# *Iris*

Prologue to *Magic at the Grand Dragonfly Theatre* By Brandie June
Illustration by [illustrator]

Curriculum developed by Clarissa McLaughlin



## OVERVIEW

### Quick-Glance 10 Points for Usage Guide

| **Student Population** | |
|---|---|
| Age/Grade-Level Appropriateness | * 14-16 / 9th - 10th grade |
| Genre/s | * Fantasy |
| Length | * 2,908 words (10 min read) |
| Content Advisories | * Choking<br>* Endangerment of a child<br>* Burns<br>* Fictional Discrimination<br>* Complimentary text “Using Magic as Metaphor in Fantasy Novels”: mention of depression and homophobia (not included in excerpt) |

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

| | |
|---|---|
| One-Sentence Summary | A young girl watches her mother and sister be endangered by the government for being Conjurers. |
| **Lesson Planning** | |
| Topics & Key Themes Overview | **Topics:**<br>* Talent vs skill<br>* Role models<br>* Family<br>* Sibling relationships<br>* Masking (behavior)<br>* Military draft<br><br>**Themes:**<br>* Hegemony<br>* Discrimination<br>* Privilege/Oppression<br>* Identity<br>* Restraint<br>* Trauma<br>* Agency<br>* Illusions |
| Historic Events/Time Periods for Study | * Draft Resistance in the Vietnam Era<br>* U.S. Citizen Children Impacted by Immigration Enforcement |
| Complimentary Texts | * Short Story: Everything in the Garden is Lovely by Hannah Yang<br>* Article: "Using Magic as Metaphor in Fantasy Novels" (Writer's Digest) (Content advisory: mention of depression and homophobia) |
| Author and Artist Information | |
| **Key Common Core Standards** | Grades 9-10 Common Core Standards:<br><br>● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1<br>● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2<br>● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3<br>● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4<br>● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5<br>● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.9<br>● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.7<br>● |

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

| | |
|---|---|
| | • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2<br>•<br>• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1<br>• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2<br>• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3<br>• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8<br>•<br>• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1<br>• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2<br>• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.3 |

### Author Biography

**Brandie June**

### Artist Biography

## SYNOPSIS

Iris looks forward to seeing her Uncle Leo's illusion show and hopes to show him her own sleight of hand talents of illusion. Meanwhile, her younger sister, Violet, is able to effortlessly conjure items using magic, which their mother admonishes Violet for. After the show, Iris, Violet and their mother are meeting with Uncle Leo when a bounty hunter and captain confront Iris and Violet's mother as she is a Conjurer who has failed to report for the mandatory five-year draft. She begs the girls' uncle to take them in and says goodbye to her daughters before she is taken away. The loss of her mother devastates Iris.

## CURRICULUM

### Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

**Pre-Reading**

20 Minute Writing Activity:

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

Option #1: Think of a time when you've kept or found out about a secret. Why was it secret? If the secret got out, what were the consequences of the revelation? Was it a secret worth keeping and why? Please journal your answer.

Option #2: Is there ever a time when you should break the rules? How do you determine what rules you should follow and what rules should be broken? Why do you think we have rules? Who do you think should get to decide the rules and why? Please write down your answer and/or share it with a partner.

**Main Ideas**

5 Minute Writing Activity: Provide an objective summary of the text, focusing on the action rather than your opinion of the characters' choices.

10 Minute Partner Discussion: Consider the motivations behind each character's actions. How do these motives align or conflict between the characters?

**Passage-Specific Themes**

Small Group and Class Discussion:

Read the following passage from "Prologuie - Iris" by Brandie June. Discuss the questions below in small groups, then share your ideas with the class:

> *The squire introduced a knight, who entered the stage and bowed low to Uncle Leo. As her uncle gave the knight a quest, Iris let herself slip into the story as easily as she slipped into dreams, living in the world playing out in front of her. Iris felt the ocean spray on her skin and tasted saltwater on her tongue as the knight saved himself from drowning after a tidal wave hit his ship in a storm. She held her breath when the knight fought a three-headed wolf that guarded a witch's hut, the wild animal onstage looking so real that Iris wondered if there really were wolves with three heads. The audience booed when they saw the witch, a hunched woman attired in rags, a giant snake slithering over her shoulders. And Iris shrieked in delight when the brown phoenix the knight fought so hard for burst into flames, only to reappear golden and mirror bright. Iris cheered loudly when Uncle Leo rewarded the knight and welcomed him home.*

- Imagery is language that uses descriptive words to create mental images and sensory experiences for the reader. What examples of imagery can you identify in this passage? How do they add to the story?

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

- This excerpt shows a story within the story. Look up the stages of the Hero's Journey. What elements of a story can you identify in this excerpt?
- How does the story in this excerpt pull from folklore or mythology? How does that affect the tone?

**Universal Themes**

Write down your responses to the following question for 5 minutes. Then discuss with the class Socratic Seminar-style.

- Think about a marginalized group in your community or within the media you consume. In what ways are they perhaps expected to act differently in public than when they are in private or only amongst other members of their marginalized community? Describe how you think this impacts them both physically and emotionally? Should these expectations be upheld, or what can be done to foster a more accepting and inclusive society amongst the general public?

## Key Vocabulary

Definitions are context-dependent. Make sure any definitions you look up or work from are the ones that most correctly fit in the context of the story.

| Level One | Level Two | Level Three |
|---|---|---|
| illusion | materialize | voilà |
| conjure | incredulous | foyer |
| regalia | bedeck | conscription |
| squire | filigree | pristine |
| doublet | bounty hunter | vigorous |

## Vocabulary Activity Options

1) Many fantasy stories are blended with historical fiction and set in a world without modern technology. How do words like "regalia", "squire", and "doublet" help establish setting and tone?

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

2) What do you assume “voilà” means, based on the context clues? Why do you think the author included a French word? How would the tone be different if the author had written the English meaning instead?

ACTIVITY: In small groups, select three words from each level. Write three sentences as a group, each of which needs to include a word from every vocab level. You may change the tense of the words if necessary. For example, you could pick squire, materialize, and pristine to write a sentence like “At his lord’s summoning, a pristinely-dressed squire materialized with the armor.” Share these sentences with the class.

## Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

1. How do Lynette and Violet’s conjuration abilities affect their lives? If you lived in this world, would you want to be a conjurer? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think Lynette chose not to report for conscription? Do you think she had good reasoning or was she misguided? Explain why.
3. Consider the difference between skill (a learnt ability) and talent (an inborn ability). How does this difference impact Iris and Violet’s relationship? How is this difference impacted by the girls’ birth order? How does the political climate the girls live in affect this difference in their relationship?
4. How does the illusion show affect the overall plot and the story’s pacing?
5. Why do you think the author chose to tell the story from Iris’s perspective instead of Violet or Lynette? How would the story be different from a different character’s point of view?

## ** Text-Dependent Question Options

1. One prominent element of this story is showcasing the wonder and spectacle of theater. With this in mind, identify three separate moments where the text is dramatized. This can be cinematic action, descriptive imagery in the setting, or theatrical dialogue. Explain their significance to you.
2. What does the line “ ‘It’s not a magic show. It’s a show of illusion,’ Iris corrected with a six-year-old’s sense of superiority” tell us about Iris as a character?
3. What role does smiling play in this story? How does it relate to this story’s themes? Use examples from the text to support your response.
4. When Lynette tells Violet to hide her conjuration abilities, she says. “Your father was taken away because bad men saw him conjuring. I only want to keep you safe.” What information is hidden from Iris and Violet in their mother’s explanation? Why do you think she chooses not to tell them everything here?
5. What period of time would you guess this story takes place in? Use examples from the text to defend your answer.

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

## Complementary Text #1:

From “Everything in the Garden is Lovely” by Hannah Yang

Now that I’ve failed as a woman, my punishment is to become a garden.

I receive the verdict on a Sunday evening. They’re supposed to give you advance notice so you can put your affairs in order, but the letter is postmarked from more than a month ago—I’ve never been good about clearing out my mailbox—so I don’t see it until two days before I’m supposed to begin my transformation.

They don’t call it a punishment in the letter. They use words like *optimal outcome* and *mutually advantageous*. But everyone knows what it is.

There’s no reason I should go to work on Monday, after reading their verdict. I have enough savings to last me through the transformation process, and I won’t need money after it’s done.

Still, the next day, I wake up for my morning run, as usual. I head to the office in a silk blouse and black pumps. I sit down in my cubicle, drink my cup of coffee, check in with my team. I’ll keep going through the motions of being a woman until someone makes me stop.

---

On Tuesday, the day of the first appointment, I coax my face into full makeup. Foundation, contour, highlighter, blush. I even curl my hair, which I haven’t done since my early twenties, when I was still crafting my identity around who I thought other people wanted me to be.

After I get to the Transformation Office, I feel a little foolish for dressing up. It’s a sterile, simple place, no different from all the doctor’s offices I’ve gone to for all my normal human ailments.

Resisting the urge to rub my mascaraed lashes, I sit in the pastel-colored waiting room and fill out the forms they give me. Name, age, occupation. Relationship status. Date of last menstrual period. Date of last sexual encounter. Questions that almost feel like accusations.

From the inner corridor, a nurse calls my name.

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

My Transformation Officer is about my age, a tall woman with an easy smile and steady hands.

She looks over my paperwork, enters it into the system, and gives me a bottle of pills.

“That’s it?” I say, clutching the pills, feeling foolish.

“That’s it,” she says. “One a day.”

“For how long?”

“You’ll need to take them for about two weeks,” she says, scribbling something on a clipboard. “Do you have someone you can trust who will be able to help you through the process? A friend or a family member, perhaps?”

There are so few people I’m close with these days. My friends from the cross-country team have all moved on, posting pictures of their growing families online. My colleagues are friendly enough in the office, but after I leave, they’ll put a new hire in my cubicle and forget I was ever there. Maybe that’s why I’m still in the same role I started in, while men hired after me scurried up the promotion ladder—because our bosses knew they’d need to replace me, for one reason or the other.

Who else can I tell? I could visit my sister. We were close, once.

But I need to think. I need to be sure.

When I get home, I put the pills down and go for a run.

I need the slap of my sneakers against the pavement, the wind biting my ears.

I run past smiling, pastel-painted houses with neatly mowed grass lawns. I always hated this neighborhood, hated living alone in a house with three bedrooms, but it didn’t make financial sense to move away.

One mile. Two.

A group of young mothers pushes their strollers down the sidewalk, laughing and chattering. One stops to pick up her child’s pacifier, which he’s thrown onto the curb. Wipes off the sticky residue with her fingers.

Maybe I could just keep running. Leave the pills at home and never go back.

I still have my body, my human body, which I’ve loved and hated in turns. My hands, my stomach, my strong legs.

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

Six miles. Seven.

My lungs ache. My calves burn. I keep running until I see nothing but trees.

But the Transformation Officers would find me, no matter how far I ran. There's nowhere I can hide forever. They'd find me and make me do this in a more painful way, drag my family's name through the mud, bring in lawyers and police to force me to comply.

I force myself to turn around.

Better, less humiliating, to face this head-on. To act like this is a choice.

**** Writing Exercise**

The narrator in the excerpt above is sentenced to become a graden after failing to produce children. It is later revealed that though she did attempt to have children, she was relieved when she did not succeed.

PROMPT: How does the theme of agency play into "Iris" and "Everything in the Garden is Lovely?" How does identity affect the agency each of the characters have? How do the characters in each story respond to mandates from their respective governments and how does this relate to their agency? Please cite specific examples from both texts to support your claim.

## Writing Exercises

**Narrative**

The full novel that "Iris" comes from features multiple points of view by having different characters take turns telling the story.

Think of a scenario when a family member or friend looked out for you or you looked out for someone else, like how Lynette tried to keep her children safe, and how she instructed Iris to look after Violet. Write a page or more about how that person looked out for you, or you looked out for them, and how that experience made you feel.

Afterward, rewrite the page from the other person's perspective. How do you imagine they felt giving or receiving help?

**Descriptive**

> *"Stop that!" their mother said, so sharply that Iris froze. Their mother snatched the coin from Violet. "We don't conjure things, do you understand?" She bent down and held Violet's shoulders. "Understand?"*

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

> *"Mommy, you're hurting me," Violet whined.*
>
> *Their mother seemed to melt, almost crying as she quickly wrapped Violet in a hug. "I'm so sorry sweetheart. Your father was taken away because bad men saw him conjuring. I only want to keep you safe."*

In 500 words or more, write about a character who has a secret to hide. What lengths do they need to go to to keep the secret? How do they feel about the information they're keeping secret, and how do they feel about keeping it secret? Is it a secret they have to hide from everyone or only from specific people?

Please include the character's internal thoughts and vivid description of the physical sensations they experience.

Optional challenge: Don't use fluff words like "felt", "heard", or "saw". Since the writing will be from the character's perspective, these words aren't necessary. Instead, change a sentence like "She heard the alarm go off" to "The alarm went off." Or, "He smelled pizza" to "He breathed in and the scent of pizza warmed his soul and moistened his tongue." This makes your writing clear, immediate, and descriptive.

Optional Take-Home Activity: Bring your story home and expand it to a 1,000 word–3,000 word narrative. Print out copies for each person in your small group. The next day, take home all your group members' stories and make notes on what you liked/didn't like in the margins. They will do the same for you. Make sure to include one to two compliments for every one criticism.

**Analysis**

The opening of "Iris" reads: "By order of His Majesty, King Edmund IV, all Conjurors are to immediately report to the Noble Guard for mandatory five-year military service to aid in the war against the revolting colonies of Tsitonia. Military service for Illusionists and those without the Gifts remains voluntary." This is a fictional scenario based on a magical world notably different from our own, but drafts, dissenting colonies, and discrimination are very real.

Please read the following passage from "Using Magic as Metaphor in Fantasy Novels" by Adrienne Tooley.

*Yet sometimes, readers don't wish to see their struggles laid out so plainly on the page. Instead, they hope for entertainment, for worlds brimming with whimsy and enchantment, for darkness and villains to take on a far less realistic slant. But no matter the genre, readers still seek connection. So how can fantasy authors give all of this to their readers: escapism and reality; connection and distance?*

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

*I turn toward metaphor. My preferred conduit for that metaphor is magic.*

*Magic as a concept is elusive and enigmatic, consistent only in its inconsistency. It can be gained any number of ways. A person can be born with magic. Magic can be earned, gifted, or bargained for. Magic can be wielded indefinitely or can be utilized for only a brief window of time. The possibilities are endless. But no matter how a character gains their power, once they possess magic, it changes them irrevocably. This change—both the way a fantasy world responds to a person with power and the way that person perceives themselves—is just as much the heart of a story as the actual spells that are cast.*

*Sometimes, of course, characters with magic are revered and treated with respect. But more often, those characters face scrutiny, suspicion, and vilification from those around them. How these characters are treated can become intentional metaphors for nuanced, real-life scenarios.*

*Biases against characters with magic in a novel might reflect biases readers face based on their race or religion. A witch born to a family who reviles magic might resonate to a child in a conservative household who is beginning to explore their sexuality or gender expression. A character who earns magic through difficult trials and honest means may resonate with a reader who knows what it feels like to work hard and make sacrifices in the name of achieving their dreams. A character with unwanted magic may grapple with their sense of self, may feel monstrous and wrong the way teenagers do as their bodies, brains, and hearts change.*

*Using the metaphor of magic to connect to a character's life experience and emotions can make it easier for a reader to confront their own feelings. That layer of separation allows them to make a choice: to investigate and explore, and internalize the deeper meaning, or to gloss right over the metaphor, should the reader wish not to engage with that fantastical reflection of self.*

1) How do you think "Iris" could be interpreted as a metaphor for a real-world event or concept? Write a five-paragraph argumentative essay with a thesis statement and concluding statement, citing the article and story to do so and refuting any opposing arguments you may come up with.
    a) Optional: If you want, find an article from a scholarly source or with a high credibility rating on an event you think parallels "Iris" and cite the article to bolster your argument.

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

2) Later in the article, Tooley states that “Of course, metaphors are not always perfect, and are always left up to a reader’s interpretation. But still, they allow an author to bridge the gap between the fantastic and the true.”

   In a two-page argumentative essay, compare and contrast how “Iris” and “Everything in the Garden is Lovely” operate as metaphors. Cite both stories in your argument.

## Activity Options

**Classroom Activity One**

Students will read the article: Draft Resistance in the Vietnam Era.

Then, students will pair up and discuss the following questions:

1. What reasons did draft dodgers and resisters during the Vietnam war have for resisting the draft?
2. How does this inform your understanding of why Lynette may have chosen to avoid the draft?
3. How might this relate to the verdict the narrator receives in “Everything in the Garden is Lovely”?

After, students may share their findings with the class.

**Classroom Activity Two**

Students will read the article: U.S. Citizen Children Impacted by Immigration Enforcement

Then, students will pair up and discuss the following questions:

1. What effects does ICE detainment have on children of detained parents?
2. Based on this knowledge, how do you think Iris and Violet might be affected by their mother’s drafting after the end of the story?
3. The narrator in “Everything in the Garden is Lovely” doesn’t have children, and only mentions a sister and friends she’s lost touch with. Do you think her lack of close relationships makes it alright for her government to take possession of her life? Explain your answer.

After, students may share their findings with the class.

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

**Home Activity**

Think of a story you're familiar with that is not set in the real world. This can be a book, movie, television show, video game, podcast, etc. It could have magic, talking animals, futuristic technology, supernatural creatures, or anything that makes it not possible to occur in real life.

Write 500 words or more about how that story could be a metaphor for events or ideas from real-life. Think of what the story's themes are, what is the heart of the story that brings the emotional impact? Where have you seen that feeling show up in the real world?

**Guest Speaker**

Invite the author, Brandie June, to speak to the class about her story and her experience onstage and as a writer and story coach. Ask her about her inspirations for her story and the research she did on magic for her story.

**Local Spectacles**

Option 1 (17 and under FREE): Visit the Academy of Motion Pictures. What tools does each exhibit use to create the spectacle? How is the atmosphere and tone of each exhibit informed by that lighting, display items, interactive elements, and the physical space? How do they affect your experience of the exhibits?

Option 2: Visit a local theater production or magic show. Note in what ways the theater, sound, set, lights, costumes, and performers contribute to the spectacle of the show. What atmosphere and tone do they set and how does it affect your experience of the show?

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS REFERENCE

**This story and its exercises are appropriate for 9th grade and above. 9th- and 10th-grade standards are cited.**

### Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.9: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.C: Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D: Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.E: Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.3: Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

### Vocabulary Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). (See grade 9–10 Language standards 4–6 for additional expectations.) CA.

**Post-Reading Class Discussion Options**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.A: Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.A: Introduce a topic or thesis statement; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.B: Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.A: Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C: Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

**Text-Dependent Question Options**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). (See grade 9–10 Language standards 4–6 for additional expectations.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

**Writing Exercise Options**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.A: Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W..9-10.1.E: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.A: Introduce a topic or thesis statement; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.B: Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.C: Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.E: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A: Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.B: Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.C: Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D: Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation including footnotes and endnotes.

**Complementary Reading Text (Comparative Writing Exercise)**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.7: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.A: Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.B: Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.C: Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

**Activity Options**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.A: Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C: Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

© 2026 Locavore Lit LA, a program of Light Bringer Project. All rights reserved. https://locavorelitla.org