

Inquiry By Design High School Curriculum Overview

At high school, each Inquiry By Design course of study is made up of six units featuring detailed, flexible lesson plans aimed at building critical, standards-aligned literacy skills. Each unit is built around challenging, grade-appropriate texts and spiraling cycles of work marked by reading, writing, and collaborative small-group and whole-class discussion.

Teaching Focus	Introduction to Argument: Writing About Literature	Reading and Writing About Informational and Literary Nonfiction	Reading and Writing Across Multiple Texts	Reading and Writing Reports of Information	Retellings: Analyzing Stories Across Time
Grade 9	Foundations for Inquiry (Jen and Canin)	Reading Intelligence Dealing With Difficulty (Church and Tocqueville)	Borderlands: Theories and Stories	Tracing Cultural Influences: A Study of Research-Based Report Writing	The Icarus Tales
Grade 10	Foundations for Inquiry (Baxter and Didion)	Language and Thought Dealing With Difficulty (McPherson and Plato)	Language Matters: Essays and Arguments	Models and Methods for Research	The Demon Lover
Grade 11	Foundations for Inquiry (Jones and Hempel)	Bias and Assumption in Research Dealing With Difficulty (Winthrop and Ross)	Writing to Witness, Writing to Testify	Spreading Innovations: Study and Research	Interpreting Tennessee Williams: A Streetcar Named Desire
Grade 12	Foundations for Inquiry (Lahiri and Gordimer)	Science Writing for Lay Audiences Dealing With Difficulty (Orwell and Montaigne)	Being and Unbeing: A Study of Four Poets	How We Learn: Research-Based Writing Projects	Shakespeare at the Movies: Much Ado About Nothing

Introduction to Argument: Writing About Literature

After establishing the routines to support an independent reading initiative that will guide students' self-selected reading over the year, these units move into an introduction (or review) of argument and interpretation. Students wrestle with short fiction as they revisit the practice of crafting text-based arguments distinguished by clear claims and supported by compelling explanations anchored in specific evidence from the text.

Reading and Writing About Informational and Literary Nonfiction

In the first unit, students work with thematically linked pairs of complex informational texts to determine the central ideas, how they unfold, and the methods writers employ to develop content. In the second unit, students work with complex literary nonfiction to develop the skills, tenacity, and mindset that can only be acquired through thoughtful encounters with difficult texts.

Reading and Writing Across Multiple Texts

Whether writing their own "borderlands" stories, tackling their own documentary project, or locating themselves in the bilingualism debate or the arguments poets make across clusters of poems, students engage in text-based discussions about complex issues and then compose a variety of papers that permit them an active, "insider's view" on the topics. All studies are marked by sequences of close reading, collaborative discussion, and culminate in significant writing projects.

Reading and Writing Reports of Information

Students read and study texts by some of today's smartest and most engaging report writers before tackling substantial and carefully scaffolded research-based report writing projects where they "try out" the methods, style, and structure observed in the models.

Retellings: Analyzing Stories Across Time

This series is designed around that notion of retellings—the idea that authors draw upon and transform stories that have already been told and, in the process, create new meanings. The work sketched out in these units is inquiry-based and places a strong emphasis on re-reading, writing, discussion, and collaboration.