



## Jewels of Endurance

Curriculum Unit 02.01.03  
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### Description of Class

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"Jewels of Endurance" has been created to meet the diverse educational needs of a sixth grade class within an urban, fifth through eighth grade inner-city school with a population of about 600 students. Nearly 98 percent of the student population is African-American, with the remaining two percent consisting of students from a variety of backgrounds, including Vietnamese, Caucasian, Hispanic, Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Native American, and Mexican.

Classrooms are heterogeneously inclusive, containing students with special needs and learning disabilities that require adaptations to the curriculum. Students have a variety of learning levels and socio-economic demands within their lives which affect the way they view the importance of education.

The response to literature component of the unit, featuring the historical novel *Dear America , Early Sunday Morning , The Pearl Harbor Diary of Amber Billows , Hawaii , 1941* , by Barry Denenberg, is designed to operate with three to four heterogeneously grouped literature and reading circles, so students of all learning levels and abilities experience the benefits of working together (and thus fulfilling state and local curriculum standards and goals). By heterogeneously grouping the literature and reading circles, students are able to read silently or aloud to one another to complete the novel. Teachers may take the approach of assigning the reading of 10 pages per day over 12 days, in class or among the groups, or they may elect to assign the reading as homework.

*Dear America , Christmas After All , The Great Depression Story of Minnie Swift , Indianapolis, Indiana, 1932* , by Kathryn Lasky, which is used for the process in writing component of the unit, may be assigned over the December vacation as independent reading. When students return, they are assessed on the reading through the process in writing assignment. Students also discuss *Christmas After All* , before beginning the writing assignment.

## Overview and Objectives

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Students will respond to literature and experience a process in writing to create publishable text in a two-part unit highlighting story telling and diversity within American history. "Jewels of Endurance" will feature two historical novels teaching children the importance of enduring, despite hardships. Children will learn the true jewels of endurance are the stories of the human condition that go beyond the limits of time. Such stories transcend all barriers to give hope to those who follow.

In "Jewels of Endurance," students will read two novels, *Early Sunday Morning* and *Christmas After All* . They will read these novels in conjunction with *The Language of Literature* anthology, unit five, "Making Your Mark," which carries two themes: "Finding Your Voice" and "Voices from the Past." Through the text, *The Language of Literature* , students are given a variety of reading, writing, listening, speaking, artistic, and other activities which enable them to fully experience the stories, plays, poetry, essays, and other genre within the book. These activities introduce students to various themes and enable them to master many components of the English language, including grammar, usage, and mechanics.

In *Early Sunday Morning* , students will meet Amber Billows, a young girl who moves from Washington, D.C. to Hawaii with her family, a couple of months before the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor and usher the United States into World War II. In *Christmas After All* , Minnie Swift lives in Indianapolis, Indiana, with her family during the Great Depression and describes the experience - from the stock market crash to the Dust Bowl - detailing how the events of the time change the lives of those around her.

In reading *Early Sunday Morning* , students will encounter and understand historical fiction through a voice from the past, Amber Billows. While immersed in Amber Billows' journal, students will discover literature brings life to the past. They will also compare and contrast the past with the present to identify how the past shapes their understanding of today's world. Students will learn that history continues to speak through the passage of time. In this response to literature, students will realize past experiences still have an effect on the present. Students will envision ordinary life in 1941 and find how little has changed in the ways people travel, communicate, and relate to each other. They will get a feel for what it was like to live in Hawaii when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, thus sending the United States into World War II. They will internalize the experiences of the story, and they will identify with the experiences of children in times of crisis.

Students will respond to the novel through a variety of roles in literature circles modeled after *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* . Six students in three literature circles will be assigned the roles of discussion director, literary luminary, illustrator, summarizer, creative connector, or other possible roles. Students will also respond to the literature by keeping a journal of personal reactions to the book.

Learning objectives include: literary analysis; critical thinking; grammar, usage, and mechanics; and vocabulary. In the area of literary analysis for *Early Sunday Morning* , students will identify the purpose of real and imaginary characters in historical fiction, fictional yet accurate setting, plot, internal and external conflict, implicit and explicit information, and tone. In the area of critical thinking, students will distinguish fact from opinion and connect the history of Pearl Harbor and World War II to their lives. Grammar, usage, and mechanics will focus on semicolons, dashes, compound and complex sentences, and adverb phrases. Vocabulary highlights include: synonyms and antonyms; words with suffixes; analogies; context clues; using prefixes, suffixes, and roots; and denotative and connotative meanings.

For the *Early Sunday Morning* assessment, students will write a three-page journal entry wherein they imagine themselves as Amber Billows one year later. Students must retain the tone and historical accuracy of the 1940s, being sure not to put any 21st Century events into this piece. As Amber Billows, one year later, the first page and one half of the journal will focus on her writing to her journal, describing what life is like now, in San Francisco, where she and her family moved after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In this section, students will tell why Amber, after moving with her family from Washington, D.C. to Hawaii two months before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, never wrote to her best friend, Allison. In the second page and one half, students, imagining themselves as Amber, will write to Allison. Amber will confide in her journal that she finally did write to her dear friend, and this is what she said, and she will fill the remainder of the journal entry with her letter to Allison. Students will receive a writing rubric explaining how to achieve success with the project. As a culminating activity, students will watch the film, *Pearl Harbor* . They will compare and contrast the images of the bombing of Pearl Harbor in the film with what they imagined when they read of the bombing in *Early Sunday Morning* .

*Christmas After All* will enable students to understand that before they can make their marks in the world, they must first find their voices - the way in which they can best express themselves - as *The Language of Literature* attests. Some may discover expressing themselves comes not only through speaking and writing but also through dance, art, music, sports, math, and even science.

In the process in writing component, students will understand Minnie Swift's voice and how she came to find the way in which she could best express who she is - through writing - thus allowing herself to make her own mark on the world. By understanding Minnie Swift's journal and her life during the Depression, students will find their own voices by creating a three-page journal entry. The better writers will imagine themselves at Christmas during the Great Depression, and the less proficient writers will focus on what it is like to be a child in the present day, during Christmas. A general writing rubric will be distributed to the students before they begin their writing process. Teachers will use this rubric to assess the students' writing, and the students will understand that their audience could easily be anyone, from child to adult, who is interested in stories such as those portrayed in the *Dear America* series.

In *Christmas After All* , students will be introduced to the following literary analysis objectives: theme; the author's purpose or perspective; the difference between "subject" and "theme;" symbols; characterization; setting; and plot. They will also master the reading and critical thinking aspects of drawing conclusions, determining implicit and explicit information, making inferences about characters, and recognizing cause and effect. Grammar, usage, and mechanics will focus on sentence fragments and run-on sentences, ellipses, colons, conjunctions, and capitalization. In vocabulary, the emphasis will be on: context clues; apostrophes in contractions and possessives; denotation and connotation; regular and irregular plurals; idioms; analogies; and finding meaning clues.

At the conclusion of *Christmas After All* , students will view the film, *It's a Wonderful Life* , a 1930s story of despair and loss one man faces and overcomes through a community of faith. Students will write an essay describing the similarities and differences between Christmas in *It's a Wonderful Life* and Minnie Swift's Christmas.

*Early Sunday Morning* and *Christmas After All* have been selected because the historical events of the Depression and World War II are integrated with the social studies curriculum. Sixth graders focus on United States history from after the Civil War to the present day in social studies, and the 1930s and the 1940s are two of the decades featured in the curriculum.

In conjunction with *The Language of Literature*, students will focus on several local curriculum standards, including: inferring title; tapping prior knowledge; visualizing; answering and creating questions which require thinking; making personal connections to the literature, while responding to it; comparing and contrasting cultures to learn values; identifying context clues; summarizing and retelling; drawing conclusions; identifying figurative language; omitting details; predicting; identifying explicit and implicit messages; and determining how to tell the difference between the purpose of a story and the main idea.

## Rationale for the Choice of Literature

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### **Pearl Harbor and World War II: History**

From as early as 1937, several nations throughout the world had become engaged in war. Germany's Nazis, ruled by the dictator Adolf Hitler, sought to create a pure race, ridding the world of those Hitler considered to be inferior, especially the Jewish. As the Nazis spread their reign of terror throughout Europe, Japan sought to control the Far East with its imperialism (1). China and Japan became engaged in conflict, but even as late as 1941, the United States appeared to want to remain neutral in the world's affairs, despite economic sanctions made in 1940 to prevent Japan from taking the Philippines, after it had wrestled Indochina from France. By 1941, the Japanese were so enraged by the United States and its various trade embargos that it sought to retaliate. Since half the United States naval fleet was docked at Oahu's Pearl Harbor, and the port was strategically important to Japan's dreams of controlling the entire Far East, it became a target for war (2). On Dec. 7, 1941, in the early morning hours, Japan's pilots flew over the base and bombed Pearl Harbor, demolishing eighteen American ships, over 300 American military planes, killing over 2,400 Americans, and wounding 1,178 people (3). President Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared war on Dec. 8, and the United States became engaged in World War II.

### ***Pearl Harbor* : The Novel**

*Early Sunday Morning*, offers students several opportunities to reflect about diverse ethnic, racial, historical, age group, and gender perspectives.

A historical novel, *Early Sunday Morning* features a sixth grade girl, Amber Billows, who is moving from Washington, D.C. to Oahu, Hawaii with her older, teenaged brother, Andy, her mother, who is a nurse, and her father, who is a newspaper reporter often transferred from one city to another to capture the news. It is the father's job transfer that causes the family to relocate to Hawaii in October 1941, two months before the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, sending the United States into World War II. This novel features imaginary characters of Japanese-American descent who are sent to internment camps following the attack on Pearl Harbor. It also includes real and imaginary American and Japanese characters and their leaders, and real and imaginary Hawaiians. In addition, the book provides diverse ethnic, racial, historical, age group, and gender perspectives by including the historical figures of the Nazis and Adolf Hitler in Germany; Benito Mussolini and his Fascist Italy; United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt; Hawaiian Queen Lili; and Great Britain's Winston Churchill. Those who became famous in the time period in other ways, such as airplane pilot Charles Lindbergh, musician Benny Goodman, and baseball teams, such as Jackie Robinson's Brooklyn Dodgers, among others, are also featured in the novel.

When the Billows family moves to Hawaii, Amber becomes friends with Kame Arata, a Japanese-American

daughter of a family which functions under the "traditional" Japanese model, where the father, as the head of the household, requires everyone else to remain silent in his presence. Amber admits her all-American family is not like this; there are many times her mother will not be quiet in the presence of her dad. When Amber visits Kame's house, she finds it steeped in Japanese tradition and design. Characters are of all ages, and the gender perspectives show diversity by contrasting the way "traditional" Japanese-American women are expected to behave in the presence of men, with the opinionated, sprightly, and brave Amber and her mother as they interact with the men around them.

*Early Sunday Morning* provides opportunities for interpretation by giving students a chance to explore important themes, including the importance of friendship and family life, losing loved ones, making your own mark on history, finding your own voice, and listening to a voice of the past. Amber, through her *Dear America* journal, becomes a voice from the past reaching out toward today's students. She makes her own mark on history by going to the hospital after Pearl Harbor is attacked and helping her mother to nurse the wounded and dying. The theme which underlines the importance of friendship and family is depicted in the contrast of Amber, who has trouble making new friends whenever she and her family move, and her brother, Andy, who makes friends easily. Their father knows how to engage people in conversation, but his ability to make friends appears to be more closely aligned with Amber's. Both Amber and her dad, however, form deep, lasting friendships in Hawaii - Amber with Kame, and her dad with Mr. Poole, both of whom are Japanese-American. Amber loses Kame to a U.S. internment camp, and Mr. Poole dies in a fire in his house during the Pearl Harbor attack. Students interpret what these losses mean to the characters in the novel and to themselves, as they come to love the characters about whom they are reading.

In addition, students are given a chance to interpret internal and external conflict, plot, and tone. Amber's tone varies throughout the novel, from sarcastic and humorous, to callous yet understanding, to frightened and then brave. Students have plenty of opportunities to identify the various tones Amber uses throughout her journal. Since *Early Sunday Morning* contains both internal and external conflicts - the internal conflict of Amber being upset over having to move in a brand new school year and the external conflict of the Pearl Harbor attack, among other, smaller, internal and external conflicts - students are given a chance to identify the conflicts and interpret what they will mean in the final outcome of the story.

Plot is interpreted by students as the story progresses from Washington, D.C. and a little girl being concerned about making friends in a new school, to the world essentially falling apart around her in the attack on Pearl Harbor and the discovery of even greater challenges to face, such as the loss of beloved friends and family and an uncertain, worldwide future peace. Finally, students interpret how it feels to live in a world which can so suddenly put everyone in imminent danger. As Amber experiences the crises in her own life, students can reflect upon and identify with her, comparing their own losses to those felt by the characters in *Early Sunday Morning*.

### **The Great Depression: History**

America had enjoyed nearly a decade of prosperity following World War I. Americans were content to be safe on home soil and to enjoy the fads and fashions of the Roaring Twenties. The automobile began to change the face of the landscape and the United States lifestyle. Industry was booming, the stock market kept rising, and it seemed prosperity would never end (4). Suddenly, on Oct. 29, 1929, a day which became known as "Black Tuesday," the stock market crashed; stockholders lost forty billion dollars, and by 1932, banks were closing daily, soup kitchens were set up to feed the hungry, and the homeless began sprouting up in cardboard shanties known as Hoovervilles (5). President Herbert Hoover, new to power in 1929, could not inspire the

confidence Americans needed to pull out of the financial disaster facing them. By 1932, Roosevelt became president, and the tide began to turn, through emergency banking measures, the implementation of many programs to assist hardship victims, regain jobs, and inspire industrial recovery, and the enactment of new stock and monetary issue laws to prevent future economic woes (6). It would take nearly seven years before the nation could begin to breathe more freely, and by then, World War II was churning its way around the globe.

### **The Great Depression: The Novel**

*Christmas After All* also offers students a chance to reflect on diverse ethnic, racial, historical, age group, and gender perspectives. Minnie Swift, her parents, and four siblings are living in Indianapolis, Indiana, during the Great Depression. Her father is a chief accountant at Greenhandle Scrap Iron. Minnie has three sisters named Lady, Clem, and Gwen, and a brother named Ozzie. When the story opens, it is a few months before Christmas, and Minnie describes how her family copes with the lack of money - by planting gardens for food, making gifts for Christmas, adding cheese to various meals to stretch out the ingredients, and by making their own clothes for special events such as school parties or dances.

Minnie Swift describes the horrors of the Great Depression, how fathers once used to working daily and earning money are suddenly found destitute and distraught, feeling as though there is no choice other than to commit suicide. As her own family experiences the loss of money and copes by decreasing the numbers of rooms they use within the house, to conserve on heat, a distant family member, an orphaned cousin, Willie Faye Darling, whose parents died, arrives from the Dust Bowl of the mid-west. This child's suitcase is virtually made out of cardboard; her shoes are well worn and floppy; her clothes and kitten are as dusty and dirty as she is. When she takes a bath, the dirt blackens the water and tub, frightening the little girl, who cannot see how it will ever be clean again. But Minnie Swift takes cleanser and dissolves the filth, making the tub look new again. This orphan child is the picture of wisdom. Her knowledge and spiritual resolve, her sense of humor, and her ability to love everyone brighten even the most dreary of days during the Great Depression, including when Minnie's father leaves the family, apparently for good.

Students are given the opportunity to experience a wide range of family relationships within the novel, including those with siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Through this novel, children experience life in the 1930s, with vivid descriptions of scenery, characters, and personalities of all ages and genders. Entertainment, in the form of radio shows and news broadcasts and movies in theaters, is also aptly described in the novel. Students achieve a clear glimpse of life in the 1930s through the eyes of Minnie Swift, and the emotional ties they make with the characters linger long after the book is read.

### **Historical Background**

Both historical novels include detailed, factual descriptions of the eras they portray in the back of each book. World War II and the Great Depression, from beginning to end, are concisely summarized, and there are pictures from the time periods, as well. It would be a good idea to present the factual material detailed in the back of each book as an introduction to each novel, thus setting the scene for the students before they begin reading. Students would be aware the novels are based on historical fact and will contain elements of reality.



## Secondary Sources for Teachers

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Teachers could become more familiar with the Great Depression and World War II by reading a variety of books, including: *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* ; *No Ordinary Time* ; and *The Enduring Vision, A History of the American People* . Books giving background information specific to the Pearl Harbor story and Japanese internment include: *War Without Mercy* ; *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* ; and *The First Strange Place: The Alchemy of Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (7). Great Depression books include: *Holding their Own: American Women in the 1930s*; *The Dispossessed: America's Underclass from the Civil War to the Present*; *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*; and *The Invisible Scar* (8).

## Strategies

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Teachers will use a variety of instructional strategies throughout both components of the unit. Since, in this particular school, class periods last 48 minutes, the general structure for lessons will be allocated as follows: A "Do Now" assignment upon student entry into the classroom, usually written, five minutes; initiation, which could consist of a mini lesson to meet grammar or other learning objectives, 10 minutes; actual classroom activities, reading, writing, listening, and speaking, either all together or separated, 30 minutes; and closure, three-minute wrap up to assess learning.

### **Response to Literature Group and Independent Work**

Students will work through the unit as a whole group, in small groups, and in pairs. They will also work independently. Students will be able to share reading and discussion. Most mini lessons will take place in the whole-group format, with students later breaking up into smaller groups or pairs to read silently or aloud. In completing the literature circle worksheets, students will be required to work independently, bringing what they derived from the reading, as individuals, to the heterogeneous literature circle for discussion. In closure, students return to the whole-group setting to share what they learned that day.

### **Literature Circles**

Literature circle worksheets are designed to tap a variety of intelligences and learning strengths. Each lesson, incorporating the literature circle worksheets, enables students to experience before, during, and after reading strategies, such as: tapping background information prior to reading, recording literary aspects and historical facts unearthed during reading, and sharing what was discovered in the reading. Students will, daily, be setting a purpose for their reading, posing questions, making predictions, and determining whether their predictions were accurate. In one of the literature circle roles, a student is asked to draw something remembered from the reading and to describe why this is important, another role requires a student to be a leader, a third role calls for a summarizer, and another position makes a student responsible for assessing individual and group work during discussion. Teachers could expand upon the drawing assignment by asking students to create works of art or models depicting scenes from the two novels. Students could use a variety of artistic media, including paints, crayons, paper collages, and clay, among others, to create what they imagined while reading.

All literature circle worksheets will be assessed and graded the day they are completed, and the next day, when the students move into the discussion groups with their graded worksheets, they will be aware of how they are doing in the learning process. Since the discussion aspects of the literature circles cannot function properly if any student is absent, teachers may take the option of handing out worksheets, originally intended for an absent student, to another student, promising extra credit if he or she completes the worksheet for the absent child. If the absent child returns the next day, that graded worksheet will be handed to that child, so he or she can share in the discussion and not be excluded. Students are more than willing to take on extra work for extra credit.

There are five main roles in the literature circles: discussion director; literary luminary; creative connector; illustrator; and summarizer. A separate worksheet is created for each role and passed out on a rotating basis to students. Each sheet contains the student's name, title of the book, date, the numbers of the pages being read, a description of the role, and an area in which to complete the work. It is the discussion director's job to create a list of questions the group might want to discuss about this part of the book; the discussion director helps the group talk over the main ideas in the reading and share reactions. On the discussion director's worksheet, there is a place to record four possible questions or topics for discourse, and there is a list of suggested questions that could be used by the group. For the literary luminary's role, it may be better if the teacher selects a literary element all the groups can investigate, and this element should appear on the pages students had to read. For instance, one literary element for analysis could be finding dashes that are used to add further meaning or detail to the text. It is the literary luminary's job to find a few sections in the reading that the group would like to hear read aloud, which illustrate or make clear the literary element. This worksheet gives space for up to four examples to be found in the reading, and the luminary writes down the page number, the location of the paragraph, the reason the example was chosen, and the plan for who will read the part aloud. The creative connector finds connections between the book the group is reading and the world outside the book. Creative connectors must connect the text to their own lives, to events within the community or school, to similar events in history, or to other people and problems. When the creative connector finds a passage, there is a space on the worksheet in which he or she can write his or her personal connection to the literature. The creative connector must then write three questions to enable group members to make connections. The illustrator must draw a picture related to the reading; it can be a sketch, cartoon, stick figure scene, flow chart, diagram, or other work of art, but it must depict a feeling or an event from the book. When the illustration is complete, the discussion director invites the illustrator to show the art without saying what it is. Group members must then try to guess what the drawing represents. At the end, the illustrator tells the purpose of the artwork. It is the summarizer's job to write a brief summary of what was read, being careful to include the key points, the main highlights, and the essence of the reading. There is enough space on the worksheet to record the summary and up to five key points. (9)

Because, in this particular class, the completion of homework is inconsistent, and the literature circles could not function without everyone making sure they read all of the assigned pages and completed the questions on their worksheets, the unit is designed to devote 30 minutes of one lesson, on one day, to reading 10 pages silently or aloud in the groups, with 30 minutes of the next day's lesson spent on actual literature circle discourse, using the answers written on the worksheets the previous day. In classes where homework completion is more dependable, teachers could assign a certain number of pages to read at home, ask students to complete the worksheets at home, and then, when the students return the next day, the class time can be devoted to literature circle discourse. One problem with this approach is that the teacher is unable to grade the worksheets prior to students entering the circles for discussion. Assessing the paperwork would, therefore, take place after discourse.



## Process in Writing Component

Six lesson plans comprise the *Christmas After All* process in writing work. In each lesson, students write one half page journal entries and then enter heterogeneous peer editing groups of no more than three students per group, to read the writing aloud and to edit the work. In the groups of three, each person receives the writer's journal entry, the piece is read aloud, and then the work is edited, aloud, and marked with pencil or pen to note changes needed. The writer also makes the changes on his or her paper during the peer editing process. Students make Venn Diagrams comparing and contrasting present day Christmas to Christmas in the 1930s Great Depression, in preparation for the writing assignment. They also create a rough draft, edit the work, rewrite the assignment, make a second draft, and then after all editing is complete, students submit the final copy.

## Computer Use

In both components of the unit, students should be given an opportunity to enter the school's computer laboratory to write the final copies of their assessment pieces. After printing, the documents may then be stapled in booklet form, using construction paper covers. Students could also illustrate the covers. In schools where facilities are available to bind the books using cardboard and wallpaper coverings, this is another way the work could be displayed in its final form.

## Culminating Projects

As a culminating activity to both novels, students would view the films *Pearl Harbor* and *It's a Wonderful Life* . They could then write a review of each film, assessing the films' relationship to the historical moments they claim to depict. Students could compare and contrast how the novels portray the time period with the ways in which the films show the time period. They could also say whether what they saw in their mind's eye while reading the novels was accurately depicted when compared to the historical period viewed on film.

Old time radio programs, recorded and available today on cassette tapes, featuring some of the comedies and serious shows mentioned in *Christmas After All* , and compact discs or cassette tapes featuring a story from World War II, through a program known as *Adventures in Odyssey* , could also be played to the students during the unit. Students could create their own radio shows by writing scripts and then performing the shows in groups. Some tapes available from Radio Reruns include: the 1938 classic, "The Shadow's Revenge," from *The Shadow* ; "War of the Worlds, Part I and Part II, starring Orson Wells," the broadcast that brought panic to the world on Oct. 30, 1938; "The Old Jalopy," Best of Series 1939, from *Fibber McGee & Molly* ; "A Matter of Evidence," from *The Green Hornet* ; and "Pearl Harbor Attacked! A Day That Will Live in Infamy, Dec. 7, 1941," from *Newsbreaks As They Happened on That Day* . In the *Adventures in Odyssey Classics, Star and Spangled Stories* , the radio dramas related to World War II include: "East Winds, Raining," from *At Home and Abroad* , Pearl Harbor; "Rescue from Manatugo Point," from *Terrific Tales, Mysterious Missions* , World War II; and "Operation Dugout," from *Terrific Tales, Mysterious Missions* , World War II. In addition, teachers could expose students to the music, which was popular for young people living during the 1930s and 1940s, such as the Big Band sounds of the Swing Era.

## Activities

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Classroom activities will require students to keep a composition notebook for both parts of the unit, the response to literature and the process in writing components. Within these composition notebooks, students will respond in writing to what they have read, complete classroom written assignments focusing on the daily objectives, or they will write responses to questions raised during mini lessons. These notebooks can also be used to create Venn Diagrams, to make predictions, and to record new vocabulary.

Drawing or creating works of art will also be a part of the classroom activities, through the literature circles' illustrator role, the option of designing the covers of the three-page journal entries, or by creating collages representing images from the 1930s and 1940s, using old magazines and other print materials.

Discourse, through active literature circles, can take place daily or every other day, depending upon whether students read the literature in class or at home.

Through the process in writing, students will write journal entries during class time and edit peers' work. Students will complete the entire journal entry within class, over six class periods, but second drafts and final copies may take a few more days to complete. If there are enough computers in the classroom, students may share them on a rotating basis to complete the final, typewritten versions of the assessment pieces, or all students may work together in a computer laboratory.

Other classroom activities include watching movies, listening to cassette tapes or compact discs, and reading a variety of literature related to both eras. This literature, in the form of children's picture books, such as *Uncle Jed's Barbershop* or *Number the Stars*, would be made available in the classroom and offered to children to read during Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) time. Children who choose these books would be able to write book reports upon their completion and earn extra credit for their efforts. Since the reading material spans the elementary grades from kindergarten and beyond, children with various reading levels would benefit from the offerings, with students reading at higher levels taking the more challenging books and those with lower abilities being given the opportunity to choose picture books or simpler novels.

## Informal and Formal Evaluation and Assessment

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In the response to literature, students will be evaluated and assessed daily, as students complete literature circle worksheets, which the teacher collects, grades, and hands back in time for literature circle discussion. Evaluation and assessment also takes place as the teacher circulates around the room, while the students read silently or aloud in groups and fill in the worksheets and during student discussion. A final, more formal assessment is administered through the students' creation of the three-page journal entry, in which they imagine themselves as Amber Billows one year after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. This assessment is evaluated through a detailed rubric, which is submitted to all students when they are given a written description of the three-page journal entry they must write.

In the process in writing component, students are evaluated and assessed while writing independently and working in peer editing circles, as the teacher circulates around the room. They are also given a detailed

rubric explaining expectations for learning success, when they are given a written description of the three-page journal entry they must submit, in which they imagine themselves as children during the Great Depression or children today, depending on their writing abilities.

## Curriculum Standards

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"Jewels of Endurance" contains the elements necessary to meet all 10 English Language Arts standards listed in Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching, including: composing, responding, and interpreting literature through reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and acting; engaging in a writing process in which students experience many writing elements; allowing children to respond to literature through discourse and writing; reading for information; understanding the conventions of English language; being introduced to a variety of materials for instruction; being exposed to several teaching strategies to strengthen literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities; allowing students to develop concepts and skills that enable them to respond, interpret, and compose through exposure to literature; and providing opportunities for children to work together as a community of learners, thus building experiences similar to those they may encounter in working together outside of the classroom.

"Jewels of Endurance" is also integrated with the local social studies curriculum, which requires these particular sixth grade students to learn and experience American history from after the Civil War to the present day. World War II and the Great Depression are two chapters studied in the curriculum.

Linking historical novels to the social studies curriculum enables students to meet several state of Connecticut social studies performance standards, including: allowing students to develop the historical thinking skills of chronological order and recognizing change over time; contextualizing, comprehending, and analyzing historical literature; researching historical sources; understanding the concept of how events take place in history and identifying the causes; understanding and constructing narratives and interpretation; using historical thinking skills to develop an understanding of the major historical periods, issues, and trends in United States history; applying their understanding of historical periods, issues, and trends to examine the historical themes of ideals, beliefs, and institutions, as well as human movement and interaction; and recognizing the importance of historical thinking and historical knowledge in their own lives and in the world around them.

## Children's Literature

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Picture books and other historical novels or short stories should be made available to students wishing to expand their knowledge of the Great Depression and

World War II. These books include: *Number the Stars* ; *The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank, The Definitive Edition* ; *The Devil's Arithmetic* ; *Star of Fear, Star of Hope* ; *The Island on Bird Street* ; *Hide and Seek* ; and *The Upstairs Room* (10).

As companions to the Holocaust and to the Amber Billows story about Pearl Harbor, students can obtain a further glimpse of life as Japanese-American citizens during the internment by reading *Journey to Topaz* , *Journey Home* , and *Under the Blood Red Sun* (11). Students may also read *Lily's Crossing* and *Once Upon America, Pearl Harbor is Burning! A Story of World War II* .

Non-fiction picture books about World War II, which could be made available to the classroom, include *Our Finest Hour*, *Voices of the World War II Generation* , and *Pearl Harbor, 50th Anniversary Special Edition* .

Great Depression themes which can be found in children's literature include: *The Bamboo Flute* ; *Grandpa Jake and the Grand Christmas* ; *Souder* ; *Circle of Fire* , (12); and *Uncle Jed's Barbershop* . Another historical novel is *Red-Dirt Jessie* .

Picture books made available to students telling stories of the 1930s include: *Duke Ellington* ; *The Gardener* ; *In Coal Country* ; *Lou Gehrig The Luckiest Man* ; *Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride* ; and *The Piano Man* . Picture books featuring the 1940s and America's struggles during World War II include: *Just Like New* ; *The Bat Boy and His Violin* ; *A Penny for a Hundred* ; and *Dirt on Their Skirts* .

### Final Summary

Students who complete this unit successfully will have internalized the factual and fictional information presented through the books so well that their culminating projects of the three-page journal entries will virtually come alive to the reader. In addition, the novels will have made a deep impression on the children, enabling them to compare what they saw in their mind's eye through the written word with what they saw in the two films, *Pearl Harbor* and *It's a Wonderful Life* . There are opportunities within the unit to tap children's multiple intelligences, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking, among others. Children will use their hands, minds, and eyes, and a variety of artistic media to create works of art, ranging from literature circle illustrations, to covers for the three-page journal entries, to collages of scenes from the Great Depression and World War II. Those who are drawn to drama will delight in making scripts to produce and then perform radio shows, much like those described in the novels.

A response to literature component of the unit, which focuses on literature circles, enables students to work together cooperatively to achieve state and local curriculum goals and objectives focused on the attainment of higher-order thinking skills. In the process in writing component of the unit, students write independently and peer edit the work to successfully grasp the finer skills needed to produce real-world publishable text. Students particularly enjoy the aspects of being able to work together to attain knowledge, to trust one another, and to depend upon each other to achieve common goals of success.

## Response to Literature Lesson Plan One

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### Goal

Students will respond to literature by reading the historical novel *Dear America* , *Early Sunday Morning* , *The Pearl Harbor Diary of Amber Billows* , *Hawaii* , 1941 , by Barry Denenberg, keeping a journal of personal reactions to the story, and engaging in discourse with other students through roles shared in literature circles. Students will understand reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills are important to their development in

a diverse world.

### **Objective, Do Now, Materials, and Initiation**

The objective is for students to identify the components of historical fiction, the purpose of real and imaginary characters, fictional yet accurate setting, plot, internal and external conflict, and tone. Students will connect the history of Pearl Harbor and World War II to their lives. Students will understand and identify how *Early Sunday Morning* is similar to stories found in unit five, "Making Your Mark," from *The Language of Literature*, and how it fits in closely with the theme, "Voices from the Past."

In the Do Now, students will create a three-column Know, Want to Know, Learned (KWL) chart, "What I Know," "What I Want to Know," and "What I Learned," giving it the headline, "Pearl Harbor." They will then write what they know and what they want to know about Pearl Harbor. (3-5 minutes) Materials include composition notebooks, pens, pencils, *Early Sunday Morning*, literature circle worksheets. For initiation, students will share what they know and want to know about Pearl Harbor (2 minutes).

### **Methods and Activities**

Students will open *Early Sunday Morning* and preview the text. They will read "Life in America in 1941," the historical note on pages 134-141, to understand how America became involved in World War II, through the bombing of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Students will complete the "What I Learned" portion of the KWL Chart in their composition notebooks. (15 minutes). Students will understand historical fiction, fictional yet accurate setting, plot, internal and external conflict, and tone (10 minutes). Students will then begin reading pages 3 to 8 (6 pages) in *The Pearl Harbor Diary of Amber Billows*, understanding that, while reading, they must fill in their role sheets for their literary circles. (12 minutes)

### **Closure, Assignment, and Assessment**

During closure, students will review what they learned about historical fiction, Pearl Harbor, fictional yet accurate setting, plot, internal and external conflict, and tone. (4 minutes) Students will, for the homework assignment, write a reaction to what they read on pages 3 to 8 in *Early Sunday Morning*. This may be stapled or taped into the composition notebooks the next day. During assessment, teacher circulates, as students write, and collects composition notebooks and homework for review.

## **Response to Literature Lesson Plan Two**

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### **Goal**

This goal is identical to the one posted in the first lesson plan.

### **Objective, Do Now, Materials, and Initiation**

Students' objective will be to discuss and identify the components of historical fiction (page 697, *The Language of Literature*) in literature circles. Students will also discuss and relate to what it is like to move in the middle of the school year (pages 3 to 8), in literature circles. In the Do Now part, while using composition notebooks and pages 3-8, students will answer: How did you feel when you heard the family was moving

again? How did you feel when Amber said she felt like the whole class was staring at her? Write briefly about a time this may have happened to you. (5 minutes) For materials, students will use composition notebooks, pens, pencils, *Early Sunday Morning*, and completed literature circles worksheets. During the initiation, students, as a whole class, will discuss how they felt when they heard Amber's family was moving again and how they felt when Amber thought the whole class was staring at her. Did they ever experience similar situations? (10 minutes)

### **Methods, Activities, Closure, Assignment, and Assessment**

Students will break into literature circles (2-3 minutes). Students will take literature circle worksheets and enter into discourse, being responsible for their appropriate roles. They will discuss and understand historical fiction (literary luminary) and discuss and relate to what it is like to move in the middle of the school year (pages 3-8). (25 minutes) For closure, students will tell what they learned from their literature circle discussions (3 minutes). Students will rearrange desks to their original position, return to their seats, pack up, and be dismissed (2 minutes). Students' homework assignment is to briefly describe their literature circle experiences in one or two paragraphs. How well did it go? Was it successful, why or why not? During assessment, teacher circulates during literature circle discourse, facilitates discussion, gathers worksheets for grading and review, and checks composition notebook entries.

## **Response to Literature *Early Sunday Morning* Assessment**

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You will write a three-page, two-day, final journal entry by Amber Billows, one year later, 1942, and show some maturity of the character, keeping to this time period. This journal entry must fit the character, the story line, and her time - there can be no 21st century events taking place. Amber's life has really come close to ending in Pearl Harbor, and she did not write to her friend, Allison. Does she finally write to her? This would be the first day of the journal entry.

If Amber has not written to Allison, what makes her think she should write? This would be day two of the journal entry, writing to her friend, Allison. Remember, Amber did not write while she was in Pearl Harbor, in *Early Sunday Morning*, so what do you think she would have to say to Allison, one year later?

## **Process in Writing Lesson Plan One**

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### **Goal**

Students will read the historical novel *Dear America*, *Christmas After All*, *The Great Depression Diary of Minnie Swift*, *Indianapolis, Indiana, 1932*, by Kathryn Lasky, and work through a process in writing, which will enable them to create a publishable text. Students will be engaged in their writing and will be given times to share their writing, thus gaining meaningful opportunities to communicate with others. Students will be involved in a writing process, which moves from forming an initial idea to revision, and then, finally, to the creation of a final draft. Students will be supported as they work on their writing, structure the text, and apply



the correct conventions of text, including grammar, spelling, mechanics, and usage.

## **Objective**

Students will be assigned one of two ideas to write a three-page journal entry, similar to Minnie Swift's diary in *Christmas After All*. The audience and interest level for this journal entry will range from childhood to adulthood. Students will understand in experiencing this process in writing that they will be able to create a text, which could be published in a *Dear America* novel. Some students will be assigned the task to write a three-page journal entry imagining themselves facing Christmas during the Great Depression. Other students will write a three-page journal entry describing Christmas as a child at home, in the current school year.

## **Do Now**

Copy the assignment you are given by the teacher in your composition notebooks, as follows. Assignment one: Write a three-page journal entry imagining yourself facing Christmas during the Great Depression. Assignment two: Write a three-page journal entry describing Christmas as a child in the current school year. The audience and interest level for this journal entry will range from childhood to adulthood. You will be creating a journal entry that could be published in a *Dear America* novel. You will be writing this over a period of six classes, from first draft, to revision, to final copy. The procedure is to write six half pages and peer edit the six half pages in a period of six classes. (5 minutes)

## **Materials, Initiation, Methods and Activities, Closure, Assignment, and Assessment**

Materials consist of composition notebooks, notebook paper, pens, pencils, and *Christmas After All*. During initiation, students will, as whole group, discuss what they know about creating a Venn diagram to form initial ideas for writing. Students will draw and label a Venn diagram on the board suitable to the ideas expressed in *Christmas After All*. (One circle would be labeled Christmas during the Great Depression; a second circle would be labeled Christmas, Today; and the third circle - where the two circles overlap - would be labeled Similarities.) (5 minutes) For methods and activities, students will brainstorm ideas to incorporate into the Venn diagram on the board. They will copy these diagrams into their composition notebooks to use as a reference for forming an initial idea in writing the three-page journal entry. Students will write the first half page of the journal entry on separate notebook paper (altogether there will be six half-pages to write, until the final copy, on three full pages). (35 minutes) In closure, students will share examples of what they wrote. Students will, for the homework assignment, write down any other ideas they might want to incorporate in their three-page journal entry. During assessment, teacher circulates, as students write, and collects composition notebooks and notebook papers for review.

## **Process in Writing Lesson Plan Two**

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### **Goal**

This goal is identical to the first lesson plan in the process in writing component.

### **Objective**

Students will peer edit the first half-page journal entry, marking for capitalization, punctuation, spelling, correct grammar, usage, mechanics, and thematic concerns. Students will ask for more description or details and seek clarity. Students will write the second half-page journal entry.

### **Do Now, Materials, Initiation, Methods, and Activities**

For the Do Now assignment, students will copy the following information in their composition notebooks, for review. Capitalization - Capitalize proper nouns and the pronoun, "I," as well as the first words in sentences; do not capitalize words in the middle of sentences, if they are not names. Punctuation - All sentences have a period, question mark, or exclamation point at the end of them. Commas are used to separate a series of words; semi colons are used to join two complete sentences into one, without the use of the word *and* . Colons are used to introduce a series of phrases separated by semi colons, such as, "He took with him to the beach several items: a very rusty bucket; a brand new beach ball; several worn blankets." Grammar - Nouns and verbs must agree, such as, "John went to the store," and not "John goed to the store." Complete sentences have a noun and a verb; sentence fragments are missing either the noun or verb. Run-on sentences go on for a long time and can be re-written into several smaller sentences. Paragraphs - Paragraphs usually have a main idea and several supporting sentences with details. A new paragraph begins with a new main idea. Conclusion - A conclusion to a story summarizes what was said earlier and usually ends with an interesting sentence that makes the reader remember the theme of the work. Spelling - If unsure of proper spelling, use a dictionary. (10 minutes)

Materials consist of composition notebooks, notebook paper, pens, pencils, *Christmas After All* . During initiation, students will, as a whole group, discuss what they know about creating a well-written document, reviewing grammar, vocabulary, spelling, usage, and mechanics lessons learned earlier. (10 minutes) For methods and activities, students will, in groups of three, peer edit the first half-page journal entry and pass the papers to the teacher for review. Peer editors will mark for capitalization, punctuation, spelling, correct grammar, usage, mechanics, and thematic concerns. When the papers are peer edited, the writers take them and rewrite them into a final version, which is then submitted to the teacher for review. Students will write the second half-page journal entry, with peer editing taking place the next day. (25 minutes)

### **Closure, Assignment, and Assessment**

In closure, students will tell two new ideas they learned from peer editing. (3 minutes) Students will, for the homework assignment, write down any other ideas they might want to incorporate in their three-page journal entry. Assessment takes place as the teacher circulates to observe while students write, and then the teacher collects the composition notebooks and notebook papers for review.

## **Process in Writing Assessment Assignments**

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### **First and Second Assessment Assignments**

You will write a three-page journal entry similar to the literary journal, *Christmas After All* . You will imagine yourself as a child of your age living in the Great Depression, with Christmas nearby. The audience and interest level for this journal entry will range from childhood to adulthood. You will create a text, which could be published in a *Dear America* novel. You will be descriptive in your writing, use details, apply the correct

conventions of the English language, and make the piece enjoyable for all to read. You will read your final copy to the class, and others will share how they felt after hearing your work. All work will be peer edited and gone over closely by your teacher. You will be graded on your work. You will receive a rubric for this writing assignment.

You will write a three-page journal entry similar to the literary work created by Minnie Swift in *Christmas After All*. You will describe Christmas as a child with your family, in the current school year. The audience and interest level for this journal entry will range from childhood to adulthood. You will create a text, which could be published in a *Dear America* novel. You will be descriptive in your writing, use details, apply the correct conventions of the English language, and make the piece enjoyable for all to read. You will read your final copy to the class, and others will share how they felt after hearing your work. All work will be peer edited and gone over closely by your teacher. You will be graded on your work. You will receive a rubric for this writing assignment.

### How to Peer Edit

The teacher chooses students to work in groups of three or four. Writers receive their original papers. Editors - the remaining students in the group - receive copies of the writers' journal entries. Writers read the portion to be edited that day to the group, as the editors seek errors. When the writers are finished reading, editors suggest changes to be made and make the changes on their copies, while the writers make the changes on their originals. Writers receive copies and originals to compare and place in writing folders. When one paper is read and edited, the group moves onto the second paper, and then to the third and fourth papers, until all papers are completed.

## Notes

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1. Barry Denenberg, *Dear America , Early Sunday Morning , The Pearl Harbor Diary of Amber Billows* , Hawaii, 1941 (Scholastic, Inc., New York, N.Y., 2001), p. 134.

2. Denenberg, 138.

3. Denenberg, 140.

4. Kathryn Lasky, *Dear America , Christmas After All , The Great Depression Diary of Minnie Swift* , Indianapolis, Indiana, 1932 (Scholastic, Inc., New York, N.Y., 2001), p. 161.

5. Lasky, 161.

6. Lasky, 166.

7. Paul S. Boyer, Clifford E. Clark, Jr., Sandra McNair Hawley, Joseph F. Kett, Neal Salisbury, Harvard Sitkoff, Nancy Woloch, *The Enduring Vision, A History of the American People* , Concise Third Edition (Houghton Mifflin Company, Evanston, Ill., 1998), p. 613.

8. Boyer, 587-588.

9. Harvey Daniels, *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* , (Stenhouse Publishers, York, Maine,

1994), p. A1-A5.

10. Donna E. Norton and Saundra E. Norton, *Through the Eyes of a Child , An Introduction to Children’s Literature* (Prentice-Hall Inc., Upper Saddle River, N. J., 1999), p. 556-558.

11. Norton, 569.

12. Norton, 554-555.

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