



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2013 Volume IV: Invisible Cities: The Arts and Renewable Community

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## **The Study of a Zip Code: Tulsa's Invisible City**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.04.01, published September 2013  
by Krista Baxter Waldron

I work with adjudicated youth who are very reluctant students in a blighted urban area. This unit is for similar secondary English classrooms but is adaptable for any zip code, provided the teacher is willing to research and assemble documents for his/her students' geographies. In short, my two key objectives are to engage my students as agents of change and beauty where they live and to improve their reading and writing skills for complex Common Core writing tasks. The six week unit has three segments. First, after discussing a Tupac poem to introduce the unit, we will spend one week exploring and defining our area via on-the-ground activities. We'll be out in taking pictures and doing some reflective writing. The second segment is the academic centerpiece, with document studies and written responses to those documents, which are selected from a variety of resources and represent our geographic area. The histories, stories, and statistics they convey are engaging for traditionally unengaged readers. There are accompanying Common Core style reading and writing practice assignments. Finally, we revisit Tupac and again to find the area's beauty in all manifestations we can. It will culminate in artistic map-making projects celebrating their communities.

(Developed for ninth- and tenth-grade combined Language Arts, grades 9-10, and eleventh- and twelfth-grade combined Language Arts, grades 11-12; recommended Language Arts, grades 9-11, and State History, grades 9-10)

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