

## 9th Grade: Unit Two

# PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### Unit at a Glance

Grade Level: 9th

Essential Question: How do people and the environment affect each other?

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

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

- “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” by Arlie Hochschild (Narrative Non-fiction)
- “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones) (Short Story)
- “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” by Linda Hogan (Poem)
- “Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley (Short Story)
- “The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie (Narrative Non-fiction)
- “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” by Matthew Olzmann (Poem)
- “Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy (Poem)
- Supplemental Texts Included (English + Spanish)
- Independent Reading and Book Club Options

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

Reading:

- Development of central idea [RI.9-10.2]
- Author’s development of ideas or claims [RI.9-10.5]
- Theme development [RL.9-10.2]
- Analysis of text structure [RL.9-10.5]
- Impact of word choice and figurative language [RL.9-10.4]

Writing:

- Argument writing [W.9-10.1]
- Expository writing [W.9-10.2]
- Write introductions [W.9-10.2.A]

Language:

- Use parallel structure [L.9-10.1.A]
- Grade-appropriate academic vocabulary [L.9-10.6]

Speaking and Listening:

- Summarize points of agreement and disagreement during discussion. [SL.9-10.1.D]

### Unit Overview

This 360 Unit, People and the Environment, is anchored around one essential question: how do people and the environment affect each other? Students will read two narrative non-fiction texts, “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” and “The Sea Also Rises,” which illustrate examples of human behavior affecting the environment and the consequences that result. These true stories of pollution and sea level rise will expose students to real-world environmental issues. To help students further engage with the themes in the unit, they will read “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” and “Quiet Town,” two short stories that convey messages about people and their impact on the environment. Students will also read three poems by Linda Hogan, Matthew Olzman, and Camille T. Dungy. Each poem expresses an idea about valuing our environment. This unit also includes a Related Media Exploration that allows students to explore ways that individuals are taking action to make Earth a place where humans and wildlife thrive.

By the end of the unit, students should be able to articulate authors’ claims about humans’ impact on the environment and explain how each author develops those claims. To demonstrate this skill, they will write an essay that analyzes how their answer to the essential question has been changed or reinforced by the unit texts. 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

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

## Skill Focus:

By the end of 8th grade, students should be able to analyze in detail the structure of a single specific paragraph, including how specific sentences develop and refine the central idea of that paragraph [RI.8.5]. Students should also be able to notice how a text's structure contributes to its meaning and determine the meaning of word choice and figurative language in a text [RL.8.2, RL.8.4, RL.8.5]. In this 9th grade unit, students will continue to develop these skills by analyzing how an entire text is structured. Students will be able to articulate the author's claim in a narrative non-fiction text and analyze how specific sentences, paragraphs, or sections of the text develop it [RI.9-10.5]. Students will also be able to analyze the way a literary text's structure, word choice, and literary devices impact its mood and message [RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10.5].

Reading lessons in this unit include scaffolded questions to help students meet these grade level reading standards. Independent Practice for each reading lesson is aligned to RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10.5, and RI.9-10.5, and include both multiple-choice and short answer responses.

Writing in this unit is focused on helping students write an essay that analyzes the unit's essential question. Students receive instruction on introducing evidence with context and writing strong explanations that connect evidence to an argument. Students will also learn to write more sophisticated introductory paragraphs that include varied and engaging hooks.

### How does RL.2 shift?

**8th Grade:** Determine a **theme or central idea** of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including **its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot**; provide an objective summary of the text.



**9th-10th Grade:** Determine a **theme or central idea** of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including **how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details**; provide an objective summary of the text.

### How does RL.4 shift?

**8th Grade:** Determine the **meaning of words and phrases** as they are used in a text, including **figurative and connotative meanings**; analyze the **impact of specific word choices** on **meaning and tone**, including **analogies** or **allusions** to other texts.



**9th-10th Grade:** Determine the **meaning of words and phrases** as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the **cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone** (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

### How does RL.5 shift?

**8th Grade:** Compare and contrast the **structure** of two or more texts and analyze how the **differing structure** of each text contributes to its **meaning and style**.



**9th-10th Grade:** Analyze how an **author's choices** concerning how to **structure** a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) **create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise**.

### How does RI.5 shift?

**8th Grade:** Analyze in detail the **structure** of a **specific paragraph** in a text, including the role of particular **sentences** in **developing** and **refining** a key concept.



**9th-10th Grade:** Analyze in detail how an **author's ideas or claims** are **developed** and **refined** by particular **sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions** of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

## ARC OF READING INSTRUCTION

Reading Lesson 1	Reading Lesson 2	Reading Lesson 3	Reading Lesson 4
<b>"Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou" by Arlie Hochschild</b> <i>(Narrative Non-fiction)</i>	<b>"He—y, Come on Ou—t!" by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones)</b> <i>(Short Story)</i>	<b>"Song for the Turtles in the Gulf" by Linda Hogan</b> <i>(Poem)</i>	<b>"Quiet Town" by Jason Gurley</b> <i>(Short Story)</i>
In this lesson, students will analyze how an author uses <b>specific sentences, paragraphs, or sections</b> of a text to <b>develop a claim</b> . [RI.9-10.5]	In this lesson, students will look at how the <b>structure</b> and <b>order of events</b> in a story create <b>mood</b> or <b>tension</b> . [RL.9-10.5]	In this lesson, students will learn how <b>diction</b> develops the <b>theme</b> of a poem. [RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.4]	In this lesson, students will look at how the <b>structure</b> and <b>order of events</b> in a story create <b>mood</b> or <b>tension</b> . [RL.9-10.5]

Reading Lesson 5	Reading Lesson 6	Reading Lesson 7
<b>“The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie</b> <i>(Narrative Non-fiction)</i>	<b>“Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” by Matthew Olzmann</b> <i>(Poem)</i>	<b>“Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy</b> <i>(Poem)</i>
In this lesson, students will analyze how an author uses <b>specific sentences, paragraphs, or sections</b> of a text to develop a <b>claim</b> . [RI.9-10.5]	In this lesson, students will learn how <b>diction</b> develops the <b>theme</b> of a poem. [RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.4]	In this lesson, students will learn how <b>structure</b> develops the <b>theme</b> of a poem. [RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.5]
<b>This unit also includes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optional supplemental texts in English and Spanish that support students in developing reading volume and stamina.</li> <li>Independent reading and book club optional to build students’ volume and breadth of reading</li> </ul>		

### 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.

## ARC OF WRITING INSTRUCTION

Writing Baseline Assessment (Optional)	Writing Lesson 1:	Writing Lesson 2:	Writing Lesson 3:	Writing Lesson 4:	Writing Lesson 5:
In your opinion, are more people today protectors of nature or destroyers of nature?	Introducing Evidence With Context	Writing Explanations	Mid-Unit Writing Review	Unit 2 Essay: Planning	Writing Engaging Introductions

**Prompt (Recommended):** How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least two unit texts to support your response. [W.1,W.2]

**Essay (Optional):** Narrative

**Prompt:** Write a narrative about a character who is faced with an environmental conflict. Consider the following:

- Rising sea levels
- Oil spills
- Pollution of food and water sources
- A different environmental conflict of your choice [W.3]

## VOCABULARY, DISCUSSION, AND GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION



### Vocabulary

This 360 Unit includes **explicit vocabulary instruction** on 15 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.9-10.6]. [Learn more here.](#)



### Discussion

In all 360 Units, students discuss the texts they are reading daily. In addition to multiple opportunities for **informal discussion**, there is one **formal whole class discussion** where students will discuss the following: Are people more impacted by the environment or is the environment more impacted by people? Students receive **explicit instruction** on **summarizing** points of **agreement and disagreement** during discussion. [SL.9-10.1.D].



### Grammar Instruction

This unit includes a short lesson and 6 practice activities on using **parallel structure** [L.9-10.1.A]. This skill helps students write more balanced sentences that maintain consistency in words, phrases, and verb tenses within clauses.

# 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:

Spark curiosity for this 360 Unit with an editable slide deck and paired handout. Encourage students to start talking with debatable questions that they will return to throughout the unit!

### 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 more people today are destroyers or protectors of nature, 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: List 1

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This vocabulary activity set helps 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:

- [I'm a Flint resident. I'm done paying for water that is not safe](#) by Tunde Olaniran (Informational Text): *This text describes one person's experience with the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. Use it after reading "Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou" to extend the conversation about the dangerous impact contaminated water sources can have on a community.*
- [The Last Dog](#) by Katherine Paterson (Short Story): *This short story is set in a future where people are separated from the natural world and human emotions. People have been told that nature is uninhabitable, but one day a boy makes a fascinating discovery that causes him to reconsider everything he has believed to be true. Use this text to start a conversation about the resiliency of nature and the way the natural world gives life purpose and meaning.*
- [Messenger](#) by Mary Oliver (Poem): *This poem reveals themes of gratitude for the astonishing world of nature. Use it to help students continue practicing poem analysis and to build their understanding about the power and beauty of the natural environment.*
- [Autumntime](#) by Anthony Lentini (Short Story): *This story is set in a future where technology and artificial objects have replaced many aspects of everyday life that we take for granted. The narrator describes his experience with seeing a real tree for the first time. Use this text after the Related Media Exploration to continue a conversation about what people should and should not be willing to sacrifice as technology progresses.*
- [Your food choices affect Earth's climate](#) by Janet Raloff (Informational Text): *In this text, Janet Raloff discusses a study about how your diet can affect the Earth's climate. Pair this text with unit texts to help students build their understanding of the ways that everyday actions can have a cascading impact on the environment.*
- [From "understory"](#) by Craig Santos Perez (Poem): *In this poem, the speaker reflects on the way the ground, soil, and air of his home are being contaminated. He wonders how the world will have changed when his unborn daughter grows up. Pair this poem with "Letter to Someone Living 50 Years from Now" and have students discuss their ideas for what could and should change in the environment for current and future generations.*

## 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 *9th Grade Unit 2: People and the Environment*, 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 [9th Grade Unit 2: People and the Environment Independent Reading Teacher Guide](#) and make a plan for independent reading.

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

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

## Reading Lesson: “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” (Narrative Non-fiction)

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

“Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” tells the true story of one man’s dangerous work and how it caused harm to both nature and people. As students read, they analyze how an author develops a claim.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Introduce the lesson with the slide deck (5 min)
- Lead students through the reading and questions (45 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: Introducing Evidence with Context

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

In this writing lesson, students learn when and how to use different types of context to ensure that their quoted evidence is always clear to the reader. Students apply this skill as they respond to a prompt for “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou.”

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Follow the guidance on each section of the lesson. Each part has clear facilitation directions that indicate if the section should be teacher-led or assigned as partner work or independent practice. (40 min)

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

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

## Reading Lesson: “He—y, Come On Ou—t!” (Short Story)

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

“He—y, Come on Ou—t!” is an allegorical short story by Japanese writer Shinichi Hoshi that describes how one village begins using a mysterious hole to dump all of their unwanted items, causing readers to wonder about the consequences of their actions. As students read, they analyze how the structure and order of events create mood.

**Note:** See 9th Grade Unit 1 for an optional stand-alone theme lesson that can be used as a scaffold for this lesson’s Independent Practice.

### 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://commonlit.org) for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the [text page](#) and click “Download PDF” to access these materials.*

## Writing Lesson: Writing Explanations

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

In this writing lesson, students review and take notes on what makes a strong explanation. Students learn to use explanations to show how their evidence supports their argument. Students apply this skill as they revise weak explanations.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Follow the guidance on each section of the lesson. Each part has clear facilitation directions that indicate if the section should be teacher-led or assigned as partner work or independent practice. (45 min)

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

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

## Vocabulary Quiz 1

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This vocabulary quiz assesses students’ knowledge of the vocabulary words in Vocabulary List 1.

### 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: “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” (Poem)****ESSENTIAL****ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:**

The poem “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” by Linda Hogan expresses the speaker’s sadness about the devastation caused by an oil spill. Students analyze the poet’s use of diction to determine her message about humans and nature.

**HOW TO FACILITATE:**

- Introduce the lesson with the slide deck (5 min)
- Lead students through the reading and questions (35 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 Reference Sheet: Poetry Terms](#)
- [Student Reference Sheet: Quoting & Citing Poetry](#)

*\*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.*

**Vocabulary Activity Set: List 2****ESSENTIAL****ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:**

This vocabulary activity set helps students master the 7 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!*

**Related Media Exploration: People and the Environment****RECOMMENDED****ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:**

Students work with their peers in this Related Media Exploration to learn about different ways people are protecting the planet’s natural resources. Students watch four videos that illustrate the ways individuals are taking action to make Earth a place where both humans and wildlife thrive.

**HOW TO FACILITATE:**

Lead students through the introductory slides. Release students to complete the remainder of the exploration with partners. (100 min)

**ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:**

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



## Reading Lesson: “Quiet Town” (Short Story)

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

The short story “Quiet Town” takes place in a town where almost all residents have evacuated due to the threat of rising sea levels. The story explores one woman’s decision to ignore warnings. As students read, they analyze how the structure and order of events create mood.

### 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.*

## Writing Lesson: Mid-Unit Writing Review

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This writing lesson allows students to review the key components of a strong paragraph before they write their unit essay. Students review writing clear arguments, introducing evidence with context, and writing strong explanations. Students apply these skills as they complete a written response about “Quiet Town.”

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

Follow the guidance on each section of the lesson. Each part has clear facilitation directions that indicate if the section should be teacher-led or assigned as partner work or independent practice. (25 min)

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

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

## Vocabulary Quiz 2

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This vocabulary quiz assesses students’ knowledge of the vocabulary words in Vocabulary List 2.

### 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: “The Sea Also Rises” (Narrative Non-fiction)

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

“The Sea Also Rises” explores a major issue that residents of Maryland’s Eastern Shore face: rising sea levels. As students read, they analyze how an author develops a claim.

### 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.

## Grammar and Usage Activities

**OPTIONAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

Students who know how to utilize different types of sentences for effect will have more success with writing. This 360 Unit’s grammar and usage materials contain 6 activities that focus on helping students notice and correctly use parallel structure. 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: “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” (Poem)

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

In the poem “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now,” the speaker explains how their generation destroyed Earth’s vulnerable ecosystem. Students analyze the poet’s use of juxtaposition and diction as they examine his message.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Introduce the lesson with the slide deck (5 min)
- Lead students through the reading and questions (35 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 Reference Sheet: Poetry Terms](#)
- [Student Reference Sheet: Quoting & Citing Poetry](#)

\*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.

## Narrative Writing Prompt

**OPTIONAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This narrative prompt can be used as a way to engage students with unit texts in a more creative way while also gaining additional writing practice. For this unit, students write an original narrative about a character who is faced with an environmental conflict.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

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

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

- [Student Copy](#)

## Reading Lesson: “Trophic Cascade” (Poem)

**ESSENTIAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

The poem “Trophic Cascade” uses the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park to remark on the complexity of nature. Students analyze the poet’s use of structure, specifically her use of enjambment, to reveal theme.

### HOW TO FACILITATE:

- Introduce the lesson with the slide deck (5 min)
- Lead students through the reading and questions (35 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 Reference Sheet: Poetry Terms](#)
- [Student Reference Sheet: Quoting & Citing Poetry](#)

\*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](#) to download these materials.

## Grammar and Usage Quiz

**OPTIONAL**


### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

This grammar quiz assesses students’ knowledge of the unit’s grammar skill: parallel structure.

### 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:

Understanding how to effectively share ideas, ask questions, and summarize understandings in a group setting are skills that students will use throughout their academic careers. Class discussions allow for students to practice these skills while voicing their thoughts and ideas. This discussion lesson will help students summarize points of agreement and disagreement. 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:

*Are people more impacted by the environment or is the environment more impacted by people?*



### 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](#)

## Writing Lesson: Unit 2 Essay Planning

**ESSENTIAL**

### ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:

Planning for an essay is often the most challenging part of essay writing. This multi-part writing lesson will set students up for success on their end of unit essay and allow them to practice skills they can carry over into future essay planning.

Students will:

- Break down a prompt
- Review and discuss unit texts
- Plan their evidence
- Draft a thesis statement
- Examine 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. (50 min)

### ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:

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

**Writing Lesson: Unit 2 Essay****ESSENTIAL****ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:**

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

How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least two unit texts to support your response.

**HOW TO FACILITATE:**

Have students use their resources to draft their essay.

**ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:**

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

**Writing Lesson: Writing Engaging Introductions****ESSENTIAL****ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT:**

In this multi-part writing lesson, students review examples of engaging introductions that hook readers' attention. They use these examples to help them draft their own engaging introductory paragraphs for the unit essay.

**HOW TO FACILITATE:**

Follow the guidance on each section of the lesson. Each part has clear facilitation directions that indicate if the section should be teacher-led or assigned as partner work or independent practice. (35 min)

**ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS:**

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

**Alternative End of Unit Writing Options****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 9, Unit 2 should take roughly 5-7 weeks of instructional time. This assumes **90 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>• Unit Introduction</li> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set List 1: Activity 1 &amp; Slide Deck</li> </ul>
<b>Tues.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set List 1: Activity 2</li> <li>• "Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou" Slide Deck</li> <li>• "Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou"</li> <li>• "Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou" - Independent Practice</li> </ul>
<b>Wed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set List 1: Activity 3</li> <li>• Writing Lesson: Introducing Evidence with Context</li> </ul>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set List 1: Activity 4</li> <li>• "He—y, Come On Ou—t!" Slide Deck</li> <li>• "He—y, Come On Ou—t!"</li> <li>• "He—y, Come On Ou—t!" - Independent Practice</li> </ul>



<b>Fri.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set List 1: Activity 5</li> <li>• Writing Lesson: Writing Explanations</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 2

<b>Mon.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocab Quiz 1</li> <li>• “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” Slide Deck</li> <li>• “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf”</li> <li>• “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” Independent Practice</li> </ul>
<b>Tues.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set List 2: Activity 1 &amp; Slide Deck</li> <li>• Related Media Exploration: People and the Environment <b>RECOMMENDED</b></li> </ul>
<b>Wed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set List 2: Activity 2</li> <li>• “Quiet Town” Slide Deck</li> <li>• “Quiet Town”</li> <li>• “Quiet Town” Independent Practice</li> </ul>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set List 2: Activity 3</li> <li>• Writing Lesson: Mid-Unit Writing Review</li> </ul>
<b>Fri.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary Activity Set List 2: Activities 4-5</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>• Vocab Quiz 2</li> <li>• “The Sea Also Rises” Slide Deck</li> <li>• “The Sea Also Rises”</li> <li>• “The Sea Also Rises” - Independent Practice</li> </ul>
<b>Tues.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar and Usage Activities: Parts 1-3 <b>OPTIONAL</b></li> <li>• “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” Slide Deck</li> <li>• “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now”</li> <li>• “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” Independent Practice</li> </ul>

<b>Wed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar and Usage Activities: Part 4 <b>OPTIONAL</b></li> <li>• Narrative Prompt <b>OPTIONAL</b></li> </ul>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar and Usage Activities: Parts 5-6 <b>OPTIONAL</b></li> <li>• “Trophic Cascade” Slide Deck</li> <li>• “Trophic Cascade”</li> <li>• “Trophic Cascade” Independent Practice</li> </ul>
<b>Fri.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar and Usage Quiz <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>• Discussion Skill Lesson <b>RECOMMENDED</b></li> <li>• Class Discussion <b>RECOMMENDED</b></li> </ul>
<b>Tues.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Lesson: Unit 2 Essay Planning</li> </ul>
<b>Wed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Lesson: Writing Engaging Introductions</li> <li>• Unit 2 Essay: Drafting - Day 1</li> </ul>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit 2 Essay: Drafting - Day 2</li> </ul>
<b>Fri.</b>	<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>



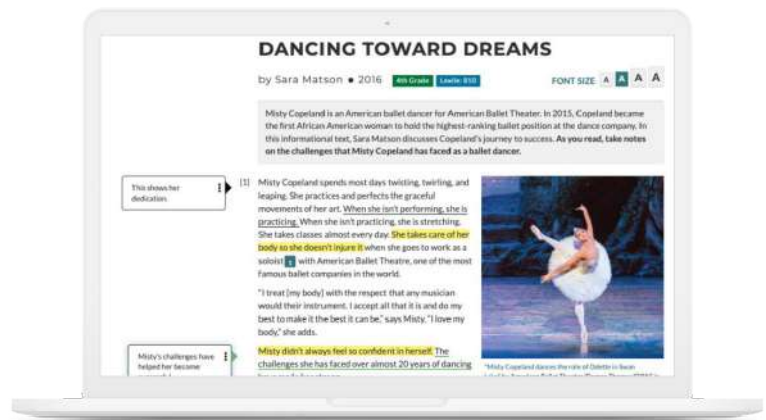


## WEEK 5

<b>Mon.</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>Tues.</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>Wed.</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>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
<a href="#">“Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou”</a> by Arlie Hochschild (Narrative Non-fiction)	1060L	“Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” tells the true story of one man’s dangerous work and how it caused harm to both nature and people. As students read, they analyze how an author develops a claim.
<a href="#">“He—y, Come on Ou—t!”</a> by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones) (Short Story)	850L	“He—y, Come on Ou—t!” is an allegorical short story by Japanese writer Shinichi Hoshi that describes how one village begins using a mysterious hole to dump all of their unwanted items, causing readers to wonder about the consequences of their actions. As students read, they analyze how the structure and order of events create mood.
<a href="#">“Song for the Turtles in the Gulf”</a> by Linda Hogan (Poem)	Non-Prose	The poem “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” by Linda Hogan expresses the speaker’s sadness about the devastation caused by an oil spill. Students analyze the poet’s use of diction to determine her message about humans and nature.
<a href="#">“Quiet Town”</a> by Jason Gurley (Short Story)	740L	The short story “Quiet Town” takes place in a town where almost all residents have evacuated due to the threat of rising sea levels. The story explores one woman’s decision to ignore warnings. As students read, they analyze how the structure and order of events create mood.
<a href="#">“The Sea Also Rises”</a> by Ron Cassie (Narrative Non-fiction)	1270L	“The Sea Also Rises” explores a major issue that residents of Maryland’s Eastern Shore face: rising sea levels. As students read, they analyze how an author develops a claim.
<a href="#">“Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now”</a> by Matthew Olzmann (Poem)	Non-Prose	In the poem “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now,” the speaker explains how their generation destroyed Earth’s vulnerable ecosystem. Students analyze the poet’s use of juxtaposition and diction as they examine his message.
<a href="#">“Trophic Cascade”</a> by Camille T. Dungy (Poem)	Non-Prose	The poem “Trophic Cascade” uses the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park to remark on the complexity of nature. Students analyze the poet’s use of structure, specifically her use of enjambment, to reveal theme.



## SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS (ENGLISH)

Title by Author	Lexile	Description
<a href="#"><u>"I'm a Flint resident. I'm done paying for water that is not safe"</u></a> by Tunde Olaniran (Informational Text)	1130L	This text describes one person's experience with the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. Use it after reading "Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou" to extend the conversation about the dangerous impact contaminated water sources can have on a community.
<a href="#"><u>"The Last Dog"</u></a> by Katherine Paterson (Short Story)	830L	This short story is set in a future where people are separated from the natural world and human emotions. People have been told that nature is uninhabitable, but one day a boy makes a fascinating discovery that causes him to reconsider everything he has believed to be true. Use this text to start a conversation about the resiliency of nature and the way the natural world gives life purpose and meaning.
<a href="#"><u>"Messenger"</u></a> by Mary Oliver (Poem)	Non-Prose	This poem reveals themes of gratitude for the astonishing world of nature. Use it to help students continue practicing poem analysis and to build their understanding about the power and beauty of the natural environment.
<a href="#"><u>"Autumntime"</u></a> by Anthony Lentini (Short Story)	1050L	This story is set in a future where technology and artificial objects have replaced many aspects of everyday life that we take for granted. The narrator describes his experience with seeing a real tree for the first time. Use this text after the Related Media Exploration to continue a conversation about what people should and should not be willing to sacrifice as technology progresses.
<a href="#"><u>"Your food choices affect Earth's climate"</u></a> by Janet Raloff (Informational Text)	1020L	In this text, Janet Raloff discusses a study about how your diet can affect the Earth's climate. Pair this text with unit texts to help students build their understanding of the ways that everyday actions can have a cascading impact on the environment.
<a href="#"><u>"From 'understory'"</u></a> by Craig Santos Perez (Poem)	Non-Prose	In this poem, the speaker reflects on the way the ground, soil, and air of his home are being contaminated. He wonders how the world will have changed when his unborn daughter grows up. Pair this poem with "Letter to Someone Living 50 Years from Now" and have students discuss their ideas for what could and should change in the environment for current and future generations.



## SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS (SPANISH)

Title by Author	Lexile	Description
<a href="#"><u>"Yo soy un residente de Flint. Estoy cansado de pagar por agua que no es segura."</u></a> by <b>Tunde Olaniran</b> (Informational Text)	1080L	This text describes one person's experience with the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. Use it after reading "Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou" to extend the conversation about the dangerous impact contaminated water sources can have on a community.
<a href="#"><u>"Mensajero"</u></a> by Mary Oliver (Poem)	Non-Prose	This poem reveals themes of gratitude for the astonishing world of nature. Use it to help students continue practicing poem analysis and to build their understanding about the power and beauty of the natural environment.
<a href="#"><u>"Otoño"</u></a> by Anthony Lentini (Short Story)	980L	This story is set in a future where technology and artificial objects have replaced many aspects of everyday life that we take for granted. The narrator describes his experience with seeing a real tree for the first time. Use this text after the Related Media Exploration to continue a conversation about what people should and should not be willing to sacrifice as technology progresses.
<a href="#"><u>"Lo que eliges para comer afecta el clima"</u></a> by Janet Raloff (Informational Text)	970L	In this text, Janet Raloff discusses a study about how your diet can affect the Earth's climate. Pair this text with unit texts to help students build their understanding of the ways that small, seemingly normal, everyday actions can have a long-term and cascading impact on the environment.
<a href="#"><u>"Desde 'el sotobosque'"</u></a> by <b>Craig Santos Perez</b> (Poem)	Non-Prose	In this poem, the speaker reflects on the way the ground, soil, and air of his home are being contaminated. He wonders how the world will have changed when his unborn daughter grows up. Pair this poem with "Letter to Someone Living 50 Years from Now" and have students discuss their ideas for what could and should change in the environment for current and future generations.

