



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2009 Volume II: The Modern World in Literature and the Arts

Modern Literature and the Arts, Seen through the Experience of American Immigrants

Guide for Curriculum Unit 09.02.07
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The purpose of this unit is, through reading and writing reflections of selected pieces of modern literature written by authors who are immigrants or come from immigrant families or are closely connected to immigrant communities, to expose students to the experiences of immigrants to the United States. The aim is to bring students closer to an understanding of and connection to people of various ethnic groups.

The unit includes background information that outlines a brief history of immigration to the United States by various groups including those from Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Included are brief biographies of the authors whose work will be studied -- Amy Tan, Laurence Yep, Gary Soto and Julia Alvarez -- and a review of the pieces of literature that will be read.

Sample lessons are outlined for reading and reflecting on these pieces, researching immigrant culture and writing in response to mentor texts. Students will give presentations to demonstrate their learning. This can be done through oral presentation backed up by an artistic or visual presentation such as skits, songs, dances, posters or other work that shows creativity and understanding of the texts studied.

(Developed for Language Arts, grade 8; recommended for Language Arts, grade 8)

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