Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2019 Volume I: Digital Lives

Living in the Cloud: Private Lives in the Digital Age

Curriculum Unit 19.01.07
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Introduction

This unit provides an in depth look at the interplay between losses in privacy and gains in convenience that accompany the ever-expanding use of and reliance on digital media and technology in our lives. The aim of the unit is not to convince students of a specific stance; rather, it is to provide an opportunity for students to look critically at the ways in which privacy's role in our modern lives has changed and to think about taking intentional action regarding their own use of digital media. Adolescents (and people in general) often engage in activities without fully understanding the consequences or repercussions. By analyzing ways in which the use technology may have a lasting impact on their privacy, students might choose to change their practices or they may realize there is no conflict with their current usage.

The majority of class time during this unit will be committed to discussions of topics that arise from a wide variety of informational and literary texts that delve into the topics of privacy and digital technology in our lives. While there is much current information being published on these topics, the unit also pulls from some historical sources and asks students to consider changes to privacy over previous eras. As the core text, George Orwell's *1984* provides a solid foundation on issues concerning privacy. This novel elucidates two interrelated aspects of privacy that this unit seeks to develop: first, the internal thoughts that we develop and contemplate without outside influence; and second, the freedom from being observed, accessed, and controlled by outsiders.

Throughout this unit, students will produce short argumentative pieces drawing evidence from the texts read for and discussed in class. Classroom instruction on producing a claim, drawing and citing evidence from a text, and using reasoning to develop a stance will be addressed through lessons in the unit. The short pieces of writing students produce throughout the class will culminate in a final argumentative essay weighing the interplay and value of privacy and convenience in our digital lives.

Privacy

Each of us has a private life. We all have secret thoughts that we choose not to share, even with our closest friends. You might have a hobby or interest that you keep completely to yourself. You might have a private space where you record your thoughts, a space that is for your eyes only. In a similar vein, most of us would be very unsettled by the idea that a person might be watching us without our knowledge. In most aspects of our daily lives, we assume, even while in public, that we are operating under a degree of privacy, that nobody is watching us as we go about our business.

The relationship between humans and privacy in western tradition is pretty old, stretching back all the way to creation according to the Judeo-Christian tradition. Adam and Eve, after eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, instantly seek out privacy, covering themselves with leaves, and attempt to hide themselves from God. If one is to take this story at face value, it is the knowledge of good and evil which incites them to seek out privacy, at least of their nakedness. According to Richard E. Miller, "Before the fall, there was only innocent looking; after the fall, on the other side of Eden, there is shame, concealment, and the designation of spaces on the body that are not to be looked at." (1) What we can learn from this story, at least as far as privacy is concerned, is that it is in our nature to be concerned with our privacy; desiring privacy is part of being human.

Fast forward a few millennia: The United States was founded on the idea that people were individuals and had "certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." (2) A few years later, in 1791, the right of privacy itself was made a little more concrete as it was defined and established legally in the Fourth Amendment:

> The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized. (3)

We live in a country that prides itself on the protection of the rights of the individual.

But a distinction should also be drawn between two different meanings of the word privacy. On one side, there is what I will call self-thinking; the internal thoughts that we have and the private experiences of our lives. We can choose what portions of these thoughts we share and with whom we share them. Alternatively, there is the desire to keep our lives and our personal information from external access; it is our assumption, especially as Americans, that we are not being constantly monitored by powerful entities such as the government or private corporations. Throughout the content of this unit, students will explore the distinction between these two definitions through reading and discussing a variety of texts, fiction and informational, that delve into the idea of privacy.

Impact of Technology

So, what has the digital age that we now live in done to our privacy? We publicly announce information about ourselves, personal information that previously would have been guarded. We find with steadily increasing regularity that our personal data is turning up in publicly accessible forums. A quick search of just my name on the internet turns up, among other things, my current address and cell phone number, my parents' names and address, my wife's name, and previous addresses I have lived at. Incidents of online accounts being hacked are commonplace. Whether we want it or not, our personal lives now have digital shadows that will follow us wherever we go. It is not so much a question of what we choose to post anymore, because chances are, our information has already been posted.

Of course, there are conveniences that come with the loss of privacy: instant communication with friends and relatives around the globe, online banking and shopping that provide immediate access to resources, a wealth of information that can be called up at a moment's notice for free. But, there are just as many negatives that accompany the positives: we spend more time in our relationships digitally than we do in person, we buy more than we need because it is so readily available and marketed with targeted advertising, much of the information available through the web is unreliable and insufficiently verified through accurate research and scholarship.

The majority of students in high school today cannot imagine a world where digital access is not instantly at their fingertips. They have grown up with the ability to instantaneously retrieve any answer with a Google search. They have been able to listen to or watch what they want, when they want, through apps like iTunes, YouTube, and Netflix. They are in contact with friends and family around the clock through instant messaging and through their ever adapting and evolving social media feeds. They can easily access their assignments and grades in school using Google Classroom or PowerSchool or Engrade, and if that fails, they can simply message their teacher. This doesn't even begin to cover the list of games, apps, and services that teens access on a daily basis.

Today's adolescents live their day to day lives constantly connected to their online lives, a digital version of themselves. While there are arguably benefits to uploading and downloading information to and from the cloud, there are significant drawbacks as well. With adolescents sharing more and more of themselves in these online accounts, they have less and less private moments. Rather than spend time in silent reflection, most students drown out the internal monologue with a social media feed. Instead of putting effort into solving a problem for oneself, it has become much easier--and more common--to simply look up solutions and go with the one that has the most thumbs next to it, the most crowd support. Has the sense of what privacy means fundamentally changed for this generation?

At our core, humans are social animals: we have evolved to exist in societies that provide strength and security. At the same time, we have also evolved to be sentient and philosophical beings, capable of deep thought independent of others. This duality, being connected and separate, is something that sets us apart from other animals. As technology evolves, we become less and less independent. The reliance on technology that we see in today's adolescents spans all aspects of their thinking. They have, in many ways, given up the separation that is inherent in human existence to become part of an ever-expanding connected organism. But what happens to the individual with this shift? By giving up the private internal thoughts through constant access to and reliance upon the thoughts of others, by turning away from the privacy of personal experience through constant sharing on social media, are today's teenagers redefining what it means to be an individual?

The teenage years are a time for rebellion and self-discovery. Adolescents are trying to define who they are but are simultaneously trying to feel a sense of belonging. Music, fashion, and other trends are outward aspects of self that teens gravitate towards to show their belonging to a certain group or clique; this is nothing new. But in recent years, the hive mentality that defines what it means to belong has become more pervasive through the ubiquity of these trends in social media and other digital access. More and more, what it means to express oneself as a teenager means following trends. Self-expression has become a commercial enterprise, one that teens are not even aware that they are buying into. Digital technologies such as social media and even streaming media have been able to inundate the teenage mind with advertisements because teens spend more and more time on their feeds. Targeted advertisements blend into the stream of images that their friends have posted, and, just as frequently, their friends are posting about the products that are being advertised.

To a great extent, what the internet has done is bring us all closer together. We can communicate with people around the globe in real time. We have instant access to information via websites like Wikipedia, a crowdsourced digital encyclopedia that provides free information on just about any topic you can imagine. We have streaming news from limitless sources. This is viewed by most as a great positive contribution to society. We now have access to information that makes understanding those who are different much easier. But this is not always what happens. Our 24-hour access to information through our phones and computers has magnified the hive mentalities that have always existed. With the internet as a place where anyone can publish their thoughts, it gives credence to ideas that would otherwise not take root. People tend towards the information they already believe and agree with. Rather that opening the door to new ideas and providing understanding of those with different backgrounds, philosophies, and beliefs, the information most people encounter on the internet serves to distance groups of people from one another.

In his book *On the End of Privacy*, Richard E. Miller delves deep into the circumstances surrounding the 2010 suicide of Tyler Clementi. Before his final act, Clementi posted a final status update, “jumping off the gw bridge sorry.” As Miller goes on to explain, “In the paper-based world, suicide notes are, almost exclusively, private affairs. But what to make of a suicide note posted, in real time, to the Internet?” (4) This is not the only recorded instance of a publicly announced suicide, a phenomenon becoming more frequent in today’s digital landscape. When young people communicate, it is most frequently through digital means, and it is most frequently through public channels. What’s more, as Miller continued digging into the story behind Tyler Clementi’s suicide, he discovered that social media had played a much bigger role in the suicide than just Tyler’s posting his final message. Clementi’s college roommate had secretly filmed and shared via a live web-feed a private homosexual encounter between Tyler and another student at the college. According to Miller’s detailed research into the events, this public broadcast of a private event led directly to Tyler’s taking his own life. The roommate, Dharun Ravi, received a sentence of 30 days in prison and three years probation. (5)

So do the positives of our digital lives outweigh the negatives? This unit asks students to analyze the evidence on both sides of this question and decide for themselves. The answer should not be a simple one; rather, students will have to consider the complicated and often conflicting relationship between our desires for both privacy and convenience.

Big Brother Is Watching You

George Orwell's dystopian novel, *1984*, looks at the world of Oceania through the perspective of fictional Winston Smith, the novel's protagonist. The novel begins with Winston trying to hide himself from the government's ever-present cameras, the eyes of Big Brother, to write his thoughts in a journal he has illegally purchased on the black-market. In Winston's world, not just the action of writing his thoughts down has been banned, but the mere existence of personal thoughts is a crime--"thoughtcrime." Winston is aware that this crime is among the highest in his society, yet his desire to track his own thoughts, to access and explore his own mind through writing, is strong enough for which to risk his life. This opening scene of the novel provides the perfect introduction to the two definitions of privacy that will be explored in this unit: external access and private thought.

Most obvious is the intrusion in the citizens' lives by Big Brother, epitomized by the telescreens that provide continuous surveillance. Citizens don't know if they are being watched by the cameras and listening devices that seem ubiquitous in this society, but a sense of fear pervades that at any given moment, at home, at work, or out in public, Big Brother is watching you:

> There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized. (6)

It is the sense of not knowing that keeps citizens in check. There are even points in the book where you wonder if the government is really watching at all (we learn without a doubt by the end that they in fact are watching).

The ubiquitous cameras are no longer merely a plot device for a dystopian fictional world. Look up in any corner in any city in America and odds are there is a camera observing you. Taken a step further, the Chinese government is utilizing the same facial-recognition AI (artificial intelligence) that Google and Facebook use to find your face in friends' pictures. Xi Jinping's regime is taking a page right out of Orwell's book and is using this AI to watch and punish citizens who step outside of the nation's strict laws. Amy Webb reports: "Chinese citizens are learning to live with automated monitoring and consequences of stepping out of line. Crime is down, and social unrest is curtailed, and for a time the middle and upper classes preserve the status quo. […] For now at least, it seems like privacy, religious freedom, sexual identity and free speech are reasonable trade-offs for earning a desirable social credit score." (7)

It is important to draw a distinction here between the fictional world of Oceania and the technological world we live in. Orwell was writing on the heels of World War II; his novel was a warning of the advancement of fascist ideals that he saw as a threat to freedom. While the fictional world he imagines has strong corollaries with the state of surveillance in China, the technological surveillance in the United States is significantly different. Obviously, there are elements of government intrusion on our lives, but the larger issue in our country are those intrusions by private corporations that citizens willingly support by purchasing and installing

“smart” devices for their homes, posting and sharing all aspects of their lives online, and by approving ever encroaching permissions on the apps they download to their phones. While this is not quite the world Orwell imagined in his dystopia, there are still startling parallels that will be explored in the content of the unit.

While the intrusiveness of the government is the privacy issue that stands out most plainly in the novel, Orwell brings up for our consideration another key aspect of privacy that will be explored more deeply in this unit: that of private thought. In our world where everyone can (and to a huge degree does) instantly publish every passing thought, is there still value in our own thoughts being private? In his history of privacy in America, Frederick S. Lane points out that the limit to the security of our thoughts is within our heads. “Once those thoughts are expressed externally in any fashion--speech, diary, letter, telephone conversation, e-mail, instant message--our ability to control the spread of information is diminished by varying degrees.” (8) In 1984, though the government has banned this type of private thinking, Winston is willing to risk his life to begin tracking his thoughts and to try to remember the world before Big Brother. In the real world, adolescents obviously still have private thoughts, but from what I have seen they are more willing to publish their thoughts, no matter how personal to the web via social media, blogs, or vlogs.

By exploring these and other aspects of privacy through both Orwell’s *1984* and other supplementary texts, students will develop a much fuller vision of their own private lives in the digital age.

Student Outcomes

Students will be asked to draw corollaries between the novel *1984* and their own lives, exploring different aspects of privacy, both through Winston’s fictional perspective and through nonfiction readings that explore the link between privacy and technology. The novel will form a point of comparison to look at the ways in which governments and other powerful entities in the world today are encroaching on and redefining the rights of citizens’ privacy. When all is said and done, students will have to decide if the fiction of Big Brother is a possible outcome of the technological path we are headed down as a society. Has our desire to keep up with accelerating technologies forced us to willingly give up our own personal privacies in exchange for the allure of digital convenience?

Each week’s readings and discussions during this unit of study are guided by a different question and focused on a different aspect of privacy. At the end of each week, students will be required to write a brief (1-2 pages typed) response to that week’s question which will be due at the beginning of the following week. In doing so, students will consider each aspect of privacy separately before facing the final task of responding to the overarching essential question: to what extent should we relinquish our personal privacies in order to gain convenience from digital devices? The goal of this approach is that students will build their final written response from the various components that make up the unit of study and will thus have a much more well-rounded response for the final task, built on the array of readings and discussions they have studied.

At the same time, it is a hope in developing and implementing this unit that the results will go beyond the written work for the class. In considering the evidence before them, I am not attempting to convince students of any particular mindset. On the contrary, I want students to honestly consider the materials presented as well as each other’s additions to the topic before deciding for themselves how much privacy they are willing to give up in order to keep moving forward in the digital age. One of the major goals of this unit is simply

awareness.

This unit of study asks students to look critically at the issue of privacy as presented in a variety of sources across genres. In doing so, students will focus on two key reading standards from the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) in English/Language Arts. First, students must "assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text" by looking for bias particular to a work and using their understanding to discern differences in multiple approaches. Similarly, they must also "analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take."

In writing both their weekly responses to the guiding questions and in their final argumentative essay responding to the unit's overarching essential question, they will receive instruction and feedback on their ability to "write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence." These writings will also provide opportunity for lessons on using textual evidence which draws on the CCS: "Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research."

Finally, throughout the unit, students will be expected to "prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively." These discussions will compose the majority of instructional time throughout the unit.

Technology and the School Setting

The Sound School is a vocational-agricultural school located in New Haven's City Point District. Students come to this school not only from the many neighborhoods of New Haven but from several surrounding towns as well. This leads to a very diverse student population with a wide range of student backgrounds and interests. The total student population at Sound was 318 in the 2018-19 academic year. The campus stretches along roughly a quarter-mile of Long Island Sound, and students pass between buildings to get from class to class. This open atmosphere coupled with the diversity of students and small class sizes leads to classes that allow for in-depth discussion of topics with a blending of perspectives. Students tend to enter conversations with open minds, and they listen to one another with authentic interest in learning from one another.

The Sound School has phased in a one-to-one digital policy. During their freshman year students are issued a Chromebook, which they carry with them until they graduate. This provides a great advantage when working with students on their writing. Assignments and readings can be posted to Google Classroom which provides students with instant access to assignments and assures that they can't misplace their work. Students produce their written work via Google Docs. This allows students and teachers alike to track revisions and edits to their work and allows both teacher and student to compile a portfolio of all the work a student produces.

This unit is intended to be used as the initial unit in an eleventh-grade English class. As with all classes at The Sound School, my junior English courses are mixed ability, presenting a range of student reading and writing abilities that can often be an instructional challenge. As noted, the core text for this unit is George Orwell's dystopian novel, *1984*. Students will read this text in print form, but the other supplemental texts for this unit

will be distributed to students electronically for them to read on a screen. All written responses to texts, including journal responses and the final written argumentative essay will be produced digitally in Google Classroom.

While this unit asks students to explore the impact of digital technologies and digital media on their lives, it will also be utilizing digital technologies and digital media to convey much of the information they will be studying and to record their thoughts on that information. On the surface, this seems like a contradiction, or at the very least a bit ironic. However, class time will be given to discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the digital approach to education. Students will be asked to assess their perception of their learning in both spheres: with books, pens, and paper and with files, keyboards, and screens. Individuals can then choose whether to include this impact on their own education as part of their final argument for the unit.

Unit Overview

In this unit, students will analyze and discuss several aspects of privacy as it connects to their own digital lives. Students will have the opportunity to develop their own thoughts, independently through their analysis and synthesis of various texts, and then as a class by sharing, debating, and refining their thoughts in class discussion. Each week, students will encounter and grapple with a different guiding question that focuses on a different aspect of privacy. All of the lessons that week will aim at helping students develop an independent response to the guiding question by looking at it from different perspectives. Students will be asked to draw on a wide variety of texts each week including fiction, poetry, essays, legal documents, visual art, and excerpts from film.

In the first week of the unit, students will begin defining the term privacy in a general sense. The guiding question is self-reflective, asking students, “What role does privacy play in your life?” Readings will focus on Cory Doctorow’s short story, “Scroogled;” contemporary news stories that present views of privacy; selected writings from Wordsworth on solitude, and foundational documents (such as the *Declaration of Independence* or the *Constitution of the United States*) that elucidate differing views of privacy. Students will also be asked to assess their own digital lives by looking at their online presence through the lens of an outsider: what are they telling the world about who they are?

During the second week of the unit students will contemplate the question, “How does the influence of others affect my thinking?” Students will begin working with the core text, George Orwell’s *1984*, focusing on setting and character as developed throughout the first 50 pages of the novel. One of the key aspects of Winston’s character, seen through the diary he begins keeping, is self-thinking, his ability to think outside of the confines of his society’s dictates. This reading will be coupled with Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essay, “Self-Reliance,” and class discussions will focus on comparing Emerson’s thoughts on independence to those of the students. Students will also analyze legal documents and news articles that connect to the foundational and contemporary American idea of freedom of speech and of expression.

The third week’s guiding question asks students whether or not the government should have access to their personal information and conversations. Students will complete reading Part 1 of Orwell’s *1984*, and class discussions will center on the role of Big Brother in the lives of Oceania’s citizenry. Students will take a deeper look at Big Brother’s conversion of language to Newspeak, a way in which the government can better control

the thoughts of the citizens. Students will also take a look at nonfiction readings about the three technology giants (Tencent, Baidu, Alibaba) that are redefining the way citizens in China are being constantly watched and controlled by the government. An excerpt from the film *Enemy of the State* will also form a piece of the readings for the week.

During the fourth week, students will consider the ways in which both age and peers influence one's perceptions of privacy. The idea that adolescents think about privacy very differently than adults is explored in danah boyd's book, *It's Complicated*. In her book, boyd explains, "When teens--and, for that matter, most adults--seek privacy, they do so in relation to those who hold power over them." In other words, adolescents are not directly concerned with the government or corporations seeing the intricacies of their day to day lives, but it is their parents and teachers from which they wish to remain private. (9) Students will read excerpts that discuss how and why these differences exist and apply to their own concepts of privacy. In Orwell's *1984*, students will read the first half of part two; discussions will center on the differences in the generations that Winston notices, both in his interactions with the older proles and in his relationship with Julia.

Week five will take a look at digital data mining and the ways in which corporations turn data pulled from our digital lives into profits. Students will answer the question, "To what extent should corporations be able to share the information you post on social media?" Students will finish the reading of part two of Orwell's *1984*, paying careful attention to the fictional writings of Goldstein's book in those chapters. Students will also read an excerpt from Dave Eggers' *The Circle* to consider how interconnected we have become by digitally sharing every aspect of ourselves and what that means for our personal and communal privacy. Students will also analyze an excerpt from Shoshana Zuboff's book, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism.* According to Zuboff, it is corporations such as Google and Facebook that are leading the charge in exploiting our digital footprints to make money and to shrink the sphere of our own private lives.

Week six, the focus will switch to anonymity in a digital world with increased storage of and access to personal information online. Students will grapple with the guiding question, "Who should own and control information on the internet that is about you?" They will complete the reading of Orwell's *1984*. Students will be asked to draw connections between the final stages of Winston's torture and the idea of digital anonymity that was at play in the 2014 European court case that deemed it the responsibility of Google to remove, at the request of involved individuals, certain results that searches returned. (10) This became known as the right to be forgotten. Though this law hasn't made its way to the United States, the question of who has the right to control what information stays on the internet is still relevant and important.

In the seventh week, students will be asked to look at the issue from the other side. The final guiding question asking, "What have we gained through digital technologies?" It can't all be bad—otherwise we wouldn't shop for the latest gadgets and upload ourselves into the digital cloud. What we gain must hold more than basic entertainment value. Students will look at a variety of short fiction and nonfiction pieces that explore the benefits of our interconnected digital world.

The final week of the unit provides students a chance to process, coalesce, and express their thoughts on the topic of privacy in their digital lives, drawing on the material they have discussed and synthesized over the past weeks. Students will compose an argumentative essay defending their stance on the debate between our loss of privacy and benefits gained in our digital lives. This essay will go through a process of peer review and revising.

Throughout this unit of study, students will be asked to reflect on their personal experiences through the lens of the material they analyze. Part of the engagement that will make this a high interest unit for high school

students is the fact that much of what they read and discuss will be applicable to their own lives, and not just to their classwork. By thinking about the applicability of what they are studying to their own lives, this unit might have a positive impact on their habits. At the very least, students will be required to think about and debate the effects of their digital lives.

Sample Lessons

Defining Privacy – Week One

The objective of this opening lesson is that students will begin developing a definition of privacy (both for themselves individually and as a class) that they will be building on and modifying throughout the unit. This definition will be the foundation of their final written argument. This lesson also seeks for students to grapple with the fictionalized account of Greg Lupinski in "Scroogled" and to draw corollaries between the story and reality.

- Students will have read Cory Doctorow's "Scroogled" in preparation for the class.
- Begin class with a 7-minute journal write: What role does privacy play in your life?
- Students share their journal responses in pairs for 3 minutes.
- Full class discussion on topic of privacy. Take notes on white board during discussion. As students share from their responses, guide them towards defining characteristics of privacy. Possible follow-up questions:
    - Why is privacy important?
    - From whom do you seek privacy?
    - How do you feel when your privacy is invaded? Why?
    - Are there different types of privacy?
    - Are there situations where privacy should be taken away? By whom?
- Pause the conversation and introduce the story, "Scroogled." Ask students to write about their initial thoughts on the story. Allow 4 minutes.
    - What are Greg's trigger points and motivations throughout?
    - How does Greg feel about privacy at the beginning, middle, and end of the story? Define the beginning, middle, and end of the story based on Greg's attitude.
- Ask students to share from their responses. Direct the conversation to the topic of privacy but allow for some discussion of character and plot as well. Possible follow-up questions:
    - Do you think something like this could happen in reality?
    - What do you think of the government accessing your internet history?
    - Where is the line of balance between individual privacy and public safety?
- On their Chromebooks, students are to take 10 minutes to search for information about themselves on the internet. They should assume the role of a government official for whom passwords are no obstacle. What about themselves can they discover online? Are there things they put online assuming a degree of privacy? Are there things about them online that they didn't post that they would prefer not to have public?
- Once students search through their online profile, they should write in their journal once more responding to what their online profile is and how they feel about the information that is available to someone who wants to find it.

- Brief conversation of students' thoughts on their online presence. Some students may be unwilling to share due to the private nature of some of their online information.
- Assignment of the reading schedule for Orwell's *1984* should also be included in this opening lesson to allow students adequate time for reading.

Winston and Oceania, Character and Setting – Week 2

The focus of this lesson is to take a deeper look at the initial characterization of Winston Smith and the description of Oceania in the opening pages of Orwell's *1984*. The objective is for students to consider the specific details Orwell includes in the opening of his novel. Students will consider how these details work together and how they compare to details later in the book. Using the description of Winston Smith, later in the week, students will compare Orwell's view of self-reliance with that defined by Emerson in his essay of that name.

- Students are to be broken into 5 small groups. Each group will be assigned a specific scene from the assigned reading:
    - Winston begins writing in the diary, pages 1-9
    - The Two Minutes Hate, pages 9-20
    - Parsons and Newsflash, pages 17-29
    - Dreams and The Physical Jerks, pages 29-37
    - Winston at work, pages 37-48
- Each group will work to analyze the assigned section of text for characterization of Winston Smith and for description of the setting (micro and macro). Distribute a piece of chart paper and two markers to each group. They should take notes on a piece of paper and record their final findings on the chart paper to present to the class. Each group should answer the following questions:
    - What details does Orwell include to characterize Winston Smith? Find five specific details in the text and record them. For each detail, explain in your own words what it shows us about Winston.
    - What details does Orwell include about the setting? Find five specific details in the text and record them. For each detail, explain in your own words, what it shows us about the world of Oceania.
- Groups hang their completed chart paper around the room and students circulate to read them.
- Students write a short reflection on the process of composing their chart and on the other groups' findings. Each student should include one similar and one different observation from another group in their reflection.

Building an Argument – Week 8

Students will begin work on the final written argument. The objective is for each student to consider an authentic audience—one in which they will address an actual or imagined recipient—for their individual argument. There are two components to the lesson: each student must consider what aspect of privacy they are most interested in building their argument about.

- Begin by reviewing the essential questions from each of the weeks of the unit:
    - What role does privacy play in your life?
    - How does the influence of others affect your thinking?
    - Should the government have access to your personal information and conversations?
    - In what ways do both age and peers influence one's perceptions of privacy?
    - To what extent should corporations be able to share the information you post on social media?

    - Who should own information on the internet that is about you?
    - What have we gained through digital technologies?
- Students should write a brief paragraph responding to each question. Encourage students to spend about 4-5 minutes on each question. Once they have written their thoughts, students should reflect on their responses and choose one that sparked a specific interest. Walk around during this process and work with students who are struggling.
- Once students have selected a focus for their argument, they should consider a specific audience and purpose for their writing. This will help shape the work as a cohesive whole. Do they want to convince their peers that they should spend less time online or share less of their information? Do they want to address their parents' concerns and let them know that there really is no risk in posting all those photos? Maybe they want to write to Facebook about their privacy policy and suggest changes that would be more palatable to the public.
- Now that they know what they are going to write about, to whom they are writing, and their purpose, students should begin thinking about which materials from the unit will best serve their needs. Students might also consider areas in which they need to conduct further research.
- Students should build an outline of their argument, including their main points and the supporting evidence for each.
- Finally, students should begin drafting their argument, drawing on the materials they have discussed in class.

Appendix on Implementing District Standards

In 2010, the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects as the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS). In 2017, a representative group of New Haven Public Schools teachers, working with the CCS as a starting point, developed a list of performance indicators and scoring criteria for high school English under four specific competencies: 1 - Reading, 2 - Writing, 3 - Speaking & Listening, and 4 - Inquiry. Following are the performance indicators directly addressed by the teaching and assessed through the student work of this unit. Each contains a reference to the College and Career Readiness Standard(s) in the CCS from which it was drawn.

1a. Comprehend complex literary and informational texts by determining what the text says explicitly and what it implies (CCR.R1)

1b. Support conclusions drawn from the text with specific evidence when writing or speaking (CCR.R1)

1c. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics (CCR.R9)

1d. Analyze the text to determine how author's choices relate to each other to shape the meaning of the work as a whole (CCR.R4-6)

The above reading indicators are addressed primarily through the reading, analysis (both formal and informal), and discussion of the core text, George Orwell's 1984. Many of these skills, for example comparing how multiple texts address the same theme, will also be an integral component of working with the shorter peripheral texts used throughout the unit.

2a. Develop argumentative writing to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts (CCR.W1)

2b. Develop informative or explanatory writing to examine and convey complex ideas and information (CCR.W2)

2c. Develop narrative writing to convey real or imagined experiences or events (CCR.W3)

2d. Organize writing in a way that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (CCR.W4)

2e. Use the conventions of standard English (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) when writing (CCR.L1-2)

2f. Use language appropriate for audience and purpose (CCR.L3)

2g. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach (CCR.W5)

The above writing indicators will be addressed throughout the unit, but 2a and 2d-g will be especially important in composing the final argumentative essay. Indicators 2b-c will be addressed throughout the unit in shorter writing assignments building from the readings and preparing for discussions.

3a. Prepare for a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners (CCR.SL1)

3b. Participate in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners (CCR.SL1)

Student discussion is a key component to students exploring the topics and essential questions of this unit. Their preparation for and participation in these discussions, whether small group or whole class, is part of the learning of the unit.

4b. Assess the credibility and accuracy of each source.

4c. Select relevant information that advances my line of inquiry (CCR.W8)

4d. Develop and pursue questions to demonstrate and expand understanding of a subject (CCR.W7)

In developing their final written argument, students will be sifting through a large amount of information from the unit. They will be pursuing an argument specific to their own interest that stems from the work of the unit. During the final week of the unit, attention will be given to instruction on choosing, referencing, and citing source material to support students' arguments.

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Notes

(1) Richard E. Miller, *On the End of Privacy*, 60

(2) US 1776

(3) US Const. amend. IV

(4) Richard E. Miller, *On the End of Privacy*, 17

(5) Richard E. Miller, *On the End of Privacy*, 210

(6) George Orwell, *1984*, 3

(7) Amy Webb, *The Big Nine*, 211(8) Frederick S. Lane, *American Privacy*, 2

(9) danah boyd, *It’s Complicated*, 56

(10) “Google fights French 'right to be forgotten' in EU court,” Phys.org