



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
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Reading One Another: Fostering Passion and Identity Growth through African-American Literature

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Finding ways to encourage reading is an obstacle in education, as is utilizing pedagogy to build character. There is stiff competition for young learners' attention in the forms of modern media, and many distracted students in the classroom. To meet these challenges, we will explore engaging texts that are simple but not simplistic, both accessible *and* challenging. We focus on African-American literature of the Harlem Renaissance, the Civil Rights Movement, and finally James McBride's *The Color of Water*, a consistently enjoyable, compelling work that students often love. At the same time, we look at evidence proving how important it is to read literature, and different strategies to encourage students to read.

The essential idea is that the words speak for themselves. Non-readers cannot become readers unless they are provided with something they will enjoy as freely as their mobile apps. These stories of personal journeys and identity aim to do just that. It is intended for 11th or 12th graders in an urban school district. However, while the grade level is recommended, the literature contained herein is relatable, erudite, accessible, and relevant for students of any background.

(Developed for English 4/Senior Level English, grade 12; recommended for English 3/Junior Level English, grade 11)

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