



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2013 Volume I: Literature and Information

Making Meaning: The Search for Identity through Family History

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.01.01

by Kelly DeLuca

When YOU are the author, what do you have to say? What message would you convey to your readers that will guide them to greater understanding? In every adult's life there are images, events and people that shape them towards the person they are to become. Some of these chapters are fondly remembered and relayed, and others are things that we wish we could forget but cannot. The ability to write reflectively about our past is an important step toward owning our identity. We empower ourselves through this reflective process because we ultimately learn that we have a message to convey to our readers. Our voice and our story are important.

This unit uses a foundation of memoir as a starting point to allow students to investigate what contributes to a person's identity and how this journey to adulthood has been expressed through the genre of memoir. Students read *The Color of Water* and other excerpts, analyze the psychological and sociological processes of searching for identity, and research their own roots through a family history project to answer the question: In what ways does our past affect our future and help to shape our identity?

(Recommended for English and AP Language and Composition, grades 11 and 12)

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