



Priority Content in Practice: 10th-grade ELA

This resource provides an example of the key instructional moves 10th-grade teachers need to make to support reading comprehension, using Odell Education’s High School Literacy Program (OE HSLP).

The decision-making guidance below prioritizes current-year content in order to advance learning for all, as well as to mitigate the disproportionate impact that disruptions in formal schooling have on focus students.¹ The guiding questions and considerations can help educators make adjustments to a curriculum’s pacing guide for Tier 1 instruction.

For more on these moves in action, you can watch a [video walkthrough](#) and download these [slides](#).

¹Focus students are those students who need the greatest support to access the content being taught, relative to their classmates. Focus student identification can and will be dynamic.





Prioritizing content

Decision making guidance	Notes
How long is each unit/module designed to last?	<p>Each grade includes one Foundation Unit that begins the year, three to four Development Units, and one Application Unit that concludes the year. All units present a combination of optional lessons and activities teachers may choose from. Lessons are designed to span 45–90 minutes, but the total length of a lesson depends on how many activities are chosen.</p> <p>Grade 10 begins with a Foundation Inquiry Unit. Teachers then choose from the five Development Units. The year ends with the Application Inquiry Unit. A surplus of Development Units have been provided to give teachers the flexibility to craft a yearlong scope and sequence based on the needs and interests of their students.</p>
Is unit/module 1 required to establish the learning routines and procedures necessary in future units/modules?	<p>The Foundation Unit introduces each grade and is intended to give teachers an understanding of students' incoming reading, writing, discussion, and presentation skills. As such, the Foundation Unit exposes students to a breadth of literacy skills and analytical processes they will develop throughout the year. As with the Development Units, students build a body of knowledge around a common topic as a class. However, in the Foundation Units, students demonstrate their entry-level skills to conduct academic research in small pathway groups as they investigate a compelling question (e.g., “Who changes the world?”).</p>





What is the knowledge story for each of the units/modules?

Note: Reading comprehension cannot be taught separately from content.

Foundational Unit

- **“How Do We Determine the Right Thing to Do?”**: Because we live in societies, many of our personal decisions affect others. Philosophers in the field of ethics have long attempted to craft frameworks for thinking about how to make those decisions ethically. In this unit, we will explore the concept of ethical decision making.
- **“Telling Stories”**: In this unit, we will study storytelling by reading a collection of short narratives—folk tales, short stories, memoirs, narrative essays, and historical narratives—and view related informational videos to explore these questions in light of the Central Question: What makes a good story?
- **“Things Fall Apart”**: In the novel *Things Fall Apart*, Pulitzer Prize-winner Chinua Achebe crafts the story of his central character, Okonkwo, an Igbo tribesman that lives during the European colonization of Africa. Through analyzing Achebe’s text, we will explore the following question: What does it mean for things to fall apart?
- **“Alexander Hamilton”**: In this unit, we will read a series of related texts to explore the following question: How do storytellers use primary sources? Our focus will be to consider how Miranda interpreted primary and secondary sources to create the musical.
- **“The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks”**: For more than 50 years, almost nothing was known about Henrietta Lacks, one of the most influential persons in modern medicine, until Rebecca Skloot decided to tell her story in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. We will examine the author’s techniques to uncover how a writer tells a complex story that unfolds over a century and involves the representation of multiple key people and perspectives. Through this study, we will examine the Central Question: How do we tell someone else’s story?
- **“The Ethics of Public Health Decisions”**: We will examine the ways in which the Central Question: How do we balance the common good with individual rights and personal liberty? plays out in the realm of public health decision making.
- **“Application Unit—What Do I Want to Research?”**: We will develop skills, methods, and learning habits that build our proficiency in conducting deep research on a topic. We will learn to ask important questions about our world, use those questions to critically explore the themes that interest us, and, consequently, open ourselves to new knowledge. Building off of what we have learned in previous units, we will deepen our abilities to find information, evaluate the validity of our sources, make connections between ideas, and organize what we find.





<p>What is the vertical knowledge story of the units/modules?</p> <p>Are there units/modules in future grade levels that depend on the knowledge built in any one particular unit/module in this grade level?</p>	<p>The “Telling Stories” unit that answers the central question, “What makes a good story?” could lay the groundwork for the grade 11 unit, “Telling Stories with Film” that answers the central question, “How do we tell stories with film?”, and the grade 12 unit, 1984, that answers the central question, “How could stories send messages to society?”</p>
<p>In the past, in which units/modules have students been particularly invested?</p> <p>Which mode of writing is centered in which unit/module?</p> <p>Note: Avoid eliminating units/modules that center argumentative writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foundation Unit: Reflective Narrative ● Telling Stories: Fictional, Personal, or Historical Narrative ● Things Fall Apart: Literary Analysis ● Alexander Hamilton: Reflective Essay ● The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks: Expository Essay ● The Ethics of Public Health Decisions: Argumentative ● Application Unit: Research
<p>Choose to include the units/modules that have texts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● maintain diversity across grade level and grade band, particularly ones that center the voices of BIPOC (genres, authors, subjects). ● apply an antiracist lens. ● are rich in scientific, historical, and literary content and vocabulary. ● provide the necessary background knowledge for current or future learning. 	<p>“Telling Stories”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Storyteller</i> ● Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery” ● William Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily” ● Thomas Wolfe, “The Far and the Near” ● Mark Twain, “The War Prayer” ● Amy Tan, “Mother Tongue” ● Barack Obama, <i>Dreams From My Father</i> ● Hampton Sides, “The Men Who Brought 911 Home” <p>“Things Fall Apart”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chinua Achebe, <i>Things Fall Apart</i> ● Katie Bacon, “An African Voice” ● William Butler Yeats, “The Second Coming” <p>“Alexander Hamilton”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lin-Manuel Miranda and Jeremy McCarter, <i>Hamilton the Revolution</i>





- include a standard only addressed once during the school year (e.g., if students only read one play during the year, avoid omitting that one play).
 - The intentional spiraling of the ELA standards means that many standards are taught multiple times during a school year.

- Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton* (Original Broadway Cast Recording)
- Ron Chernow, excerpts from *Alexander Hamilton*
- Primary source documents
- Federalist Papers
- Jennifer Schuessler, “Hamilton’ and History: Are They in Sync?”

“The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks”

- Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*
- Lamar Wilson, “HeLa”
- Brendan P. Lucey et al., “Henrietta Lacks, HeLa Cells, and Cell Contamination”
- George Wolfe, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*
- Kadir Nelson, *Henrietta Lacks (HeLa): The Mother of Modern Medicine*

Which units/modules do you recommend omitting?

Recommendation

- Omit “Things Fall Apart.” The literary analysis could be shifted to another unit. Although the unit centers the Igbo tribe, other units offer students the opportunity to engage with diverse and inclusive texts. Teachers can integrate texts from this unit into the independent reading aspect of the program.

Rational

- “Telling Stories” could lay the groundwork for units in grades 11 and 12 and represent the diversity of experiences among communities of color.
- “Alexander Hamilton” pushes against the tendency to put people in boxes and will expand students’ perceptions of what constitutes texts.
- “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks” centers a person whose voice and story is worthy of study, and is the only unit with an expository essay as a culminating task.
- “The Ethics of Public Health Decisions” centers scientific texts, and is the only unit with an argumentative essay as a culminating task.





Unit-/module-level planning

OE HSLP grade 10 Alexander Hamilton unit

Orient to the unit/module at a high level.

Guiding questions	Notes
In your own words, what are the big ideas/essential questions in this unit/module?	The central question is “How do storytellers use primary sources?” Students will examine how Lin Manuel Miranda uses primary sources to develop the musical Hamilton.
What is the knowledge story—what knowledge of the world will students gain through reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking?	Students will gain knowledge about <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alexander Hamilton• 18th century• American Revolutionary War• Colonial America• U.S. Constitution• Primary and secondary sources• Musical theater
What text genres will students encounter?	Students will read lyrics from the Broadway musical Hamilton, excerpts from Ron Chernow’s book Alexander Hamilton, primary source documents, Federalist papers, and the New York Times Article “Hamilton’ andHistory: Are They in Sync?”.
What writing types will be addressed?	Students will write original song lyrics and a reflective essay.
What grade-level standards will the unit/module cover?	Standards are not tagged to units or to lessons.





What parts of the unit/module will directly connect to student interests/identity? Where will we need to think through how to connect this with student interests and identity?

Students will likely be interested in modern storytelling, but we will need to be intentional in how we connect with the interests and identities of students.

Orient to the unit/module assessments at a high level.

Guiding questions	Notes
<p>How will students' understanding of the text and mastery of the standards be assessed?</p>	<p>Write a personal essay in which you reflect on the creative process you and your group engaged in when creating your original song lyrics. Explain your group's choices regarding the incorporation of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>In your essay, be sure to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the choices your group made concerning primary source influences when creating your original song lyrics. • Compare your original song lyrics to one of Lin-Manuel Miranda's songs that influenced your group or that you used as a model. • Discuss challenges you encountered while your group was writing your original song lyrics. • Evaluate the effectiveness of your group's choices in achieving your purpose.
<p>What do you think will be easy/challenging for your students?</p>	<p>In this unit, the most challenging aspects are centered around explaining how storytellers use primary and secondary sources when they create their own interpretations.</p>
<p>In your own words, how do the formative assessments throughout the unit/module scaffold toward the culminating assessment?</p>	<p>Students will have opportunities to practice and refine their reading skills, acquire knowledge, and make comparisons between an author's work and the primary and secondary sources they used during its creation.</p>





Select an anchor text and engage in a text chat with your colleagues. (Answers will vary.)

Considerations

Discuss the text with your colleagues as adult readers would in a book club. As needed, use the [text chat questions](#) to guide the discussion.

Discuss the text as teachers thinking about the experience you want students to have while reading the text and where, specifically, to focus students' attention through questioning and tasks.

Use the [questions for qualitative analysis](#) to think about what barriers may impede students' ability to access the text. Responses to these questions will influence the pedagogical decisions made during planning.

Facilitate text chats with other texts identified as “core” or “anchor” texts in the curriculum.





Determine which pedagogical strategies are needed to promote access to grade-level learning.

Background Knowledge (Review our [background knowledge guidance](#).)

Guiding questions	Notes
Is this the most effective strategy for this particular piece of content? How do I know? What are the benefits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launch the unit using the Notice, Think, and Wonder tool to gather data about the background knowledge students are bringing to the unit looking for evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A basic understanding of the American Revolution ○ A basic understanding of the time period. ○ A basic understanding of who Lin Manuel Miranda is. ○ Clarity around primary vs. secondary sources. ● Students will work in triads to closely read a set of photographs, summarize what they see, and draw one inference about the historical period or event. Photos can be a great way to develop a good deal of background knowledge quickly for students at all levels of literacy. We are also sharing additional strategies in our Unfinished Learning Tool Kit.
How will I know if students build the necessary background knowledge using this strategy?	<p>Read the summarizes and the inferences that students record for each photograph looking for evidence of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A basic understanding of the American Revolution ● A basic understanding of the time period. ● A basic understanding of who Lin Manuel Miranda is. ● Clarity around primary vs. secondary sources.
Where does it land in the sequence of instruction? Does the work need to be done in advance of reading the text or while reading the text?	In advance of reading the text
What is the time commitment? How does it impact pacing?	Twenty minutes

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z





Fluency (Review our [fluency guidance](#).)

Guiding questions	Notes
Is this the most effective strategy for fluency practice with this text and with the focus students who need the practice? How do I know? What are the benefits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the 10th verse from “Alexander Hamilton” that describes Hamilton’s transition from his life in the West Indies to his new life in New York to build a fluency routine. This is a particularly critical moment in the text, and there is interesting vocabulary. Reading aloud will support increased comprehension and strengthen fluency.• Repeated reading provides the reader with increasing familiarity with the text—its words and its literary and syntactical features.
How will I know if students are demonstrating improvement in their fluency using this strategy?	Focus students will read with me so that I can gather fluency data as they read.
Where does it land in the sequence of instruction? Will it be necessary for students to do work at home?	After activity 5 concludes, students will practice fluently reading this excerpt of text with a partner using a Fluency Partner-Assessment Rubric. In addition to the practice students are doing in class with a partner, I will assign the excerpt as homework to be read aloud nightly.
What is the time commitment? How often will students engage in fluency practice during the unit/module? How does it impact pacing?	15 minutes daily for the first week of the unit. Students will use the Weekly Reading Practice Routine as suggested by Student Achievement Partners.





Lesson-level planning

OE HSLP grade 10 Alexander Hamilton unit, section 1, lesson 1

Articulate the goal of the lesson.

Guiding questions and considerations	Notes
What do you want students to know and be able to do by the end of the lesson? What are the important learnings in the lesson?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Describe the central question: How do storytellers use primary sources?● Summarize and communicate the big idea of "Alexander Hamilton"● Use semicolons correctly to separate closely related independent clauses
How will students be assessed in the lesson?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Section 1 Diagnostic: Write an objective summary of Acts 1 and 2 of Hamilton: An American Musical, and identify one of its themes. Use evidence from the text to support your response.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Students prepare for the Culminating Task by illustrating their understanding of the musical, which will help prepare them to analyze how Miranda interpreted primary and secondary sources to create this musical.● Students will independently rewrite the lines from “When he was ten” to “his mother went quick” from "Alexander Hamilton" in prose, using semicolons to separate closely related independent clauses and adding words (nouns, verbs, pronouns, etc.).<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Students will answer the question “How does rewriting this into prose affect your understanding of the plot or characters? Share your thoughts in a whole-class discussion.”





Do the work of the lesson and assessments.

Guiding questions and considerations	Notes
<p>Answer the questions and complete the student tasks.</p>	<p>What do you learn about Alexander Hamilton?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bastard• Orphan• From the Carribean• Poor• Becomes a hero and a scholar• Self-starter• By fourteen in charge of a trading charter• Determined• Ambitious• Father abandoned him• Mother died• Avid reader• Astute• Clerked for his mother's landlord• Moved to NYC <p>What characters are you introduced to in this song?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alexander Hamilton• Hercules Mulligan• Marquis de Lafayette• John Laurens• George Washington• The Schuyler Sisters• Aaron Burr <p>What else do you learn about Alexander Hamilton from his movement, facial expressions, gestures, and interactions with other characters in this scene?</p>

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z





- In his first scene, AH appears stoic.
- Hamilton’s quick smile as he reads the book suggests that maybe AH is inspired by reading.
- When AH changes jackets as he says “just you wait,” and as he “arrives” in NY, his expression softens and he looks hopeful.
- His posture at the end of the scene as he says his name suggests that he is confident and determined.

List out criteria for success—note what you’re looking for in student work. Develop an exemplar response or use the criteria for success to annotate the exemplar that has been provided.

Exemplar response provided for rewriting excerpts of the song into prose.

Identify points in the text that are the most critical for accessing and understanding the central idea and answering any text-dependent questions. Write exemplary annotations and/or student responses for those critical moments in the text.

The 10th verse describes Hamilton’s transition from his life in the Caribbean to his new life in New York. This is a particularly critical moment in the text, and there is interesting vocabulary.





Determine the learning steps to build toward the learning goal.

Guiding questions and considerations	Notes
<p>Determine where to prioritize your time within a lesson. How do the learning activities build on each other in the lesson? Which ones are the most important?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each section of the unit begins with a review of the Central Question and the Framing Questions to set the context for students as they begin their work and to show how the work of the unit supports the Culminating Task.• Students will record their initial thoughts on the CQ in their learning logs:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is the Central Question asking?○ What might you already know in relation to the Central Question?○ What about the question piques your curiosity?○ How do you think this question relates to the texts or topic of the unit?○ If you were to provide an answer to the Central Question today, what would it be?• Students will record their initial thoughts on the FQ in their learning logs:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Notice: What seems interesting or important?○ Think: What does it make me think about? What connections can I make?○ Wonder: What am I curious about?• Students will create a checklist in their Learning Log or use the Culminating Task Progress Tracker to note what they need to know and be able to do to succeed on the Culminating Task.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Students will add their responses to their Act 1 Notice and Wonder Note-Taking Tool to track observations, thoughts, and questions as they watch and listen to the video.○ Students will review independent and dependent clauses, and rewrite sections of "Alexander Hamilton" into prose.





<p>What are students learning as a result of these activities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The purpose of Section 1 is to have students build their own understanding of the plot and characters in <i>Hamilton: An American Musical</i> in an authentic way.• Students will use Notice and Wonder Note-Taking Tool more in upcoming lessons as they listen to other songs and continue to gather evidence to respond to the question, “Who is Alexander Hamilton?”
<p>How will students make their thinking visible?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Culminating Task Checklist that students use throughout the unit to monitor how they are evaluating their progress helps make instructional decisions that are finely tuned to students’ learning needs.• Whole-class and partner discussions• Notice and Wonder Note-Taking Tool• Rewriting sections of “Alexander Hamilton” into prose





Determine which pedagogical strategies are needed to promote access to grade-level learning.

Vocabulary (Review our [vocabulary guidance](#).)

Guiding questions and considerations	Notes
Is this the most effective strategy for this particular piece of content? How do I know? What are the benefits?	Vocabulary Self-Knowledge Rating Chart—students can quickly tell me how well they know the words.
How will I know if students are expanding their word knowledge using this strategy?	We will revisit the chart later in the unit. Students will utilize the words in their oral and written responses.
Where does it land in the sequence of instruction? Does the work need to be done in advance of reading the text or while reading the text?	Before launching section 1
What is the time commitment? How does it impact pacing?	Five minutes





Syntax (Review our [syntax guidance](#).)

Guiding questions and considerations	Notes
Is this the most effective strategy for this particular piece of content? How do I know? What are the benefits?	Activity 7 invites students to examine the lines from “There would have been nothin’” to “In New York you can be a new man” from the song “Alexander Hamilton.”
How will I know if students are deepening their knowledge of syntax using this strategy?	Students then rewrite the lines in prose to change or deepen their understanding of the plot or characters.
Where does it land in the sequence of instruction? Does the work need to be done in advance of reading the text or while reading the text?	At the end of Lesson 1.
What is the time commitment? How does it impact pacing?	No additional time needed

