



# STELLAR

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**STAAR™ Techniques to Engage Learners  
in Literacy and Academic Rigor**

**English II End-of-Course**



## Introduction

*STAAR Techniques to Engage Learners in Literacy and Academic Rigor (STELLAR)* was developed as a resource for classroom teachers to use in preparing their students for the STAAR English II End-of-Course Assessment. Through the course of four units, it incorporates multigenre reading selections that are thematically linked and creatively crafted to encourage inquiry, discussion, and ongoing reflection. Every unit offers value-added enrichments through technology, research, and listening and speaking, while providing relevant scaffolding options for diverse learners and gifted and talented students. Also included are suggestions for big ideas, skills-based vocabulary, literary extensions, and benchmark and summative assessment options to support authentic literacy experiences.

### Value-Added Components

*STELLAR* is carefully crafted to provide big-picture ideas in the form of essential unit questions, themed passages, and assessments based on these passages. In addition to the basics, each unit contains applications for listening and speaking, research, skills-based vocabulary, technology, and project ideas. To aid in planning for unit instruction, *STELLAR* offers ideas for differentiation for diverse learners, adaptation for gifted learners, and lesson-planning tools. The text also contains several appendices for research-based study-skills practice, product options, grouping strategies and activities, and discussion formats and models, all of which can be utilized within each unit. Finally, in order to allow extensions with the selected themes beyond the materials provided within each unit, additional appendices on choosing themed passages and integrating instruction with technology are included.

### Thematic Instruction

*STELLAR* puts forth the best practice of thematic instruction in integrated language arts. It utilizes the English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as its foundational document. There are five strands of instructional skills outlined in the TEKS: Reading (including Figure 19), Writing, Oral and Written Conventions, Research, and Listening and Speaking. These skills are meant to be taught in conjunction with one another in order to help students make connections between the different literacy strands. In any unit of study, therefore, educators are encouraged to integrate the literacy strands so that students must synthesize skills and concepts from each to gain meaning and insight.

The study of themes is a naturally recurring element within the TEKS; students are expected to make thematic connections within and between the many different genres:

(2) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/**Theme** and Genre. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about **theme** and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:

(A) analyze how the genre of texts with similar **themes** shapes meaning

All the components of the *STELLAR* Series resources are based on the design schematic for the state summative assessment and the TEKS; therefore, it requires students to demonstrate understanding of theme through themed passages, crossover multiple-choice and short-answer questions for reading, and thematically linked writing tasks.

### **Assessments**

The assessments contained in *STELLAR* are custom designed for Texas students. The assessments measure a student's level of performance on clearly defined standards, objectives, and skills. Student scores will be based on test questions that have been developed and aligned to the most current version of the ELAR TEKS as well as the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS).

The chosen selections meet the criteria for high-interest, 21st-century context and age-appropriate content. The Lexile score, which considers word frequency and sentence length, of each selection was used to determine ability-level applicability. Selections were then linked by theme, which allowed assessment questions to be written to a higher cognitive level for an upward cognitive spiral. Each test comprises a set of themed selections with unique questions and an additional set of questions that draw upon the theme.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires that state assessments be aligned and "measure the depth and breadth of the state academic content standards for

a given grade level” (US Department of Education, 2003, p. 12). Alignment is the match between the expectations of student learning described in the TEKS and the questions on STAAR. Depth of Knowledge (DOK) was formulated in 1997 by Dr. Norman Webb in response to a need generated by states to objectively and accurately align assessment questions to standards for compliance with federal guidelines. DOK, which measures the cognitive complexity of a task, was the alignment tool used for these assessments. It is a federally approved method of alignment for state summative assessments that is currently used by over twenty states, including Texas.

SAMPLE

## How to Use This Book

*STELLAR* is divided into four thematic stand-alone units. Each unit offers three options for planning.

Option One encompasses instruction with components of the assessment given when appropriate. The suggested time frame, based on 45-minute instructional periods, is a total of 10 days for instruction, 3 days for assessment, and 2 days for review and debrief. An overview of the planning steps for Option One along with a sample calendar immediately follow this foreword.

Option Two documents student improvement through baseline testing, targeted instruction, and retesting. The suggested time frame, based on 45-minute instructional periods, is 4 days for baseline testing, 7 days for instruction and practice, 2 days for retesting, and 2 days for review and debrief. An overview of the planning steps for Option Two along with a sample calendar immediately follow this foreword.

Option Three strictly consists of test preparation (e.g., practice in test-taking skills, gaining familiarity with format and vocabulary, and understanding the expectations of a standardized assessment). The instructor may use the passages and assessments at the beginning of each unit to prepare students for the STAAR EOC English II. The suggested time frame, based on 45-minute instructional periods, is 4 days for assessment and 3 days for review and debrief. A sample planning calendar immediately follows this foreword.

**A Note to the Teacher:** Every *STELLAR* unit is designed to engage students' interest by addressing subjects and content they will encounter in their everyday lives. All activities and facilitation questions contained herein are suggestions. Please preview all selections for applicability and appropriateness before using the materials in your classroom. All movie suggestions are sourced from The Internet Movie Database, and music selections are sourced from iTunes.

## Planning for Option One: Teaching, Testing, Reviewing

A written overview of the planning steps for using this text for teaching, testing, and reviewing, along with a graphical representation of the process, are provided for your use. A blank calendar for use when planning is included at the end of this section.

**Step One** begins with planning instruction by deciding whether to use the literature selections in this text, choose supplemental literature, or use a mixture of both. Regardless of the source, make sure the selections come from multiple genres. If you have chosen to solely use supplemental literature, construct the themes based on the selections. If you have chosen to use both provided and self-selected texts, make sure the connections that provide the theme(s) carry through in each selection.

**Step Two** involves asking questions to help direct learning:

- What themes, or big ideas, does the text(s) address?
- Are the themes subtly connected or is the connection more apparent?
- How can the big ideas for each selection be connected through the theme?

In **Step Three**, first determine the various skills (TEKS) that are naturally embedded within each selection, as well as those within the theme. Next locate the skills within each of the RLA strands.

**Step Four** identifies the areas within each strand that most likely will need explicit instruction for the students to be able to take ownership of their learning. List the skills and plan the most effective strategies and methods for approaching each skill, including classroom (formative) assessment. Be sure to take the following into consideration:

- In what order should the skills be taught?
- What mini lessons are necessary to provide explicit skill instruction?
- How will the instruction address multiple levels of skill proficiency?
- Is the classroom assessment effective for determining comprehension?
- How will students show evidence of skill attainment and mastery?
- What task(s) must be successfully completed?

**Step Five** focuses on the administration of sections of the assessments. Review your planning up to this point and look at the provided assessment. Select portions of the assessment and plan their placement within the

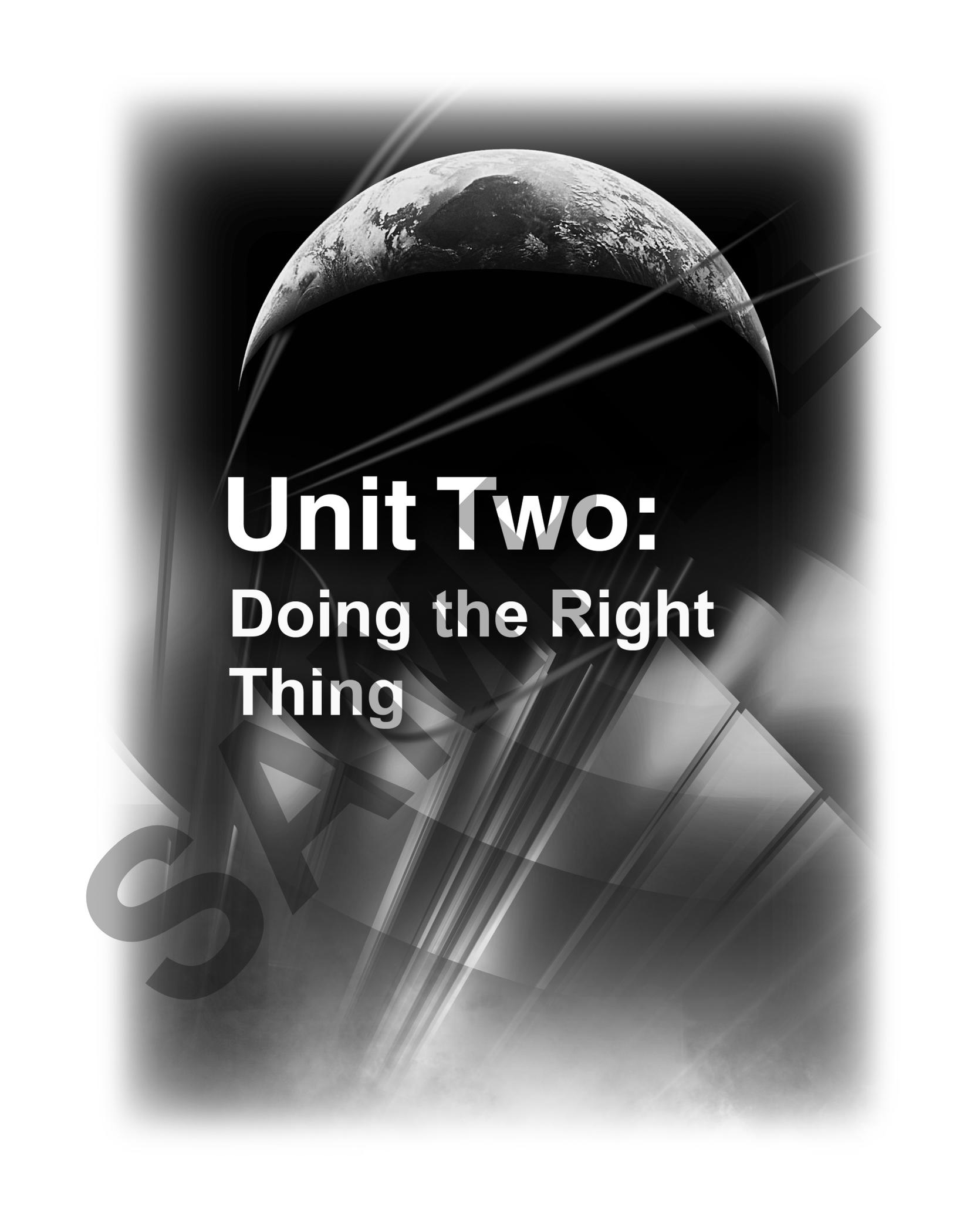
learning cycle. For example, one choice is to administer the reading multiple-choice questions after each reading selection has been completed. The short-answer questions that apply to a single selection could also be administered at the completion of the reading. The revising and editing questions would be administered at the most appropriate time throughout the instructional process. The short-answer questions, which apply to more than one selection along with the written component (stories and essays), would be administered at the completion of all reading selections. An answer key is provided at the back of each unit.

After incorporating the sections of the test into the learning cycle, build the necessary time for administration of these sections of the test into your overall plans.

NOTE: When using Option One, it is not necessary or expected that the included assessments would be administered in their entirety.

In the final stage, **Step Six**, after the sections of the assessments have been scored, review the data and chart the weaknesses overall and individually. Then plan how best to approach any areas needing additional instructional time and resources. It is imperative that educators allow for time to reteach and review skills for persistent weaknesses before continuing within the unit or moving on to another unit.

The entire process of lesson planning for Option One might look something like this.



**Unit Two:**  
**Doing the Right**  
**Thing**

Before the Battle of the Alamo, Davy Crockett was traveling through Texas with three companions, whom the author refers to as the bee-hunter, the juggler, and the old pirate.—Ed.

An excerpt from  
**David Crockett: His Life and Adventures**

*by John S. C. Abbott*

Notes about my reading

- 1 The fortress of the Alamo is just outside of the town of Bexar, on the San Antonio River. The town is about one hundred and forty miles from the coast, and contained, at that time, about twelve hundred inhabitants. Nearly all were Mexicans, though there were a few American families. In the year 1718, the Spanish Government had established a military outpost here; and in the year 1721, a few emigrants from Spain commenced a flourishing settlement at this spot. Its site is beautiful, the air salubrious, the soil highly fertile, and the water of crystal purity.
- 2 The town of Bexar subsequently received the name of San Antonio. On the tenth of December, 1835, the Texans captured the town and citadel from the Mexicans. These Texan Rangers were rude men, who had but little regard for the refinements or humanities of civilization. When Crockett with his companions arrived, Colonel Bowie, of Louisiana, one of the most desperate of Western adventurers, was in the fortress. The celebrated bowie-knife was named after this man. There was but a feeble garrison, and it was threatened with an attack by an overwhelming force of Mexicans under Santa Anna. Colonel Travis was in command. He was very glad to receive even so small a reinforcement. The fame of Colonel Crockett, as one of the bravest of men, had already reached his ears.
- 3 "While we were conversing," writes Crockett, "Colonel Bowie had occasion to draw his famous knife, and I wish I may be shot if the bare sight of it wasn't enough to give a man of a squeamish stomach the

## The Influence of Volunteerism

1 Volunteerism, while not a new concept, is gaining popularity across America. As early as 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville described the populace of the United States as “a nation of joiners” (Tocqueville, 1945) that made a practice of getting together to accomplish shared goals. The 1930s produced volunteerism in the form of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which planted trees and improved public lands, roads, and bridges all across America. During the 1960s, the Peace Corps worked to improve impoverished conditions all over the world, and the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) worked to assist low-income groups through clean-up efforts in urban areas (Young, N.D.). Today, thousands of national, state, and local volunteer organizations aim to resolve almost every kind of problem facing society.

2 One noteworthy volunteer organization, the Houston Fat Stock Show and Livestock Exposition, was organized in 1931 by seven cattlemen having a business conversation over lunch. Their established mission was to encourage raising and marketing better breeds of livestock at county fairs and to promote improved educational research efforts within the livestock industry. Any money raised over the amount of administrative costs to produce the show would be awarded as scholarships to young livestock exhibitors in an effort to advance agribusiness as an industry. The next two decades brought about many firsts for the organization, such as the first rodeo, the first horse show, and the first parade to be held during the annual livestock exhibitions. Gene Autry, the singing cowboy, was the first star to entertain the growing crowds. In 1952, the first trail ride, known as the Salt Grass Trail Ride from Brenham, Texas, to Houston, Texas, was traveled by four men on horseback. Five years later, the first major college scholarship, in the amount of \$2,000, was awarded to a hardworking high school exhibitor. In 1961, The Houston Fat Stock Show and Livestock Exposition became what is known today as the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo (HLS&R).

3 Growing numbers of exhibitors and spectators validated the need to move the event into a larger venue, and in 1966, the show moved from the Sam Houston Coliseum to its new home in the expansive

## Big Ideas and Key Questions

### Classroom Discussion Key Questions

Utilize the following questions to elicit feedback and encourage dialogue within the classroom. Select an appropriate discussion and grouping format from Appendix B to engage students in discussion. It is useful to provide explicit instruction with regard to adequate and appropriate commentary and rules of interaction. It is also advisable to model acceptable and unacceptable responses through think-aloud processes and revisit the essential questions daily to allow students to gain depth of understanding.

### **Essential Questions**

- Why is it difficult to do the right thing?
- Why is it important to do the right thing?
- When is it acceptable not to do what is expected of you?
- How do your friends and family affect your choices?
- When is it the most difficult to do the right thing?

### **Additional Key Questions**

- How does it feel when you don't do the right thing?
- How does it feel when you do the right thing?
- Have you had to defend your choice to do the right thing? Why?
- Have you ever made incorrect choices that have made things worse?
- Why did you make those choices?
- How do your surroundings, family, and society shape whom you become and the choice you make?
- Have you ever given tried to influence a friend to do the right thing?
- How did you learn to do the right thing? Who/What was your model?
- How does doing the right thing affect the way you view yourself?

### Quotes to Consider

Utilize the following quotes to add depth to classroom discussions and small-group interactions. Challenge students to agree or disagree with the given quotation and then justify their responses through examples, logic, and evidence.

*I have always supported measures and principles and not men.*  
—Davy Crockett

*Obviously, people in Texas have big hearts.* —Katie Couric

## Skills-Based Vocabulary

The following terms and phrases are aligned with the TEKS to be taught and assessed within this unit. It is strongly suggested that this terminology be integrated into mini lessons for initial teaching and reviewing throughout the unit to ensure concept attainment.

### Unit Two

academic vocabulary

analogy

archetype

author's purpose

controlling idea

cultural setting

evidence

anecdotal

empirical

logical

statistical

figurative language

historical setting

imagery

inference (subtle and complex)

moral dilemma

organizational pattern

plot

symbolism

syntax

technical academic vocabulary

theme

tone

voice

## Suggested Literary Extensions

The following literary pieces and ideas offer opportunities to extend or abridge the theme of this unit, highlighting a focus on genre and grade-level reading instruction.

### Children's Books

- *Black and White: The Confrontation between Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth and Eugene "Bull" Connor* by Larry Dane Brimner
- *America Is Under Attack: September 11, 2001—The Day the Towers Fell* by Don Brown
- *The Cheshire Cheese Cat: A Dickens of a Tale* by Carmen Agra Deedy and Randall Wright, illustrated by Barry Moser
- *No Ordinary Day* by Deborah Ellis
- *Underground* by Shane W. Evans
- *E-mergency!* by Tom Lichtenheld
- *These Hands* by Margaret H. Mason, illustrated by Floyd Cooper
- *Tia Isa Wants a Car* by Meg Medina, illustrated by Claudio Munoz
- *The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families* by Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore
- *Should I Share My Ice Cream?* by Mo Willems

### Fiction

- *All Good Children* by Catherine Austen
- *The House of Tomorrow* by Peter Bognanni
- *To Save a Life* by Jim and Rachel Britts
- *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- *Catching Fire* by Suzanne Collins
- *Mockingjay* by Suzanne Collins
- *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane
- *Tempest: A Novel* by Julie Cross
- *Room: A Novel* by Emma Donoghue
- *Courage in Patience* by Beth Fehlbaum
- *Hope in Patience* by Beth Fehlbaum
- *Truth in Patience* by Beth Fehlbaum
- *Scarlet* by A.C. Gaughen
- *New Kids: Big Dreams and Brave Journeys at a High School for Immigrant Teens* by Brooke Hauser
- *Girl in Translation* by Jean Kwok
- *The Talk-Funny Girl: A Novel* by Roland Merullo

## Listening and Speaking Applications

This section contains listening and speaking tasks to engage students collaboratively in active critical and creative thinking with the Doing the Right Thing Unit.

Task Name	Task Directions	Suggested Time Allotment
<p>Courage Experiment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divide the class in half. Each group must design an experiment to test another's ability to do the right thing.</li> <li>• Give the students a few days to perform the experiment (as many times as necessary) and record the results.</li> <li>• At the end of the experiment, have each group explain its experiment and results.</li> <li>• Debrief on the results as well as the students' attitudes, expectations, and personal feelings.</li> </ul>	<p>5 minutes for setup 2–3 days outside of class for experimentation 15–30 minutes to explain, debrief, and discuss with journaling (may be done at end of each class period)</p>
<p>Social Reflection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the student to choose a social group (e.g., immediate family, team, class, circle of friends, Facebook friends, etc.).</li> <li>• Ask students to maintain a log to record every choice the group makes in a given period of time (suggestion is 1 week or longer).</li> <li>• At the end of the time frame, have the students review the data and mark which choices resulted in doing the right thing and which did not. They should also note who made what decisions.</li> <li>• Ask the students to jot down a justification (if possible) for each decision.</li> <li>• Debrief.</li> </ul>	<p>5–8 minutes for initial assignment 8–10 minutes for data review 15 minutes to debrief and discuss with journaling (may be done at end of each class period)</p>

Use *David Crockett: His Life and Adventures* (pp. 85–90)  
to answer questions 1–10.

- 1 Determine the meaning of citadel using the text and etymology entry below.

from L. civitatem (nom. civitas) originally "citizenship, condition or rights of a citizen" and later it expanded to include "community of citizens, state, and commonwealth."

- A community
  - B body of troops
  - C fortress
  - D citizens
- 2 Read the excerpt.

*In the night, Colonel Travis sent the old pirate on an express to Colonel Fannin, who, with a small military force, was at Goliad, to entreat him to come to his aid.*

Using the context, determine the most appropriate meaning for express.

- F train that runs to a certain station
- G representative from San Antonio
- H special messenger
- J rapid trip

Use *Kid Wolf of Texas* (pp. 91–99) to answer questions 11–21.

11 Complete the analogy below.

Saddle : concha as young figure : \_\_\_\_\_

- A buckskin
- B horse
- C colors
- D saddle

12 What inference can you make about the horseman after reading paragraphs 11–13?

- F He changed his mind and decided to take the shortest route.
- G He didn't see any Indians on the plain, so he thought he would be safe.
- H He was curious about the cry and wanted to see what it was.
- J He wanted to help the person who cried out even though he was afraid.

13 Determine which archetype best matches Kid Wolf.

- A King
- B Warrior
- C Hero
- D Prophet

Use *David Crockett: His Life and Adventures* (pp. 85–90) and *Kid Wolf of Texas* (pp. 91–99) to answer questions 22–24.

- 22 What is one difference that does not exist when you contrast Kid Wolf with Davy Crockett?
- F Kid Wolf was modest, and Davy Crockett was proud.
  - G Davy Crockett was famous, and Kid Wolf was unknown.
  - H Kid Wolf did not seem comfortable with killing, and killing did not appear to bother Davy Crockett.
  - J Davy Crockett seemed apathetic toward others, and Kid Wolf seemed concerned about others.
- 23 Which scenes made similar contributions to plot development of each selection?
- A *Kid Wolf*, paragraphs 20–28, and *Davy Crockett*, paragraph 11
  - B *Kid Wolf*, paragraph 35, and *Davy Crockett*, paragraph 6
  - C *Kid Wolf*, paragraph 21, and *Davy Crockett*, paragraph 10
  - D *Kid Wolf*, paragraph 45, and *Davy Crockett*, paragraphs 1–2

39 Which main character from *David Crockett: His Life and Adventures* or *Kid Wolf of Texas* would most likely work as a volunteer at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo? Justify your answer using textual evidence.



STUDENTS MAY NOT WRITE OUTSIDE THE BOX

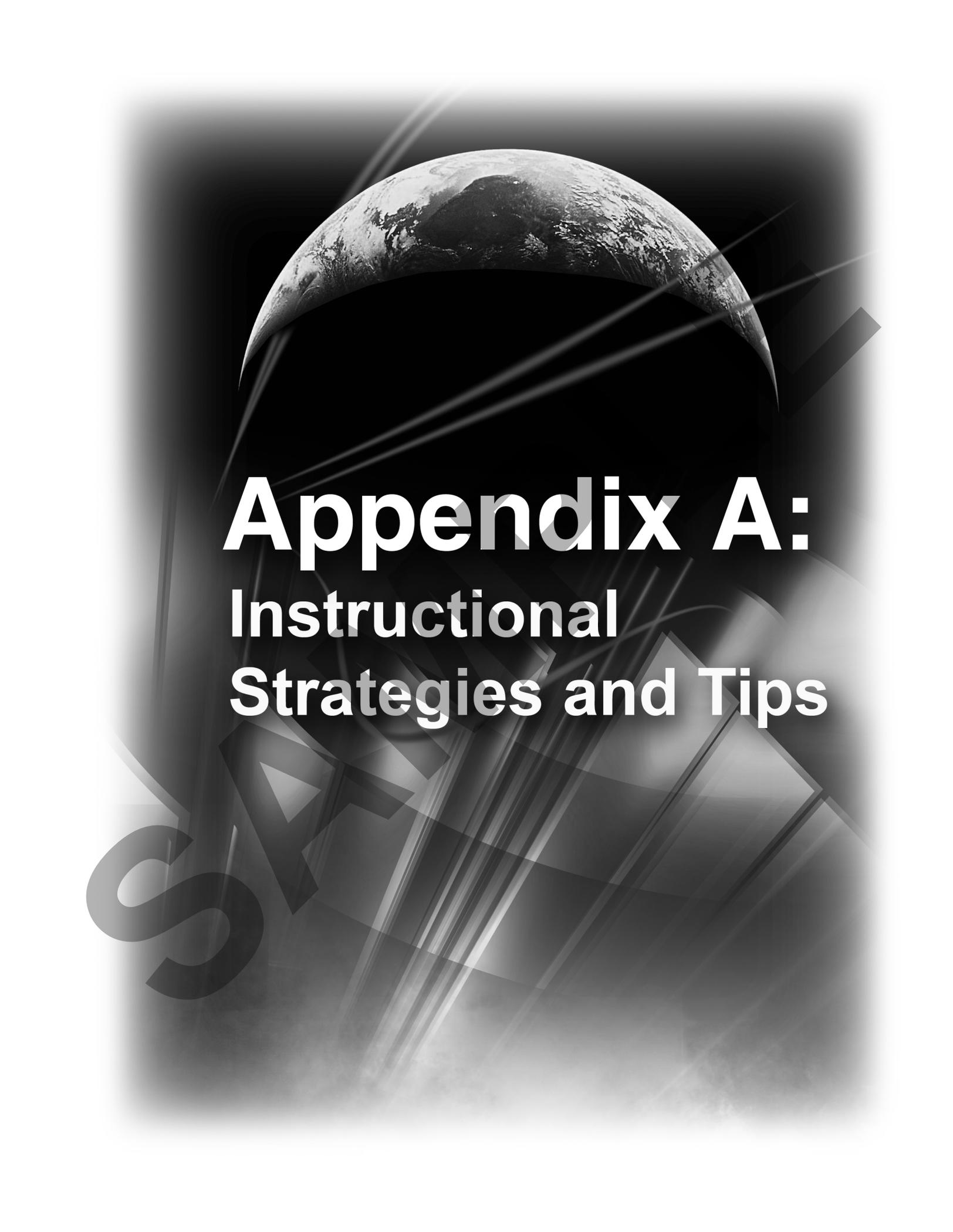
SAMPLE

40 What is the most effective revision of sentence 2?

- F Tamahay was a Sioux Indian of heroic proportions, herculean in strength, and a superb runner, in fact, he had all the physical qualities of an athlete or a typical Indian.
- G Tamahay was a Sioux of heroic proportions, herculean in strength, and a superb runner; in fact, he had all the physical qualities of an athlete or a typical Indian.
- H Tamahay was of heroic proportions, herculean in strength, and a superb runner; in fact, he had all the physical qualities of an athlete or a typical Indian.
- J Tamahay was of heroic proportions: herculean in strength, a superb runner; in fact he had all the physical qualities of an athlete or a typical Indian.

41 What is the best way to rewrite sentence 3?

- A In his scanty dress, he was beautiful, looking like an antique statue in living bronze.
- B In his scanty dress, he was beautiful like an antique statue in living bronze.
- C In his scanty dress, he was as beautiful as an antique statue in living bronze.
- D No revision is needed in this sentence.



# **Appendix A: Instructional Strategies and Tips**

## Differentiating for Diverse Learners

Every classroom contains learners with diverse sets of skills and abilities. The central challenge in instruction involves planning to scaffold support to each independent learner in order to foster access to content knowledge and instill motivation to continued learning. This challenge is directly addressed using the constructs of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a scientifically based framework for curriculum delivery and design, officially defined in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008<sup>1</sup>:

*The term Universal Design for Learning means a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that:*

- A) Provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and*
- B) Reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.*

UDL principles should be utilized to plan for differentiated instruction. There are three basic approaches to differentiating instruction through UDL: 1) providing multiple means of representation (i.e., presenting the information differently); 2) providing multiple means of action and expression (i.e., giving students different ways to process and produce information); and 3) providing multiple means of engagement (i.e., soliciting student interest and participation in information processing). Therefore, the central questions for reflecting on lesson design are—

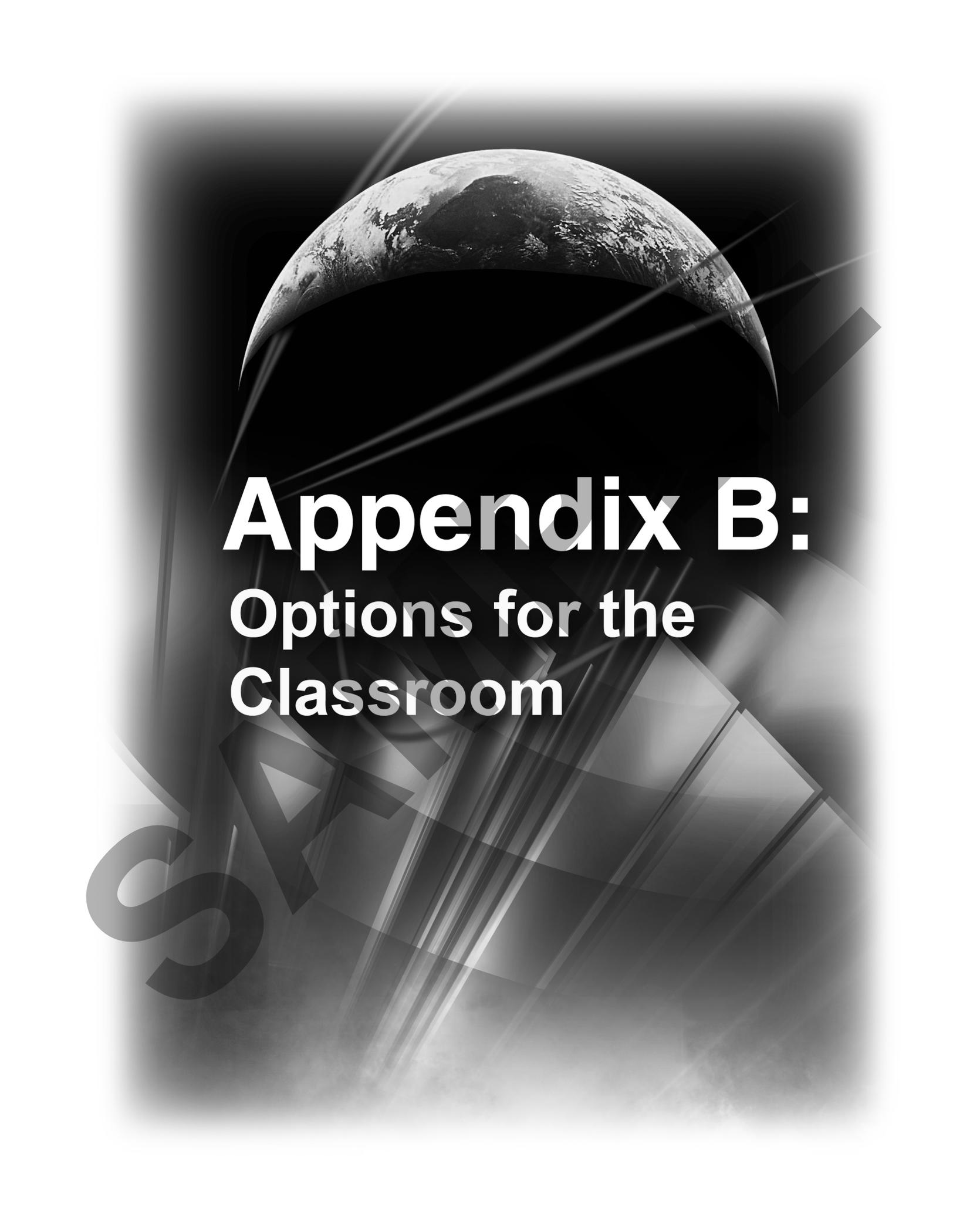
- **Representation:** How can I make the information more accessible through language and sensory integration?
- **Engagement:** How can I recruit interest and minimize distractions through activities?
- **Action and Expression:** How can I provide students with options for interacting with and responding to information?

## Adapting for Gifted Learners

The key to adapting instruction for gifted and talented learners is challenging them to seek depth and complexity within units of study and tasks. Depth is generally understood as utilizing the information within a discipline, its details, patterns, trends, rules, and ethics. Complexity is understood as interrelationships among concepts, topics, and subjects across disciplines and time, considering multiple perspectives and points of view. A simple protocol for adapting a task for a gifted student in reference to depth and complexity is modeled below. A planning template for gifted adaptations is included in this section.

1. Consider the task (e.g., the research extension option in Unit One, wherein students are asked to create an interactive family tree).
2. Look for ways in which students can be challenged to delve deeper into the task, considering details, patterns, trends, and rules.

<b>Depth Construct</b>	<b>Questions to Consider</b>	<b>Embedded Skills</b>
Details (regarding patterns or trends)	What are its features? What defines this? What makes this unique?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• locate evidence</li> <li>• identify facts</li> <li>• differentiate facts from opinions</li> </ul>
Patterns	What issues/elements repeat? What is the order of elements? Can we predict next steps? Can we infer previous steps?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• infer</li> <li>• predict</li> <li>• connect</li> <li>• synthesize</li> <li>• organize</li> <li>• summarize</li> <li>• relate</li> <li>• compare/contrast</li> </ul>
Trends	What factors influence outcomes? What variables create change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cause and effect</li> <li>• predict</li> <li>• hypothesize</li> <li>• deduce</li> </ul>
Rules	How is this supposed to be? What is the correct structure? What rules determine conduct or choices? What are the proper procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generalize</li> <li>• confirm</li> <li>• direct</li> </ul>



# **Appendix B:** **Options for the** **Classroom**

## Alternative Discussion Formats

Discussion is a vital part of literacy. The most traditional format utilized in the classroom involves teacher-directed questions asked within a whole-class setting. Although there is definitely a place in the curriculum for teacher-led discussions, it is important to provide a variety of discussion-format options, which lead to increased student ownership of learning. Below please find a few discussion options to cultivate this ownership.

Discussion Format	Process for Implementation
Silent conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designate a bulletin board or location in the room for the conversations. Have sticky notes, note cards, or slips of paper available near the display.</li> <li>• Post a question, quotation, or thought-provoking comment on the top of the display.</li> <li>• Invite students to visit the display and leave responses to the prompt and for one another.</li> </ul>
PNI (Positive, Negative, and Interesting) system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a piece of literature for reading.</li> <li>• Brainstorm key points in the text as a class, and record these on visual display.</li> <li>• Then ask students to place a plus sign (+) next to key points that have a positive impact on a given character or theme.</li> <li>• Ask students to place a minus sign (–) next to key points that have a negative impact on a given character or theme.</li> <li>• Ask students to place an exclamation point (!) next to the points they find most interesting.</li> <li>• Challenge the class to discuss and defend their individual choices.</li> </ul>
Museum exhibit notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place various stimuli or artifacts around the classroom. (Note: It is ideal to have these posted on poster board or chart paper.)</li> <li>• Ask students to visit each “exhibit” and record comments, questions, and connections on their own paper.</li> <li>• After all exhibits have been visited by all students, ask students to move beside the artifact to which they had the strongest reaction (positive or negative).</li> <li>• As groups congregate, have them discuss their connections with the artifact, and record “aha” moments on the chart paper or display.</li> </ul>

## Grouping Strategies

### Flexible Grouping

It is important to vary grouping strategies throughout the course of the school year. Over-dependence on any one type of grouping format invites stagnation in learning and can lead to discipline issues. Flexible grouping allows for multiple grouping formats. Factors to consider in selecting grouping formats include group size, group membership (i.e., heterogeneous or homogeneous), group task, literacy levels, and group dynamics (i.e., affective group concerns). The matrix below addresses key questions to address when making decisions regarding grouping formats.

### Group Format Planning Matrix

Grouping Components	Key Questions
Group Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many students are needed to complete the group task?</li> <li>• What roles are required of each student?</li> <li>• What is the optimal group size for the resources and space required for the task?</li> <li>• What size groups are manageable in terms of teacher mobility and discipline issues?</li> </ul>
Group Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it better for group membership to be aligned by common strengths or weaknesses in literacy?</li> <li>• Does the group membership allow for embedded differentiation?</li> <li>• What period of time must the group members work together?</li> <li>• Are there task requirements for group collaboration outside of class?</li> <li>• Would heterogeneous grouping be an asset or a detriment to task completion?</li> </ul>
Group Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the group being asked to do?</li> <li>• What level of rigor is inherent in the task?</li> <li>• What skills are embedded within the task?</li> <li>• What prior knowledge is required of the task?</li> <li>• What teamwork skills are required for task completion?</li> <li>• What embedded task structures are needed for group equity?</li> <li>• How will the task be assessed?</li> </ul>