of specific language choices, such as sensory language on meaning and tone.

The student can analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetition of sound on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

**Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:**

The student can identify words and phrases that have connotative and figurative meaning used in a text.

The student can identify repetitions of sound and sensory language in a text.

The student can identify tone in a text.

**Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:**

The student can determine, interpret, clarify, or verify the figurative, literal, and connotative meanings of words and phrases by using context clues, applying knowledge of Greek/Latin affixes and roots, and/or consulting reference materials.

OHIO'S LEARNING STANDARDS-CLEAR LEARNING TARGETS  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS-READING LITERATURE, GRADE 7

<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <b>RL. 7.5</b> </div>	<p><b>ANALYZE HOW A DRAMA'S OR POEM'S FORM OR STRUCTURE (E.G., SOLILOQUY, SONNET) CONTRIBUTES TO ITS MEANING.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Essential Understanding</u></b>          -Identify and understand          drama structures/forms          -Identify and understand          poetic structures/forms          -Understand and analyze          how dramatic and poetic          structure contributes to          meaning in a text</p> <p><b><u>*Extended Understanding</u></b>          -Close reading</p>	<p><b><u>Academic Vocabulary/Language</u></b></p> <p>-analyze</p> <p>-drama and poetry          structures (aside, comedy,          plot line, scene, verse, line,          soliloquy, stanza types,          tragedy, etc.)</p> <p>-poetic forms (lyric-elegy,          ode, sonnet; narrative-epic,          ballad; dramatic;          open/closed-free verse,          blank verse; light verse-          limerick, epigram; etc.)</p>
<p>CCR ANCHOR: <b>ANALYZE THE STRUCTURE OF TEXTS, INCLUDING HOW SPECIFIC SENTENCES, PARAGRAPHS, AND LARGER PORTIONS OF THE TEXT (E.G., A SECTION, CHAPTER, SCENE, OR STANZA) RELATE TO EACH OTHER AND THE WHOLE.</b></p>			
<p><b>ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE: REASONING</b></p>	<p><b><u>BROAD LEARNING TARGETS:</u></b></p> <p><b>The student can analyze how a drama's form and structure contributes to its meaning.</b></p> <p><b>The student can analyze how a poem's form and structure contributes to its meaning.</b></p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:</u></b></p> <p><b>The student can identify poetic elements of form and structure.</b></p> <p><b>The student can identify dramatic elements of form and structure.</b></p> <p><b>The student can identify the form and structure of various types of poetry and drama.</b></p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:</u></b></p> <p><b>The student can determine the meaning of a drama or poem.</b></p>		

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Teacher Resource was created during the summers of 2017/2018 as part of an initiative to increase textual choice for teaching Ohio's Learning Standards. It is part of a series of Teacher Resources for the following newly adopted supplemental literature. Note: Please adhere to the grade level chosen for each title to avoid textual overlap for our students.

### Grade Six

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare

(No Fear Shakespeare Edition)

*Hello, Universe* by Erin Kelly

### Grade Seven

*The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander

### Grade Eight

*The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare

(No Fear Shakespeare Edition)

### Grade Nine

*Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson

### Grade Ten

*Othello* by William Shakespeare

(No Fear Shakespeare Edition)

*Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds

### Grade Eleven

*The Help* by Kathryn Stockett

### Grade Twelve

*Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare

(No Fear Shakespeare Edition)

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## Supplemental Resources for *The Crossover*

NOTE: The lessons included in these supplemental resources may not be aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards or the Common Core. Please make choices about using any of the lessons and ideas included here based upon how they can help students meet and exceed learning targets.

[Choose to Read Ohio Book Kit](#)

[Educator's Guide from HMH](#)

[Literary Fusion Ideas](#)

[ALA Activities/Discussion Guide](#)

[Poetry for Children Blog](#)

[Poetry Prompts for \*The Crossover\*](#)

[The Crossover Google Classroom/Narrative Writing Unit \(Created by Sibyl Barber, CCS Teacher\) Join Code Ef6n4y](#)