

5 - 7 WEEKS

## 7th Grade: Unit One

# IN OR OUT: OUR STRUGGLE TO BELONG

### Unit at a Glance

Grade Level: 7th

Essential Question: What does it mean to be an outsider? How does our need to belong affect our actions?

Length: 5–7 weeks (see [Pacing Guide](#))

Unit Texts: (see [full list of texts](#))

- “The War of the Wall” by Toni Cade Bambara (Short Story)
- “The White Umbrella” by Gish Jen (Short Story)
- “Hello, My Name Is \_\_\_\_” by Jason Kim (Memoir)
- “How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation” by Kendra Cherry (Informational Text)
- “The Stolen Party” by Liliana Heker (Short Story)
- Supplemental Texts Included (English + Spanish)
- Independent Reading and Book Club Options

Focus Skills: (see [Reading and Writing Skill Arcs](#))

Reading:

- Theme Development [RL.7.2]
- Interaction of story elements [RL.7.3]
- Point of view [RL.7.6]

Writing:

- Explanatory writing [W.7.2]

Language:

- Function of phrases and clauses [L.7.1.A]
- Grade appropriate academic vocabulary [L.7.6]

Speaking and Listening:

- Clarify understanding of others’ ideas [SL.7.1]
- Introduce new ideas [SL.7.1]

### Unit Overview

This 360 Unit, *In or Out: Our Struggle to Belong*, is anchored around three engaging short stories and one thought-provoking memoir that each illuminate how it looks and feels to be an outsider. In “The War of the Wall,” “The White Umbrella,” “Hello, My Name Is \_\_\_\_\_,” and “The Stolen Party,” characters struggle with feelings that they don’t belong or don’t know how to interact with those they see as “outsiders.” To further engage students with themes in the unit, assign “How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation,” an informational text about how our innate human desire to belong affects the actions we take. Students also participate in a Related Media Exploration featuring videos that reveal the challenges of fitting in, the ways we feel like outsiders, and the ways we show others that they belong to the in group.

By the end of the unit, students should be able to articulate themes about feeling like an outsider shared by these stories and discuss how the authors develop themes. To demonstrate this skill, they practice writing sophisticated evidence-based paragraphs that include arguments, evidence, and explanations. At the end of the unit, students will plan and write a full literary analysis essay that includes complete paragraphs and clear introductions and conclusions. This unit also includes resources to support teachers in launching an independent reading program or book clubs that run parallel to the core instruction in this unit.

### WHAT’S INCLUDED

- ✓ 5 Reading Lessons
- ✓ A Set of Supplemental Texts
- ✓ Independent Reading and Book Club Resources
- ✓ A Writing Baseline Assessment
- ✓ 5 Writing Lessons
- ✓ 1 Vocabulary Activity Set
- ✓ 1 Vocabulary Quiz
- ✓ 1 Grammar and Usage Activities
- ✓ 1 Grammar and Usage Quiz
- ✓ 1 Discussion Skill Lesson
- ✓ 1 Class Discussion
- ✓ 1 Related Media Exploration
- ✓ 1 Literary Analysis Essay
- ✓ 1 Narrative Prompt
- ✓ A Set of Alternative End-Of-Unit Writing Options

## Skill Focus:

By the end of 6th grade, students should be able to describe how a story's plot unfolds and how the characters respond or change as a result [RL.6.3]. In this 7th grade unit, students will take these skills to the next level. Students will analyze how different story elements interact with each other to develop a theme [RL.7.2, RL.7.3]. Students will also be able to articulate how story elements such as conflict, setting, and point of view influence character change and story resolution [RL.7.3, RL.7.6].

Reading lessons in this unit include scaffolded questions to help students meet grade level reading standards. Independent practice for fiction reading lessons are aligned to RL.7.3 and RL.7.6, and include both multiple choice and short answer responses.

This is a writing-rich unit. Direct writing instruction in this unit is focused on helping students compose complete paragraphs with arguments, evidence, and explanations. Students will write a full-length literary analysis essay featuring complete paragraphs, introductions and conclusions. Students will also receive guidance on breaking down a prompt and planning and organizing ideas for their essay.

### How does RI.3 shift?

**6th Grade:** Describe how a particular **story's or drama's plot unfolds** in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.



**7th Grade:** Analyze how particular **elements of a story or drama interact** (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

### How does RI.6 shift?

**6th Grade:** Explain how an author **develops the point of view** of the **narrator or speaker** in a text.



**7th Grade:** Analyze how an author **develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators** in a text.

## ARC OF READING INSTRUCTION

Reading Lesson 1	Reading Lesson 2	Reading Lesson 3	Reading Lesson 4	Reading Lesson 5
<b>"The War of the Wall"</b> by Toni Cade Bambara (Short Story)	<b>"The White Umbrella"</b> by Gish Jen (Short Story)	<b>"Hello, My Name Is _____"</b> by Jason Kim (Memoir)	<b>"How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation"</b> by Kendra Cherry (Informational Text)	<b>"The Stolen Party"</b> by Liliana Heker (Short Story)
Students read to analyze how one story element affects others: the way the <b>setting shapes the characters and conflict</b> . [RL.7.3]	Students read to analyze how one story element affects another: the way <b>characters influence the conflict</b> in a story. [RL.7.3]	Students read to analyze how <b>setting contributes to character change</b> . [RL.7.3]	Students read to analyze how a <b>central idea is developed</b> over the course of a text. [RI.7.2, RI.7.3]	Students read to analyze <b>characters' contrasting points of view</b> in a story. [RL.7.3, RL.7.6]

### This unit also includes:

- Optional supplemental texts in English and Spanish that support students in developing reading volume and stamina.
- Independent reading and book club optional to build students' volume and breadth of reading

### Unit Test

**Coming Soon:** Unit Tests will be available for SY 2022-2023 as part of the CommonLit 360 for Schools package of services. For more information, encourage your administrator to email [360@commonlit.org](mailto:360@commonlit.org).





## ARC OF WRITING INSTRUCTION

Writing Baseline Assessment (Optional)	Writing Lesson 1:	Writing Lesson 2:	Writing Lesson 3:	Writing Lesson 4:	Writing Lesson 5:
An outsider can be described as a person who does not belong to a particular group. Do you consider being an outsider mostly a positive thing or a negative thing?	Writing a Complete Paragraph	Determining a Theme	Unit 1 Essay: Planning	Writing Introductions	Writing Conclusions

**Prompt (Recommended):** In “The Stolen Party,” how does Rosaura’s understanding of her relationship with Luciana change? What does this reveal about being an outsider and belonging? Use specific evidence from the story to support your analysis. [W.2]

**Essay (Optional):** Narrative

**Prompt:** You have read the short story “The Stolen Party” by Liliana Heker. In the story, Señora Ines insults Rosaura by offering her money in exchange for her help. What will happen the next time Rosaura comes to Señora Ines’ house after school to do her homework with Luciana? Write the scene in third person, limited to Rosaura’s perspective. Use details from the story and add your own ideas to show how Rosaura feels as she interacts with Luciana. [W.3]

## VOCABULARY, DISCUSSION, AND GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION



### Vocabulary

This unit includes **explicit vocabulary instruction** on 8 academic words. Students complete 5 activities for each set of words. Consistent with research, students encounter these words in context. Word usage is reinforced in reading, writing, and discussion activities [L.7.6]. [Learn more here.](#)



### Discussion

In all CommonLit units, students discuss the texts they are reading daily. In addition to multiple opportunities for **informal discussion**, there is one **formal whole class discussion** about the ways the communities we live in can either bring us together or separate us. Students receive explicit instruction on introducing **new ideas** and clarifying **their understanding of others’ ideas** [SL.7.1].



### Grammar Instruction

This unit includes a short lesson and five practice activities on **explaining the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in sentences** [L.7.1.A]. This skill helps students express more sophisticated ideas in writing.



# Lessons & Materials

Below, you will find all of the materials needed to teach this unit. To better help you understand the choices and flexibility within the unit materials, individual lessons are tagged as Essential, Recommended, or Optional.

A sample Pacing Guide is available [here](#).

## Unit Introduction

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

Start the unit by engaging students with debatable questions and an introduction to the unit's texts and topics. Use this editable slide deck and paired handout to spark curiosity and provide students with an overview of what they will be learning.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Use the slide deck to facilitate the Unit Introduction handout whole class (20 mins)

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Slide Deck](#)
- [Teacher Copy](#)
- [Student Copy](#)
- [Student Reference Sheet](#)
- [Word Wall](#)

## Writing Baseline Assessment

**OPTIONAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

Assigning a writing baseline assessment at the beginning of the year is a great way to get to know your class and assess student strengths and weaknesses. This argumentative prompt connects to the major unit themes. It asks students to argue whether being an outsider is a positive or negative thing, using evidence from stories, movies, real world events, or experiences from their own lives.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Distribute the Writing Baseline Assessment on paper or through Google Docs. Set aside one class period for students to compose the essay, ideally in a silent testing environment. Students may use blank paper or a digital notebook to plan their essay. Use the Grade 6-10 Argumentative Writing Rubric to score student essays. Provide direct feedback to students on their essay using the Student Feedback Form. Have students reflect on their writing and set writing goals using the Writing Baseline Assessment Goal-Setting Tool. You may use this tool to kick off 1:1 conferences with students..

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Student Copy: Writing Baseline Assessment](#)
- [Grade 6-10 Argumentative Writing Rubric and Student Feedback Form](#)
- [Writing Baseline Assessment Goal Setting Tool](#)



## Vocabulary Activity Set

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This vocabulary activity set will help students master the 8 high-impact academic vocab words they will see in the texts they read. These 5 activities are great for a quick warm-up activity or homework.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Use the Slide Deck to facilitate Vocabulary Activity 1 whole-class (20 min)
- Flexibly assign the remaining activities as warm-ups, homework, or practice to prepare students for the Vocabulary Quiz.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Student Vocabulary Activity Set](#)
- Teacher Answer Key\*
- [Activity 1 Slide Deck](#)
- [Word Wall](#)

\*Not available in PDF. Coming soon in digital form!

## Supplemental Texts

**OPTIONAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

Each CommonLit 360 Unit is accompanied by a set of supplemental texts that connect to the unit's themes. Texts can be printed or assigned digitally and include questions and activities.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Review the [Guidance for Supplemental Text Sets](#) for ideas on how to implement supplemental texts across the unit.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Blue](#) (short story): *This text explores the relationship between a blue creature appearing before a young girl who feels like an outsider after her mother leaves. Students will read about how one can embrace what makes them different.*
- [Trailblazing Surgeon Mary Walker Still One of a Kind](#) (biography): *This text provides key background information about the only female recipient of the Medal of Honor for Civil War Service: Mary Walker. Students will discover how her work and life made her both an outsider and a trailblazer.*
- [Elena](#) (poem): *This poem is told from the point of view of an outsider in a new country who is struggling to learn the language. Use this poem to help students explore the topic of our struggle to belong.*
- [Stories Saved My Life, and That's Why I Write for Young People](#) (informational text): *This text illuminates one writer's experience of growing up feeling different. Use it to dive deeper into the topic of embracing one's outsider status.*

## Independent Reading and Book Club Resources

**OPTIONAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This set of resources supports teachers in launching an independent reading program or book clubs that run parallel to the core instruction in this unit. It includes a list of books that align thematically to *7th Grade Unit 1: In or Out: Our Struggle to Belong*, discussion questions, reading response questions, as well as ready-made student-facing logs and handouts.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Start by downloading [Best Practices for Independent Reading](#).
- Check out the [7th Grade Unit 1: In or Out: Our Struggle to Belong Independent Reading Teacher Guide](#) and make a plan for independent reading.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Student Copy: Independent Reading Materials](#)

## Writing Lesson: Writing a Complete Paragraph

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

Students will learn the essential skill of writing a complete paragraph. They will watch and listen to Rosie King's Ted Talk "How Autism Freed Me to Be Myself" and use this speech as the topic for their paragraph writing practice. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to identify the parts of a complete paragraph and apply them to their own responses.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Follow the guidance on each section of the lesson. Each part has clear directions that indicate if the section should be teacher-led or assigned as partner work or independent practice.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Slide Deck](#)
- [Teacher Copy](#)
- [Student Copy](#)

## Reading Lesson: "The War of the Wall" (Short Story)

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

"The War of the Wall," by Toni Cade Bambara tells the story of how one community interacts with, and eventually comes to appreciate, a mysterious outsider. As students read, they will analyze how setting and characters shape conflict.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Introduce the lesson with the slide deck (5 min)
- Lead students through the reading and questions (30 min)
- Have students complete the independent practice (20 min)
- Facilitate the quick partner discussion (5 min)

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Slide Deck](#)
- Teacher Copy\*
- Student Copy\*

*\*Student and teacher copies of this reading lesson are downloadable on [commonlit.org](https://commonlit.org) for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the [text page](#) and click "Download PDF" to access these materials.*

## Writing Lesson: Determining a Theme

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This lesson guides students through a protocol for determining theme. Students will apply the skill by writing about how theme is developed in "War of the Wall."

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

To assign the interactive digital lesson, click "Assign" and schedule the lesson.\*

To facilitate the lesson on paper, access the student copy of the lesson and distribute it to students.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Teacher Copy](#)
- [Student Copy](#)
- [Classroom Anchor Chart](#)
- [Student Reference Sheet](#)

*\*The data for interactive digital lessons will show up on your teacher assignment report.*

## Reading Lesson: “The White Umbrella” (Short Story)

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

In “The White Umbrella” a young girl tells her story of struggling to belong. A scary experience at the end of the story helps the narrator realize what is truly important. As students read, they will analyze how characters influence conflict.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Introduce the lesson with the slide deck (5 min)
- Lead students through the reading and questions (50 min)
- Have students complete the independent practice (20 min)
- Facilitate the quick partner discussion (5 min)

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Slide Deck](#)
- Teacher Copy\*
- Student Copy\*

*\*Student and teacher copies of this reading lesson are downloadable on [commonlit.org](https://www.commonlit.org) for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the [text page](#) and click “Download PDF” to access these materials.*

## Vocabulary Quiz

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This vocabulary quiz assesses students’ knowledge of the vocabulary words in the Vocabulary Activity Set.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- To assign this quiz digitally, click “Assign” and schedule the quiz. Set aside 15 minutes for students to complete the vocabulary quiz.
- To have students complete the quiz on paper, access the student copy of the assignment materials and distribute it to students.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Student Vocabulary Quiz](#)
- Teacher Answer Key\*

*\*Quizzes assigned digitally will be scored automatically. To ensure assessment security, a printable answer key is not available at this time.*



**Reading Lesson: “Hello, My Name Is \_\_\_\_” (Short Story)****ESSENTIAL****ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:**

In “Hello My Name Is \_\_\_\_,” Jason Kim reflects on how his experiences moving from South Korea to the United States shaped his identity. As students read, they will analyze how setting contributes to character change.

**HOW TO FACILITATE:**

- Introduce the lesson with the slide deck (5 min)
- Lead students through the reading and questions (20 min)
- Have students complete the independent practice (20 min)
- Facilitate the quick partner discussion (5 min)

**ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:**

- [Slide Deck](#)
- Teacher Copy\*
- Student Copy\*

*\*Student and teacher copies of this reading lesson are downloadable on [commonlit.org](https://commonlit.org) for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the [text page](#) and click “Download PDF” to access these materials.*

**Related Media Exploration: Insiders and Outsiders****RECOMMENDED****ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:**

In this Related Media Exploration students will work collaboratively to understand how groups of insiders and outsiders form, empathize with the outsiders’ experience, and explore how communities can use differences to bring people together.

**HOW TO FACILITATE:**

Lead students through the introductory slides. Release students to complete the remainder of the exploration with partners.

**ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:**

- [Slide Deck](#)
- [Student Copy](#)
- [Teacher Copy](#)

**Reading Lesson: “How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation” (Informational Text)****ESSENTIAL****ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:**

This informational text will help students consider how the human need to belong shapes our everyday actions. As students read, they will analyze how ideas interact and develop the central idea.

**HOW TO FACILITATE:**

- Introduce the lesson with the slide deck (5 min)
- Lead students through the reading and questions (10 min)
- Have students complete the independent practice (20 min)
- Facilitate the quick partner discussion (5 min)

**ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:**

- [Slide Deck](#)
- Teacher Copy\*
- Student Copy\*

*\*Student and teacher copies of this reading lesson are downloadable on [commonlit.org](https://commonlit.org) for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the [text page](#) and click “Download PDF” to access these materials.*





## Grammar and Usage Activities

**OPTIONAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This 360 Unit's grammar and usage materials contains 6 activities that focus on phrases and clauses, which will help students identify the building blocks for writing strong, complete sentences. Great for a quick warm-up activity or homework!

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Assign the 6 activities as warm-ups, homework, or practice to prepare students for the grammar quiz.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Student Grammar Activities](#)
- [Teacher Answer Key](#)

## Reading Lesson: "The Stolen Party" (Short Story)

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

Are there certain social circles where outsiders can never really belong? In "The Stolen Party," one young girl is invited to a birthday party and finds out the answer the hard way. As students read, they will analyze characters' contrasting points of view.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Introduce the lesson with the slide deck (5 min)
- Lead students through the reading and questions (40 min)
- Have students complete the independent practice (20 min)
- Facilitate the quick partner discussion (5 min)

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Slide Deck](#)
- Teacher Copy\*
- Student Copy\*

*\*Student and teacher copies of this reading lesson are downloadable on [commonlit.org](https://commonlit.org) for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the [text page](#) and click "Download PDF" to access these materials.*

## Grammar and Usage Quiz

**OPTIONAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This grammar quiz assesses students' knowledge of the unit's grammar skill: understanding the functions of phrases and clauses.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Assign the grammar quiz to students (10 min)

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Student Grammar Quiz](#)
- Teacher Answer Key\*

\*Not available in PDF. Coming soon in digital form!

## Discussion Lesson

**RECOMMENDED**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

Learning to articulate ideas clearly and respectfully communicate with peers are important skills for middle schoolers. This discussion lesson will help students introduce new ideas and clarify their own understanding of others' ideas. The assignment materials include a handout to teach the discussion skill whole-class, a handout to help students prepare for discussion and take notes, and teacher resources to help you facilitate whole-class or small group discussions.

Students will discuss their answers to the following question: How can the communities we live in either bring us together or separate us? Consider why people feel more or less connected to people from similar communities.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Lead students through the Discussion Skill Lesson (15 min)
- Have students prepare for discussion using the Discussion Prep handout (15 min)
- Launch discussion and have students take notes during discussion (30 min)

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Discussion Skill Lesson Student Copy](#)
- [Discussion Skill Lesson Teacher Copy](#)
- [Discussion Preparation Student Copy](#)
- [Discussion Protocols](#)
- [Student Voice Tracker](#)

## Narrative Writing Prompt

**OPTIONAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This engaging narrative prompt provides students with an opportunity to be both creative and analytical as they write a continuation to the short story "The Stolen Party."

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Have students respond to the narrative prompt using the Narrative Writing Checklist as they write.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Student Copy](#)

## Writing Lesson: Unit 1 Essay Planning

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

Planning and organizing ideas is often the most challenging part of writing an essay. In this multi-part writing lesson, students will prepare for their end of unit essay by practicing skills they can carry over into future essay planning.

Students will:

- Break down a prompt
- Find evidence that relates to the prompt
- Discuss the prompt
- Develop a thesis statement
- Review an exemplar essay

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Follow the guidance on each section of the lesson. Each part has clear directions that indicate if the section should be teacher-led or assigned as partner work or independent practice.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Teacher Copy](#)
- [Student Copy](#)

## Writing Lesson: Unit 1 Essay Drafting

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

***This end of unit activity requires that students respond to the following writing prompt:***

In “The Stolen Party,” how does Rosaura’s understanding of her relationship with Luciana change? What does this reveal about being an outsider and belonging? Use specific evidence from the story to support your analysis.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Have students use their resources to draft their essay.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Student Essay Prompt](#)
- [Exemplar Essay](#)
- [Essay Rubric](#)

## Writing Lesson: Writing Introductions

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

In this writing lesson, students will learn how to write a strong introduction that begins with a text-to-world connection and includes a thesis that clearly addresses the prompt. Students will apply this skill to their unit essays.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Follow the guidance on each section of the lesson. Each part has clear directions that indicate if the section should be teacher-led or assigned as partner work or independent practice.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Teacher Copy](#)
- [Student Copy](#)
- [Classroom Anchor Chart](#)
- [Student Reference Sheet](#)

## Writing Lesson: Writing Conclusions

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

In this writing lesson, students will learn how to wrap up their essays with a conclusion that echoes their thesis and connects their essay's big ideas back to the real world. Students will apply this skill to their unit essays.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Follow the guidance on each section of the lesson. Each part has clear directions that indicate if the section should be teacher-led or assigned as partner work or independent practice.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Teacher Copy](#)
- [Student Copy](#)
- [Classroom Anchor Chart](#)
- [Student Reference Sheet](#)

## Alternate End of Unit Writing Assignments

**OPTIONAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This unit includes three additional end of unit writing task options. Teachers may consider using these as extension activities or as a replacement to the recommended prompt.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Consider which prompt best meets your students' needs and assign that prompt in place of or in addition to the recommended unit prompt.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Teacher Copy](#)
- [Student Copy](#)





## Training & Support Resources

CommonLit 360 is rich with resources for teachers and administrators. In addition to this PDF Unit Guide, here are just a few additional tools available to teams for free:

- ↳ Document: [Curriculum Framework, An Overview](#)
- ↳ Document: [Themes & Topics Overview](#)
- ↳ Live Webinar: [Getting Started with CommonLit 360](#)
- ↳ Instructional support videos available on each unit's [Support and Resources](#) page

Ready to roll out CommonLit 360 in your school or district? [Read about the affordable professional development](#) we offer for schools and districts through our CommonLit for Schools packages.

## Pacing Guide

With appropriate pacing, Grade 7, Unit 1 should take roughly 5-7 weeks of instructional time. This assumes **45 minutes** of daily instruction. With this assumption, many of the reading lessons can last up to 2 days/class periods and should be spaced accordingly. Supplemental reading, vocabulary activities, and grammar activities can often be assigned as homework. Teachers should expect to revise pacing as needed.

### WEEK 1

<b>Mon.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intro to Unit</li> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set: Activity 1 &amp; Slide Deck</li> </ul>
<b>Tues.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Lesson: Writing a Complete Paragraph</li> </ul>
<b>Wed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set: Activity 2</li> <li>• "The War of the Wall" Slide Deck</li> <li>• "The War of the Wall" - Day 1</li> </ul>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The War of the Wall" - Day 2</li> </ul>
<b>Fri.</b>	Flex time for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent/Book Club reading or meetings</li> <li>• Supplemental text set reading</li> <li>• Completion of previous activities</li> <li>• Teacher-created activities</li> </ul>

## WEEK 2

<b>Mon.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary Activity Set: Activity 3</li> <li>"The War of the Wall" - Day 3</li> <li>"The War of the Wall" - Independent Practice &amp; Partner Discussion</li> </ul>
<b>Tues.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing Lesson: Determining a Theme</li> </ul>
<b>Wed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary Activity Set: Activity 4</li> <li>"The White Umbrella" Slide Deck</li> <li>"The White Umbrella" - Day 1</li> </ul>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"The White Umbrella" - Day 2</li> </ul>
<b>Fri.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary Activity Set: Activity 5</li> <li>"The White Umbrella" - Day 3</li> <li>"The White Umbrella" - Independent Practice &amp; Partner Discussion</li> </ul> <p>Flex time for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent/Book Club reading or meetings</li> <li>Supplemental text set reading</li> <li>Completion of previous activities</li> <li>Teacher-created activities</li> </ul>

## WEEK 3

<b>Mon.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary Quiz</li> <li>"Hello, My Name Is ____" Slide Deck</li> <li>"Hello, My Name Is ____"</li> <li>"Hello, My Name Is ____" Independent Practice &amp; Partner Discussion</li> </ul>
<b>Tues.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Related Media Exploration <b>RECOMMENDED</b></li> </ul>
<b>Wed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation" Slide Deck</li> <li>"How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation"</li> <li>"How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation" - Independent Practice &amp; Partner Discussion</li> </ul>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grammar and Usage Activities: Parts 1-3 <b>OPTIONAL</b></li> <li>"The Stolen Party" Slide Deck</li> <li>"The Stolen Party" - Day 1</li> </ul>
<b>Fri.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grammar and Usage Activities: Part 4 <b>OPTIONAL</b></li> </ul> <p>Flex time for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent/Book Club reading or meetings</li> <li>Supplemental text set reading</li> <li>Completion of previous activities</li> <li>Teacher-created activities</li> </ul>

## WEEK 4

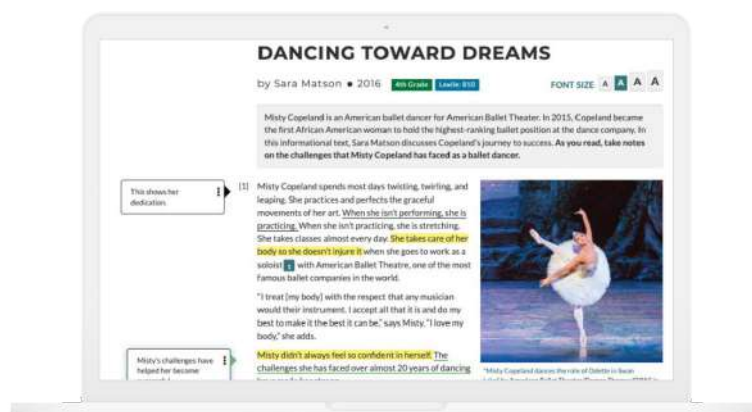
<b>Mon.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grammar and Usage Activities: Parts 5-6 <b>OPTIONAL</b></li> <li>"The Stolen Party" - Day 2</li> </ul>
<b>Tues.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grammar and Usage Quiz <b>OPTIONAL</b></li> <li>"The Stolen Party" - Day 3</li> <li>"The Stolen Party" - Independent Practice &amp; Partner Discussion</li> </ul>
<b>Wed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion Skill Lesson <b>RECOMMENDED</b></li> <li>Class Discussion <b>RECOMMENDED</b></li> </ul>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Narrative Prompt <b>OPTIONAL</b></li> </ul>
<b>Fri.</b>	Flex time for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent/Book Club reading or meetings</li> <li>Supplemental text set reading</li> <li>Completion of previous activities</li> <li>Teacher-created activities</li> </ul>

## WEEK 5

<b>Mon.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unit 1 Essay: Planning</li> </ul>
<b>Tues.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing Lesson: Writing Introductions</li> <li>Unit 1 Essay: Drafting - Day 1</li> </ul>
<b>Wed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unit 1 Essay: Drafting - Day 2</li> <li>Writing Lesson: Writing Conclusions</li> </ul>
<b>Thurs.</b>	Flex time for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent/Book Club reading or meetings</li> <li>Supplemental text set reading</li> <li>Completion of previous activities</li> <li>Teacher-created activities</li> </ul>
<b>Fri.</b>	Flex time for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent/Book Club reading or meetings</li> <li>Supplemental text set reading</li> <li>Completion of previous activities</li> <li>Teacher-created activities</li> </ul>

# CommonLit 360: Digital Experience

One of the reasons CommonLit 360 is so unique is that it is accessible through a free, state-of-the-art digital platform. Reading, writing, and vocabulary lessons and assessments within a CommonLit 360 unit can be assigned to students through CommonLit.org. During and after the lesson, teachers can view formative assessment data through a real-time lesson dashboard to easily track completion and progress. All of these digital features are free for teachers and students, just like the rest of CommonLit. To learn more about the digital experience, [sign up for an upcoming CommonLit 360 webinar](#) or email [help@commonlit.org](mailto:help@commonlit.org).



## Appendix I: Text Selection & Text Complexity

When selecting texts for this unit, CommonLit considers both quantitative and qualitative measures of text complexity.

### UNIT TEXTS

Title by Author	Lexile	Description
<b><u>"The War of the Wall"</u></b> by Toni Cade Bambara (Short Story)	910L	"The War of the Wall" by Toni Cade Bambara tells the story of how one community interacts with, and eventually comes to appreciate, a mysterious outsider.
<b><u>"The White Umbrella"</u></b> by Gish Jen (Short Story)	570L	In "The White Umbrella," a young girl tells her story of struggling to belong. A scary experience at the end of the story helps the narrator realize what is truly important.
<b><u>"Hello, My Name Is ____"</u></b> by Jason Kim (Memoir)	1060L	In "Hello My Name Is ____," Jason Kim reflects on how his experiences moving from South Korea to the United States shaped his identity.
<b><u>"How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation"</u></b> by Kendra Cherry (Informational Text)	1240L	This informational text will help students consider how the human need to belong shapes our everyday actions.
<b><u>"The Stolen Party"</u></b> by Liliana Heker (Short Story)	650L	Are there certain social circles where outsiders can never really belong? In "The Stolen Party," one young girl is invited to a birthday party and finds out the answer the hard way.



## SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS (ENGLISH)

Title by Author	Lexile	Description
<b><u>"Blue"</u></b> by Francesca Lia Block (Short Story)	640L	This text explores the relationship between a blue creature appearing before a young girl who feels like an outsider after her mother leaves. Students will read about how one can embrace what makes them different.
<b><u>"Trailblazing Surgeon Mary Walker Still One of A Kind"</u></b> by Marylou Tousignant (Biography)	1020L	This text provides key background information about the only female recipient of the Medal of Honor for Civil War Service: Mary Walker. Students will discover how her work and life made her both an outsider and a trailblazer.
<b><u>"Elena"</u></b> by Pat Mora (Poem)	Non-Prose	This poem is told from the point of view of an outsider in a new country who is struggling to learn the language. Use this poem to help students explore the topic of our struggle to belong.
<b><u>"Stories Saved My Life, and That's Why I Write for Young People"</u></b> by James Bird (Informational Text)	730L	This text illuminates one writer's experience of growing up feeling different. Use it to dive deeper into the topic of embracing one's outsider status.

## SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS (SPANISH)

Title by Author	Lexile	Description
<b><u>"Azul"</u></b> by Francesca Lia Block (Short Story)	800L	This text explores the relationship between a blue creature appearing before a young girl who feels like an outsider after her mother leaves. Students will read about how one can embrace what makes them different.
<b><u>"Mary Walker: cirujana pionera e inigualable"</u></b> by Marylou Tousignant (Biography)	1040L	This text provides key background information about the only female recipient of the Medal of Honor for Civil War Service: Mary Walker. Students will discover how her work and life made her both an outsider and a trailblazer.
<b><u>"Elena"</u></b> by Pat Mora (Poem)	Non-Prose	This poem is told from the point of view of an outsider in a new country who is struggling to learn the language. Use this poem to help students explore the topic of our struggle to belong.
<b><u>"Los cuentos me salvaron la vida y por eso escribo para niños"</u></b> by James Bird (Informational Text)	730L	This text illuminates one writer's experience of growing up feeling different. Use it to dive deeper into the topic of embracing one's outsider status.

