

RISING GRADE 9

Literacy Teacher Guides

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RedThread™
A **Lavinia**
Literacy Program

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UNIT OVERVIEW

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Introduction

Kwame Alexander's Newbery Medal–winning book The Crossover is an incredible coming-of-age story, especially suited for students on the cusp of young adulthood. The novel, written entirely in verse, tells the story of Josh Bell through an accessible yet sophisticated examination of what it means to lose things and people; what it means to grow up; and what it means to sort out who you really are. Leveraging basketball as both a literary backdrop and central metaphor, the novel questions whether life, like basketball, has rules—and what those rules should be.

While this story engages students with relatable characters, situations, and themes, the novel presents a meaningful opportunity for students to embrace verse as a medium for storytelling. Alexander's poems offer a tremendous display of how diction, rhythm, structure, and imagery can amplify a narrative's meaning and its emotional resonance and cohesion. Students will gain a deeper appreciation for the power of poetry to create uniquely moving and rich reading experiences.

In both content and form, The Crossover is not just the study of a transitional chapter in the fictional life of Josh Bell but also a platform for young readers to transition themselves: They will "crossover" to become deeper and more deft critics—of verse, sports, and life.

Knowledge-Building Connections

The accompanying RISE Close Reading for Meaning unit for Rising Grade 9 supports students in developing their understanding of the key themes and topics explored in The Crossover. The unit includes informational texts about famous athletes and topics like grief and loss, alongside poetry and fiction stories that highlight the importance of coming of age and family relationships. This thoughtful integration of nonfiction, poetry, and fiction helps students strengthen their comprehension skills while exploring the complex themes developed in The Crossover.

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Essential Question and Themes

Throughout this unit, students will grapple with the Essential Question below. As they explore the novel, they will use their growing knowledge to develop robust ideas.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION
How do the challenges we face shape who we become?

As students read The Crossover and engage in rich discussions, they will uncover the themes of the novel. By the end of the novel, students will be able to articulate and explain the following themes:

- **Coming of age:** The Crossover explores the complex process of growing up—navigating shifting relationships, identity, and responsibility. The novel captures the moment when childhood certainty gives way to emotional complexity as Josh reckons with change, conflict, and maturity. The theme speaks to the challenge of holding on to who you've been while stepping into who you're becoming.
- **Loss:** Loss in the novel is both emotional and physical. Josh experiences what it means to lose connection, lose control, and ultimately, lose someone he loves. The novel invites readers to reflect on how we respond to grief, how relationships evolve or break under pressure, and how healing can begin after rupture.
- **Life and basketball:** Basketball is more than a sport in this novel—it becomes a metaphor for expression, connection, discipline, and self-discovery. Through the rhythm and rules of the game, Josh learns about freedom, struggle, teamwork, and self-worth. The novel thus elevates the significance of basketball—not just as a competition to be played but also as a vehicle for meaning-making regarding our human experience, especially in our youth.

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Reading and Writing Knowledge

Throughout this unit, students will also become stronger readers, writers, and thinkers. The key reading and writing goals for this unit follow.

Reading

Students will apply narrative reading strategies to develop their ability to gain insight from a novel. They will study:

- How an author develops characters across a novel.
- How to read and interpret poetry.
- How an author uses character development, plot, and literary devices to develop themes.

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Writing

Students will write Literature Responses to strengthen their writing skills and to convey their understanding of the content and ideas studied in this unit. They will study:

- How to craft a strong claim in response to a prompt.
- How to support a claim with relevant evidence and insightful explanation.

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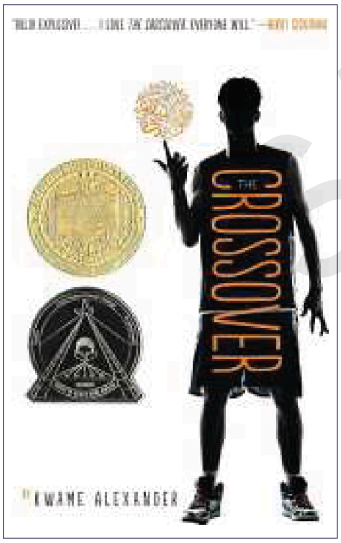
Preparing To Teach:
Getting To Know Your Literature and Planning Your Unit

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Getting To Know Your Literature

Before launching the unit, study the core texts carefully to ensure you thoroughly understand them and have internalized how they fit together to support student learning. You should also consider student, school, and community needs and values to determine if any language or content will require additional consideration when using these texts in your classroom.

Core Texts



In his award-winning novel, written entirely in verse, Kwame Alexander tells the story of Josh Bell, a twelve-year-old basketball phenom. At the novel's start, Josh's life is straightforward: He loves basketball and adores his family, especially his twin brother, JB, who rivals his talent on the court. But as the novel progresses, Josh's world begins to change. Josh struggles to navigate life without his twin brother, who has fallen for a new girl at school. At the same time, Josh becomes aware that his beloved dad, Chuck, has serious health issues. When Josh lets out his frustration on the basketball court and breaks his brother's nose, he's benched for the season. With a distant brother, a sick dad, and no basketball season, Josh is left to wonder who he has—and who he will—become.

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Planning Your Anchor Charts

Before the Unit

Before the first lesson, prepare and post the following anchor charts:

- A chart for the unit's Essential Question
- A chart for the unit's vocabulary words
- "Genre Frames" anchor chart
- "Plot Arc" anchor chart

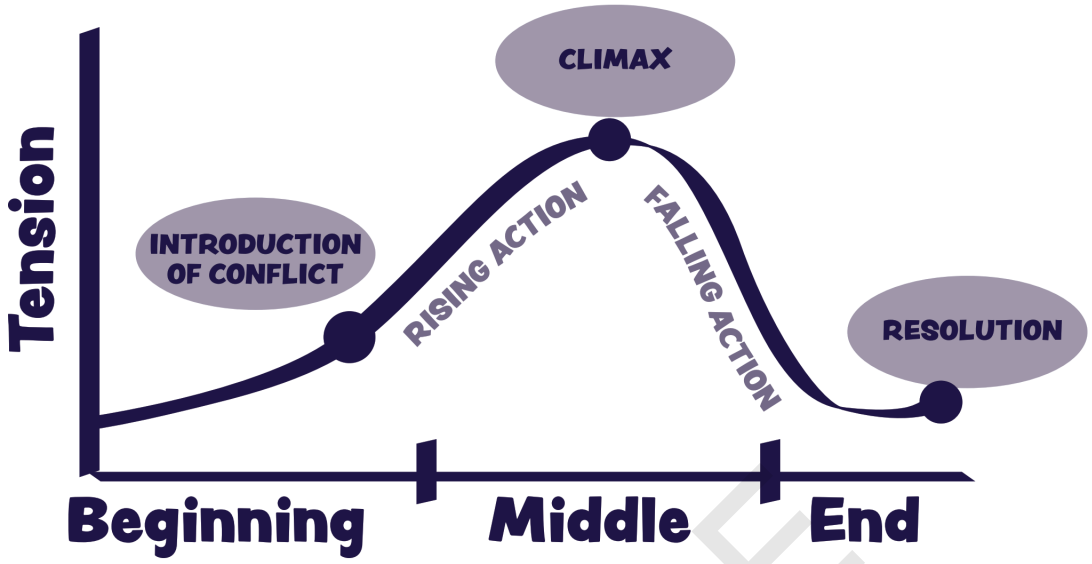
GENRE FRAMES

Genre	Frames
Nonfiction	• What is the topic? • What is the text teaching me about the topic? • What is the author's perspective on the topic?
Fiction	• Who are the characters, and what have we learned about them? • What is the conflict? • What is the resolution? • What is the theme?
Poetry	• What is the literal meaning? • What is the deeper meaning?

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"Plot Arc" Anchor Chart



Additional Resources

The following recommended resources can be used to facilitate student discourse throughout the unit. They can be found in the RedThread RISE Knowledge Implementation Guide.

- "**Ask Protocols**"
- "**Tips and Prompts for Facilitating Discourse**"
- "**Discourse Norms and Guidelines**"
- "**Strategies for Sharing Student Work**"

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Student Outcomes:
Key Artifacts of Learning

Setting Your Vision for Student Writing

Literature Responses

Students will write in response to various prompts at strategic points throughout the unit. An example of a Literature Response for this unit follows.

Mentor Piece

Mentor Literature Response Prompt: What is one idea the poem "Five Reasons I Have Locks" develops about Josh?

> *The poem "Five Reasons I Have Locks" develops the idea that Josh's hair helps him feel strong in his identity. In listing reasons why he has locks, Josh says, "[I]t helps people know / that I am me and not JB." This shows that his locks help him feel like an individual, separate from his twin. Then, Josh says that when he watched a clip of his dad dunking, "his / long twisted hair like wings / carrying him / high above the rim," he "knew / one day / [he'd] need / [his] own wings / to fly." In this metaphor, Josh compares his and his dad's hair to wings, showing that Josh sees his hair as part of what lifts him up on the court and in life. Both examples show that his locks are not just about looks—they represent his pride in his identity.*

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Rising Grade 9 Criteria List for Literature Responses

SCORE	CRITERIA
2	• Answers all parts of the prompt with a valid claim. • Includes relevant and specific evidence. • Includes an insightful explanation of how the evidence supports the claim. • Is organized and logical.
1	• Answers some parts of the prompt. • Includes mostly literal events or details from the text. • Includes some relevant evidence, but the evidence is either not the best or insufficient. • Attempts to explain evidence, but the explanation does not clearly connect to the claim. • Is somewhat organized and logical.
0	• Answers the prompt inaccurately. • Is disorganized. • Contains grammatical or conventions errors that interfere with understanding.

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Setting Your Vision for Project Work

In addition to Literature Responses, you may choose to have students engage in project work as an authentic assessment of student learning.

A suggested Project Lesson sequence is provided in the Unit at a Glance, based on the text students should have read before each lesson. You may wish to adjust the timing, but ensure students have read through the section "Second Quarter" before Project Lesson A and through the section "Third Quarter" before Project Lesson B. Should you wish to use them, Project Lessons have been included in a separate section of the Teacher Guide and Unit Portfolio.

Signature Moves, Signature Shoes

In this project, students will design a custom basketball shoe for one of the secondary characters in the novel The Crossover. Students should draw their design freehand, though you may offer the option of adding cut-out materials (e.g., magazines, fabric) or designing it digitally using a tool like Google Slides or Canva, if available. You may offer a **printed shoe outline** for students who need support with structuring the shoe.

Signature Moves, Signature Shoes Project Prompt: In The Crossover, Josh Bell drives the story—his perspective is always center court. But the people around him are in the game too, each with a unique perspective, personality, and voice, even if we don't always hear from them directly. Now it's your turn to step into their shoes, figuratively and literally. In this project, you'll design a custom basketball shoe that shows the personality, emotions, and perspective of Alexis, JB, or Chuck. You'll use symbols, colors, words, and creative design choices to express their perspective and voice, then you'll provide an explanation of your choices as the designer.

In this project, you will:

- Design a custom basketball shoe that represents your character's personality, emotions, and perspective. Your shoe should include:
  - Colors that symbolize your character.
  - Images, symbols, or shapes that show who they are or what they care about.
  - Words, phrases, or quotes that connect to their voice or experience.
- Write a Designer's Statement that answers:
  - Why did you choose this character?
  - How do your design choices connect to the character's personality and perspective?

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Showcase of Learning

At the end of their project work, have students present their projects before an audience. Consider the following ideas to help you plan for how students will showcase their work:

- Having students apply their designs to real, plain white shoes for display.
- Creating a "shoe wall" reminiscent of a retail shoe display.
- Organizing displays by the character perspectives represented in each shoe design to help visitors connect student work to the project task.
- Preparing audience questions—such as "How does your shoe represent your character?"—and having students actively share their learning through presentations or guided tours.
- Involving community members to enrich the event and broaden the audience.
- Partnering with art teachers to offer additional creative opportunities connected to the project.

Mentor and Exemplar Student Piece

The following Mentor Student Signature Moves, Signature Shoes Project demonstrates the type of work that students can be expected to produce in response to this project prompt. While this piece may be used in Project Lessons to model specific concepts or skills, you are strongly encouraged to create your own piece when preparing to teach the unit and to use it as an example during lessons.



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Designer's Statement

I designed this shoe for Josh's mom. The three hearts on the ankle represent Josh, JB, and Chuck—her family, whom she protects and supports through everything. Her family is the most important thing to her—they are her heart—so I chose to represent them using heart symbols. The basketball on the tongue represents her family's love for the game and her involvement in it as a supportive wife and mom. Even though she doesn't play ball herself, she shows up to every game and cheers from the sidelines. The wedding ring near the toe represents her commitment to her marriage to Chuck. She loves Chuck dearly, and they have a strong marriage that serves as the backbone of the Bell family. The book and pencil designs on the heel stand for her role as an assistant principal and her belief in education. She emphasizes the importance of school to her sons, ensuring they don't toss their educational responsibilities to the side for basketball. I added the words "Team Bell" on the sole to show she holds the family together, even when things are hard. Even when she disagrees with Chuck or her sons' decisions (like Chuck's refusal to see a doctor or when Josh hits JB with the ball), she still acts as part of her family's team, supporting them all. Finally, the shoe is designed using calm, cool colors—light blue and off-white—to emphasize her presence as a calming force in the family.

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Rising Grade 9 Criteria List for Signature Moves, Signature Shoes Projects

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	SCORE
Ideas	• Focuses on one character's perspective. • Demonstrates a deep understanding of the character, including their personality and thoughts on specific events from the text.	
Details	• Includes relevant and specific symbols, colors, and/or words on the shoe to represent the character's perspective. • Includes sufficient, relevant, and varied explanations in the Designer's Statement to support at least three of the design choices.	
Organization and Style	• Groups similar information together in a logical and/or creative way. • Organizes information with a structure that builds seamlessly to show the idea. • Explains how each design choice is connected to the character's perspective.	
Process	• Includes evidence of thorough planning in the final product. • Includes evidence that self-reflection or feedback was taken into account and that thoughtful revisions were made in response. • Uses models and examples as inspiration for their own creativity rather than as a blueprint.	
Quality of Work	• Is neat, clear, and easy to understand. • Responds clearly and thoughtfully to all components of the task. • Uses grade-level grammar, punctuation, and spelling conventions in all writing.	

OVERALL SCORE

SCORING KEY			
4 All Criteria Met	**3** Most Criteria Met	**2** Some Criteria Met	**1** Criteria Not Met

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Unit at a Glance

LESSON	PAGES	TEACHING POINT
Week 1 - The Crossover		
1	3–20	Fiction readers focus on getting to know the protagonist. They pay close attention to how particular lines or details from the text reveal aspects of the character.
2	23–43	Poetry readers analyze how a poem's structure influences its meaning and impact on the reader.
3	44–65	Fiction readers make connections across scenes or moments in a story to identify the conflict. They ask themselves, "How does this new scene build on what I already know? What conflict is developing?"
4	N/A	Writers identify the qualities of a strong Literature Response and include those qualities in their own responses.
5	66–85	Fiction readers know that authors develop themes throughout a novel. As they continue reading, readers identify ideas that are repeated to determine if they develop into central themes.

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LESSON	PAGES	TEACHING POINT
Week 2 - The Crossover		
6	89–99	Fiction readers analyze how the narrative point of view contributes to their understanding of the story.
7	100–112	Readers analyze how an author's word choice creates the tone of a poem and helps convey the characters' emotions.
8	113–122	Readers make inferences about the characters' feelings and motivations as they read by using clues from the text and their own background knowledge.
9	N/A	Writers carefully consider what the prompt is asking them, then think about everything they have read in a text so far to help them develop a claim that accurately states their idea.
10	123–134	Fiction readers pay attention to internal and external conflict to better understand the themes of the text.
Lesson A (Optional)	N/A	Creators study a mentor project in order to understand the qualities of an engaging and compelling project.
Week 3 - The Crossover		
11	137–154	Fiction readers analyze the author's word choice and figurative language to deepen their understanding of characters' emotions.
12	155–169	Readers notice structural differences in poems and compare how the author's structural choices help develop their meaning.
13	170–182	Readers connect details across a text to infer how a character's thoughts or feelings are changing.
14	N/A	Writers identify evidence from the text that most closely supports their claim.
15	183–196	Readers notice turning points in a character's journey and think about how these moments help develop the themes of the story.
Lesson B (Optional)	N/A	Creators sketch a design of their project to convey their character's perspective and identity.
Lesson C (Optional)	N/A	Creators draft their Designer's Statements to explain how their design choices represent their character.

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LESSON	PAGES	TEACHING POINT
Week 4 - The Crossover		
16	199–211	Readers pay attention to the story's point of view. They ask themselves, "How does a character's point of view shape our understanding of the story? How might the story change if the point of view were to shift?"
17	212–222	Fiction readers consider how the author begins to resolve conflicts at the end of a novel. They ask themselves, "How do the character's actions help bring the story to a close?"
18	225–237	Fiction readers reflect on how a novel ends. They ask themselves, "What do the final scenes reveal about what the characters have learned? What messages does the author want us to take away?"
19	N/A	Writers include an explanation to show how their evidence supports their claim.
20	N/A	Fiction readers reflect on how authors use recurring elements to develop characters and themes. They ask themselves, "How do these repeated elements take on new meaning by the end of the novel?"
Lesson D (Optional)	N/A	Creators revise their work to strengthen their explanations and finalize their projects.

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DAILY LESSON PLANS

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Lesson 1: Reading

LESSON OVERVIEW

TEACHING POINT:

- Fiction readers focus on getting to know the protagonist. They pay close attention to how particular lines or details from the text reveal aspects of the character.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

- Literature Response

KEY VOCABULARY:

- narrator
- protagonist

MATERIALS:

- The Crossover, pages 3–20
- "**How to Play Basketball**" (video)
- "Genre Frames" anchor chart
- "**Filthy McNasty (Live At Village Gate Club, New York, 1961 / Remastered 2006 / Rudy Van Gelder...**"

UNIT PORTFOLIO:

- **Folio 1:** "Lesson 1: Reading"
- **Folio 27:** "Genre Frames"

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SUGGESTED AGENDA 45 min.

3 min.	**Engage**
15 min.	**Launch**
10 min.	**Independent Reading**
10 min.	**Literature Response**
5 min.	**Whole-Class Discourse**
2 min.	**Closing**

Notes for Lesson Differentiation

TO SUPPORT:	• Literature Response: To support students in forming a claim, remind them that Josh mentions in the previous poem, "Conversation," that his dad gives rules before each game. Then, read the poem "Basketball Rule #1" aloud to students and ask, "What might this rule mean for Josh and Jordan? What message is Josh's dad conveying through this rule?"
TO ADVANCE:	• Literature Response: Tell students that Josh's dad's basketball rule includes a metaphor for how to view both the sport and life. Ask students to instead respond to the question, "How does the metaphor in this poem develop the reader's understanding of Josh Bell's perspective?"
LANGUAGE AND MLL SUPPORTS:	• Reading Support: If students need additional support in understanding text structure, introduce them to the visual layout of verse novels explicitly by pointing out line breaks, stanza structure, spacing, and font changes. • Writing Support: If students need support getting started with their writing, provide the following sentence starter: "'Basketball Rule #1' develops the idea that …"

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Lesson 1: Reading

Teaching Point: Fiction readers focus on getting to know the protagonist. They pay close attention to how particular lines or details from the text reveal aspects of the character.

Engage

> *Today, we will enter the world of Josh Bell, the **protagonist** of Kwame Alexander's acclaimed novel The Crossover. Josh is a young basketball star, and this novel explores how his life and world change over the course of his seventh-grade year.*

Display and read the Essential Question for the unit. Keep the Essential Question posted on an anchor chart throughout the unit.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION
How do the challenges we face shape who we become?

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Launch





> *To better understand the **protagonist's**, or main character's, descriptions in The Crossover, we'll start by watching a brief video that explains some of these terms. As you watch, think about what you learn about basketball and how it might help you understand the story more deeply.*

Play the video "How to Play Basketball" from Jr. NBA.

Teacher's Note: If your students are well acquainted with the sport of basketball, you may wish to have a student explain key basketball terms to the class.

Ask:
Based on this video, what basketball terms might be used in The Crossover?

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Key Ideas To Listen For: Students' responses may vary, but be sure that they identify some of the key terms that follow to support students who may not be as familiar with basketball: "tip-off," "dribble," "offense," "three-point shot," "foul," "free throw," etc.



*The **narrator** of this book, Josh, uses a variety of basketball terminology. A **narrator** in fiction is the individual who tells a story. Understanding basketball will help us better understand the **protagonist's**, or Josh's, narration.*

Now that we are acquainted with basketball as a sport, let's further orient ourselves with the novel's genre and consider how it impacts what we think about while we read.



Display the "Genre Frames" anchor chart, and introduce or review the genre frames for fiction and poetry with students.

GENRE FRAMES

Genre	Frames
Fiction	• Who are the characters, and what have we learned about them? • What is the conflict? • What is the resolution? • What is the theme?
Poetry	• What is the literal meaning? • What is the deeper meaning?

*This novel is a series of poems, and it is also a fictional story. As we read this story, we'll read it both as readers of poetry and as readers of fiction. Today, **we will focus on getting to know the protagonist. Fiction readers pay close attention to how particular lines or details from the text reveal aspects of the character.***

In this part of the lesson, you will read from the poem "Dribbling" on page 3 to the end of the poem "Filthy McNasty" on page 10 of The Crossover by Kwame Alexander.

Model jotting as you read and/or as students share.

*As I read this first poem aloud, read along in your books and think about what we learn about the **protagonist**.*

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Teacher's Note: Older students can benefit from hearing a text read aloud just as much as younger students. We encourage you to read these pages aloud so students can be fully immersed in listening to and comprehending the text.

Read the poem "Dribbling" on page 3.

Think Aloud: *Alexander intentionally formatted the poem so that the words influence its rhythm and help illustrate the* ***protagonist's*** *experience with basketball. For example, the word "slipping" appears to slip down the page like a player trying to run after Josh but failing to keep up as he dribbles the ball down the court.*

Rather than tell the "story" of how his basketball games or practices unfold, Josh emphasizes how the sport feels for him. I get the sense that the ***protagonist*** *feels energized when playing basketball—he is "MOVING & GROOVING." The lines "and my dipping will leave you / S L I P P I N G on the floor, while I / SWOOP in / to the finish with a fierce finger roll ..." reveal that he is extremely confident as a basketball player.*

As we read on, pay attention to particular lines and details that help us understand the ***protagonist****.*

Read to the end of the poem "Josh Bell" on page 5.

Ask:
Which details from this poem help you better understand Josh? What do they help you understand about his character?

Key Ideas To Listen For:

- "Josh Bell ... is my name. / But *Filthy McNasty* is my claim to fame. / Folks call me that / 'cause my game's acclaimed": Josh's identity is wrapped up in basketball, so much so that people call him by a nickname he earned because of his basketball skills.
- "my dad likes to gloat: / *I balled with Magic and the Goat*" and "*Your game so sweet, it's a crêpes suzette*": Through these parts, we learn that Josh's dad was also a basketball player and that his mom is supportive of his talent.

Read to the end of the poem "Filthy McNasty" on page 10.

In this poem, "Filthy McNasty," the writing style returns to that of the first poem. It suggests that when Josh speaks as Filthy McNasty, he makes unapologetic claims about his brilliance on the court. Filthy McNasty represents Josh's confidence.

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Independent Reading

> *Now, you will read to page 20 independently. While you read, remember that* ***fiction readers focus on getting to know the protagonist. They pay close attention to how particular lines or details from the text reveal aspects of the character.***

Circulate, notice trends, and coach students in their understanding of the day's Teaching Point as students read. As needed, you may choose to read this portion of the text aloud with a small group.



In this part of the lesson, have students read from the poem "Jordan Bell" on page 11 to the end of the poem "Basketball Rule #1" on page 20 of The Crossover. They should take notes in their Unit Portfolios as they read.

Key Ideas To Look For (Related to the Teaching Point):

- "Jordan Bell": Josh speaks about his twin Jordan in a brotherly, affectionate way when he says that Jordan's betting habit is "annoying / and sometimes / funny."
- "Five Reasons I Have Locks":
  - Josh draws confidence from his locks. They make him feel unique because they distinguish him both from his brother and from his teammates.
  - The simile Alexander uses to describe what Josh's dad looked like in an old clip of him playing basketball coupled with Josh's metaphorical statement "I knew / one day / I'd need / my own wings / to fly" shows that Josh feels like his locks connect him to his dad.
- "Mom tells Dad" and "Conversation": Details about his parents actions and words reinforce that Josh has a very supportive home life and shares a close bond with his parents.
- "Basketball Rule #1": This poem compares the basketball court to one's family, showing that family is the foundation of Josh's life. It also compares a basketball to a person's heart, showing that Josh's heart is always with his family "on the court."

As you circulate now and throughout the rest of the lesson, use the following Back-Pocket Questions to support and deepen students' thinking.

Back-Pocket Questions To Scaffold:

- What details help the reader understand Josh's relationship with his brother, Jordan?
- What details help the reader understand Josh's relationship with his parents?
- Why does Josh have locks? What lines support this idea?

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Literature Response

Teacher's Note: While students write, you may wish to quietly play the jazz song "Filthy McNasty" by Horace Silver mentioned in "How I Got My Nickname" on page 7.

Literature Response Prompt: How does "Basketball Rule #1" develop the reader's understanding of Josh Bell?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- "Basketball Rule #1" develops the idea that even though Josh loves basketball, family is ultimately the most important thing to him.
- In this poem, Josh shares his dad's first rule of basketball, which emphasizes that one's heart should be with their family.
- The early poems in this section emphasize Josh's love and talent for basketball. But as the first section comes to a close, the reader sees how much Josh's brother, mom, and dad mean to him.
- The final poem underscores this value by affirming that the number one basketball rule is actually not about basketball itself—instead, it's about keeping basketball in perspective and keeping family at the forefront.

Whole-Class Discourse

Prompt: How does "Basketball Rule #1" show us a different side of Josh from the earlier poems in the first section of the novel, "Warm Up"?

Key Ideas To Listen For: Other poems in "Warm Up" are humorous and playful, but "Basketball Rule #1" concludes the section with a semi-serious reflection on the importance of family in one's life. This poem shows that Josh is more than just a young athlete—he is thoughtful, is loving, and values his family.

Back-Pocket Questions To Scaffold:

- Which is more important to Josh—his family or basketball? How do we know?
- What do the earlier poems help us understand about Josh?

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Closing

Through our reading today, we were better able to understand the ***narrator*** *and* ***protagonist*** *of the novel, Josh Bell. Remember that when beginning a novel,* ***fiction readers focus on getting to know the protagonist. They pay close attention to how particular lines or details from the text reveal aspects of the character.*** *Keep these ideas in mind as we continue reading the story.*

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Lesson 9: Literature Response

LESSON OVERVIEW

TEACHING POINT:

- Writers carefully consider what the prompt is asking them, then think about everything they have read in a text so far to help them develop a claim that accurately states their idea.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

- Literature Response

KEY VOCABULARY:

- N/A

MATERIALS:

- "Qualities of a Strong Literature Response"
- Mentor Literature Response prompt
- Non-exemplar and exemplar claims

UNIT PORTFOLIO:

- **Folio 9:** "Lesson 9: Literature Response"

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SUGGESTED AGENDA 45 min.

3 min.	**Engage**
10 min.	**Launch**
15 min.	**Literature Response**
10 min.	**Writers' Circle**
5 min.	**Revise**
2 min.	**Closing**

Notes for Lesson Differentiation

TO SUPPORT:	• Literature Response: For students who need support structuring a response, have them complete the "Literature Response Outline" from the Differentiation Toolkit rather than writing a paragraph response. • Revise: For students who need additional support in forming a strong claim, focus revision on claims, and ensure they name an accurate idea that is based on text evidence. Prompt students with Back-Pocket Questions, such as "How did Josh feel about JB's interest in girls at the beginning of the story? How does Josh feel in the poem 'tip-ping point'? Why?"
TO ADVANCE:	• Literature Response: For students who would benefit from a challenge, provide the following alternative prompt: "What does the metaphor of the apple in the poem represent?"
LANGUAGE AND MLL SUPPORTS:	• Writing Support: If students need support getting started with their writing, provide the following sentence frame: "Josh's feelings about JB's relationship changes from ... to ..." • Speaking and Listening Support: If students need support responding to the writing prompt in English, allow them to discuss their responses orally first (in English or home language). Provide bilingual glossaries for key vocabulary, such as "resentment," "jealous," "distant," and "change," as they prepare to write.

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Lesson 9: Literature Response

Teaching Point: Writers carefully consider what the prompt is asking them, then think about everything they have read in a text so far to help them develop a claim that accurately states their idea.

Engage

In our previous Literature Response Lesson, we practiced using all that we know about strong writing to respond to a question about the text. Today, we will focus on ensuring we begin our responses with strong claims. To do that, we must carefully consider what the prompt is asking us to analyze, then consider all parts of the text that relate to the prompt to ensure we generate claims that are accurate and convincing.

Launch



Display and review the "Qualities of a Strong Literature Response."

Today, we will focus on ensuring we have a clear claim at the beginning of the paragraph to communicate a strong idea that answers the prompt. ***Writers carefully consider what the prompt is asking them, then think about everything they have read in a text so far to help them develop a claim that accurately states their idea.***



Display and read the Mentor Literature Response prompt.

First, we will examine a Mentor Literature Response. Let's study the mentor prompt so we understand its content.

Mentor Literature Response Prompt: What is one idea the poem "Five Reasons I Have Locks" develops about Josh?

Ask:
What does the prompt ask the mentor writer to think about?

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Key Ideas To Listen For:

- The mentor writer must think about a big idea that the reader learns about the protagonist, specifically from the poem "Five Reasons I Have Locks."

Ask:
What information must the mentor writer include in their response to this prompt?

Key Ideas To Listen For:

- The mentor writer must include an idea about the protagonist that is developed from the poem.
- The mentor writer must include specific details from the text that prove the big idea they name about the protagonist in their claim. Then, they should explain how each piece of evidence supports the idea in their claim.

Now, we will examine a non-exemplar and an exemplar response and consider whether the claim in each response accurately responds to the prompt.

Display and read the non-exemplar and exemplar claims.

Non-Exemplar: In "Five Reasons I Have Locks," the reader learns that there are many reasons why Josh has locks.
Exemplar: The poem "Five Reasons I Have Locks" develops the idea that Josh's hair helps him feel strong in his identity.

Ask:
What makes the exemplar claim stronger?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- The exemplar claim is stronger because it contains an idea that accurately responds to the prompt.
- The non-exemplar claim does not argue one specific idea about what the mentor writer learns about Josh.

The non-exemplar claim does not include any of the mentor writer's own ideas about what they are learning about the protagonist from the words in the text. A strong claim articulates the reader's individual interpretation of what they read based on the text. Then, the writer can support the claim with specific evidence from the text. Let's review the prompt we will work with today.

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Display and read the Literature Response prompt for this lesson.

Literature Response Prompt: How do Josh's feelings about JB's relationship change over time?

Ask:
What is this prompt asking? What do we need to do in order to answer it?

Key Ideas To Listen For:

- This prompt is asking us to explain how Josh's feelings about JB's relationship have changed from the beginning of the novel until now.
- We need to think about Josh's feelings about JB's relationship with Miss Sweet Tea at the beginning of the story and about his feelings now. Then, we need to name the change or difference.
- We need to include evidence from the text that shows how his feelings have evolved (evidence that supports what his initial feelings are and evidence that supports what his changed feelings are) and reasoning that explains how this information reveals the change in his feelings.

Now that we understand what the prompt is asking, let's think about our ideas and plan our responses.

Have students briefly discuss their ideas with their partners before beginning to write.

Literature Response



Literature Response Prompt: How do Josh's feelings about JB's relationship change over time?

Key Ideas To Look For:

- Josh initially feels frustrated about being left out, but over time, his emotions intensify to anger and resentment as he realizes his relationship with his brother will never be the same.
- At the beginning of the book, Josh is annoyed and confused that JB spends time with Miss Sweet Tea instead of him ("Second-Person").
- In the middle of the book, he becomes jealous and introspective ("I wish I had an apple of my own" ["The Main Reason I Can't Sleep"].).
- Now, he's reached his tipping point ("And found my *tipping point*" ["Tipping Point"].).

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Writers' Circle

Use the "Strategies for Sharing Student Work" from the RedThread RISE Implementation Guide to facilitate a discussion of student work that highlights the trends you noticed.

For this lesson, you may want to highlight or provide feedback on:

- Claims, and whether they fully respond to the prompt by including how Josh's feelings have changed over time.
- Structure, and whether the response begins with a clear claim that is followed by textual evidence and an explanation of evidence.

Revise



Direct students to revise their writing based on the discussion.

Closing

> *Today, we talked about how* ***writers carefully consider what the prompt is asking them, then think about everything they have read in a text so far to help them develop a claim that accurately states their idea****. Every time we write a Literature Response, we must remember to include a claim that answers the question being asked, at least two pieces of textual evidence to support that claim, and reasoning that shows how our evidence proves the idea in our claim.*

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