

# Literature of the United States of America: Contemporary Literature and the Diaspora

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**Essential Understandings:** The idea of what it means to be “American” is constantly evolving. In education, often we focus on writings that are from the Western canon of literature, which are a list of works that have been considered the most important to study in academics. Historically these works have had a Eurocentric perspective, and have ignored the experiences of marginalized communities. Through encouraging students to think critically about which stories and knowledge are valuable, and about how bias shows up in many of our dealings with one another, we are able to explore the entirety of the human experience and find common ground with each other.

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## **Essential Questions:**

How can we understand the contributions of immigrants to American identity?

What does it mean to search for one’s identity?

How does diversity enhance society?

How does literature communicate and express culture?

“This is what she has been missing all these years without really knowing that she has been missing it. Standing here in the quiet, she believes she has never felt at home in the States, never.”

## **overview**

An author uses many literary techniques to **show** (and **not tell**) a story. Close reading of a text, with a **specific focus** on **literary techniques** (how the story is told), can help us to uncover an author’s intent for writing. Authors may have many hopes for their written words; that they will foster empathy and understanding; that readers will learn from their stories; that their **words will propel social change**. Stories can be important tools for change, understanding the tools authors use will help us to analyze how art and society influence each others’ formations. We will practise the following skills:

### **READING**

- **Apply information from one text to another**
- **Research the setting of the text**
- **Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources**

- **Examine and explain alternative perspectives across a variety of sources**

## **WRITING**

- **Construct multiple-paragraph essays that demonstrate synthesis and analysis of complex ideas**
- **Compare and contrast multiple sources and texts**
- **Include voice and style in compositions**
- **Use quotations as evidence to support claims**

## **LISTENING**

- **Practice “active listening” skills when passages are read, or when presentations are given**

## **SPEAKING**

- **Present for group work, socratic seminars. Students will become strong speakers.**
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## **lessons**

- Introduction: Historical Overview
  - Text Connections
  - Part 1: read, analyze, vocab, study questions
  - Part 2: read, analyze, vocab, study questions
  - Vocabulary
  - Review
  - Themes
  - Writing Workshops
  - Rubrics
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## **group work Due 3/23**

Students, in their assigned groups, must chose and complete TWO of the following:

1. Create a comic or other visual representation of the text. Must be more than 1 image/more than 1 page. Write a paragraph summarizing the text, and explaining how the visual relates, or interprets the text.
2. Create a presentation using nonfiction sources to explain the concept of diaspora. Must be at least 5 minutes long, and include original work. You can NOT just cut and paste information into PPT slides. Be original!

3. Using the app “Splice” (or any other media) create a presentation that focuses on some of the common motifs/themes in the reading. Share with the class.
  4. Make a video of one of the scenes from the text.
  5. Create a game or wordsearch for the class to work on together, could be vocabulary words, analysis of symbols from the book, etc.
  6. Identify the symbols/themes from the text. Then, create a modern soundtrack for the story. Explain how the symbols/themes can be seen in the book, and the song. Minimum 7 songs.
  7. Go deeper into one of the settings from the text. You can create a presentation (or performance), or you can present a popular piece from the era.
  8. Come up with another creative idea, and get permission from Ms. L
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## **individual work**

- Literary Analysis Essay- Students will complete a 5 paragraph essay on the use of literary devices and elements in the novel. **Due 4/6**
  - Students will complete test preparation for the SAT and ACT exams. In class, participation grade. **Due 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27**
  - Notebook- In addition to the daily notes taken in class, students will begin a notebook that they will use to make annotations on the independent reading they do each day at the start of class. Students may choose from one of a list of approved supplementary texts, or they may choose their own text, provided they have obtained PRIOR APPROVAL from Ms. Luken. Additionally, some days Ms. Luken will have assigned readings for this notebook. **Due 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27**
  - Annotated Notes- A summary of the day’s lesson/terms, vocabulary words and their definitions, annotations on class readings. **Due 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27**
  - There will be poetry and other writing entries due in annotated notes, also students can choose to write about persuading or having students express personal sentiments.
  - Students should choose another immigrant author (who lives in the United States presently), to research. Students will choose one reading (novel length) from this author, and write a 5 paragraph literary analysis essay. **Due 4/9**
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## **assessments**

Socratic Seminar 4/6

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## **class readings and additional resources:**

Students will read How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents  
Alvarez

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Ge6oVjM6M8M>

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## **individual readings--choose one for individual reading and response time--**

The Remarkable Reason Men in Iran are Wearing Hijabs:

<http://www.inc.com/melanie-curtin/the-remarkable-reason-men-in-iran-have-started-wearing-hijabs.html>

New Marvel Pilot Features Mexican American Lead:

<http://remezcla.com/film/victor-mancha-hulu-pilot-runaways-marvel/>

Las Patronas:

<http://remezcla.com/lists/culture/las-patronas-mexico-photo-essay/>

It Would Take 228 Years for Black Families to Amass Wealth of White Families:

<http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2016/08/09/it-would-take-228-years-for-black-families-to-amass-wealth-of-white-families-analysis-says/>

Multicultural Britain:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/dabbott\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/dabbott_01.shtml)

Do Children Still Need to Read the Classics of English literature?:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/education-34341656>

Why the Real Problem isn't #oscarssowhite:

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/23/opinions/oscars-so-gray-seymour/>

Hollywood still 'straight, white, boys' club', finds major diversity survey:

<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/feb/22/major-study-hollywood-endemic-diversity-crisis>

Racist abuse won't stop me from seeking more diversity in children's literature:

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/27/racist-abuse-diversity-in-childrens-literature>

The value of storytelling:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=286225903>

Multicultural Books Offer Diverse Reading Experience:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12093236>

Multiculturalism Explained in One Word HAPA:

<http://www.npr.org/2008/08/18/93690045/multi-culturalism-explained-in-one-word-hapa>

An 11 Year Old's Drive is 1000 Black Girl Books:

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/an-11-year-olds-drive-is-1000blackgirlbooks-1456535514>

“Always Running”

<http://www.csudh.edu/ccauthen/570f15/Rodriguez-Running.pdf>

“Drown”

<https://eng1301blog.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/junot-diaz-drown.pdf>

“This is How You Lose Her”

<http://gerwazy.lo3.wroc.pl/~stasio/tlh.pdf>

“Monstro”

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/06/04/monstro>

The Kite Runner

<http://www.thehazeleyacademy.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/IB-English-The-Kite-Runner-Full-Text.pdf>

The Reluctant Fundamentalist

<https://vusc-english.wikispaces.com/file/view/Moshin+Hamid+-+The+Reluctant+Fundamentalist.pdf>

Identity formation:

<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=storied-identities.pdf&site=15>

**links**

<http://gjs.appstate.edu/social-justice-and-human-rights/what-social-justice>

<http://gender.stanford.edu/news/2013/why-literature-matters-social-justice>