



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# Grade 6: Module 2B: Unit 3: Overview



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.  
Exempt third-party content is indicated by the footer: © (name of copyright holder). Used by permission and not subject to Creative Commons license.



### Unit 3: Analyzing, Comparing, Sharing: Modern Voices of Adversity

In this unit, students move from the monologues of medieval times to modern voices of adversity. They do this through a study of John Grandits's concrete poems in the collections *Blue Lipstick* and *Technically, It's Not My Fault*. As in Unit 2, students continue to read closely for word choice, figurative language, and themes of adversity found in these poems. Students consider how these themes of adversity apply to their own lives and the lives of their peers. In the mid-unit assessment, students are assessed on speaking and listening skills as they participate in discussion groups focusing on the language of the poems, the themes of adversity conveyed in these poems, and the connections between the voices of these poems and the voices from the characters of *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!*

In the second half of the unit, students identify a theme of adversity they would like to convey in their own writing. Then, through a series of narrative writing lessons, and using either a monologue from *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* or a John Grandits concrete poem as a model text, they write their own modern monologue or concrete poem. For the end of unit assessment, students submit their best draft of their writing. For the performance task, students orally present this narrative to an audience of their peers.

#### Guiding Questions and Big Ideas

- **How do modern authors use language to convey theme and meaning in a literary text?**
- **How can I share the adversities I face?**
- *Authors use figurative language, word choice, and text structure to convey meaning and theme in a literary text.*
- *Themes of adversity can be both specific to and transcendent of time and place.*



Mid-Unit 3 Assessment	<p><b>Small Group Discussion: How Do Modern Poems Portray Modern Adversities?</b></p> <p>This assessment centers on NYSP12 ELA CCLS RL.6.7, RL.6.9, SL.6.1, SL.6.4, and SL.6.6. After reading and analyzing several concrete poems, students will engage in a small group discussion in which they talk about themes of adversity. Students will compare and contrast how a poem and an informational text approach a similar idea or topic. Finally, students will listen to an audio version of that same poem, and compare and contrast the experience of reading a text and listening to an audio version of the same text.</p>
End of Unit 3 Assessment	<p><b>Giving Voice to Adversity: Drafting a Modern Narrative of Adversity</b></p> <p>This assessment centers on NYSP12 ELA CCLS W.6.3, L.6.1, and L.6.3. Students will review the themes of adversity collected by the class while reading concrete poems, and then choose a theme that they have experienced. Using mentor texts to guide them, they will write their own monologue or concrete poem giving voice to this adversity. This assessment is two parts. In Part 1 (Lesson 7), students draft the body of their narrative. In Part 2 (Lesson 8), students draft the introduction and conclusion of their narrative.</p>
Final Performance Task	<p><b>Giving Voice to Adversity</b></p> <p>This performance task gives students the chance to create and perform their own modern-day narrative of adversity. After studying the narrative-based monologues in <i>Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!</i> as well as the concrete poetry of John Grandits, students will choose from one of two formats—either monologue or concrete poem—in which they convey a theme of adversity. Then students will practice the speaking and listening skills necessary to perform their writing, as a monologue or “spoken word” poetry, for their peers. This task addresses NYSP12 ELA CCLS W.6.3, SL.6.4, SL.6.6, L.6.1, L.6.3, and L.6.6.</p>



### Content Connections

This module is designed to address English Language Arts standards as students read literature and informational text about modern adversities faced by children and adolescents. However, the module intentionally incorporates Social Studies Practices and Themes to support potential interdisciplinary connections to this compelling content.

These intentional connections are described below.

**Big ideas and guiding questions are informed by the New York State Common Core K–8 Social Studies Framework:**

**<http://engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/ss-framework-k-8.pdf>**

#### **Unifying Themes (pages 6–7)**

- Theme 1: Individual Development and Cultural Identity: The role of social, political, and cultural interactions supports the development of identity. Personal identity is a function of an individual's culture, time, place, geography, interaction with groups, influences from institutions, and lived experiences.
- Theme 2: Development, Movement, and Interaction of Cultures: Role of diversity within and among cultures; aspects of culture such as belief systems, religious faith, or political ideals as influences on other parts of a culture, such as its institutions or literature, music, and art; cultural diffusion and change over time as facilitating different ideas and beliefs.
- Theme 4: Geography, Humans, and the Environment: The relationship between human populations and the physical world (people, places, and environments).
- Theme 5: Development and Transformation of Social Structures: Role of social class, systems of stratification, social groups, and institutions; role of gender, race, ethnicity, education, class, age, and religion in defining social structures within a culture; social and political inequalities.

### Central Texts

1. John Grandits, *Technically, It's Not My Fault* (New York: Clarion Books, 2004), ISBN: 978-0-618-42833-5.
2. John Grandits, *Blue Lipstick* (New York: Clarion Books, 2007), ISBN: 978-0-618-56860-4.
3. Laura Amy Schlitz, *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village*, illustrated by Robert Byrd (Cambridge, MA: Candlewick, 2007), ISBN: 978-0-7636-4332-4.



**This unit is approximately 2 weeks or 10 sessions of instruction.**

Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 1</b>	Comparing and Contrasting: Seeing and Hearing Different Genres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can compare and contrast how reading a story, drama, or poem is different from what I perceive when I listen or watch. (RL.6.7)</li> <li>I can compare and contrast how different genres communicate the same ideas. (RL.6.9)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can compare and contrast the experience of listening to an audio version of the poem “Angels” to reading the same poem.</li> <li>I can compare and contrast how a poem and a news article communicate the same ideas.</li> <li>I can compare and contrast how a song and a monologue communicate the same ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modern Voices graphic organizer for “My Sister is Crazy” (from homework)</li> <li>Venn Diagram: Comparing and Contrasting “Angels” and Audio Version</li> <li>Comparing/Contrasting Genres graphic organizer for “Bad Hair Day” and news article</li> <li>Reading Tracker and Reviewer’s Notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective Discussions anchor chart</li> <li>Challenges of Modern Times anchor chart</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 2</b>	Analyzing, Comparing, Sharing: Modern Voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can effectively engage in sixth-grade discussions with diverse partners about sixth-grade topics, texts, and issues. (SL.6.1)</li> <li>I can express my own ideas clearly during discussions. (SL.6.1)</li> <li>I can build on others’ ideas during discussion. (SL.6.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can discuss concrete poems with diverse partners.</li> <li>I can express my own ideas clearly during discussions.</li> <li>I can build on others’ ideas during discussion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparing Genres graphic organizer for “Jack, the Half-Wit” and “Kyle’s Story” (from homework)</li> <li>Modern Voices graphic organizer for “The Thank-You Letter”</li> <li>“I Think ... What Do You Think?” scavenger hunt to identify theme and evidence, infer, and discuss</li> <li>Self-assessment using speaking and listening criteria</li> <li>Reading Tracker and Reviewer’s Notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges of Modern Times anchor chart</li> <li>Themes of Adversity anchor chart</li> <li>Effective Discussions anchor chart</li> </ul>



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 3</b>	Seeing, Hearing, and Comparing Genres: A Poem and a Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material, and explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. (SL.6.1a)</li> <li>I can follow class norms when I participate in discussions. (SL.6.1b)</li> <li>I can pose questions that help me clarify what is being discussed. (SL.6.1c)</li> <li>I can review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing. (SL.6.1d)</li> <li>I can seek to understand and communicate with individuals from different perspectives and cultural backgrounds. (SL.6.1e)</li> <li>I can compare and contrast how reading a story, drama, or poem is different from what I perceive when I listen or watch. (RL.6.7)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can prepare myself to participate in discussions.</li> <li>I can follow class norms when I participate in discussions.</li> <li>I can be involved in discussions by asking and responding to questions.</li> <li>I can demonstrate understanding of different perspectives through reflecting and paraphrasing.</li> <li>I can try to understand and communicate with others who have different ideas and backgrounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading Tracker and Reviewer's Notes (from homework)</li> <li>Venn Diagram: Comparing and Contrasting: "The Thank-You Letter" and Audio Version</li> <li>Comparing/Contrasting Genres graphic organizer</li> <li>Speaking and Listening Criteria Discussion Tracker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective Discussions anchor chart</li> </ul>



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 4</b>	Mid-Unit Assessment: Small Group Discussion: How Do Modern Poems Portray Modern Adversities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can compare and contrast how reading a story, drama, or poem is different from what I perceive when I listen or watch. (RL.6.7)</li> <li>• I can compare and contrast how different genres communicate the same theme or idea. (RL.6.9)</li> <li>• I can come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material, and explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. (SL.6.1a)</li> <li>• I can follow class norms when I participate in discussions. (SL.6.1b)</li> <li>• I can pose questions that elaborate on a topic and respond to questions with elaboration. (SL.6.1c)</li> <li>• I can review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing. (SL.6.1d)</li> <li>• I can seek to understand and communicate with individuals from different perspectives and cultural backgrounds. (SL.6.1e)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can compare the experience of reading the poem “Skateboard” to listening to its audio version.</li> <li>• I can compare how similar themes are communicated in the poem “Skateboard” and a news article.</li> <li>• I can prepare myself to participate in discussions.</li> <li>• I can follow class norms when I participate in discussions.</li> <li>• I can be involved in discussions by asking and responding to questions.</li> <li>• I can demonstrate understanding of different perspectives through reflecting and paraphrasing.</li> <li>• I can try to understand and communicate with others who have different ideas and backgrounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-Unit 3 Assessment (graphic organizers and discussion component)</li> <li>• Speaking and Listening Criteria: Class Discussion Tracker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Discussions anchor chart</li> </ul>



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 5</b>	Introduction: Writing a Narrative of Adversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.6.3)</li> <li>I can use correct grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.6.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can describe the criteria for writing a narrative about a theme of adversity.</li> <li>I can identify first-person pronouns to use for a narrator's voice in a narrative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading Tracker and Reviewer's Notes (from homework)</li> <li>Narrative of Adversity Structure and Content</li> <li>Exit Ticket: Narrative of Adversity Plan Part I</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Themes of Adversity anchor chart</li> <li>Challenges of Modern Times anchor chart</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 6</b>	Writing and Sharing: A Narrative of Adversity Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can use correct grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.6.1)</li> <li>I can use the proper case of pronouns in my writing. (L.6.1)</li> <li>I can establish a context for my narrative. (W.6.3a)</li> <li>I can organize events in a logical sequence. (W.6.3a)</li> <li>I can use dialogue and descriptions to show the actions, thoughts, and feelings of my characters. (W.6.3b)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can describe events and details in the experience of "Jack, the Half-Wit" and "TyrannosaurBus Rex."</li> <li>I can develop a plan for writing a narrative that includes a context, a narrator, sequenced events, and details.</li> <li>I can use pronouns to establish a narrator's voice in a narrative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading Tracker and Reviewer's Notes (from homework)</li> <li>Narrative of Adversity Plan Part II graphic organizer</li> </ul>	
<b>Lesson 7</b>	End of Unit Assessment, Part 1: Drafting the Experience of Event of the Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.6.3)</li> <li>I can use correct grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.6.1)</li> <li>I can use a variety of sentence structures to make my writing and speaking more interesting. (L.6.3)</li> <li>I can maintain consistency in style and tone when writing and speaking. (L.6.3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can draft the experience or event that conveys the modern-day adversity of my narrative.</li> <li>I can use correct grammar and word usage when writing my narrative draft.</li> <li>I can use a variety of sentence structures to create my narrative.</li> <li>I can select and use words and phrases to create tone in my narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading Tracker and Reviewer's Notes (from homework)</li> <li>End of Unit 3 Assessment: Draft of experience or event conveying a modern-day adversity</li> <li>Self-assessment: Narrative of Adversity checklist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tone anchor chart</li> </ul>





Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 8</b>	End of Unit Assessment, Part 2: Drafting Introduction and Conclusion of a Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can establish a context for my narrative. (W.6.3a)</li> <li>• I can use transitional words, phrases, and clauses to show passage of time in a narrative text. (W.6.3c)</li> <li>• I can use precise words and phrases and sensory language to convey experiences and events to my reader. (W.6.3d)</li> <li>• I can write a conclusion to my narrative that makes sense to a reader. (W.6.3e)</li> <li>• I can use a variety of sentence structures to make my writing and speaking more interesting. (L.6.3)</li> <li>• I can maintain consistency in style and tone when writing and speaking. (L.6.3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can establish a context and draft the introduction of my narrative.</li> <li>• I can draft the conclusion of my narrative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Tracker and Reviewer's Notes (from homework)</li> <li>• End of Unit 3 Assessment, Part 2: Giving Voice to Adversity: Drafting a Modern Narrative of Adversity (introduction and conclusion)</li> <li>• Self-assessment against the Narrative of Adversity Criteria checklist</li> </ul>	



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 9</b>	Writing the Final Narrative: Monologue or Concrete Poem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.6.3)</li> <li>I can use correct grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.6.1)</li> <li>I can use a variety of sentence structures to make my writing and speaking more interesting. (L.6.3)</li> <li>I can present evidence and details in a logical order. (SL.6.4)</li> <li>I can support my evidence with descriptive details. (SL.6.4)</li> <li>I can use effective speaking techniques, appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. (SL.6.4)</li> <li>I can adapt my speech for a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.6.6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can use correct grammar and word usage when writing my narrative.</li> <li>I can use a variety of sentence structures to create my narrative.</li> <li>I can present evidence and details in a logical order in my narrative performance.</li> <li>I can use descriptive details to create an image of the evidence in my narrative.</li> <li>I can use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation to convey the message in my narrative.</li> <li>I can adapt my speech to fit the context of my narrative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading Tracker and Reviewer's Notes</li> <li>Writing of narrative monologue</li> <li>Writing of concrete poem</li> <li>Performance task practice</li> </ul>	
<b>Lesson 10</b>	Performance Task: Performing a Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can present evidence and details in a logical order. (SL.6.4)</li> <li>I can support my evidence with descriptive details. (SL.6.4)</li> <li>I can use effective speaking techniques, appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. (SL.6.4)</li> <li>I can adapt my speech for a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.6.6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can present evidence and details in a logical order in my narrative performance.</li> <li>I can use descriptive details to create an image of the evidence in my narrative.</li> <li>I can use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation to convey the message in my narrative performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading Tracker and Reviewer's Notes (from homework)</li> <li>Final drafts of narratives</li> <li>Performance of narrative monologues</li> <li>Performance of concrete poems</li> <li>Narrative Rubric: Self-assessment</li> </ul>	



Optional: Experts, Fieldwork, and Service

**Experts:**

- Invite an expert on drama or theater to discuss the specific dramatic genre of monologue.
- Invite a local poet or spoken word performer to come to your class to model how poetry is performed.

**Fieldwork:**

- Arrange for a visit to a local theater to see the production of monologues.
- Arrange for a visit to a local poetry reading or poetry “slam” to see modern poetry in action.

**Service:**

- Through the writing of their own monologues, students explore and express multiple themes of adversity that face teenagers. Any (or all) of these themes could translate into individual or group service projects for students.

Optional: Extensions

- Students could perform their monologues (narratives and concrete poems) to a wider audience (families, school community, public venue.)
- Students could create audio or visual recordings of their monologues (narratives and concrete poems) to share digitally.



## Preparation and Materials

### ***Blue Lipstick and Technically, It's Not My Fault***

- These two collections of concrete poems were chosen due to their high engagement factor: topics, language, form, and tone. They strike a beautiful balance between whimsical narrative technique and themes to which students can relate. These poems also serve a great complement to *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* since they convey many similar themes while being set in a completely different context and using a completely different narrative structure. This combination of continuity and contrast was chosen very purposefully to inspire great conversation in the speaking and listening centered portion of this unit, and then, in the written component, to encourage students to express their own stories in a narrative style they feel best fits.
- This unit was written to accommodate 5 copies of each book per classroom. Therefore, students will share the books (in small groups) during class time, and will be provided individual copies of specific poems that are necessary for homework.
- This unit invites students to compare the experience of reading a text and listening to its audio version. The link to the audio version for each of the poems used to practice and assess this skill is [www.johngrandits.com](http://www.johngrandits.com). That link is also provided in the relevant lessons:
  - Lesson 3: “Angels”
  - Lesson 5: “The Thank-You Letter”
  - Lesson 6: “The Skateboard”

**This unit includes a number of routines.**

### **1. Reading Calendar**

- Students read and reread poems for *Blue Lipstick* and *Technically, It's Not My Fault*. Use the stand-alone Reading Calendar to help guide students in their reading expectations.
- Students will work in groups to share resources in class (5 books per classroom). They receive individual copies of specific poems to read for homework.



## 2. Reader's Notes

- In this unit, students read several concrete poems in *Blue Lipstick* and *Technically, It's Not My Fault*. The poems share issues of growing up and becoming one's own person expressed through the modern voices of kids. Students are exposed to the genre of concrete poetry and see the influence of graphics in expressing a theme or idea.
- Also in this unit, students compare and contrast the medieval monologues and concrete poetry with other genres that express similar ideas. In addition, they compare and contrast text with audio.
- When students read poetry from *Blue Lipstick* and *Technically, It's Not My Fault* for homework, they are asked to complete the Modern Voices graphic organizer. This graphic organizer will be used to launch discussion in the following lesson.

## 3. Independent Reading

- This module introduces a more robust independent reading structure. Consider scheduling a week between Unit 2 and Unit 3 to launch independent reading. Alternatively, you could lengthen the time for Unit 3 and intersperse the independent reading lessons into the first part of the unit. See two separate stand-alone documents on EngageNY.org: **The Importance of Increasing the Volume of Reading and Launching Independent Reading in Grades 6–8: Sample Plan**, which together provide the rationale and practical guidance for a robust independent reading program. Once students have all learned how to select books and complete the reading log, it takes less class time. After the launch period, the independent reading routine takes about  $\frac{1}{2}$  class period per week, with an additional day near the end of a unit or module for students to review and share their books. You may wish to review the independent reading materials now to give yourself time to gather texts and to make a launch plan that meets your students' needs. When students read independently, they are asked to complete a Reading Tracker and Reviewer's Notes.

The calendar below shows what is due on each day.

Teachers can modify this document to include dates instead of lessons.

Due at Lesson	Monologue to Read:
Unit 2, Lesson 15	“Advanced English” from <i>Blue Lipstick</i>
Unit 3, Lesson 1	“My Sister Is Crazy” from <i>Technically, It’s Not My Fault</i>
Unit 3, Lesson 2	“Jack, The Half-Wit” in <i>Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!</i> and “Kyle’s Story,” a news article. Complete Comparing and Contrasting Genres graphic organizer.
Unit 3, Lesson 3	Independent read for goal. Complete Reading Tracker and Reviewer’s Notes.
Unit 3, Lesson 4	Prepare for mid-unit assessment. Reread poems and add notes to graphic organizers. Make connections to themes. Prepare questions to pose during the discussion.
Unit 3, Lesson 5	Independent read for goal. Complete Reading Tracker and Reviewer’s Notes.
Unit 3, Lesson 6	Independent read for goal. Complete Reading Tracker and Reviewer’s Notes.
Unit 3, Lesson 7	Independent read for goal. Complete Reading Tracker and Reviewer’s Notes.
Unit 3, Lesson 8	Independent read for goal. Complete Reading Tracker and Reviewer’s Notes.
Unit 3, Lesson 9	Independent read for goal. Complete Reading Tracker and Reviewer’s Notes.
Unit 3, Lesson 10	Independent read for goal. Complete Reading Tracker and Reviewer’s Notes.