

Storytelling in Print and Beyond

This lesson explores what stories, be they print or non-print cultural text forms, can teach us about the world we live in.

Grade

9 (ENL1W)

Curriculum expectations

B1, B1.4, C2, C1.2, C1.7, C2, C2.6, C3, C3.4 (see <u>Appendix D</u> for full descriptions)

Strands

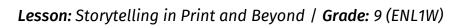
B. Foundations of Language

C. Comprehension: Understanding and Responding to Texts



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Learning goals

We are learning ...

 How to understand the lived experience and culture of others and what we can learn from stories about ourselves and each other.



Success criteria

I can ...

Describe listening, speaking and non-verbal communication skills
Use listening, speaking and non-verbal communication skills
Assess how effectively I use my listening, speaking and non-
verbal communication skills
Define cultural text form
Describe different skills I may use to work with different
cultural text forms
Synthesize meaning from stories on various interpretation
levels
Explain what I have learned about lived experiences and
culture from stories and storytellers





Time

225 Minutes

This is a suggested amount of time. This lesson may be implemented over a series of days. Educators will make the best judgement on how to implement.

Materials and resources

- Storytelling Lesson Slide Deck (Google slides)
- Sticky notes
- "Eraser Tattoo" by Jason Reynolds (Google doc)
- "Eraser Tattoo" Annotated Sample (PDF)
- Making meaning in stories: handout (Appendix A)
- Making meaning in stories: <u>sample responses (Appendix B)</u>
- Cultural Text Forms (Appendix C)



Minds on

- **1.** Divide the class into groups of three. Give each group a set of small sticky notes (10 15 per group).
- 2. Prepare the class for discussion (slide 4): "By the time you reach grade 9, you have READ lots of stories. Stories are used to teach people all kinds of things. In your group, brainstorm a list of things that you have learned by reading and studying



- stories." Groups record one item per sticky note. Provide approximately 5 minutes for groups to discuss and record their ideas.
- 3. Ask groups to examine their collection of items and organize them into categories, moving sticky notes into two or more groupings (slide 5). Either circulate to hear from each group how they categorized their items and why, or engage students in a whole class discussion for all to hear some of the types of categories identified. Point out two main categories that emerge (slide 6):
 - WHAT the story is about (Content/Message/Lesson of a Story)
 - Students may have included items such as important life lessons, details about life in other parts of the world, what it's like to live as a different identity, how to have empathy for others, etc. They may list specific lessons such as "don't judge a book by its cover", or "things aren't always what they seem."
 - HOW the story is communicated (Parts/Features/Elements of a Story)
 - Students may have created a list of terms or even definitions of parts of a story: plot, characters, conflict, point of view, setting, theme, etc. They may be more open with items such as beginning/middle/end.
- 4. Have groups re-organize their items into these two categories (slide 7).
- 5. Introduce this lesson's focus: the **WHAT** and the **HOW** of storytelling in a familiar form, through written text (slide 8). (The focus later in the lesson will be on using these skills to explore different kinds of text.)
- 6. Present this overarching question to guide the learning: **How does text create meaning?** (slide 9). Ideally, post this question somewhere in the classroom for ongoing reference.







Reading for meaning

- 7. Distribute a copy of "Eraser Tattoo" and a highlighter to each student.
- 8. Read aloud while students follow, modelling how to pause to think and annotate to make note of writing moves that create meaning. (See "Eraser Tattoo" Annotated Sample). Read through the story in this manner, stopping regularly to ask students for their thoughts about what is happening in the text or how it is being told.
- 9. The whole story may be read aloud together in this way, or, when students seem ready to apply the process independently, allow them to finish reading the story at their own pace while highlighting and annotating the text.
- 10. Once students have finished reading the story, conduct a class discussion focused on the question: What is this story about? Have students prepare for the discussion by first talking in a small group, then sharing thoughts with the whole class (slide 10). Possible responses include young love, moving away. There may even be some discussion about whether or not Dante and Shay are actually in love.
- 11. Discuss the bigger conflict in the background of the story, using the following questions as prompts (slide 11). Follow each question with "How do you know?" to encourage students to use textual support in their responses.
 - Why is Shay's family moving away?
 - How does her mother feel about it?
 - Do we have any hints as to the race of Shay, her family, and Dante?
 - How would you characterize the couple that is moving into Shay's family's apartment?
- 12. Ask if anyone knows the definition of **gentrification**. If not, provide it for the class (slide 12): the process whereby the



character of a poor urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in, improving housing, attracting new businesses, typically displacing current inhabitants in the process.

- 13. Have students discuss in small groups (slide 13):
 - Is this story about gentrification? How do you know?
 - How does the eraser tattoo act as a symbol for gentrification?
 - Note: This step in the lesson is aimed at "critical consciousness," one of the tenets of culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP). "Critical consciousness is developed when we challenge students to question, analyze and critique the norms and values that shape society and lead to social inequities for different groups" (Chisholm et al., 2019).

Finding the larger context

- 14. Explain that there would have been nothing wrong with enjoying "Eraser Tattoo" simply as a story of the heartbreak of losing your first love. But taking some time to think about how society is represented in a story helps readers to realize how much stories can teach us about the world we live in (slide 14).
- 15. View the <u>short clip (YouTube video)</u> from Jason Reynolds, the author of the story, and complete the exercise that he describes (slide 15):
 - What is a tattoo that you would put on your body?
 - What is the story of that tattoo?





Slide 15 of the lesson slide deck includes Jason Reynolds "Write, right, rite" video to play for students.

16. How would you use word(s), image(s), colour(s), and placement on your body, to tell that story?

Exploring the 'what' and 'how' of stories

17. Distribute the graphic organizer Making Meaning in Stories (one per student). Complete the T-Chart as a class, using the board, chart paper, or a projected copy of the handout to document the collaborative categorization of details from the story into "WHAT the story is about" and "HOW the story is told." Use the highlighted and annotated story to complete the task. (See Making meaning of stories: sample responses (Appendix B))

Assessment opportunity

Discuss the question: Did reading this story teach you anything about the world you live in? Have students complete the final section of the T-chart. Use student responses as assessment for learning to inform next steps.



Working with cultural text forms

18. Introduce the concept of cultural text forms – texts that tell stories without use of written words (slide 18). Moʻolelo is an oral tradition from the Hawaiian islands, Bharatanatyam is from India and involves telling a story through dance, and Cree Star Stories are a part of First Nations oral tradition.



Slide 18 of the lesson slide deck has examples of three cultural text forms

- 19. Read and clarify the definition of a <u>cultural text form (Appendix C)</u> from the glossary of the ENL1W curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2023): "This text form includes sign systems, storytelling tools, and symbols that contribute to and shape a society's culture. Cultural texts have underlying cultural, historical, and/or social meanings. They either require certain cultural knowledge to be understood, are produced through a certain cultural context or, as most texts do, become representative of a culture's beliefs and values."
- 20. Discuss how the skills required for the audience of cultural text forms are different from those used when reading stories communicated through written words (slides 20 22).





- 21. Discuss protocols for engaging with Indigenous stories (slide 23). Jo-Ann Archibald, Sto:lo Indigenous educator, has offered "Four R's" for the audience to become "story ready":
 - Readers/viewers must give respect to the individual who is telling the story and the people that offered the story to that individual.
 - Readers/viewers have a **responsibility** to open your mind, to be willing to think beyond your mindset, and to share your new understanding with others.
 - Readers/viewers must hold reverence for the culture and truths that lie at the heart of the story.
 - Stories are about **reciprocity**. Readers/viewers must understand the balance between giving and receiving. Audience members are an important part of the storytelling process. Readers/viewers are involved in making the meaning.

Extend the discussion by asking what it might look like to honour these Four R's.

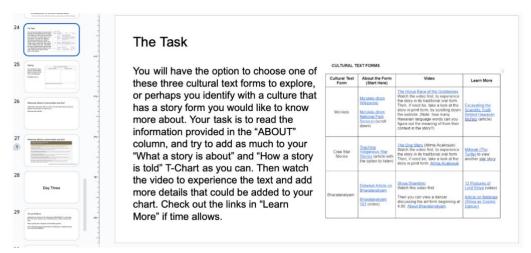
Engaging with cultural text forms

- 22. Be sure that there is a way to share the <u>cultural text forms</u> (Appendix C) document from the Appendix with students so that they will be able to click the links. Distribute the graphic organizer Making meaning in stories: handout (Appendix A) (one per student).
- 23. Provide clear instructions for the Cultural text forms (Appendix C) activity (slide 24). (Note: If other story forms are selected besides the ones in Appendix C, they will need accompanying resources to support knowledge of the story form for students.) For example, say "You will have the option to choose one of these three cultural text forms to explore, or perhaps you identify with a culture that has a story form you would like to know more about. Your task is to read the information provided in the "ABOUT" column, and try to add as much to your "WHAT a story is about" and "HOW a story is told" T-Chart



as you can. Then watch the video to experience the text and add more details that could be added to your chart. Check out the links in "Learn More" if time allows."

Note: This portion of the lesson is aimed at "Cultural Competence," another tenet of CRRP. "Cultural competence involves ensuring students value their own culture while learning about the cultures of others who may or may not be represented in their classrooms." (Chisholm et al., 2019)



Slide 24 of the lesson slide deck includes the Cultural Text Forms task and instructions.

Sharing thinking

24. Form small groups of three. Prepare students to share what they have learned with each other in their small group by first discussing effective communication (slides 25 – 26). For example, say: "Collaborative classrooms allow us to learn from each other. But we need to be effective communicators in order to do so. What does that look like?" Give students a chance to brainstorm in small groups, then share ideas in a whole-class discussion. Record ideas on the board. (Optional: Show students the graphic of Strand B, B1: Oral and Non-Verbal Communication (slide 27). Highlight on the graphic where students have identified the same idea. Then ask if there are any important ones they think were missed.) Decide, as a class,





- on 3-4 "look-fors" to focus on for this task. (Students may find some correspondence with the 4 R's that Jo-ann Archibald shares for audiences of Indigenous storywork.). Provide time for students to take turns sharing what they learned through their selected story in their small group, using their T-chart notes for support.
- 25. Rearrange students into different groups, mixed in such a way that each story form is represented, if possible. (Groups may be uneven, based on student choices.) Instruct students to share with each other what they learned about their selected story form, and then discuss what they learned about the world from each storytelling form, completing the final section of the T-chart.

Assessment opportunity

Through observation, gather evidence of student understanding about what they learned from their selected story form (assessment as learning), and for Effective Communication look-fors identified above (assessment for learning).



Connecting perspectives

- 26. Remind students that one of the Four R's of Storywork is **reciprocity**. This means that the audience (reader/viewer) is a necessary part of creating meaning in the story (slide 29).
- 27. Instruct students to complete a journal entry in response to the following question:
 - Do you think who you are contributed to the meaning you created from each of the stories you looked at? (For example, if you are not a dancer, maybe it was difficult to make meaning from the Bharatanatyam story, or



maybe you have experienced racism like Shay and Dante did).

Sharing personal stories

- 28. Prepare students for the task of becoming a storyteller by reading the instructions on slide 30: "Now it is your turn to be the storyteller. Can you think of a story that exists in your family or community? It could be connected to your culture, or a story that has been told in your family time and time again." Ideally, share a story of your own, both as a way to foster CRRP and to attempt to alleviate student concern over sharing personal stories.
- 29. "How would you tell your story to a group of your peers? Consider your story and your own skills and interests to determine the best way to tell your story (e.g., print, visual, oral, kinesthetic). You are not limited to the methods we explored as a class." Make clear that students are NOT mimicing one of the cultural text forms from the lesson, but rather to use a similar mode to tell their own story (print, oral, visual, kinesthetic).
- 30. Provide time for students to prepare their stories (slide 31). This preparation time will look different for each student as they will have chosen different storytelling forms (e.g., they may be writing and revising a written text, sketching a piece of art, choreographing and practising a dance, or outlining and then rehearsing an oral story)
- 31. Once students have had enough time to prepare their stories, prepare the class for sharing by discussing what it means to listen respectfully, referring back to previous discussions (slide 32). Then, depending on class size and dynamic, have students share their stories with the whole class, half the class, or in small sharing groups. (Consider the amount of teacher oversight students will require in order to listen and engage respectfully.)



Reflection

- 32. When finished, have students respond to the following questions in their journals (slide 33):
 - How did it feel to share your story?
 - How does it feel when people listen respectfully?
 - How can you bring this learning forward into other aspects of your life?

Assessment Opportunity

Use student responses as evidence for assessment as learning.

Possible extensions

Explore other cultural storytelling forms:

- New Zealand Haka
- various Henna/Mehndi practices in Pakistan, India, Africa, and the Middle East
- First Nations ribbon skirts
- various African braiding styles

Invite students and/or community members to share knowledge and expertise on their own cultural stories.



Appendix A

Making meaning in stories: handout

•	Story	:				

- WHAT the story is about
- HOW the story is told
- What does the story teach us about the world we live in?

WHAT the story is ABOUT	HOW the story is TOLD		
What does the story teach us about the world we live in?			

Making Meaning in Stories activity template in a two-column graphic organizer for learners who prefer a paper format.



Appendix B

Making meaning in stories: sample responses

Story: "Eraser Tattoo", by Jason Reynolds			
WHAT the story is ABOUT	HOW the story is TOLD		
Moving, leaving home and friends behind	Plot		
"But for Shay and Dante, not a normal day at all." (4)	The story is narrated by Dante, a teenaged boy whose girlfriend's family is moving away. Most of the action is a conversation between Shay and Dante on the stoop of		
"Up and down the steps Dante had gone, back and forth, lifting, carrying, moving, packing, while Shay and her mother	Shay's apartment while she gives him an eraser tattoo, and the new tenants move in. Their discussion of the past makes it clear that they have known each other for a long time, going from close friends to young lovers.		
continued taping boxes and bagging trash, pausing occasionally for moments of	Personification		
sadness." (5)	"Brooklyn was being its usual self. Alive, full of sounds		
"Well Shay's mother did at least a much	and smells." (3)		
needed moment to weep in peace." (7-8)	Symbolism The eraser tattoo has many layers of meaning. On a		
Young Love	literal level, it is something for Dante to remember Shay		
"He'd told Shay that he loved her a long time ago, back when they were five years old and she taught him how to tie his shoes." (4)	by forever. On another level, it can be a symbol of their love, leaving a permanent mark on his arm the way she has left a mark on his heart. Finally, it is a symbol of gentrification. When looking at the finished S, Dante		
"When the 'no doubt, homie' fiasco first took place, he thought his heart would split in half. But it'd been a long time and he'd gotten over	thinks, "White where brown used to be", which represents the shifting demographic of the Brooklyn neighborhood.		
it, for the most part. Now it was just something he loved to tease Shay about." (11)	Conflict The white couple moving into Shay's family's apartment seems to have no regard for the people they are		
Gentrification	displacing.		
"Moments later, another truck pulled up to the same spot – a replacement." (3)	"Dante shook his head, first at Shay, then at the young man and woman now carrying a mattress toward them. They started up the stoop, but Dante and Shay		
"They'd been sitting on the stoop for a while, watching cars pull out and new cars pull in.	had no more space to scoot over. They were already to against the railing." (11)		
Witnessing the neighborhood rearrange itself." (5)	" 'Wasn't even out of the house before they started moving in all their s—,' Shay's mother muttered under her breath." (12)		

Example of a Making Meaning in Stories activity in a two column graphic organizer.

What does the story teach us about the world we live in?



Story: "Eraser Tattoo", by Jason Reynolds

What is the story about?

Moving, leaving home and friends behind

"But for Shay and Dante, not a normal day at all." (4)

"Up and down the steps Dante had gone, back and forth, lifting, carrying, moving, packing, while Shay and her mother continued taping boxes and bagging trash, pausing occasionally for moments of sadness." (5)

"Well Shay's mother did at least ... a much needed moment to weep in peace." (7 - 8)

Young Love

"He'd told Shay that he loved her a long time ago, back when they were five years old and she taught him how to tie his shoes." (4)

"When the 'no doubt, homie' fiasco first took place, he thought his heart would split in half. But it'd been a long time and he'd gotten over it, for the most part. Now it was just something he loved to tease Shay about." (11)

Gentrification

"Moments later, another truck pulled up to the same spot – a replacement." (3)

"They'd been sitting on the stoop for a while, watching cars pull out and new cars pull in. Witnessing the neighborhood rearrange itself." (5)



How the story is told

Plot

The story is narrated by Dante, a teenaged boy whose girlfriend's family is moving away. Most of the action is a conversation between Shay and Dante on the stoop of Shay's apartment while she gives him an eraser tattoo, and the new tenants move in. Their discussion of the past makes it clear that they have known each other for a long time, going from close friends to young lovers.

Personification

"Brooklyn was being its usual self. Alive, full of sounds and smells."
(3)

Symbolism

The eraser tattoo has many layers of meaning. On a literal level, it is something for Dante to remember Shay by forever. On another level, it can be a symbol of their love, leaving a permanent mark on his arm the way she has left a mark on his heart. Finally, it is a symbol of gentrification. When looking at the finished S, Dante thinks, "White where brown used to be", which represents the shifting demographic of the Brooklyn neighborhood.

Conflict

The white couple moving into Shay's family's apartment seems to have no regard for the people they are displacing.

"Dante shook his head, first at Shay, then at the young man and woman now carrying a mattress toward them. They started up the stoop, but Dante and Shay had no more space to scoot over. They were already up against the railing." (11)

"'Wasn't even out of the house before they started moving in all their s—,' Shay's mother muttered under her breath." (12)



What does the story teach us about the world we live in?

- Heartache is a part of growing up and a part of the human condition.
- Gentrification is a process that is both caused by and reinforces systemic racism. Shay and Dante don't fully understand the forces that have caused them to have to separate, but they do recognize the unconscious and the overt rudeness of the new tenants.

Story: Moʻolelo — The Hōlua Race of the Goddesses

What is the story about?

Two goddesses lived separately on the largest mountains in Hawai'i until Pele (fire) decided to challenge Poli'ahu (snow) and her maidens to sled races. Pele won against all of Poli'ahu's maidens and then challenged Poli'ahu, the best sled rider. Poli'ahu won and Pele became angry. She called the volcano forth and the mountain shook, cracked and became covered in lava. Poli'ahu threw her cloak over the top of the mountain, covering it in white, and Pele shivered in defeat.

- This story explains volcanic activity on Hawaiian islands: "To this day, Pele tries to take over Poli'ahu's district, but as long as Poli'ahu reigns and as long as the snow maidens keep their mountain top cool, Hawai'i island will be able to live in peace."
- Mo'olelo also relay important lessons about the values, norms, and traditions of the Hawaiian people.

How the story is told

 oral stories told usually by a kapuna (elder)... passed down through the generations





- could be told in chants or through hula
- began to be written down in the 1800's with the development of the written Hawaiian language
- set in specific and identifiable locations
- characters stand for different landforms (Goddesses of fire and snow)
- uses Hawaiian language
- offers a moral to the listener
- uses cultural imagery (plant life, landforms, etc.)

What does the story teach us about the world we live in?

- The land can teach us a lot about how to live, if we only listen.
- Indigenous peoples of Hawaiii have been telling stories about geological events and phenomena for thousands of years. This shows us that storytelling is a valid way to learn about the world - including scientific knowledge.

Story: Cree Star Stories

What is the story about?

Humans used to live without dogs, which meant they didn't have anything to warn them if something dangerous was approaching camp. They had to use watchmen who would stay up and guard camp. But often, the guards would get hungry or distracted and leave their post and then harm would befall the camp. After many years of this, Mikun (Wolf) sent two puppies to live with humans as companions and protectors. Mischachakanis (Coyote) and Makisaw (Fox) wanted also to be honoured by humans so they each sent two puppies as well. Four sets of these six puppies were sent to the East, West, North, and South, and this is how dogs came to live with humans all over the world.



Star stories explain why certain things are the way they are (such as animal appearances or behaviours), where humans originate. They also teach about social norms, community and family responsibilities.

How the story is told

- oral tradition
- told during the winter months, when people were in their shelters for long periods of time
- refers to a star constellation (Ursa Minor, or "The Little Dipper")
- animals are characters they have spirit and agency, and usually teach the human characters a lesson
- show a relationship between humans and the land

What does the story teach us about the world we live in?

- Humans and animals (and the rest of nature) have a reciprocal relationship.
- We need to honour all living things.
- Every culture that looks up at the sky has its own stories about the stars. (Why do we privilege the Greek and Roman stories?)

Story: Bharatanatyam

What is the story about?

Shiva Shambho is a performance that celebrates Lord Shiva, "the destroyer". Shiva is part of the trimurti along with Vishnu, "the preserver" and Brahma, "the creator". Shiva is honoured as destruction is seen as a necessary part of the cycle of creation.

The dance emphasizes his attributes (such as three eyes or matted hair) and narrates stories and legends associated with Shiva (like the churning of the oceans or his marriage to Parvati).



How the story is told

- represents complex narratives through easy-to-understand motions
- hand movements (mudras) which describe objects, animals, or emotions
- eye movements (drishti bheda)
- head movements (shirobheda)
- music
- brightly coloured sari with fan-like patterns that open when the dancer bends is worn
- wrists and ankles are adorned so that audience can see (and hear) the movements better

What does the story teach us about the world we live in?

- Stories don't have to have words to deliver a meaning.
- Using your body to tell stories can contribute to the spiritual power of them.



Appendix C

Cultural text forms

Cultural Text Form	About the Form Start here to choose a cultural text form.	Video After you have learned a little about your chosen form, select a video here.	Learn More After your video, learn more here.
Moʻolelo	Moʻolelo (Wikipedia, external resource) Moʻolelo (National Park Service, external resource) (scroll down the web page)	The Hōlua Race of the Goddesses (external resource) Watch the video first (starting at 1:35), to experience the story in its traditional oral form. Then, take a look at the story in print form by scrolling down the website. (How many Hawaiian language words can you figure out the meaning of from their context in the story?)	Excavating the Scientific Truth Behind Hawaiian Moʻolelo (article, external resource)





Cultural Text Form	About the Form Start here to choose a cultural text form.	Video After you have learned a little about your chosen form, select a video here.	Learn More After your video, learn more here.
Cree Star Stories	Teaching Indigenous Star Stories (external resource). Article with the option to listen.	The Dog Stars by Atima Atchakosuk (YouTube video), Watch the video first, to experience the story in its traditional oral form. Then, if need be, take a look at the story in print form: Atima Acakosuk (Google doc).	Mikinak: The Turtle (YouTube video) to view another star story.
Bharatanatyam	Detailed Article on Bharatanatyam Bharatanatyam 101 (YouTube video)	Watch this video first: Shiva Shambho (YouTube video). Then you can view a dancer discussing the art form beginning at 4:00: About Bharatanatyam (external resource).	12 Postures of Lord Shiva (YouTube video) Nataraja, Shiva, Cosmic Dancer (external resource)



Appendix D

Curriculum expectations

B1. Oral and Nonverbal Communication

apply listening, speaking, and non-verbal communication skills and strategies to understand and communicate meaning in formal and informal contexts and for various purposes and audiences

B1.4. Oral and Non-Verbal Communication Strategies

identify and use oral and non-verbal communication strategies, including expression, gestures, and body language, and evaluate and compare the effectiveness of these strategies in supporting understanding or communication, including how their use may vary across cultures

C1. Knowledge about Texts

apply foundational knowledge and skills to understand a variety of texts, including digital and media texts, by creators with diverse identities, perspectives, and experience, and demonstrate an understanding of the patterns, features, and elements of style associated with various text forms and genres



C1.2. Text Forms and Genres

analyze and compare the characteristics of various text forms and genres, including cultural text forms, and provide evidence to explain how they help communicate meaning

C1.7. Indigenous Context of Various Text Forms

read, listen to, and view a wide variety of text forms by diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit creators to make meaning through Indigenous Storywork about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, relationships, communities, groups, nations, and lived experiences

C2. Comprehension Strategies

apply comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading, listening to, and viewing a variety of texts, including digital and media texts, by creators with diverse identities, perspectives, and experience, in order to understand and clarify the meaning of texts

C2.6. Summarizing: Identifying Relevant information and Drawing Conclusions

summarize and synthesize the important ideas and supporting details in complex texts, and draw effective conclusions

C3. Critical Thinking in Literacy

apply critical thinking skills to deepen understanding of texts, and analyze how various perspectives and topics are communicated and addressed in a variety of texts, including digital, media, and cultural texts



C2 /. /

C3.4. Analyzing Cultural Elements of Texts

analyze cultural elements that are represented in various texts, including, norms, values, social hierarchy, past times, language, and taboos, by investigating the meanings of these elements, making connections to their lived experience and culture, and considering how the inclusion of these elements contributes to the meaning of the text

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Updates

When updates are made to this document, they are tracked below with date and description of update.

February 2025: initial release