Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
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Teaching the Elements of Literature Using Stories from Infancy to Age-appropriate

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This unit entitled "Teaching the Elements of Literature Using Stories from Infancy to Age-appropriate" is designed to use fictional stories from all reading levels in ascending order, starting with elementary stories and concluding with the complexities of the fiction novel. By first reading elementary texts, the students will identify the structures of the story in order to apply prior knowledge to the next, more complex, story. As each successive story gets more difficult, longer, and closer to the students' age-appropriate reading level, students are transferring knowledge from their prior reading and applying it at each new level. While this in-class study of the Elements of Literature is unfolding, students are reading an individual selection in order to apply their knowledge, once more, in the form of a reader response composition. In this composition students are asked first to summarize their selection, then to identify and analyze some of the elements from the story (at least three), and finally to offer an evaluation of the text. Students will then write a story of their own (prompted or original), using the elements to create a work of fiction. The idea behind this unit is to construct an equalization strategy for any group of students who enter the classroom with various reading abilities.

(Developed for English Language Arts, grades 9-11; recommended for English Language Arts, grades 7-12)