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## **Overcoming Adversity: Finding the Survivor in You**

### **An Eighth Grade English/Language Arts Unit**

#### **Unit Texts:**

##### **Books:**

Hesse, Karen. *Out of the Dust*

Na, An. *Step From Heaven*

Curtis, Christopher P. *Bud, Not Buddy*

##### **Poems:**

Unknown, "When Things Go Wrong"

Johnson, Angela. "Super Girl"

Whitman, Walt. "A Noiseless, Patient Spider"

Angelou, Maya. "Still I Rise"

Dickenson, Emily. "Hope"

Kipling, Rudyard. "If"

#### **Unit Rationale:**

Scott Hamilton, the Olympic ice skater who overcame the obstacles of a birth defect and cancer during his life, said: "Adversity, and perseverance and all of these things can shape you. They can give you a value and a self-esteem that is priceless" (2013). In this unit, students will examine how the characters in our texts, as well as the characters familiar to us in the past and the present, have taught us that adversity cannot just be overcome, but that it can help build the self-esteem and grit that are needed to make it through future life challenges with grace and aplomb.

- **Alignment with The Common Core Standards for Reading**

The Common Core reading standards for eighth grade state that students should be able to:

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 [and] [c]ompare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style (*Common Core Standards Initiative*, 2012).

In this unit, students will discuss the central theme of overcoming adversity in the text *Out of the Dust*, by Karen Hesse, and will compose a multi-genre project comparing and contrasting obstacles in their own lives to those of the characters in the book and in additional texts with the same theme. The Core also stresses in the eighth grade Range of Reading section that students should be able to analyze poetry, and they will do this in a group activity using several different poems selected to reflect the theme of the unit.

- **Alignment with The Common Core Standards for Writing**

In the book *Pathways to the Common Core*, the three types of writing encouraged by the common core are listed as narrative, persuasive and informational (Calkins, Ehrenworth & Lehman, 2012). This unit will focus on narrative writing. Students will be given four narrative writing assignments, with one piece being subjected to extensive revision. This satisfies writing standards number five and 10 which emphasize routine writing and revision. (Culkins, et al, 2012).

- **Relevance**

Relating to the literature they are reading is important to students. While the historical setting of *Out of the Dust* may be difficult for students to relate to, the problems encountered by the main character of Billie Jo are not. She struggles with the same obstacles many adolescents today encounter, namely, estrangement from a parent, physical disability and economic hardship. By reading about Billie Jo's struggle (and those of the main characters in the supporting texts), students will be better prepared to

face adversity in their own lives. In addition, reading about how Billie Jo deals with her problems (both effectively and ineffectively) will be a valuable learning experience for students when it comes to dealing with obstacles of their own.

- **Teacher Interest and Knowledge**

Norman Unrau, in his book *Content Area Reading and Writing*, (2004) emphasizes teacher engagement as being an important factor in motivating students to learn. My enthusiasm for the show, *Survivor*, with its slogan of “outplay, outwit, outlast,” should be infectious to the students in my classroom.

Teaching the topic of overcoming adversity might best be done by someone who has overcome struggles in life and has gained strength and insight from those struggles. Peter Smagorinsky, in his book *Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units*, writes that “[t]eaching within your area of expertise can make you an excellent resource for students and their learning” (2008, p. 135). The fact that I am a mature person who has lived through the obstacles of peer bullying, parental alcohol abuse and abandonment, depression and divorce, gives me credibility to teach a unit on overcoming adversity.

- **Literary Significance**

The larger texts for this unit, *Out of the Dust*, *Bud, Not Buddy*, by Christopher Paul Curtis and *A Step from Heaven*, by An Na, have much to recommend them. *Out of the Dust* is written in free-verse and will expose students to this genre of writing while demonstrating the unit theme and teaching them about the historical period of the Great Depression, which is the setting for the novel. This book has been awarded both the Newberry Medal and the Scott O’Dell Award and is an ALA choice for best books for young adults.

The book *Bud, Not Buddy* has won the Newbery Medal and a Coretta Scott King Book Award. The latter award is given annually to notable African American authors and illustrators

who demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture. Also set in the historical period of the Great Depression, it allows students to view the challenges of that era across two different cultures. Recommended as a fifth-grade text in The Common Core, *Bud, Not Buddy* was chosen for this unit to give struggling readers a text choice that will suit their reading level.

*A Step From Heaven* has won a Michael L. Printz Award and was a 2001 National Book Award finalist. The Korean culture is represented by the main character, Young Ju Park, who struggles to overcome language barriers and economic hardship when she relocates with her family from Korea to Southern California.

The poems for this unit were chosen because of my belief that poetry should be incorporated as often as possible into the classroom. The six poems chosen for this unit each present the theme of overcoming adversity in a different way, and will spur discussion of the traits needed to overcome adversity while exposing students to both historical and contemporary poetry.

- **Answering objections**

*The seventh stanza of the poem “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou that you have chosen to examine for this unit contains some risqué’ wording. Is this appropriate for eighth graders?*

That stanza reads:

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I’ve got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?

This poem is being used to examine the adversity overcome by African Americans in our history. Although this stanza may seem purely sexual on the surface, the “diamonds” actually may refer to children born during the slave era as a result of plantation owners raping their

slaves. The fact that these children were often treated as treasure in spite of how they came into being attests to the survivor instinct.

*One of the book selections, *Bud, Not Buddy*, seems too easy for eighth graders. Why was this book chosen for the unit?*

The book *Bud, Not Buddy* is geared toward readers of about a fifth grade level. It was included as one of two supplemental book options in this unit to cover the possibility that the classroom would contain readers who were reading below grade level. Grade level readers will be encouraged to choose the other supplementary book, *A Step From Heaven*.

**Conclusion:**

This unit was designed to explore the ways in which we can become survivors who triumph over the adversity life throws at us and learn important lessons from those challenges. By examining the characters in their texts, as well as familiar characters on television, in our historic past and the everyday heroes and villains in our lives today, students will come to understand that adversity is often something out of our control, but that what can be controlled is how we handle it. By reading about the survivors in our texts and responding verbally and in writing to the character traits those survivors display, students will have a better understanding of the positive ways to deal with adversity in their lives.

## **Assessments and Rubrics:**

### ***Writing Opus based on In-Class Writing Activities:***

Most people think of a musical composition when they hear the word *opus*. But another definition of the word that comes from *Webster's College Dictionary* is **a literary work or composition.**

In this unit, students will collect informal and formal writing in a file folder that will be kept in the classroom. Toward the end of the unit, each student will choose a favorite piece from his or her opus and revise and edit it to turn in for a portion of the final unit grade. One of these assignments will be due roughly each week of the unit. These opus entries will take on different forms throughout the unit, from free-write responses about personal experiences that connect with the reading to analysis of themes. The opus entries will require that students are familiar with the major events of the novel *Out of the Dust*. A dual purpose will be getting students to begin thinking about the obstacles they have overcome in their own lives in preparation for their end-of-unit multigenre "Survivor" project.

The opus writing assignments will be given once weekly beginning in the first week of the unit and will be graded on a loose scale—with points being awarded on a scale from 0-6. These weekly assignments will not be graded for correctness, but rather for a grasp on the knowledge presented in class and the ability to translate this knowledge into descriptive and interesting writing. The grading specifics are outlined in the Opus Entries Grading Scale. These assignments will count for 24 of the possible 124 points total for the unit.

### **Grading Rubric for Opus Writing Journal entries**

- A 5 or 6 will be assigned to opus entries that
  1. Are handed in on time.
  2. Illustrate comprehension of the assignment.
  3. Demonstrate creative thinking and writing.
  
- A 3 or 4 will be assigned to opus entries that
  1. Are handed in on time.
  2. Illustrate comprehension of the assignment.
  3. Show an effort towards creative thinking and writing.
  
- A 2 or 1 will be assigned to opus entries that
  1. Are handed in late.
  2. Show little or no comprehension of the assignment.
  3. Do not show an effort towards creative thinking and writing.
  
- A 0 will be assigned to opus entries that
  1. Are not handed in.

### **Writing Opus Selection**

Students will be asked to choose a selection from their writing opus to revise and edit for assessment. Students will have four entries to choose from. Because this is a final draft, consideration in grading will be given to organization and ideas, as well as correctness. The length requirement of the selection should meet the requirements of the original assignment. The student will have a brief meeting with the teacher to discuss their opus selection before revisions begin. Opus selections will also require an outside editor of the student's choice. This person may be a friend, parent or sibling over the age of 18. The editor will be asked to fill out a form that should be attached to a revision of the work at the beginning of the week the final paper is

due. Additional comments may be added in the margins of the paper, if the editor desires. This paper is worth 50 points out of 124.

### **Grading Rubric for Writing Opus Selection**

**Statement of theme:** -----15

The theme of the piece is clear  
 A personal reaction to the theme is present.  
 The introduction is original and interesting

**Creativity Quotient:** -----15

An attempt is made to analyze the subject matter creatively.  
 The piece is engaging to the reader.  
 The writer includes details and avoids generalities.

**Correctness:**

The conventional rules governing the genre are followed. \_\_\_\_\_10  
 Words are spelled correctly  
 Full sentences are used.  
 Punctuation errors are minimal.  
 Comments from peers and outsiders have been considered

**Conclusion:**

The piece has a well-thought-out conclusion \_\_\_\_\_5

**Attention to Directions:** -----5

Revision sheets are attached to final copy

**Total:** -----/50

**Multigenre Survivor Project**

Students will be asked to complete a multigenre “Survivor” project as their culminating text for the unit. They will be asked to represent the idea of Overcoming Adversity in a genre other than narrative or formal writing. The project may reflect their own adversities, challenges a character from our study has endured, or a representation of the Traits of Survivors we have uncovered as a class. This project will be worth 50 points.

## Multigenre Project Rubric

**Total Points = 50**

Category	10	5-9	0-4
<b>Choice</b>	Student's choice of visual project was approved by teacher and meets the 11 by 17 size requirement if a paper project and a length requirement of at least two minutes if a media project.		Student's choice of project was not approved by teacher or did not meet the 11 by 17 size requirement for a paper project or two minutes for a media project.
<b>Originality</b>	Student has presented the material in a way that is very original.	Student appears to have put effort into presenting the material in an original way.	Student's visual project shows lack of originality.
<b>Communication</b>	The theme of the project is clear from looking at it or listening to it.  Student's written description of project is clear, correct and concise.	The theme of the project is not clear from looking at it or listening to it.  Student's written description of project is somewhat unclear or contains several spelling or grammatical errors.	There does not appear to be a theme for the project.  Student has not included a description of the project or the included description does not explain the project.
<b>Effort</b>	Student's project shows outstanding effort.	Student's project shows effort.	Student's project shows little or no effort.
<b>Neatness</b>	If a paper project, the student shows neatness in presentation. If a media project, the visual flows smoothly.	The project could be neater. If a paper project, paper is wrinkled, stained or otherwise compromised. If a media project, the visual is choppy and shows poor editing.	The project suffers in neatness due to an apparent lack of effort.

**Extra Credit:**

Up to 7.5 points may be earned for this unit by keeping unit handouts in a neat binder.

**Week One, Day One (Monday)**

**Standard:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2 *Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization and analysis of relevant context.*

**Materials needed:** Matching worksheets, lined notebook paper, copies of poem. **Note:** “When Things Go Wrong” is an open domain poem.

**5 minutes:** Read weekly poem and take attendance. Announce that this poem is the first handout that students should put into a class binder. Throughout the unit, handouts should be kept in class binders. A binder check at the end of the unit will yield one half point in extra credit for each handout that is clipped into the binder.

**Handout 1:** “When Things Go Wrong” poem**When Things Go Wrong - by Unknown**

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,  
 When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,  
 When the funds are low and the debts are high,  
 And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,  
 When care is pressing you down a bit-  
 Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,  
 As every one of us sometimes learns,  
 And many a fellow turns about  
 When he might have won had he stuck it out.  
 Don't give up though the pace seems slow -  
 You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than  
 It seems to a faint and faltering man;  
 Often the struggler has given up  
 When he might have captured the victor's cup;

And he learned too late when the night came down,  
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out -  
The silver tint in the clouds of doubt,  
And you never can tell how close you are,  
It might be near when it seems afar;  
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit -  
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

**10 minutes:** Introduce unit. Let students know that throughout the unit we will be adding to a list on the board title “Traits of Survivors.” Have students start the list by finding one or two traits of a survivor in the poem from today.

**10 minutes:** Worksheet match on adversity. See following.

**Matching Activity:** Draw a line from the person listed below to the obstacle you think they overcame on the way to success.

**Handout 2:** Matching activity

Maya Angelou	homelessness
Tom Cruise	stalking
Thomas Edison	alcoholism
Buzz Aldrin	imprisonment
Jim Carrey	college drop-out
Jodie Foster	Parkinson’s disease
J.K. Rowling	blindness
Stephen Spielberg	agoraphobia
Michael J Fox	rape

Claude Monet	dyslexia
Paula Deen	ADHD
Martha Stewart	cancer
Lance Armstrong	sexual molestation
Oprah Winfrey	depression

### **Matching Activity Answer Sheet**

Maya Angelou	sexual molestation
Tom Cruise	dyslexia
Thomas Edison	ADHD
Buzz Aldrin	alcoholism
Jim Carrey	homelessness
Jodie Foster	stalking
J.K. Rowling	depression
Stephen Spielberg	college drop-out
Michael J Fox	Parkinson's disease
Claude Monet	blindness
Paula Deen	agoraphobia
Martha Stewart	imprisonment
Lance Armstrong	cancer
Oprah Winfrey	rape

**10 minutes:** Group Activity. Break class into four groups by having students count off from one to four. Make note of the groups for further reference. Groups should appoint a scribe and a reporter (will report findings to the class) and make a list of things that they think provide barriers to happiness in their lives or the lives of others. Ask students to try to compile a list of 5-10 items.

**10 minutes:** Class discussion. What did each group come up with as barriers to happiness? Write these on the board or overhead and discuss. Ask students to consider why these are barriers to happiness. Ask them to find examples of people who have these barriers yet still seem to be happy. Why?

**5 minutes:** Ask students to clip their copies of the poem and their matching worksheets in their class binders. Dismiss.

## **Day Two: Tuesday**

**Standard:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1d *Establish and maintain a formal style*

**Materials needed:** Copy of the book *Out of the Dust*, lined notebook paper, copy of Opus grading rubric for each student, copy of writing prompt written on board or overhead, lecture notes for The Great Depression and The Dust Bowl.

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**10 minutes:** Introduce the book *Out of the Dust*. Divide class into the groups from yesterday and ask them to appoint a new scribe and reporter. Ask them to compile a list of facts that they know about the Great Depression. Examples are: When did it take place? How did it happen? What were some of the repercussions for people living in that time? Each group should try to come up with four things they know about The Great Depression.

**15 minutes:** Class discussion. Have each group report their list and write their facts on the board or an overhead. Point out factual errors and make additions to the list as necessary to enhance student's reading of *Out of the Dust*. Give a brief history lesson about The Dust Bowl.

**15 minutes:** Ask students to return to their desks and complete this assignment: Take a few minutes to explain how a formal letter should look, showing or reading examples.

## **Handout 3: Writing Opus entry. Letter to a friend**

We have reviewed The Great Depression, which took place from 1929-1940. Pretend you are a teenager living in this time. Write a letter to a friend who is feeling discouraged about the things that are happening. Use complete sentences and write in a formal style. Include details that help describe this time in history. Share with your friend the imaginary experiences and struggles you are having and suggest coping skills your friend might use to become a survivor. This letter should be at least one page in length and will be the first entry in your Writing Opus. It

will be given a point value from 1-6 according to the rubric governing Opus entries.

**Handout Four:** Opus Writing Journal Rubric (rubric found in Assessments and Rubrics section).

**5 minutes:** Ask students to file their letters in their opus folders if they are finished or take them home to finish them.

### **Day Three: Wednesday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3 *Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.*

**Materials needed:** large index cards, notes on free verse, writing prompt written on board or overhead.

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**15 minutes:** Teacher will begin class with a discussion about free verse, the style of writing used in *Out of the Dust*, and then read out loud from the first section of the book.

**20 minutes:** Students will be asked to read *Out of the Dust* silently for 30 minutes. During this time, the teacher will conduct individual writing conferences with six students (five minutes each) about their first writing assignment, suggesting ways to improve their writing. After reading, students will be asked to fill out a notecard with a sentence or two about what they think is the main plot development in the reading, explaining who or what caused the action. Students should include a favorite line from the reading and any word or meaning that was unclear.

**5 minutes:** Students will hand in their notecards. Dismiss.

### **Day Four: Thursday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2c *Spell correctly*; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4 *Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on the grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.*

**Materials needed:** large index cards, copies of vocabulary words from *Out of the Dust*, copies of books *Step From Heaven* and *Bud, Not Buddy*.

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**10 minutes:** Vocabulary list based on challenging words from the book along with SAT words for the week. Pass out vocabulary list and assign each student the task of incorporating each word into a written sentence. Circle the room helping students create sentences for words they do not know. Encourage students to make use of classroom dictionaries to find the meanings of words they do not understand.

**10 minutes:** Ask each student to state their word and then read the sentence they have composed out loud for their classmates. Other students should attempt to spell each word on the paper where they have written their assigned sentence. Students should hand their papers in after class.

**Handout 5:** Vocabulary List:

1. bitter: angry or unhappy because of unfair treatment
2. bounty: good things that are given freely and in large amounts
3. cast-off: something that is thrown away or given away
4. oilcloth: a cloth that is treated with oil so that it does not let water in
5. ratchet: a mechanical device that allows for continuous rotary motion
6. riled: to become irritated
7. sorghum: a grass that produces grain
8. wisp: a person or thing who is small or delicate
9. obliged: to put in one's debt by a service of favor
10. quench: to drink to satisfy a thirst
11. squirreled: hidden away
12. octaves: a tone on the eighth degree above or below another note
13. descending: moving from a higher to a lower level
14. stupor: zombie-like state
15. spindly:
16. chafe: to make sore by rubbing

**SAT Words**

17. collaborate: to work together
18. diligent: careful and hard-working
19. abbreviate: to shorten
20. adversity: misfortune
21. anecdote: short, funny account of an event
22. anonymous: nameless
23. compassion: sympathy
24. clairvoyant: exceptionally insightful
25. arid: dry

**20 minutes:** Silent reading *Out of the Dust*, student/teacher writing conferences (five students).

**5 minutes:** Introduce free choice reading selections *Step From Heaven* and *Bud, Not Buddy*. Let students know they will have several weeks to finish their free choice book and will be given class time to read it but are free to read it on their own time if they wish.

**5 minutes:** Ask students to come to class the next day with a decision about which book they will be reading. Dismiss.

### Day Five: Friday

**Standard:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R1.8.9 *Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.* CCSS.ELA-Literacy. W.8.3d *Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.*

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**Materials needed:** Copies of *Out of the Dust* and *Bud, Not Buddy*, free verse handout, copies of free verse poems for comparison exercise, blank 8x10 paper.

**15 minutes:** Ask students to break into their groups and appoint a new scribe and reporter. Distribute copies of poems and ask students to read both poems and find the similarities and differences between the two poems. Scribe should draw a line down the middle of the page and on the left hand top write “different” and on the top write “same.” Groups should discuss similarities and differences between the two poems and write them in the columns. Students will also be asked to underline their favorite line in each poem and be prepared to explain why they like it. **Note:** The Whitman poem is a public domain poem. Angela Johnson’s poem to be reprinted with permission.

### **Handout 6:** Free Verse Poem Examples for Comparison.

#### *Super Girl*

By Angela Johnson

[http://www.scholastic.com/staysmart/pdf/wg\\_free\\_verse\\_poem\\_1.pdf](http://www.scholastic.com/staysmart/pdf/wg_free_verse_poem_1.pdf)

#### **A Noiseless Patient Spider**

by Walt Whitman

A noiseless patient spider,  
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,  
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,  
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,  
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,  
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,  
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,  
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,  
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

**10 minutes:** Groups will report on their findings, with teacher compiling results on overhead or board. Teacher will point out the extended metaphor in the Spider poem, asking students to find descriptive words, encouraging students to talk about how these details help the reader.

**10 minutes:** Students will work in pairs of their choosing to brainstorm ideas for their own free verse poems. This poem will be due by the beginning of class on Monday. The poem should be written according to the following prompt and will be graded on same 6 point scale as the first writing assignment. It will become the second entry in their Writing Opus.

**15 minutes:** Students will be reminded to clip copies of poems and writing prompt into their binders and will be given the rest of class time to work on their poems. During this time the teacher will hold two writing conferences. Students will either file their finished poems in their writing folders or bring them home to finish for Monday. Dismiss.

### **Handout 7: Free Verse Handout:**

**Poem Topic:** My First Day of Eighth Grade

#### **Writing Prompt:**

Karen Hesse, author of *Out of the Dust*, wrote the book in free verse. Using the information about free verse from class discussion, describe your first day of school this year. This poem should be at least 20 lines in length. Remember to keep the reader in mind and use descriptive words to help convey your meaning.

#### **Writing Free Verse:**

Free verse does not have a set pattern of rhyme or rhythm. There are no rules about line length. You should try to keep thoughts that belong together on the same line, but you can be tricky and create a “shape” with the words in your poem if you think it will help convey the meaning. Here are some different things you might try to help the reader find the meaning in your poem:

- Put important words or phrases on their own lines
- Use unusual punctuation
- Repeat important words or phrases
- Use internal rhyme or alliteration
- Use extended metaphor or personification

Remember that your assignment is to describe your first day of school this year. You have so many options for what to focus on in your poem. Here are a few: The

bus ride or car ride, waking up to the alarm clock, the symbolic end of summer, your feelings about a new school year, friend issues. Use your imagination!

### **Week Two: Monday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL.8.2 *Determine the 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.*

**Materials needed:** Think sheet, “Still I Rise” poem reprinted only with permission, biography notes for Maya Angelou.

**5 minutes:** Take attendance and pass out and read the Maya Angelou poem *Still I Rise* to class or show video of the artist reading her poem.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0PkBOPPbzo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0PkBOPPbzo)

[www.poemhunter.com/poem/still-i-rise/](http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/still-i-rise/)

**15 minutes:** Have class break into the groups from last week. When groups are assembled, ask each group to send two students to the group on the right. Do this with each group to form new groups for the week’s activities. Once the students are in their new groups, ask them to appoint a scribe and a reporter for the group activity and pass out Think Sheet for the Maya Angelou poem. Students will read the poem through a second time, answering the questions and giving information on *how* they came to their conclusions.

### **Handout 8:** Think Sheet: “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou

1. Who do you think the author is talking to in this poem? How did you come to that conclusion?
2. What is the obstacle that the author has overcome? How did you come to that conclusion?
3. Who are the characters in this poem? Is it just the author or are there others? Indicate the lines that led you to this conclusion.
4. What do you think is meant by the “huts of history’s shame?” How did you come to that conclusion?
5. What is the “past that is rooted in pain?” How did you come to that conclusion?
6. What traits of a survivor does the character in the poem seem to possess?

**10 minutes:** Give a brief biography of Maya Angelou. Emphasize that she is someone who has overcome adversity in her own life and that this poem is a commentary on how an entire race of people are working to overcome adversity. Read the questions from the Think Sheet one by one, calling on reporters from different groups to contribute to the discussion. Add new survivor traits that emerge from discussion to running list on board. Explain to students that what they were

doing was an exercise in inferences. Discuss the ways in which we are using inferences while reading *Out of the Dust*.

**15 minutes:** Pass out large notecards. Have students silently read section two of *Out of the Dust*. Ask them to record several lines in the text that require them to use inferences to figure out what is happening or what a character means or is feeling.

**5 minutes:** Ask students to hand in notecards. Remind students to review the vocabulary sheet that should be in their binders for an activity on Wednesday.

## **Week Two: Tuesday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1 *Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.* CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3 *Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of character, or provoke a decision.*

**Materials needed:** Copies of Overcoming Adversity writing prompt, blank sheets of 8x10 paper.

**5 minutes:** Attendance: Introduce character exercise.

**20 minutes:** Students will break into four groups to examine the main characters in *Out of the Dust*. Students should find lines from the book that describe or reveal aspects of the character their group has been assigned. Students should appoint a scribe to write results and a reporter to share results with the class. Have students make a list of physical characteristics as well as personality traits from the book as well as information they infer about the character. Have groups invent a modern-day life challenge for their character and think about how their character would deal with it. What parts of their personalities would be helpful in facing that challenge? What things about the character would make it difficult for them to overcome the challenge?

### **List of Characters:**

Billie Jo

Daddy

Ma

Mad Dog

**10 minutes:** Class discussion on the traits of a survivor from group work. Add new qualities to board list. Introduce writing activity.

**15 minutes:** Hand out guide for Adversity Paper and go over it point by point. Answer questions about the projects and then ask students to clip the guide in their binders. Remind students about vocabulary activity tomorrow.

### **Handout 9: Overcoming Adversity Writing Prompt**

Write about a time in your life when you had to overcome a personal obstacle. An obstacle is defined as *something that stands in your way*. An example of some personal obstacles you may have had to face could be: a move to a new town or school, the death of a friend, pet or grandparent or family financial problems caused by a job loss or other situation. These are just a few ideas, and your obstacle might have been a little more ordinary. What is important is to write about something that happened in your life that made things harder for you.

For the next couple of days, we are going to be learning a few writing skills that should make your paper easier to write. We will be learning how to write a good introduction, the importance of using descriptive words to convey meaning to your reader and how to give your paper a good ending.

This paper will be due at the end of class this coming Monday. The paper should be a minimum of one and a half pages written or typed (double spaced) but can be longer if you wish. This paper will be graded according to the rubric for Opus writing entries and will become an entry in your writing opus. The teacher will be the only one reading your paper. Make sure you:

- Write what your obstacle was. Try to limit yourself to one main thing, but you may also write about other problems that came up as the result of the main obstacle.
- Write about the ways you tried to overcome this obstacle. There may have been things you tried that were successful and things that were not. If it is an on-going obstacle, how do you find ways to stay positive? Is it difficult?
- What information did you take away from dealing with this obstacle? Can you see that it has given you skills to deal with difficulties that might happen

down the road, or is it something that you did not feel added anything to your coping skills?

If you would like you can add:

- What is your opinion about obstacles? Why do they happen? Would you rather that life just go smoothly?

**5 minutes:** Dismiss

### **Week Two: Wednesday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.5c *Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions)* CCSS.ELA.Literacy.W.8.2a *Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow.*

**Materials needed:** Vocabulary words and definitions written on index cards, tape, timer, handouts on hooks.

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**20 minutes:** Vocabulary Activity. The vocabulary words from last week's handout are written on individual notecards and taped to the board at the front of the room. Definitions of the words are located on index cards in a pile on the teacher's desk.

The class will divide into two even teams. On go, the first person from each team will go to the front of the room, take a word off the board and find the match from the pile on the teacher's desk. Each student will have 30 seconds to find the match for the vocabulary word. Correct answers will earn one point. Incorrect definitions will be added to the pile on the desk and incorrect vocabulary words will be returned to the teacher. Continue until all words are taken. Declare a winning team.

**10 minutes:** Pass out sheet with picture representation and definition for a hook and show examples of great hooks on overhead. Read the hooks and ask students to pick their favorites.

## **Handout 10:** How to Write a Good Introduction



The **hook** is the first sentence in your essay. The best hooks are those **that inspire an emotional response** from the reader

A good hook will **make your reader want to keep reading**. It should be used to catch their interest.

The hook works best if the sentence is **not too long**.

Hooks can be funny or sad. They can ask a question or give information. They are **a great way to show your imagination and creativity**.

Follow this URL to some good hooks taken from admission essays to Stanford. All of the students who wrote these hooks were admitted accepted to the class of 2012.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/10-great-opening-lines-from-stanford-admissions-essays/>

**15 minutes:** Ask students to find a friend to work with. Instruct them to brainstorm on what a good hook might be for the adversity paper you have been asked to write. On an index card, have them write one or two hooks they might use. Students should turn these in at the end of class. Dismiss.

**Week Two: Thursday**

**Standard:** • CCSS.ELA-Literacy. W.8.3d *Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.*

**Materials needed:** Two sets of pictures of kittens, notebook paper. (This exercise can also be completed using seashells, pens or even the shoes the students are wearing). **Note:** Pictures of kittens taken from public google images.

**5 minutes:** Attendance. Put students in pairs from previous day.

**15 minutes:** Each pair of students will be given a picture of a grey and white kitten and asked to write a vivid description of the animal without mentioning the color of the kitten's eyes, keeping the photo of the kitten hidden from view. The description should enable other students to choose the correct kitten from a table full of kitten photographs.

**10 minutes:** Pairs will pass their papers to the front of the room. Teacher will redistribute, giving each team a new paper. Teams will go to a board where the kitten photos have been tacked up and choose the kitten they think is described in the paper they were given.

**10 minutes:** Teacher and students will reveal the correct pairs and discuss what descriptive details were most helpful in finding the matches. Teacher will encourage students to remember to use descriptive details like those they used in this activity to add clarity and interest to their Adversity Narrative.

**10 minutes:** Students may read from *Out of the Dust* or their free-choice book. Teacher will meet during this time with two students for writing conferences. Dismiss.







## Week Two: Friday

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.10 *By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 test complexity band independently and proficiently.*

**Materials needed:** Writing samples for conferences.

**50 minutes:** Free reading or composing papers.

Students will be given the class period to work on their adversity papers for Monday or to read silently from *Out of the Dust* or their free choice book. During this time, teacher will conduct 10 individual writing conferences. Dismiss.

## Week Three: Monday

**Standards:** CCSS:ELA-Literacy.W.8.1b *Support claims with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.* CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.10 *Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.* CCSS.ELA-Literacy. W.8.9a *Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new”).*

**Materials needed:** copies of poem “Hope” by Emily Dickenson, group prompt written on board or overhead, 8x10 blank paper for group work, handouts of prompt for writing assignment. **Note:** poem is a free domain poem.

**10 minutes:** Monday poem and attendance. Relate to students that hope is an important component in overcoming adversity. Add hope to Traits of Survivors list on board.

### **Handout 11:** “Hope” poem

#### **Hope**

by Emily Dickenson

Hope is a the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;  
 And sore must be the storm  
 That could abash the little bird  
 That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land,  
 And on the strangest sea;  
 Yet, never, in extremity,  
 It asked a crumb of me.

**30 minutes:** By now students should be finished with the book *Out of the Dust*. One of the themes that the author said was important in her book was the theme of forgiveness. Break students into groups of four based on the first letter of their last names. Each group should appoint a scribe and a reporter. Ask students to discuss how forgiveness plays a part in the lives of characters in the book and use textual evidence where possible to answer these questions:

- Where does the idea of forgiveness come from? Has the idea of forgiveness changed through time or has it stayed the same?
- Which characters do you think are struggling with forgiveness?
- What feelings do we have when we can't forgive someone?
- Do you think forgiveness is important to the lives of the characters in the book? Why or why not?
- Do you think forgiveness is important in your lives? Why or why not?

**15 minutes:** Come back together as a class to discuss the forgiveness findings. Ask reporters from each group to report their findings. Direct the conversation to forgiveness as a tool to overcoming adversity. Add new qualities of a survivor that have emerged from discussion to running list on board. Hand out and explain writing prompt and answer questions from students about the assignment. Remind students to keep this prompt in their class binders, along with a copy of a poem from today. Dismiss.

### **Handout 12:** Writing Prompt

From class discussion, you are aware that the author won a Newberry Medal for *Out of the Dust*. In her acceptance speech, she talked about the importance of forgiveness. The main character, Billie Jo, found that an important part of moving on and being a survivor was being able to forgive her father. Write a page or two about a time in your life when you had to forgive someone. How did you feel before and after? What does forgiveness mean to you? This paper should be one to two pages in length and will be graded according the rubric that governs your

Writing Opus entries. This paper is due at the end of class this Friday. You will have some class time on Friday to finish your papers.

**Week three: Wednesday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4d *Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3c *Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.*

**Materials needed:** Vocabulary handout, notebook paper, notes and examples for work on sentence combining, copies of sentence combining handout.

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**10 minutes:** Vocabulary list based on challenging words from the book, along with our SAT words for the week. Pass out vocabulary list and assign each student the task of incorporating their assigned word into a written sentence. Circle the room helping students create sentences for words they do not know. Encourage students to make use of classroom dictionaries to find the meanings of words they do not understand.

**10 minutes:** Ask each student to state their word and then read the sentence they have composed out loud for their classmates. Other students should attempt to spell each word on the paper they have used for their sentence. Students should hand in papers after class.

**Handout 13:** Vocabulary List: \*

1. chaos: total disorder
2. fester: to be a constant source of irritation
3. forsake: to abandon
4. frail: weak, easily damaged
5. infantile: immature, childish
6. gully: a ditch or channel cut into the earth by running water.
7. moonshine: corn whiskey
8. thistle: A prickly plant
9. knoll: a small round hill
10. sparse: thinly distributed
11. betrothed: engaged to be married
12. diversify: to give variety to something
13. drift: to accumulate in piles
14. nourish: to give substances necessary for growth and life

**SAT words:**

- 15.diligent: careful and hard-working
- 16.discredit: to harm the reputation of
- 17.disdain: To regard with contempt
- 18.divergent: moving in different directions from a particular point
- 19.empathy: identification with the feelings of others
- 20.emulate: to imitate, follow an example
- 21.enhance: to improve
- 22.enervating: weakening
- 23.ephemeral: momentary, fleeting
- 24.exasperation: irritation
- 25.frugal: thrifty, cheap

\*SAT words taken from the website of The Washington Post:

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-adv/eduadv/kaplan/kart\\_ug\\_sat100.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-adv/eduadv/kaplan/kart_ug_sat100.html)

**25 minutes:** Teacher will introduce the idea of compound sentences with the purpose of varying the sentences in student's writing and eliminating redundancy of phrases and information. Students and teacher will use sentence combining on the following sets of information, discussing different ways the sentences could be combined. Students will then be given the story about Jeff that follows and asked to re-write it using what they have learned.

1. Karen Hesse is the author of the book *Out of the Dust*.  
Karen Hesse won a Newberry Medal for writing *Out of the Dust*.  
*Out of the Dust* is written in free verse form.
2. The main character in *Out of the Dust* is Billie Jo.  
Billie Jo has red hair.  
Billie Jo has freckles.  
Billie Jo loves to play the piano.
3. *Out of the Dust* takes place in the 1930's.  
The story is set in Oklahoma.  
In the 1930's there were many dust storms in Oklahoma.

#### **Handout 14: Jeff Finds a Pal**

One day Jeff was playing basketball. He was at the park. He saw a dog. The dog was big. The dog was yellow. The dog did not have a collar on. Jeff called to the

dog. The dog came over. He seemed friendly. He followed Jeff all the way home. Jeff's mother called the police. She told them about the missing dog. Jeff fell asleep on the couch watching television. The dog was lying on the floor close by. Jeff woke up. His mother told him the dog's owner had come to pick him up. Jeff was sad. He had dreamed the dog was his. He had dreamed he had named the dog Pal.

**5 minutes:** Students should turn in their story revisions on the way out of class. Dismiss.

### **Week Three: Thursday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2f *Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.*

**Materials needed:** Notes on conclusion writing, conclusion handout.

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**5 minutes:** Review. Students have been learning how to improve their writing by composing a good introductory sentence, using descriptive words to engage the reader, and using sentence combining to make the writing more varied and interesting. Today students will learn the basics of writing a good conclusion for informal writing. When students write formal papers, the rules for writing the conclusion will be a little bit different.

**10 minutes:** Class discussion. What makes a good conclusion? Pass out handout on Conclusions. Ask students to keep these in their class binders.

### **Handout 15: Conclusions for Informal Writing**

**The Conclusion:** A conclusion comes at the end of the story. It ties up the loose ends of the essay and wraps everything up.



**Here are some good ways to bring your essay to a conclusion:**

1. Ask a question that relates to the main idea of the essay.
2. Make a strong statement. Close with a statement that forcefully states your opinion
3. Bring it back around. Connect the idea from your introductory sentence (hook) to your conclusion.
4. Try something interesting. Narrative writing doesn't have as many "rules" as formal writing. As long as your conclusion brings and end to your story, you should feel free to try something new.

**Here are some things to avoid when writing conclusions:**

1. Don't end by saying everything you have written was a dream.
2. Don't re-state your introduction word-for-word.

**15 minutes:** Students will listen to the teacher read an essay written by a 15-year-old girl about her experience surviving cancer. They will brainstorm to find two new endings to the story, using tips from the conclusion handout. Dismiss.

<http://www.gildasclublouisville.org/story.cfm?STID=80>

**Week Three: Friday**

**Materials needed:** Copies of grading rubric for Opus revision papers.

**15 minutes:** Attendance and announcements: Teacher will announce that students should come to class Monday with a decision about which of their Opus entries they would like to revise and

submit for a grade. Students should be reminded that they are to finish reading their free choice novels during class time today or over the weekend. Teacher will pass out grading rubric for opus revision papers, discuss and explain each point category, and answer student's questions.

**40 minutes:** Students will be given class time to finish their papers on forgiveness or to read silently. Teacher will meet with any students needing help with the decision of which opus entry to use for their revision project. Remind students that the revised papers will be due on Thursday of next week. Dismiss.

### **Week Four: Monday**

**Standards:** CCSS ELA-Literacy.W.8.2 *Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.*

**Materials needed:** Character Comparison handout

**5 minutes:** attendance

**20 minutes:** Students will break into small groups. Those reading *Bud, Not Buddy* should work together and those reading *Step From Heaven* should work together. Students should look in their books to find passages that tell them about their main character. They should then think about the character of Billie Jo from *Out of the Dust* and fill in the chart below. Students will appoint a reporter for the purpose of the class discussion to follow, but each student should take notes using the comparison chart that has been handed out.

### **Handout 16: Character Comparison Handout**

Characteristics of Main Character	Billie Jo	Bud or Young Ju
Gender and age		
Heritage		

Financial status		
Personality		
Coping skills (survivor skills)		
Dreams and hopes		

**15 minutes:** Students will report findings to class and discussion will follow. Teacher will help clarify the differences and similarities between the characters, asking students to take notes on the handout. New survivor traits will be added to running list on board.

**10 minutes:** Teacher will discuss the final multigenre project for the unit. The teacher will distribute project guidelines and grading rubric for this project and let students know it is due the final day of the unit, in about two weeks. Teacher will remind students to keep the chart from today's group work in their binders.

### **Handout 18:** Multigenre Survivor Project Handout

We have spent several weeks learning and writing about what it takes to be a survivor. For your final assignment for this unit, you will be doing something creative and fun. You will be asked to use another genre besides narrative writing to represent what we have learned in this unit.

The project may reflect your own adversities, challenges a character from our study has endured, or a representation of the Traits of Survivors we have uncovered as a class. This project will be worth 50 points.

Your project should include a short paragraph explaining the idea your piece represents and what inspired your idea. You will meet briefly with the teacher to have your idea approved, but some ways to represent your learning are drawing, photography, collage or a digital creation. You may work with a friend on this project, if you would like.

**5 minutes:** dismissal

#### **Week Four: Tuesday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.5 *With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.*

**Materials needed:** Peer revision notes, revision forms (three for each student), pencils and revision survey for students to take home.

**5 minutes:** attendance. Pass out revision forms, paperclips and pencils.

**5 minutes:** Have students refer to the revision forms that have been passed out. Explain to students that they will be working in small groups today to offer revision tips on the opus entry that they have decided to revise. Each student will use a revision form to make comments on the papers of the three other students in the group. Comments should be confined to the two areas on the revision forms. Students should find one thing they liked about the paper and point out one area that may need clarification or improvement. Remind students to be positive and kind with their comments. Students may use pencils provided to circle words that they are sure are misspelled, but should otherwise not write on papers. At the end of the exercise, each student should have three forms attached to his or her paper.

**30 minutes:** Students will count off by fours and form groups to work on revision forms.

**10 minutes:** Students will be given time to look over revision forms attached to their papers and make changes.

**5 minutes:** Teacher will hand out revision surveys for students to take home. Students will be instructed to remove the peer comments from their papers and file them in their opus folders. The paper should then be taken home and students should find an adult friend or parent to review their writing and fill out the survey. The paper with the revision survey attached should be handed in on Friday of this week.

**Peer Revision Form:**

My favorite part of your paper was

---



---

because

---



---

A suggestion I can offer for improvement is:

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**Revision Survey Sheet**

Thank you for taking a few moments to edit this student's paper. For this phase of revision, we are using the STAR approach. Please use the letters, S, T, A or R, written in a different color of pen from the color the paper was composed in, to make marks in the margin outside the writing, adding the specific indicators below next to the letter. These letters represent changes to the paper that you recommend. Keep in mind that the student is not fixing spelling or punctuation errors at this time. Edits should focus on content. You may leave an encouraging written comment at the end of the paper if you would like. Please sign at the bottom of this paper when you are finished.

<b>S</b>	ubstitutue	overused words
		weak verbs with strong verbs
		weak adjectives with strong adjectives
		common nouns with proper nouns

“dead” words

**T**ake out unnecessary repetitions  
unimportant or irrelevant information  
parts that might belong in another place

**A**dd detail  
descriptions  
new information  
figurative language  
development  
clarification of meanings  
expanded ideas

**R**earrange the sequence to produce a logical  
chain of thought

**Signature** -----

**Print your name** -----

#### **Week Four: Wednesday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.5c *Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions)*

**Materials Needed:** Vocabulary lists located in student’s binders.

**5 minutes:** attendance

**30 minutes:** break students into groups from the day previous. One student will begin by writing the opening sentence to a story using as many vocabulary words as possible and then pass the paper to the other members of the group who will do the same. At completion, students will choose a member of the group to read their stories to the class.

**20 minutes:** students may work on their opus revision papers or read silently. Dismiss.

#### **Week Four: Thursday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1 *Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.*

**Materials Needed:** Post-it notes in five different colors, index cards.

**5 minutes:** Attendance. Students will be reminded that they will have class time tomorrow to work on the final revisions for their Opus project or to begin work on their multigenre projects.

**20 minutes:** Teacher will explain brainstorming to students. Teacher will then divide students into five groups to brainstorm ideas for their multigenre projects. Each group will be given a different color post-it note to represent these five categories of multigenre: Print Media, Visual With Words, Visual Display, informational and Creative Writing. Students will write ideas on notes and put them on the board under their group's category. If students need help, teacher can offer suggestions from the following list:

**Print Media:** newspaper article, letter to the editor, cartoon, advice column, obituary.

**Visual With Words:** poster, invitation, greeting card, book jacket, DVD cover, scrapbook.

**Visual Display:** map, collage, video, photograph.

**Informational:** game, timeline, recipe, interview.

**Creative Writing:** skit, song, poem, short story.

**10 minutes:** Students will stay in groups to brainstorm ideas for their own multi-genre projects.

**15 minutes:** Students will read or work quietly while teacher circulates to check binders to make sure they contain the materials for this unit. This binder check is worth one point for each hand-out that should be included in the binder. These points will count as extra credit for the unit.

**5 minutes:** Students will be reminded to come to class tomorrow with a decision about their multigenre project written on an index card with their name. Dismiss.

#### **Week Four: Friday**

**50 minutes:** Attendance. Students will be given this class period to make final revisions to their opus selections, incorporating comments from their peer revision sheets and the revision form that was filled out by a friend or parent. If they are finished with their opus project, students may work on their multigenre projects. Teacher will circulate, reminding students to consult the rubric for this assignment, approving final ideas for multigenre projects and collecting index cards with final student decisions about multigenre projects.

**5 minutes:** Students will turn in opus papers with revision forms attached. Dismiss.

#### **Week Five: Monday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4 *Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies and allusions to other texts.*

**Materials needed:** Copies of Rudyard Kipling poem, confirmation notes for Friday pie bakers, vocabulary list handout for Wednesday activity. **Note:** “If” is a public domain poem.

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**Handout 19:** “If” poem

**IF**

by Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you  
 Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
 If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
 But make allowance for their doubting too;  
 If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
 Or being lied about, don’t deal in lies,  
 Or being hated, don’t give way to hating,  
 And yet don’t look too good, nor talk too wise:  
 If you can dream – and not make dreams your master;  
 If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim;  
 If you can meet Triumph and Disaster  
 And treat those two imposters just the same;  
 If you can bear to hear the truth you’ve spoken  
 Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
 Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken  
 And stoop and build ‘em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make on heap of all your winnings  
 And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
 And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
 And never breathe a word about your loss;  
 If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew

To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
 And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
 Except the Will which say to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
 Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,  
 If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
 If all men count with you, but none too much;  
 If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
 With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
 Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
 And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!

**25 minutes:** Students will break into four groups and summarize the poem in a narrative paragraph with a list of traits of a survivor emerging from the analysis. Summaries from each group will be read to class at large and new survivor traits will be added to ongoing list on board.

**5 minutes:** Teacher will explain that Friday of this week will be Apple Pie Day to celebrate the end of the unit. Students will be asked to recall that one of the things that Billie Jo's mother used as a survival skill was the hope that she found in the apples that grew from the trees on their farm. Each class will need five students to volunteer to bake or bring an apple pie to school on Friday. Teacher will also ask for donations of paper plates and forks. Students who volunteer will be sent home with a confirmation note to be signed by a parent and returned the next day. Students will be reminded that a binder check will take place in the next few days. Students will be asked to look in newspapers or online sources for a survivor currently in the news and come to class Wednesday with a copy of that story to share with the class.

**20 minutes:** Students will have time to work on multigenre projects.

**5 minutes:** Hand out confirmation notes to pie bakers. Remind students to bring materials to class tomorrow to work on multigenre projects. Teacher will have some craft supplies and computers available for use. Dismiss.

### **Week Five: Tuesday**

**Materials needed:** vocabulary list handout for Wednesday activity

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**20 minutes:** Students will be asked to compose sentences using their vocabulary words. Vocabulary words will be taken from the free choice novels, with the addition of several SAT words. Each student will be assigned a word from the list and the class will then read their word

and sentence. Students will be asked to attempt spelling of words as they are read and papers will be turned in at the end of class.

**25 minutes:** Students will work on multigenre projects. Teacher will circulate to provide help and advice. Dismiss

### **Handout 15:** Vocabulary List

1. snatch: to take away quickly
2. lavatory: bathroom
3. tolerate: put up with
4. commence: to start
5. matrimonial: having to do with the condition of being married
6. orphanage: a home for children without families to care for them
7. locomotive: self-propelled vehicle used for moving railroad cars.
8. undergo: to be subjected to
9. puny: small
10. confidential: hold as a secret
11. grovel: beg
12. distinguish: to make something different or noticeable
13. establishment: a place of business
14. immigrate: to leave one country and settle in another
15. guttural: harsh, muffled or grating sound
16. podium: a small raised platform for an orchestra conductor or a speaker

### **SAT Words:**

17. hedonist: person who pursues pleasure as a goal
18. hypothesis: assumption, theory requiring proof
19. impetuous: rash, impulsive, acting without thinking
20. impute: to attribute an action to a particular person or group
21. incompatible: opposed in nature, not able to live or work together
21. inconsequential: unimportant, trivial
22. inevitable: certain, unavoidable
23. integrity: decency, honesty
24. intrepid: fearless, adventurous
25. intuitive: instinctive, untaught

**Week Five: Wednesday**

**Standards:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy. L.8.2c *Spell correctly*; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4 *Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on the grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies*. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1a *Come to class prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion*.

**Materials needed:** Vocabulary words and definitions written on index cards, tape, timer.

**5 minutes:** Attendance

**30 minutes:** The class will divide into two even teams. On go, the first person from each team will go to the front of the room, take a word off the board and find the match from the pile on the teacher's desk. Each student will have thirty seconds to find the match for the vocabulary word. Correct answers will earn one point. Incorrect definitions will be added to the pile on the desk and incorrect vocabulary words will be returned to the teacher. Continue until all words are taken. Declare a winning team.

**20 minutes:** Students will volunteer to share their stories of survivors in the news. Teacher may add new traits of survivors that emerge from discussion on the running list on the board. Dismiss.

### **Week Five: Thursday**

**Materials needed:** Art supplies for multigenre projects, bins for recycling.

**5 minutes:** Attendance.

**30 minutes:** Binder checks. Each handout included in binders will count as one half point extra credit for the unit. Students may work on multigenre project while teacher circulates to check binders.

**15 minutes:** Students will clean out opus folders, deciding which entries to keep and which to throw away. Folders will be collected for recycling.

**5 minutes:** Teacher will issue a reminder about Apple Pie Day the following day, asking those who signed up to drop off pies and paper products at a pre-determined location the following morning with the student's name and class time attached to the pie. Dismiss.

### **Week Five: Friday:**

**5 minutes:** Attendance.

**50 minutes:** Students will eat apple pie and tour the room, which has been set up as a museum to showcase stand-out Opus selections from all classes that were posted with permission from students. Teacher will collect multigenre projects. Dismiss.

## References

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