Lit Circles: Unit Overview

ENL1W, Grade 9 English (De-streamed), Unit 5. 16 classes of 75 minutes (about three and a half weeks).

The big question

How do authors use point of view and literary devices to make us see the world differently?

Students choose a novel at a book tasting, then read it in literature circles with six rotating roles. Mini-lessons build the literary toolkit: point of view, flashback and foreshadowing, juxtaposition, allusion and analogy, inference, theme and perspective, and style and voice. Four circle meetings each focus on a discussion skill (open questions and paraphrasing, building with evidence, respectful disagreement, synthesis). The unit ends with a literary analysis and a group book talk. Works with any novels you choose, including a whole-class novel or your department's own sets; all model passages are original.

Lessons

#	Lesson	Classes	Question	Expectations	What's inside
1	**Book Tasting**	1	Which novel will I choose?	C2.3, C1.2, C2.4	Taste, rate and predict; rank choices
2	**Circle Launch**	1	How will our circle work?	B1.1, C2.4, C2.6	Six roles; norms; reading schedule
3	**Point of View**	1	Whose eyes are we seeing through?	C1.6, D2.3, C3.2	POV detective; switch the narrator
4	**Circle Meeting 1**	1	How do we ask great questions?	B1.1, C2.3, C1.6	Open questions and paraphrasing
5	**Flashback and Foreshadowing**	1	How do authors play with time?	C3.1, C2.3, C2.6	Two timelines; time detective
6	**Juxtaposition, Allusion and Analogy**	1	How do devices make connections?	C3.1, C1.5, C3.2	Device hunt; write your own
7	**Circle Meeting 2**	1	How do we build on ideas?	B1.1, C3.1, C3.2	Building with evidence; evidence ladder
8	**Inference and Character**	1	What can we read between the lines?	C3.2, C2.6, D2.1	STEAL chart; inference paragraph
9	**Theme and Perspective**	1	What is the novel saying, and whose story is it?	C3.5, C3.6, C3.4	Theme tracker; perspective map
10	**Circle Meeting 3**	1	How do we disagree well?	B1.1, C3.4, C3.5	Respectful disagreement; cultural elements
11	**Style and Voice**	1	How does our author sound?	C1.5, D2.3, C3.1	Style spotter; write like your author

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12	**Circle Meeting 4**	1	What does the whole novel mean?	B1.1, C2.6, C3.6	Synthesis: then, now, so what
13	**Literary Analysis**	1	How do we turn notes into an argument?	D2.1, C3.2, C3.1	Thesis builder; essay plan
14	**Draft and Peer Feedback**	1	How do we make it better?	D2.1, D2.4, B1.1	Draft; praise, question, polish (summative 1)
15	**Book Talk Prep**	1	How do we convince an audience?	B1.3, B2.3, C2.6	Plan; read-aloud mark-up; rehearse
16	**Book Talks and Reflection**	1	What did we learn as readers?	B1.3, B1.1, A1.2	Book talks (summative 2); reflection

Assessment

Type	In this unit
Assessment for learning	Tasting menu, role sheets, meeting logs, POV detective, timelines, device hunt, STEAL chart, theme tracker, style spotter, rehearsals
Assessment as learning	Self-checks after every circle meeting, circle contract, peer conference, revision checklist, lit circle reflection
Assessment of learning	Literary analysis (paragraph series or short essay) and group book talk, with rubrics in the Summative Tasks file

Choosing novels

This unit works with any four to six novels. Include at least one by a First Nations, Métis or Inuit author. Check your board-approved list and preview each novel for content. Some suggestions:

- **The Marrow Thieves** Cherie Dimaline (Métis), 2017. Dystopian. Indigenous people are hunted for their bone marrow. Some violence.
- **Those Who Run in the Sky** Aviaq Johnston (Inuk), 2017. Fantasy and adventure in the Arctic spirit world.
- **Refugee** Alan Gratz, 2017. Three young refugees in three eras, told in alternating points of view. Some violence.
- **Long Way Down** Jason Reynolds, 2017. A novel in verse that takes place over one elevator ride. Gun violence.
- **The Outsiders** S. E. Hinton, 1967. A classic about class, loyalty and gangs, narrated by Ponyboy. Some violence.
- **The Breadwinner** Deborah Ellis (Canadian), 2000. A girl in Taliban-era Afghanistan disguises herself as a boy.
- **Brown Girl Dreaming** Jacqueline Woodson, 2014. A memoir in verse about growing up and finding her voice.

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- **Stand on the Sky** Erin Bow (Canadian), 2019. A Kazakh girl trains an eagle to save her family.

All model passages in the slides and handouts are original, so no novel text is reproduced. Plan four circle meetings (Lessons 4, 7, 10 and 12); students should finish reading by Lesson 12. Book talks can be recorded to support students with anxiety.

Using your own novel plan

Already have novels planned? Every lesson works with any novel, so use whatever fits your class. Some ways to adapt the unit:

- **Whole-class novel:** Everyone reads the same novel. Circles still meet with rotating roles and discuss the same sections, then compare ideas across circles. Use Lesson 1 as a novel launch: students “taste” the cover, back and first chapter and make predictions.
- **Your department's novel sets:** Use the titles you already have. No lesson depends on a particular book.
- **Independent choice reading:** Each student reads a different novel. Circles become theme or genre circles, and roles compare books (“In my novel… in yours…”).
- **Novels in verse, graphic novels and audiobooks:** All work with every role and mini-lesson. Mix formats to support different readers.
- **A different schedule:** If your novels are longer or shorter, add reading days or move the four circle meetings. Keep at least one mini-lesson before each meeting.
- **Skipping the book tasting:** If novels are already assigned, replace Lesson 1 with a novel launch or extra reading time and start with Lesson 2.

What's in each lesson

- Teacher lesson plan with expectations, timed sequence, differentiation, look-fors and answer guides
- Slides with speaker notes
- Student handouts and organizers
- Editable Word and PowerPoint files, plus PDFs

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