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Purpose of Knowledge Packs

In-person learning, involving traditional ELA Guidebook implementation and virtual distance learning should be prioritized. However, the Department recognizes that if school buildings do not physically open, or if a hybrid model needs to be implemented, the time available for those types of interactions might be limited.

However, it is important to remember that learning and activities assigned to students should be meaningful and should be in service of helping students master the knowledge and skills demanded by the ELA Guidebook unit. Therefore, the Department is partnering with CommonLit to release knowledge packs that will support students in building knowledge and vocabulary[1].

NOTE: Packs should have **at least three** related texts. Some topics include more than three texts. Teachers can choose to have students read all texts or select the amount of texts their schedule allows time for.

These resources can be utilized in the following learning scenarios:

- **Traditional In-person Learning**: These resources can be used to make small group instruction more meaningful for students. Teachers can support students in volume of reading and building knowledge while other students engage independently in one or more activities to support making meaning of complex, grade-level texts.
- **Virtual/Hybrid and Analog Distance Learning**: These resources can be used to give students meaningful, independent practice to support core instruction when they are learning asynchronously from home without the support of a teacher.

Directions for implementing are available.

[1] More information about volume of reading can be found in the Reading Guide.

Knowledge Pack One Text Set: Educated

Text One

"Mentors Play Critical Role in Quality of College Experience, New Poll Suggests" by Leo M. Labert, Jason Husser, and Peter Felten

College is full of new experiences and challenges, and one of the best ways to succeed in college is with a mentor. In this informational text, Leo M. Lambert, Jason Husser, and Peter Felten discuss how students benefit from having mentors in college. As you read, take notes on why the author believes student-mentor relationships are beneficial.

Text Two

"Is College Worth It? Is this Even the Right Question?" by Josipa Roksa and Richard Arum

There's one common question many people ask when considering college: is it worth it? Josipa Roksa and Richard Arum explore whether this is the right question to ask and how college prepares graduates for life after school. As you read, take notes on why the authors claim college graduates are struggling after they leave school.

Text Three

"Making College Matter" by Leo M. Lambert and Peter Felten

How do you plan to spend your time in college? Maybe you plan to spend every waking minute in the library or join every club you can. In this informational text, Leo M. Lambert and Peter Felten discuss how students can make their time in college matter. As you read, take notes on what students can do to get the most out of their time in college.

Text Four

"On the Education of Youth in America" by Noah Webster

Noah Webster (1758-1843), also known as the Father of American Scholarship and Education, was an American textbook pioneer, spelling reformer, political writer, and editor. Webster is most well-known for his publication of *An American Dictionary of the English Language* in 1828, known today as the Merriam-Webster dictionary. As you read, take notes on Webster's opinions on the current state of education in America and what he would like to see changed.

Knowledge Pack Two Text Set: *Hamlet*

Text One

"On Tragedy" by Aristotle

Aristotle (385 B.C.–322 B.C.) was an ancient Greek philosopher and scientist. A student of Plato and the teacher of Alexander the Great, Aristotle authored many influential works regarding the physical sciences, philosophy, literature, and politics. In this chapter from *Poetics*, Aristotle seeks to define "tragedy" as it relates to literature and human emotion. As you read, take notes on the different elements of what Aristotle considers to be an ideal tragedy and construct a working definition.

Text Two

"The Bright Side of Sadness" by Bruce Bower

When given a choice, most people would choose to feel happy rather than sad. In this Science News article, author Bruce Bower explores the results of several recent studies about the benefits of sadness. As you read, identify how negative emotions can affect a person's decision-making and success in personal and professional life.

Text Three

"Coping Mechanisms" by CommonLit Staff

Work, school, money — these are some of the most common stressors in everyday life. The effects of stress on a person's mental and emotional health may vary, but without the proper tools to cope, stress can have serious consequences. It can even manifest physically, causing pain and high blood pressure. It's important to learn how to adapt to, minimize, or overcome stressful situations, but some coping mechanisms are more advantageous than others. How do you deal with stress? As you read, identify the benefits and drawbacks to certain coping methods.

Text Four

"Teaching Shakespeare in a Maximum Security Prison" by Michel Martin

In this National Public Radio interview hosted by Michel Martin, Professor Laura Bates discusses her decision to teach Shakespeare in a maximum security prison as a way of educating inmates—and discovering new insights into the Bard's drama. As you read, take notes on the perspective behind Bates' approach to teaching Shakespeare in this setting and other central ideas in the text.

Knowledge Pack Three Text Set: *In the Time of Butterflies*

Text One

"Trujillo & the Mirabal Sisters" by Mike Kubic

Mike Kubic is a former correspondent for *Newsweek* magazine. In this article, Kubic recounts the events that encouraged Rafael Trujillo's rise to power, and the actions that ultimately ended the dictator's oppressive rule. As you read, take notes on the events that led to Trujillo's rise in power and those that ultimately led to his demise.

Text Two

"Daughter of Invention" by Julia Alvarez

Alvarez was born in New York but spent the first ten years of her childhood in the Dominican Republic until her family had to flee the country due to her father's involvement in a political rebellion. The following story is from the novel *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*, which is about the lives of four sisters spanning thirty years in both the United States and the Dominican Republic. In this short story, Yolanda struggles to write a speech for school.

Text Three

"The Three Sisters, Avenged: A Dominican Drama" by Larry Rohter

On November 25, 1960, the assassination of three sisters was order by the dictator of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Trujillo. The murder of the three Mirabal sisters sparked a series of events in the Dominican Republic that ultimately resulted in the fall of Trujillo's regime. Despite the time that has passed since the Mirabal sisters' murder, the Dominican Republic continues to remember the sisters and show their respect. In this New York Times article, published on February 15, 1997, Larry Rohter explores the persisting legacy of the Mirabal sisters. As you read, take notes on how the Mirabal sisters are remembered.

Text Four

"First Lady Hillary Clinton's Address to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women" by First Lady Hillary Clinton

Hillary Clinton was the First Lady of the United States from 1993-2001, as well as a senator to New York from 2001-2009, Secretary of State from 2009-2013, and the Democratic nominee for President in 2016. In 1995, Clinton delivered this speech to the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women. In the speech, Clinton discusses the many violations of human rights that women around the world endure. As you read, note the rhetorical tools such as repetition, parallelism, pathos, logos, and ethos that Clinton uses in her argument.

Text Five

"Behind Closed Doors: 'Colorism' in the Caribbean" by Michel Martin

In this interview, Michel Martin discusses Frances Robles's report on colorism in the Dominican Republic. Colorism is a form of prejudice based on the darkness of a person's skin color. Discrimination based on colorism often occurs within

the same racial or ethnic group. Robles discusses how colorism impacts people in the Dominican Republic, as well as the root causes for these mindsets. As you read, take notes on how racial identity is determined in the Dominican Republic.

Text Six

"The Spark that Brought Down Trujillo" by CommonLit Staff

Rafael Trujillo was a politician, soldier, and dictator of the Dominican Republic from February 1930 until his assassination in May 1961. This informational text describes his rise to power and the events that contributed to his downfall. As you read, take notes on the events that follow the death of the Mirabal sisters.

Knowledge Pack Four Text Set: *1984*

Text One

"The Tiananmen Square Massacre" by Mike Kubic

In this article, former *Newsweek* correspondent Mike Kubic explores the country-wide protests against government oppression and censorship that took place in 1980-90s China, and the government-ordered massacre that subsequently occurred. As you read, take notes on the author's use of language and structure, and what it reveals about his point of view.

Text Two

"I am Very Real" by Kurt Vonnegut

Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007) was an American author and humorist. One month after an English teacher at Drake High School in North Dakota decided to teach Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* in his classroom, Charles McCarthy, the head of the school board, decided that the novel's "obscene language" was not appropriate. Every copy of *Slaughterhouse-Five* at Drake High School was burned in the school's furnace. In response, Vonnegut wrote the following letter to McCarthy.

Text Three

"Total Control in North Korea" by Jessica McBirney

North Korea is a country on the Korean Peninsula of East Asia that is run by an authoritarian government, meaning it has strong central power that limits political freedoms. Today's North and South Korea were once treated as one political unit, annexed by the Empire of Japan from 1910 until the end of World War II. Following World War II, the USSR occupied North Korea and the United States occupied South Korea with the goal of reuniting them, a goal that failed in 1948 when the regions became two separate states. These two states went to war from 1950 to 1953 before reaching a ceasefire. The Kim dynasty has led North Korea from 1948 until today, with three successive supreme leaders: Kim Il-sung (1948-1994), Kim Jong-il (1994-2011), and Kim Jong-un (2011-present). As you read, note the ways in which North Korea controls its citizens' everyday lives.

Text Four

"Inside North Korea's Literary Fiction Factory" by Meredith Shaw

North Korea is a country located in East Asia in the northern region of the Korean Peninsula and is run by an authoritarian government. Kim Jong-un, the supreme leader of North Korea, tightly controls the political and individual freedoms of his citizens. One of the ways in which he does this is through propaganda, information that is either false or exaggerated. In this informational text, Meredith Shaw discusses one form of propaganda in North Korea, literary fiction. As you read, take notes on what we can learn from North Korean literary fiction.

Text Five

"F.B.I. Watched Activist Groups, New Files Show" by Eric Lichtblau

America's surveillance of citizens changed drastically after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. Following the attack, President George W. Bush signed the PATRIOT Act, expanding the power of F.B.I. and its ability to surveil citizens. In this 2005 *New York Times* article, Eric Lichtblau discusses released F.B.I. documents, revealing that certain activist groups are watched by the F.B.I. While this was one of many counterterrorism tactics, or strategies used to prevent terrorism, many found the surveillance to be controversial. As you read, take notes on the groups the FBI monitored and how each group reacted to FBI surveillance.

Text Six

"The Patriot Act: Protection Over Privacy" by Mike Kubic

The controversial PATRIOT Act, also known as the "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act," was passed by President George W. Bush following the 2001 terrorist attacks. Mike Kubic, a former correspondent for Newsweek, discusses the parameters of the PATRIOT Act, as well as why some supported it while others opposed it. As you read, take note of the benefits and disadvantages of the PATRIOT Act.

Knowledge Pack Five Text Set: Artificial Intelligence

Text One

"Are Stories a Key to Human Intelligence?" by Tania Lombrozo

Tania Lombrozo is a contributor to the NPR and an associate professor of psychology at the University of California. In this article Lombrozo explores the impact of stories on human intelligence, as well as the possible effects of stories on artificial intelligence (AI) systems. As you read, take note of the various effects stories have on humans and AI systems.

Text Two

"Human or Machine? A.I. Experts Reportedly Pass the 'Turing Test'" by Scott Neuman

The following article is a production of National Public Radio (NPR) and reports on a computer program that passed the Turing Test, a test to see if a computer can trick a person into believing that the computer is a person too. Eugene, the computer program in this article, succeeded in passing. As you read, take notes on the central ideas of the article and the implications that this development could have potentially on the future.

Text Three

"Experts Debate: Will Computers Edge People Out of Entire Careers?" by David Kestenbaum

Periods of rapid technological development have long been accompanied by fears of job loss. Workers might be replaced directly by machines or indirectly by changes in the economy. Experts have differing opinions on the effects of technological advances in the workplace. As you read, note the arguments of different experts and track how they support their arguments.

Text Four

"Can Machines Learn Morality?" by Randy Rieland

Machines are becoming increasingly more intelligent and independent, but can they know the difference between right and wrong? This informational text discusses what equipping machines with morality would look like and the effect it could have on the world. As you read, take notes on the advantages and disadvantages of providing machines with morality to make them more independent.

Text Five

"Opposing Innovation" by Mike Kubic

In this article, Mike Kubic, a former *Newsweek* correspondent, examines the history of the term "Luddite." The Luddites were bands of English workers who, believing technological advancements would threaten their livelihood, banded together to destroy new machinery between 1811 and 1816. Cotton and woolen mills were particularly popular targets. In modern usage, the term "Luddite" refers to any person who opposes the adoption of new technologies. As you read,

identify the ways that innovations have improved people's quality of life, and identify some of the unintended consequences that these innovations have had.

Text Six

"The Veldt" by Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury (1920-2012) was an American author and screenwriter. Bradbury wrote in various genres, including fantasy, science fiction, horror, and mystery fiction. In this short story, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley become concerned when they realize how important the machines of their futuristic home are to their children. As you read, take notes on what the veldt means to the children and their parents.

Knowledge Pack Six Text Set: Moral Development

Text One

"The Kohlberg Dilemmas" by Lawrence Kohlberg

Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) was an American psychologist best known for his theory of the stages of moral development. His theory asserts that there are six distinct stages of human moral development, and that a person may go through these stages throughout his or her lifespan. In his 1958 dissertation for the University of Chicago, he included a series of dilemmas that he used in various interviews with his subjects. As you read some of them below, take notes on the structure of the dilemmas and the values (love, empathy, justice, kindness) Kohlberg associates with each dilemma.

Text Two

"Morality as Anti-Nature" by Friedrich Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was a German philosopher, famous for his heavy criticism of the morality propagated by Christianity. In the excerpt below from his book *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche seeks to challenge, unravel and completely do away with the moral notions of his day. However, Nietzsche was not a nihilist or a relativist. Rather, he proposed a humanistic "life-affirming" morality that comprised every part of man: the mind and the body, the animalistic and the divine. As you read, think about where our moral notions come from. Which aspects of our human nature do we suppress? Which do we embrace?

Text Three

"What Makes Good People Do Bad Things?" by Melissa Dittmann

In 1971, Phillip Zimbardo, a psychology professor at Stanford University, oversaw an infamous experiment called the Stanford Prison Experiment. In this article, Zimbardo discusses his conclusions regarding human nature.

Knowledge Building Journals

Experts collect knowledge and vocabulary as they go along. You will do this by keeping two different types of journals – a "Rolling Knowledge" journal and a "Sensational 6" vocabulary journal. Annotating the text is one way to collect knowledge and vocabulary in order to become an expert on a topic. Teachers will need to explicitly teach the skill of annotating the text to students who have not previously used this strategy.

Rolling Knowledge Journals

Complete the Rolling Knowledge journal after reading and annotating each text. The Rolling Knowledge journal is a place for you to collect new learning about the knowledge topic and capture connections that add to your existing knowledge on the topic.

1. Read and annotate each text, then answer the following questions in the correct columns:
    - What new knowledge did I collect about the topic while reading this text?
    - How did this text add to knowledge I already had about this topic?

Sensational 6 Journals

Complete the Sensational 6 journal after reading and annotating each text. The Sensational 6 journal is a place for you to collect and practice using vocabulary that is important to understanding the knowledge topic.

1. Read and annotate each text, then determine the six words from each text that are most important to understanding the central idea or theme of the text.
2. Next use your six words to write about the most important ideas of the text. You should have as many sentences as you do words.
3. Complete this chart for each text that you read.
4. After reading all the texts included in the knowledge pack, go back and review your words.
5. Select six words from ALL the word lists that stand out as the most important to the central idea or theme of the texts you read. These words will be known as the "Sensational 6."
6. Use the "Sensational 6" words to summarize the knowledge you gained from the texts in this knowledge pack.

Annotation Strategy

- *Underline* the major points.
- *Circle* key words or phrases that are confusing or unknown to you.
- Use a *question mark (?)* for questions that you have during the reading. Be sure to write your own question.
- Use an *exclamation point (!)* for things that surprise you, and briefly note what it was that caught your attention.
- Draw an *arrow (→)* when you make a connection to something inside the text, or an idea or experience outside the text. Briefly note your connections.

Rolling Knowledge Journal Template

	New Learning	Adds to Learning
	What new knowledge did I collect about the topic while reading this text?	How did this text add to knowledge I already had about this topic?
Title of Text One	•	•
Title of Text Two	•	•
Title of Text Three	•	•

NOTE: Adjust the template to represent the number of text you assign to students.

Sensational 6 Journal Template

	Six Words	Six Sentences (new sentences)
Title of Text One	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
	6.	6.
Title of Text Two	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
	6.	6.
Title of Text Three	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
	6.	6.
Sensational 6		
Summary Write a summary using the "Sensational 6." Be sure to underline the vocabulary words.		

NOTE: Adjust the template to represent the number of text you assign to students.

Teacher Directions for Implementation

Analog/Print-Only Option

1. Create a CommonLit account.
2. Use the Knowledge Pack Text Set links from page two to access each text.
3. Select “Download PDF” at the top of the text and make a copy of each text for each student.
4. Assemble student packets with student-facing directions.
5. Ensure students understand how to complete knowledge building journals using a notebook or offline compatible word processing program.

Virtual/Technology Enhanced Option

1. Create a CommonLit account.
2. Select “My Classes” and follow the directions to get your students into classes.
3. Use the Knowledge Pack Text Set links from page two to access each text.
4. Assign each text to each student via the CommonLit digital platform.

Ensure students understand how to complete knowledge building journals using an online compatible word processing program.

Final Project

Each knowledge pack should culminate with students creating a final project to showcase their knowledge of the topic and express their understanding of the texts. Final projects should include both a product and a presentation.

- **Product**: Students will create a product which expresses their understanding of the texts and topic. This product should be appropriate to the grade level and task. Teachers should choose the final product or offer a selection of options for a final product and allow student choice.
- **Presentation**: Students will showcase their products and knowledge of a topic. Presentations can be in person, virtual via video conference, and/or prerecorded and shared.

Possible Final Project Products

- Develop a multimedia presentation explaining your topic.
- Create and publish a story related to your topic.
- Create a podcast to discuss your topic.
- Create a poster to promote change related to your topic.
- Give a TEDTalk related to your topic.
- Create a graphic novel related to your topic.
- Create a mixed media art project that visually represents your topic.

Final Project Planning and Development

To support students in developing final projects, the Final Project Tool can be shared with students.

Sample Student Schedule

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
Read text one and complete the questions that follow.	Reread text one and complete the rolling knowledge entries for that text.	Re-read text one and complete the Sensational 6 journal entries for that text.	Read text two and complete the questions that follow.	Reread text two and complete the rolling knowledge entries for that text.
Day Six	**Day Seven**	**Day Eight**	**Day Nine**	**Day Ten**
Re-read text two and complete the Sensational 6 journal entries for that text.	Read text three and complete the questions that follow.	Reread text three and complete the rolling knowledge entries for that text.	Re-read text three and complete the Sensational 6 journal entries for that text.	Reread the three texts and identify the Sensational 6 words and write a well-developed summary of the texts using the Sensational 6.
Day Eleven	**Day Twelve**	**Day Thirteen**	**Day Fourteen**	**Day FIfteen**
Make a plan for your final project.	Brainstorm the product of your final project.	Draft the product of your final project.	Develop your product for your final project.	Plan your presentation of your final project.
Day Sixteen	**Day Seventeen**	**Day Eighteen**	**Day Nineteen**	**Day Twenty**
Present your final project.	Reflect on your final project.	View a peer final project presentation on your topic and reflect on what you learned.	View a peer final project presentation on your topic and reflect on what you learned.	View a peer final project presentation on your topic and reflect on what you learned.