



Yale-New Haven
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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2016 Volume II: Literature and Identity

Discovering Yourself in the Voices of Others: Exploring Literary Aspects of Constructing an Identity

Guide for Curriculum Unit 16.02.03

by Richard Walter Cuminale

In the context of an 11th-grade English classroom, this unit will focus explicitly on the complications of “literature” and “identity.” It explores the tensions that exist in these words themselves: the distinct and intensely personal lived experience of literature that at the same time touches on the universal elements of humanity; the idea that identity is a signification of the self, yet at the same time the signification conditions the identity it signifies. This unit hopes to challenge students with questions that they may not have answers to as they study a series of short stories with a focus on voice: where literature and identity converge. Ideally students complete this unit with a sensitivity to these tensions and the confidence to engage with them with whatever text they encounter or create.

(Developed for English 3, grade 11; recommended for English, AP Literature and Composition, grades 9-12)

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