

## Stories of Human Rights

What are human rights, and how do real people and fictional characters respond when those rights are threatened? In this module, students develop their ability to read and understand complex text as they consider this question. In Unit 1, students build their close reading skills by reading the novel *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan. They read about human rights and apply this learning as one lens through which to interpret the characters and themes in the novel—a complex coming-of-age story set in Mexico and rural California during the early 1930s. Through close reading, interpretation, and analysis of fiction and nonfiction texts, students begin to build their understanding of human rights. Throughout the unit, students closely read selected articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) related to events in *Esperanza Rising* where human rights are threatened.

In Unit 2, students finish reading *Esperanza Rising*, focusing on characters' reactions and responses to events when their human rights are threatened. They write a two-voice poem with a partner, as well as a four-paragraph literary essay comparing the response of two characters to a selected event from the novel, describing how each character responds to the event. In Unit 3, students continue to revisit the themes of the UDHR and *Esperanza Rising* as they plan, write, and ultimately perform monologues based on events from *Esperanza Rising* where human rights are threatened. In groups, students write a Directors' Note to describe their selected event from *Esperanza Rising*, explain which specific articles of the UDHR relate to the event, and explain how people today are impacted by this issue. Students revise, rehearse, and ultimately perform their group's monologues for the class and/or school or community members. This performance task addresses CCSS ELA **RF.5.4**, **W.5.4**, **W.5.5**, and **W.5.8**.

- **Topic: Human rights**
- **Task: Monologue Performance and Program**
- **Targets (standards explicitly taught and assessed): RF.5.4, W.5.3, W.5.4, W.5.5, and W.5.8**
- **Text: *Esperanza Rising, A Life Like Mine: How Children Live Around the World; The Universal Declaration of Human Rights***

### Guiding Questions and Big Ideas

- ***What are human rights, and how can they be threatened?***  
*Human rights belong to everyone, but they can look different to different people in different places.*  
*We can better understand how human rights can be threatened by reading about the experiences of fictional characters in stories.*
- ***How can we use writing to raise awareness of human rights?***  
*We can raise awareness of human rights issues by writing about the issues fictional characters face.*

### [Video Overview](#)

## **Module Performance Task - Monologue Performance and Program**

This performance task gives students a chance to work in small groups to compile their monologues and create a program. Throughout Unit 3, students work with careful scaffolding to write and revise a monologue based on a character's reaction to an event from *Esperanza Rising*. For the performance task, students work in groups to finalize the order of their monologues and create a program that includes the order of their monologues, the cast, and a Directors' Note. In the Directors' Note, students write about the human right challenged by the event described in their monologues, identify the corresponding article from the UDHR, and explain how people are impacted by this issue today. Finally, students perform their monologues for a live audience. This task centers on CCSS ELA RF.5.4, W.5.4, W.5.5, and W.5.8.

## **Social Studies Connections**

This module is designed to address English Language Arts standards and to be taught during the literacy block of the school day. However, the module intentionally incorporates social studies content that many teachers may be teaching during other parts of the day. These intentional connections are described below.

College, Career, and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards:

- D2.Civ.3.3-5: Examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws, and key U.S. constitutional provisions.
- D2.Civ.4.3-5: Explain how groups of people make rules to create responsibilities and protect freedoms.
- D2.Civ.7.3-5: Apply civic virtues and democratic principles in school settings.
- D2.Civ.10.3-5: Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.
- D2.Geo.2.3-5: Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions and their environmental characteristics.
- D2.His.2.3-5: Compare life in specific historical time periods to life today.
- D2.His.4.3-5: Explain why individuals and groups during the same historical period differed in their perspectives.
- D2.His.14.3-5: Explain probable causes and effects of events and developments.
- D3.4.3-5: Use evidence to develop claims in response to compelling questions.
- D4.6.3-5: Draw on disciplinary concepts to explain the challenges people have faced and opportunities they have created, in addressing local, regional, and global problems at various times and places.