

12.3.1 Lesson 1

Introduction

In this first lesson of the unit and module, students are introduced to Module 12.3's focus: building evidence-based arguments through inquiry-based research. Module 12.3 addresses research as an iterative, non-linear process, through which students build knowledge and gather evidence to support the development of arguments about issues of interest. 12.3.1 uses *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond, a rich, complex seed text, as a model for how to initiate the inquiry process. The text also provides examples of claims, counterclaims, reasoning, and evidence, which serve as the basis for instruction on writing arguments.

In 12.3.1, excerpts of Diamond's book function to spark inquiry into areas of economic, social, geopolitical, and ethical issues related to wealth and power in "human development" (p. 16). The seed text provides multiple entry points through which students may engage in the research process.

In this lesson, students read and analyze pages 13-17 of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (from "We all know that history has proceeded very differently" to "the different historical trajectories implicit in Yali's question"). In this excerpt, students are introduced to Yali, the New Guinean man who, with a simple question, sparked Diamond's quest to explain historical and modern global disparities in wealth and power. Students analyze how Diamond broadens Yali's question, shifting the focus from its localized origin to the global stage, and in so doing considers the relationship between the question and the "subject" (p. 16) of the book. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: What is Diamond's purpose in "push[ing] this question back one step" (p. 15) and then "one step further" (p. 16)?

For homework, students read and annotate *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, pages 17-21, boxing any unfamiliar words and looking up their definitions.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.11-12.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W. 11-12.9.b	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>b. Apply <i>grades 11-12 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., <i>The Federalist</i>, presidential addresses]”).</p>
L. 11-12.4.a, c	<p>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 11-12 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <p>a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p> <p>c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.</p>

Assessment

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Assessment(s)

Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- What is Diamond's purpose in "push[ing] this question back one step" (p. 15) and then "one step further" (p. 16)?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Analyze Diamond's purpose in "push[ing] this question back one step" (p. 15) and then "one step further" (p. 16) (e.g., Diamond begins with Yali's question that is specific to New Guinea, and reframes the question twice, looking further back in history each time for patterns of "wealth and power distribut[ion]" (p. 15). By establishing these patterns, Diamond demonstrates the global implications for his research and the subject of his book: the "disparate rates" of "human development" (p. 16).).

Vocabulary

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Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- superseded (v.) - replaced in power, authority, effectiveness, acceptance, or use by another person or thing
- aboriginal (adj.) - original or earliest known; native
- decimated (v.) - destroyed a great number of or proportion of
- subjugated (v.) - brought under complete control; conquered
- metallurgy (n.) - the technique or science of working or heating metals so as to give them certain desired shapes or properties
- reverberations (n.) - effects or results that are not wanted
- guerrilla warfare (n.) - the use of hit-and-run tactics by small, mobile groups of irregular forces operating in territory controlled by a hostile, regular force.
- indigenous (adj.) - originating in and characteristic of a particular region or country; native
- impending (adj.) - about to happen
- trajectories (n.) - paths, progressions, or lines of development

Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- disparities (n.) - lack of similarities or equality; differences
- implicit (adj.) - suggested without being directly or explicitly stated

Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)

- literate (adj.) - able to read and write
- hunter-gatherers (n.) - members of a culture in which people hunt animals and look for plants to eat instead of growing crops and raising animals
- constitute (v.) - to make up or form something
- evolution (n.) - a theory that the differences between modern plants and animals are because of changes that happened by a natural process over a very long time
- charisma (n.) - a special charm or appeal that causes people to feel attracted and excited by someone
- centralized (adj.) - under the control of one authority
- standard of living (n.) - the amount of wealth, comfort, and possessions that a person or group has
- potent (adj.) - very effective or strong
- dominate (v.) - to have control or power over (someone or something)
- archaeological (adj.) - related to a science that deals with past human life and activities by studying the bones, tools, etc. of ancient people
- genocide (n.) - the deliberate killing of people who belong to a particular national, racial, political, or cultural group
- legacies (n.) - things that come from or are given by someone from the past
- descendants (n.) - those who are related to a person or group of people who lived in the past
- civil war (n.) - a war between groups of people in the same country
- asserting (v.) - demanding that other people accept or respect

Lesson Agenda/Overview

File: 12.3.1 Lesson 1 Date: 4/3/15 Classroom Use: Starting 4/2015

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Materials

- Copies of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* for each student
- Copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist for each student (optional)

Learning Sequence

File: 12.3.1 Lesson 1 **Date:** 4/3/15 **Classroom Use:** Starting 4/2015
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How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
►	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
❗	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

10%

Begin by reviewing the goals for Module 12.3. Explain that in this module, students analyze text excerpts from *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond. In addition to serving as the focal point of student reading and analysis, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* functions as a seed text to spark inquiry into areas of economic, social, geopolitical, and ethical issues related to the development of global wealth and power. Explain to students that they will construct their own evidence-based perspective through research, and ultimately write a research-based argument paper.

12.3.1, the first unit of Module 12.3, focuses on analysis of Diamond's purpose and the interaction of ideas he presents, as well as the development of claims, counterclaims, reasoning, and evidence through specific textual details. Additionally, students begin the research process by surfacing and tracking issues, generating inquiry questions, examining central and supporting claims, and identifying areas of investigation, assessing sources, crafting a research frame, and conducting independent searches.

- Students listen.

Review the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.11-12.6. In this lesson, students read and analyze pages 13-17 of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, in which Diamond retraces the origins of his research on global human development and explains the “subject” (p. 16) of his book.

- Students look at the agenda.

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Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read and annotate pages 13-17 of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond (from “We all know that history has proceeded very differently” to “the different historical trajectories implicit in Yali’s question”).) Instruct students to form pairs to discuss their annotations (W.11-12.9.b).

- Student annotations may include:
 - An exclamation point beside “Those historical inequalities have cast long shadows on the modern world, because the literate societies with metal tools have conquered or exterminated the other societies” (p. 13), because this statement summarizes one of the important reasons why some societies succeed and others do not.
 - A question mark by “as a biologist I study bird evolution” (p. 13), because it seems odd that someone who studies bird evolution would write a book about the impact of guns, germs, and steel on human history.
 - A star next to Yali’s question “Why is it that you white people developed so much cargo and brought it to New Guinea, but we black people had little cargo of our own” (p. 14), because this question seems so basic, but Diamond says the question is “difficult ... to answer” (p. 14).
 - An arrow beside the question “Why did wealth and power become distributed as they now are, rather than in some other way?” (p. 15), because this question refines Yali’s question by making it more globally applicable.
 - A vertical line beside the section of text from “The history of interactions among disparate peoples” to “some of the world’s most troubled areas today” (p. 16), because this section seems to summarize several major points of the text.

Instruct student pairs to share and discuss the vocabulary words they identified and defined in the previous lesson's homework (L.11-12.4.c).

- Students may identify the following words: *superseded, aboriginal, decimated, subjugated, metallurgy, reverberations, guerrilla warfare, indigenous, impending, and trajectories*.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may also identify the following words: *literate, hunter-gatherers, constitute, evolution, charisma, centralized, standard of living*,

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potent, dominate, archaeological, genocide, legacies, descendants, civil war, and asserting.

- Definitions are provided in the Vocabulary box in this lesson.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

65%

Instruct students to stay in their pairs from the previous activity. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss (W.11-12.9.b).

Instruct student pairs to read pages 13-17 (from “We all know that history has proceeded very differently” to “the different historical trajectories implicit in Yali’s question”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the focus excerpt for the lesson.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

How does Diamond “extend[]” (p. 15) Yali’s question in this excerpt?

What historical factors prompt Yali to ask his question about “cargo” (p. 14)?

- Before the arrival of colonialists, New Guineans “still used stone tools” and “dwelt in villages not organized under any centralized political authority” (p. 14). Once the colonialists arrived, New Guineans became aware of the differences between themselves and the “whites” (p. 14). Yali asks the question because he recognizes “huge disparities” in the goods and technology of his people as compared to the “material goods” brought by “white colonialists” “whose value New Guineans instantly recognized” (p. 14).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting Yali’s question for reference throughout 12.3.1.

Based on Diamond’s explanation of Yali’s question, what might “disparities” (p. 14) mean? (L.11-12.4.a)

- Diamond discusses the fact that “huge differences between the lifestyle of the average New Guinean and ... the average European or American” (p. 14) exist. He goes on to explain that “[c]omparable differences” (p. 14) are present in other places in

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the world as well, before stating that these “huge disparities must have potent causes” (p. 14), so *disparities* might mean “differences or inequalities.”

- Consider providing students with the definition for *disparities*.
- Students write the definition of *disparities* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

How is Yali’s question on page 14 relevant to a “larger set of contrasts within the modern world” (p. 15)?

- Yali’s original question about “white people” having “developed so much cargo” and “black people” having “little cargo of [their] own” (p. 14) is specific to Yali’s experience in New Guinea. Diamond “extend[s]” the original question “to a larger set of contrasts” (p. 15) because the pattern is repeated elsewhere in the world. Diamond states, “Peoples of Eurasian origin ... dominate the modern world in wealth and power” (p. 15). He further explains that “[o]ther peoples, including most Africans ... remain far behind in wealth and power” (p. 15). By identifying patterns similar to those experienced by Yali in New Guinea, Diamond demonstrates the relevance of Yali’s question to places and people beyond New Guinea.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider asking the following scaffolding question:

How does Diamond explain the phrase “a larger set of contrasts” on page 15?

- By detailing patterns of “dominat[ion]” of “wealth and power” in Eurasia, North America, Africa, and Australia as similar to those witnessed by Yali, Diamond demonstrates that Yali’s question can be “extended to a larger set of contrasts,” or expanded to include other parts of the world where similar contrasts exist.
- Consider providing students with a map of the world with which to examine the location of countries and regions Diamond references on page 15 with the paragraph that begins “We can easily push this question back one step.”

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to form small groups with another pair for a brief jigsaw activity. One pair in the small group should reread and summarize pages 15-16 (from “We can easily push this question back one step” to “the way it was in A.D. 1500?”). Instruct the other pair to reread and summarize page 16 (from “Once again, we can easily push this question back one

step further” to “in parts of Upper Paleolithic Europe tens of thousands of years earlier”). When finished, instruct the small groups to share their summaries with each other.

- Student responses may include:
 - In the first excerpt, Diamond discusses the fact that technological and political differences among people already existed at the beginning of colonial worldwide expansion in A.D. 1500. He then provides a brief overview of the levels of technological and political advancement in various regions of the world, before describing those differences as the cause of the world’s inequality. Finally, Diamond wonders how the world became the way it was in A.D. 1500.
 - In the second excerpt, Diamond looks to written history and archaeology to broaden his question about inequality. He reaches further back in history to 11,000 B.C. when all people were hunter-gatherers, and notes that after this time up until A.D. 1500, differences in development created political and technological inequality. Diamond then summarizes the status of development in different areas of the world.

After the completion of the jigsaw activity, instruct students to return to their original pairs to discuss the following questions.

How does Diamond determine the “subject” of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (p. 16)?

- Diamond begins the text by retelling a very specific encounter he had with Yali, and sharing Yali’s question: “Why is it that you white people developed so much cargo and brought it to New Guinea, but we black people had little cargo of our own? (p. 14). In his “attempt[] to answer Yali” (p. 15), Diamond then poses his “reformulated” version of Yali’s question, followed by a “rephrase[d]” (p. 16) version that expands the focus of “wealth and power” into a generalized inquiry about “rates” of “human development” throughout the world (p. 16). Diamond breaks down the rephrased question, “[W]hy did human development proceed at such different rates on different continents?” to arrive at the subject of his book: the “disparate rates” of “human development” on “different continents” (p. 16).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider asking the following scaffolding question:

According to Diamond, what is the “subject” (p. 16) or purpose of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*?

- Diamond states that the “subject” or purpose of his inquiry is to explore the “disparate rates” of “human development,” which “constitute history’s broadest pattern” (p. 16).

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How are “problems of the modern world” (p. 17) related to Yali’s original question?

- Student responses may include:
 - Diamond explains that “much of Africa is still struggling with its legacies from recent colonialism” (p. 16), just as Yali’s question refers to differences between New Guineans and those who colonized them. Diamond goes on to cite several other parts of the world, including “Central America, Mexico, Peru, New Caledonia, the former Soviet Union, and parts of Indonesia” where “indigenous populations” struggle with the domination of their conquerors’ descendants or their past “collisions” (p. 16).
 - Diamond explains that because so many groups of people have been subject to colonization similar to that which Yali refers, “most of the modern world’s 6,000 surviving languages” are “disappear[ing]” and are being “replaced by English, Chinese, Russian, and a few other languages” (p. 17).

What might Diamond mean when he uses the word *implicit* on page 17 in relation to Yali’s question? (L.11-12.4.c)

- Diamond explains that “different historical trajectories” are “implicit” in Yali’s question, meaning that Yali’s question relates indirectly to circumstances in other countries. Therefore, *implicit* may mean that a statement is understood rather than directly stated.
- Consider providing students with the definition of *implicit*.
- Students write the definition of *implicit* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Quick Write

10%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

What is Diamond’s purpose in “push[ing] this question back one step” (p. 15) and then “one step further” (p. 16)?

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses.

- Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

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- Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition to the independent Quick Write.

- Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
- See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.
- Consider using the Short Response Rubric to assess students' writing. Students may use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Explain to students that the Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) requirement is suspended during Module 12.3. Instead, for 12.3.1 homework, students read and annotate *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and begin their research by surfacing issues, posing inquiry questions, and independently reading possible sources for a variety of issues surfaced in the text.

- Students listen.

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate pages 17-21 of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (from “Before seeking answers to Yali’s question, we should pause” to “despite what I believe to be their superior intelligence”) (W. 11-12.9.b). Direct students to box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Instruct them to choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text (L.11-12.4.c).

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read and annotate pages 17-21 of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (from “Before seeking answers to Yali’s question, we should pause” to “despite what I believe to be their superior intelligence”). Box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

Short Response Rubric

Assessed Standard: _____

	2-Point Response	1-Point response	0-Point Response
Inference s/ Claims	Includes valid inferences or claims from the text. Fully and directly responds to the prompt.	Includes inferences or claims that are loosely based on the text. Responds partially to the prompt or does not address all elements of the prompt.	Does not address any of the requirements of the prompt or is totally inaccurate.
Analysis	Includes evidence of reflection and analysis of the text.	A mostly literal recounting of events or details from the text(s).	The response is blank.
Evidence	Includes the most relevant and sufficient textual evidence, facts, or details to develop a response according to the requirements of the Quick Write.	Includes some relevant facts, definitions, concrete details and/or other information from the text(s) to develop an analysis of the text according to the requirements of the Quick Write.	The response includes no evidence from the text.
Conventions	Uses complete sentences where errors do not impact readability.	Includes incomplete sentences or bullets.	The response is unintelligible or indecipherable.

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Short Response Checklist

Assessed Standard: _____

Does my writing...	Did I...	
Include valid inferences and/or claims from the text(s)?	Closely read the prompt and address the whole prompt in my response?	
	Clearly state a text-based claim I want the reader to consider?	
	Confirm that my claim is directly supported by what I read in the text?	
Develop an analysis of the text(s)?	Consider the author's choices, impact of word choices, the text's central ideas, etc.?	
Include evidence from the text(s)?	Directly quote or paraphrase evidence from the text?	
	Arrange my evidence in an order that makes sense and supports my claim?	
	Reflect on the text to ensure the evidence I used is the most relevant and sufficient evidence to support my claim?	
Use complete sentences, correct punctuation, and spelling?	Reread my writing to ensure it means exactly what I want it to mean?	
	Review my writing for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation?	

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