

**FRANCIS LEWIS HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM  
GRADE 11, Unit 3**

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**UNIT TITLE/FOCUS:** Tragedy Theme/College Application

**UNIT LENGTH:** 5-6 weeks (without literary complement, 6-8 weeks with)

**STEP 1: DESIRED RESULTS**

**Essential Questions:**

- How does tragedy trigger change?
- How can world views, personal drive, and strength of character be effectively communicated in written form?

**Guiding Questions: (content, process, metacognitive)**

**Content (Tragedy)**

- What is tragedy? / What makes something tragic?
- To what extent, if any, are all tragedies equivalent?
- Is tragedy a natural part of life?
- Can tragedy be avoided and/or controlled?
- How does tragedy influence society?
- How/When can tragedy become beneficial?
- How do governing bodies respond to tragic events?
- Is tragedy ever self-inflicted?
- Why are people drawn to tragic stories?

**Content (College Application)**

- What is a personal statement?
- What does a personal statement say about you?

**Process**

- How can we effectively link personal drive and determination in a college application paper?
- How can we illustrate our academic contributions and accomplishments in context?
- How can we demonstrate personal growth, either intellectually or socially?

**Metacognitive**

- How do you cope with tragedy/tragic events?
- How can my work impact my audience?
- What do I want the reader to know about me?
- Did I effectively convey my enthusiasm and passion to the reader?
- Have I established my own voice as a writer to create an authentic work that cannot be easily reproduced by others?

## **New York State Common Core Learning Standards:**

### **Reading Informational Texts 11-12**

1. a. Develop factual, interpretive, and evaluative questions for further exploration of the topic(s).
2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### **Writing 11-12**

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
  - a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
  - c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
  - d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
  - e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
  - f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 11–12 on page 68.)
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
  - a. Explore topics dealing with different cultures and world viewpoints.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

## **Speaking and Listening 11-12**

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
  - c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
  - d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.
  - e. Seek to understand other perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with audiences or individuals from varied backgrounds.
2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

## **Language 11-12**

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
  - a. Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
  - b. Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage, Garner's Modern American Usage) as needed.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
  - a. Observe hyphenation conventions.
  - b. Spell correctly.
3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
  - a. Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's Artful Sentences) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

## STEP 2: ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

**Authentic Performance Task(s): Students will write a personal statement and a resume to be submitted to an online college office website.**

Students will...

- a. Review a list of personal statement prompts and decide on a topic of their choice. Read (as a whole class) an example of a personal statement and a resume. RI 11-12.1a
  1. Annotate in the margins and determine two or more central ideas from the text and how they develop over the course of the text (*formative*) RI 11-12.2
  2. Review a worksheet identifying the factors that create an effective personal statement and resume (*see model*) RI 11-12.7
- b. Review resources (school library, online databases, etc.) available for support in a variety of media RI 11-12.7
- c. (Individually) Draft a personal statement, incorporating elements of originality, voice, command of language, purpose, style, and relativity to prompt. Drafts will be submitted for peer-assessment using a teacher-provided rationale (*see model*), then submit to teacher (*formative or summative*) W 11-12.2, 4, 7, 8; L 11-12.1, 2
- d. (Individually) Draft a resume to be submitted for peer-assessment using a teacher provided or student-generated model, then submit to teacher.
- e. Plan, edit, revise, and/or rewrite as needed, focusing on what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience (*formative*) W 11-12.5
- f. Submit final drafts to teacher (*summative*) W 11-12.5, 10
- g. Review

### **Other Assessments (Diagnostic, Formative, Summative):**

- Quizzes, tests or projects related to optional literary text (*summative*)
- Checklist assessing the qualities of an effective resume. (*formative*)
- Portfolio Folders

## STEP 3: TEACHING AND LEARNING PLAN

### **Teaching and Learning Activities:**

Students will...

- define and cite examples of tragedy
- draft and revise a personal statement
- draft and revise a resume
- collaborate to improve their writing using peer review skills
- self-assess their progress as individuals as well as in the group setting

### **Resources and Technologies Needed:**

SmartBoard/Projector for viewing informative videos  
Clips of sample tragic documentaries:

- freedocumentaries.org
- topdocumentary.com
- pbs.org
- documentaryheaven.com
- documentarywire.com
- babelgum.com

Sample articles/informational texts regarding historical or contemporary tragedy:

- cnn.com
- newyorktimes.com/archives
- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Tutorials for tools to create digital media presentations (iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, etc.)

Personal Statement PowerPoint:

- [The Ins and Outs to Conveying Personality on Paper, by Andrew Aguilar \(See Resource\)](#)

### **Suggested Texts:**

*Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller

*Fences* by August Wilson

*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

*Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

*Othello* by William Shakespeare

*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

*Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton

*The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

*Looking for Alaska* by John Green

*A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams

*One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey

*A View from the Bridge* by Arthur Miller

### **Teacher Options:**

- Keep a list of new and challenging vocabulary during research and/or reading of text(s).
- Address literary or classical definition of tragedy (Aristotle); furthermore, address the differences between current connotations and the aforementioned denotations
- Invite college counselors as guest speakers to inform students about the college application process.
- Digital Classroom Blogging
- Portfolio Folders