

## Highlights of Grade 9 Unit 1: American Voices

Dear Family,

*In this unit, students will investigate what it means to be American. They will consider how tradition and experience affect this question of identity. Students will read a variety of texts and view media as they discuss the Essential Question for the unit.*

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

As a class, as well as in small groups and independently, students will work to answer this question: *What does it mean to be “American”?* Give your student the opportunity to continue the discussion at home.

#### TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR STUDENT

- What are some of the ways you could answer the question *What does it mean to be “American”?*
- When does someone new to the country become American? Can one be more or less American or is it simply something you *are* or *aren't*?
- Why do you think stories related to cultural identity are so popular in American media and books?
- What is the most interesting aspect of the idea of the difference in American voices that you learned from your reading?

### PERFORMANCE TASKS AND PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT

Your student will need to respond to the question *How is an “American” identity created?* He or she will write a nonfiction.

### STANDARDS

Activities and assignments in Unit 1 will help your student meet the following objectives for reading literature and informational texts, writing, as well as speaking and listening.

Here are some key standards that students will work toward in this unit:

#### Reading Literature

- Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it, and manipulate time create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point or view or purpose.

#### Writing

- Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and wellstructured event sequences
- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

#### Speaking and Listening

- Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose audience, and task.

*Thank you for your continuing support!*