



Yale-New Haven  
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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
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## **The Urban, the Wilderness, and Me: An ELA Journey into Nature and Environmental Justice**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 22.01.01  
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### **Synopsis**

Stemming from a desire to connect urban high school students with the natural world, this English curriculum unit dives into the complex and sometimes unseemingly ways nature remains as constant as life itself. The unit begins by exploring the benefits of nature on mental health and communication for students within the classroom and their social lives. Focusing on the individual, students reflect on their personal understanding and relationship to nature as well as begin to grow their perception of community and cultural connections to nature in the past as well as present. Students engage in hands-on learning by growing plants, visiting local natural sites, such as New Haven's Long Wharf, and participating in Wilderness Inspired Leadership Development activities. Along the way students develop and strengthen skills such as observational thinking, narrative writing, research, and public speaking skills. Students also develop knowledge on environmental justice and activism as a way to learn to become agents of change in their school, local, and global community. This unit can also be used in tandem with US History as well as Ecology, Biology, and Math curriculum.

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