



STELLAR

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

English I End-of-Course

Region 4 Education Service Center supports student achievement by providing educational products and services that focus on excellence, service, and children.

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Writing Team

Project Facilitator
Carol McManus

Authors
Sandra Starr
Candy Core

Design Team

Lenworth Johnson
Dave Martinez
Billy Sanders

Editing Team

Becky Sanders
Jessica Hilbert

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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 I 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, thematically paired 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 pairing 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 of the components of this English I End-of-Course (EOC) resource are based on the design schematic for the state summative assessment and the TEKS; therefore, it requires students to demonstrate understanding of theme through thematically paired 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 paired by theme, which allowed assessment questions to be written to a higher cognitive level for an upward cognitive spiral. Each test is comprised of 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. Depth of Knowledge, 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.

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 I. 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 of your selections for applicability and appropriateness before using the materials in your classroom.

Reading Passages

An excerpt from **Cyrano de Bergerac**

By Edmond Rostand

Translated from French by Gladys Thomas and Mary F. Guillemard

Act 1, Scene 4

(1640, in the Hotel de Bourgogne, a large and crowded Parisian theater)

My notes about what I am reading

A BORE (coming up to Cyrano):
The actor Montfleury! 'Tis shameful!
Why, he's protected by the Duke of Candal!
Have you a patron?

CYRANO:
No!

THE BORE:
5 No patron? . . .

CYRANO:
None!

THE BORE:
What! no great lord to shield you with his name?

CYRANO (irritated):
No, I have told you twice! Must I repeat?
No! no protector . . .
10 (His hand on his sword): A protectress . . . here!

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

- Can you judge a book by its cover?
- How do assumptions impact your behavior toward others?
- When is it okay to judge someone?
- What are the effects of stereotyping?
- How have stereotyping and judgment influenced current and historical events?

Additional Key Questions

- What assumptions do you make about people you don't know?
- How does appearance impact perception?

Have you ever been judged or prejudged by others? How did this . . .

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

allusion

author's purpose

conclusion

connotative meaning

inference (subtle and complex)

literary device

nonrestrictive clause

Research Applications

This section contains several different topics intended to encourage students to apply research-based skills to the concepts and themes contained in the Book by Its Cover unit.

Topic	Key Questions	Product	Sources for Enrichment
Beauty in the Media	What does the media suggest about beauty?	Collage of media definitions of beauty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teen magazines, <i>Glamour, Vogue</i> • cosmetic companies • plastic surgeons • talk show topics • web sites
Cultural Definitions of Beauty	How does beauty differ from culture to culture?	Comparison of two cultural definitions of beauty on two different continents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Geographic</i> • cultural societies • visitors' bureaus • guidebooks

Assessment Questions Aligned to TEKS and STAAR

Use *Cyrano de Bergerac* (pp. 57–70) to answer questions 1–10.

- 2 Explain how the author uses a literary device to help shape the plot in act 1, scene 4, lines 20–68.
- F Rhetorical technique is used to influence the audience's perception of Cyrano, which contributes to the exposition.
 - G Situational irony is used to provide insight into Cyrano's character, which is a necessary component to building the rising action.
 - H Imagery is used to create an emotional effect and contribute to the exposition through the bond that Cyrano forms with the audience.
 - J Dramatic irony provides a literal look at the conflicts at this point in the play, which helps to build the rising action.
- 8 How does the relationship between Cyrano and Le Bret help develop Le Bret's character?
- F Le Bret is developed as a father figure.
 - G Le Bret is depicted as an overprotective brother.
 - H Le Bret is portrayed as protective, supportive, and thoughtful.
 - J Le Bret is characterized as guardian and benefactor.

Short Answers

DIRECTIONS

Answer the following questions in the space provided.

- 33 Explain how the genres of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and "Hot or Not? Beauty in the Eyes of Beholders" connect through the theme to shape the meanings of the selections.

Written Composition

Photograph provided in full text version.

Choice 1

Think about the issues reflected by the photograph and in the following text.

"Don't judge a book by its cover."

Plan and write an engaging story about how stereotypes influence people. Be sure to include examples taken from various resources, including experiences and observations.