

# Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard Worksheet



# Diversity of Characters

For each statement rank the materials (**Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Unclear, Not Satisfied**) and cite 3–5 examples to support your ranking.

## 1. The curriculum features visually diverse characters, and the characters of color don't all look alike.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA provides the depth, breadth, and diversity of texts and activities to ensure that students see themselves and their families, classmates, and community affirmed in the program.

### Example

- In Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, students analyze the characterization of the Garza sisters, including their various physical descriptions, to develop a deeper understanding of their distinctive identities, their roles in the narrative, and their relationships with one another. (Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, Sub-unit 1, Lesson 3)
- In the Amplify ELA Novel Guide for *When I Was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago, students engage with a memoir of a Puerto Rican teen who moves to the United States, experiencing a vast array of settings, cultures, and people along the way.
- Within Amplify's materials, students would encounter approximately 600 prominent illustrations that depict visual narratives that are directly inspired by the literary content offered within the curriculum, and, as such, influenced by cultures and human experiences from across the world. These images vary from symbolic to literal representations of environments, crafts, and people from regions within Central and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. When relevant to the narrative portrayal of stories, women protagonists, indigenous people, and characters of color are elevated as the central figure in the illustrations, purposefully bringing attention to their strong personal attributes (as leaders, independent heroines, fictional or religious beings), to purposely mitigate biases or negative stereotypical assumptions.

## 2. There are references to different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions, names and clothing.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA's lessons are mindfully crafted to expose students to a diverse array of authors, characters, and topic explorations that do not perpetuate stereotypes and present a nuanced approach to understanding cultures and societies.

### Example

- In 7A: *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative, students work to understand the setting of China's Cultural Revolution, interacting with images and considering personal stories before delving into the experiences of the novel's protagonist. (Unit 7A: *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative, Sub-unit 3, Lesson 1 and Sub-unit 4, Lesson 5)
- In 8E: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning, students analyze parts of Irene Hasenberg Butter's memoir, *Shores Beyond Shores*, including a description of the family life, traditions, and experiences of a young Jewish girl growing up in Berlin before exploring the changes that began to take hold as the Nazis came to power in 1930s Germany. (Unit 8E: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 1)

## DIVERSITY OF CHARACTERS

### 3. Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed—not all Asian families are Chinese, not all Latinx families are Mexican, etc.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA ensures that students have the opportunity to explore and affirm the contributions of a range of cultures and identities.

#### Example

- In Unit 6B: Mysteries & Investigations, students analyze an excerpt in *The Secret of the Yellow Death* by Suzanne Jurmain that details the important contributions of Dr. Carlos Finlay, a Cuban doctor who believed that mosquitoes were responsible for the spread of yellow fever, which was later proven to be true.  
(Unit 6B: Mysteries & Investigations, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 7)
- In Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, as a supplement to the novel, which features Mexican American heroines, students read an excerpt from *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario about a teenage Honduran migrant's experience and compare his circumstances to those of the girls in the novel.  
(Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, Sub-unit 1, Lesson 11.)

### 4. Diverse family structures (i.e., single parents, adopted or foster children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with the family, etc.) are represented.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA provides students with the opportunity to see family structures that are diverse and representative of their own.

#### Example:

- In Unit 8A: Perspectives & Narrative, students explore the motivations of a single mother in “My Mother’s Garden,” an essay by Kaitlyn Greenidge, as Greenidge’s mother creates a garden in the community space of her housing project. They later discuss the effect of the mother’s decisions on her children and other community members.  
(Unit 8A: Perspectives & Narrative, Sub-unit 3, Lesson 7)
- In Unit 8C: Science & Science Fiction, students read about Ada Lovelace, daughter of the famous Lord Byron and a pioneer in computer programming, who was raised by her single mother to embrace math despite Ada’s natural inclination, inherited from her father, toward the romantic. (Unit 8C: Science & Science Fiction, Sub-unit 3, Lesson 3 )
- In Unit 7A: *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative, author Ji-Li Jiang lovingly describes her family’s household, which includes her grandmother’s presence in the apartment, and her aunts, uncles, and cousins downstairs. (Unit 7A: *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative, Sub-unit 3, Lesson 9)

## DIVERSITY OF CHARACTERS

### 5. Differently abled characters or characters with disabilities are represented.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to create an equitable classroom community of readers, writers, and thinkers, and to provide opportunities for educators to use the materials that feature culturally diverse characters as well as characters that are differently abled or have disabilities.

**Example:**

- In Unit 7C: Brain Science, students investigate the physiology and effects of a traumatic brain injury on Phineas Gage’s physical, emotional, and intellectual faculties in *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by John Fleischman. (Unit 7C: Brain Science, Sub-unit 1, Lessons 4, 5, and 8)
- In Unit 7E: The Frida & Diego Collection, students explore documents related to Frida Kahlo’s life and works, including references to her disabilities stemming from childhood polio, as well as her devastating injuries from a bus accident. Students consider how she drew from all these experiences as well as her cultural identity in her paintings. (Unit 7E: Frida & Diego Collection, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 2)

### 6. Characters of color are main characters and not just sidekicks.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA is built on the conviction that equitable instruction is vital to an effective program—that curricula must provide all students with equitable opportunities to achieve academic success, texts and tasks must be relevant and responsive to culturally diverse classrooms, and the diversity of students’ voices and ideas should be at the center of learning.

**Example:**

- In Unit 7B: Character & Conflict, students analyze a major character in Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*, examining their motivations and reactions to gain a deeper understanding of their personality and role in the play. (Unit 7B: Character & Conflict, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 7)
- In the Novel Guide for *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, students examine the experiences of a black teen from an underserved neighborhood as she navigates attendance at a wealthy suburban prep school and witnesses the death of her friend during a police shooting.

## DIVERSITY OF CHARACTERS

**7. If there is conflict in the storyline, the characters of color are not mostly considered the problem.**

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA exposes students to a diverse array of authors, characters, and topic explorations that do not perpetuate stereotypes and present a nuanced approach to understanding cultures and societies.

### **Example:**

- In the Novel Guide for *Brown Girl Dreaming*, the memoir's narrator recounts her experiences as a Black child at the end of the Civil Rights Movement and beyond, highlighting the strength of the narrator and other members of her family in the face of challenges and adversity.
- In 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, students examine the heroic odyssey of the Garza sisters, noting their strength of character and reliance on traditional Aztec and Mexican characters for aid in their journey. (6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, Sub-unit 1.)
- In 8B: Liberty & Equality, Frederick Douglass's memoir *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An America Slave* allows students insight into the experiences of an enslaved person and his journey toward freedom, highlighting his strength of character in the face of challenges and adversity.

# Accurate Portrayals

## 8. Characters of color are not assumed to have low family wealth, low educational attainment, and/or low income.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to ensure that a diversity of students see themselves affirmed in the curriculum.

**Example:**

- In Unit 8F: The Space Race Collection, students learn about Katherine Johnson, the brilliant Black mathematician who helped launch America into space. (Unit 8F: The Space Race Collection, Sub-unit 5, Lesson 1, Activity 3)
- In Unit 7B: Character & Conflict, the immersive Quest *Black, White and Blues in Chicago* allows students to explore the lives and characters of *A Raisin in the Sun*, while gaining a deeper knowledge of Black history with an emphasis on Civil Rights-era thinkers and ideas. This Quest is based on a digital recreation of 1950s Chicago and includes music, photographs, essays, and video interviews with a broad range of key Black thinkers, artists, and activists.

## 9. Gender is not central to the storyline. Female characters are in a variety of roles that could also be filled by a male character.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to include texts and imagery that showcase women in a wide variety of roles.

**For example:**

- In Unit 8C: Science & Science Fiction, students encounter Ada Lovelace, whose thinking laid the foundation for modern-day computing. (Unit 8C: Science & Science Fiction, Sub-unit 3, Lessons 3 and 4)
- In Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, students dive into a retelling of *The Odyssey* and follow five fully drawn sisters as they work together to take their version of the traditional hero's journey, fighting their own battles, having adventures, and navigating relationships. (Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, Sub-unit 1)

## ACCURATE PORTRAYALS

### 10. Social situations and problems are not seen as individual problems but are situated within a societal context.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA provides materials that allow students to explore situations and problems within their context and from multiple perspectives.

**For example:**

- In Unit 7B: Character & Conflict, the immersive Quest *Black, White and Blues in Chicago* allows students to explore the history, policies, thinkers, and ideas of the Civil Rights era to gain a deeper understanding of the lives and issues faced by the characters in *A Raisin in the Sun*.
- In Unit 8A: Perspectives & Narrative, students read and discuss Kaitlyn Greenidge’s essay, “My Mother’s Garden.” In this essay, Greenidge describes the challenges her mother faced while trying to pursue the education that would allow her family access to better opportunities, all while living within the government-imposed parameters set for residents of subsidized housing. (Unit 8A: Perspectives & Narrative, Sub-unit 3, Lessons 7–11)

### 11. Characters of diverse cultural backgrounds are not represented stereotypically or presented as foreign or exotic.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to ensure that a diversity of students see themselves affirmed in the curriculum and have the opportunity to explore and affirm the contributions of a range of cultures and identities.

**For example:**

- In Unit 8A: Perspectives & Narrative, students work with Amy Tan’s short story “Fish Cheeks,” and explore how the main character’s understanding and appreciation for her cultural identity change and grow over time. (Unit 8A: Perspectives & Narrative, Sub-unit 3, Lessons 5 and 6)
- In Unit 7A: *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative, the memoir *Red Scarf Girl*, Ji-li Jiang’s account of her own adolescent experience during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, powerfully restricts the narrator’s point of view to the things a young teen would see and think and care about. In this way, students identify with the ways she feels drawn in different directions by a range of conflicting forces. (Unit 7A: *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative, Sub-unit 3)

## ACCURATE PORTRAYALS

### 12. Problems faced by people of color or females are not resolved through the benevolent intervention of a white person or a male.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA's core middle school lessons are mindfully crafted to expose students to a diverse array of authors, characters, and topic explorations that do not perpetuate stereotypes of saviors and victims.

**For Example:**

- In Unit 8B: Liberty & Equality, Frederick Douglass, through his memoir *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, is the students' guiding voice as they reflect on, discuss, write about, and debate ideas of equality, opportunity, justice, and freedom. Amplify ELA embeds dramatic readings of Douglass's narrative performed by the late Chadwick Boseman to help establish Douglass's powerful voice, to support students' reading, and to showcase Douglass as one of the leading abolitionists and thinkers in American history and as an important mentor for students' own developing powers of persuasion. (Unit 8B: Liberty & Equality, Sub-unit 2)
- Unit 7E: The Frida & Diego Collection presents Frida Kahlo as a fully independent artist, whose approach to her life, culture, and art were unique and groundbreaking. (Unit 7E: The Frida & Diego Collection)

### 13. Diverse characters are rooted in their own cultures and are not ambiguous.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to ensure that the characters and people students encounter within the texts and materials present and affirm the contributions of a range of cultures and identities.

**For example:**

- The Poetry in America: Grade 6 unit presents lessons focused on Richard Blanco's poem "Looking for The Gulf Motel," where he nostalgically describes the family vacations he took as a child with his Cuban immigrant family. Students analyze details that are specific to Blanco's family and details that could be universal to all families. They discuss how the poem can tell a story that is specific to the narrator's family and yet familiar to other families. (Poetry in America: Grade 6, Sub-unit 1)
- In Amy Tan's short story "Fish Cheeks," the main character describes in detail the Chinese foods prepared by her mother, her family's approach to a special dinner, and how these cultural markers aroused conflicting emotions. (Unit 8A: Perspectives & Narrative, Sub-unit 3, Lessons 5 and 6)



# Decolonization/Power and Privilege

## 14. Characters of marginalized backgrounds are portrayed in stories outside of the context of oppression and celebrated for their contributions.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to ensure that the characters and people students encounter within the texts and materials celebrate and showcase the contributions of a range of cultures and identities.

### Example:

- In Unit 8E: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning, students read Holocaust witness and participant memoirs. They examine events such as the 1936 Olympics, study the athletic accomplishments of Jesse Owens at the games, and consider the impact of his performance on the world and Germany's understanding of that Olympics. (Unit 8E: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning, Sub-unit 3, Lesson 3)
- In Unit 8F: The Space Race Collection, students learn about Katherine Johnson, the brilliant Black mathematician who helped launch America into space (Unit 8F: The Space Race Collection, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 2 ; Sub-unit 5, Lesson 1)

## 15. Curriculum highlights non-dominant populations and their strengths and assets, so that students of diverse race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation can relate and participate fully.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to ensure that a diversity of students see themselves affirmed in the curriculum and that their wide range of interests and perspectives are represented.

### Example:

- Using the grade 6 text *Summer of the Mariposas* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall, students dive into a retelling of *The Odyssey* through a contemporary Hispanic lens as they explore sibling and extended-family relationships. Instead of the traditional portrait of an independent male hero, students follow five fully drawn sisters as they work together to take their version of the traditional hero's journey, fighting their own battles, having adventures, and navigating relationships. Woven through this re-telling is McCall's re-imagining of Chicano and Aztec mythological and folkloric figures—not as relics of the past, but as the key guides and meaningful mentors for this thoroughly modern group of Latina sisters. (Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, Sub-unit 1)
- The Poetry in America: Grade 7 unit invites students to listen in as a variety of immigrants and scholars discuss the context for, and their personal connections to the iconic poem "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus. Students watch a video of Russian American musician Regina Spektor reading the poem and discuss how a diverse group of people all find inspiration in this poem. Students then create their own "found poem" response to capture their collected language around the dream of immigration. (Poetry in America: Grade 7, Sub-unit 2)

## DECOLONIZATION/POWER AND PRIVILEGE

**16. The curriculum communicates an asset-based perspective by representing people of diverse races, classes, genders, abilities, and sexual orientations through their strengths, talents, and knowledge rather than their perceived flaws or deficiencies.**

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA ensures students have the opportunity to explore and affirm the contributions of a range of cultures and identities.

### Example:

- Students study the grade 6 B.E.S.T. benchmark for rhetoric by analyzing the rhetorical appeals employed by Harriet Ann Jacobs in her narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Students consider how masterfully she uses this skill to persuade her readers to join the cause of abolition. (Unit 6C: The Chocolate Collection, Sub-unit 6)
- In Unit 7E: The Frida & Diego Collection, students study the person and artwork of Frida Kahlo as a critically acclaimed, important, and influential Mexican painter. Through their primary and secondary source exploration, they examine and discuss many aspects of her identity and rich life experiences. (Unit 7E: The Frida & Diego Collection)

**17. The curriculum does not communicate negativity or hostility toward people of marginalized backgrounds through verbal or nonverbal insults, slights, or snubs.**

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA wants a diversity of students to see themselves affirmed within the ELA texts, materials, and classroom experiences, with no negative or hostile portrayals of people of marginalized backgrounds.

### Example:

- In Unit 7B: Character & Conflict, students focus on Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play that showcases a diversity of characters and perspectives within a Black family called the Youngers. The Youngers negotiate complex and relatable family dynamics as they face the challenges of poverty and racial tensions on Chicago's South Side in the 1950s. The complexity of the characters allows students multiple ways to discuss and analyze issues of individual and cultural identity, familial obligations, and differing notions of success, all through the eyes of family members who pull together in spite of the challenges society places upon them and their own distinct aspirations. (Unit 7B: Character & Conflict, Sub-unit 2)
- In Kaitlyn Greenidge's essay "My Mother's Garden," she explores how her mother provided her a powerful counterpoint to the stereotypes of the Black woman that she encountered within the curriculum of her largely white high school. Students discuss how Greenidge's encounters with these stereotypes in her classroom discussions impacted her intellectual and emotional development as an adolescent. They can watch interview clips of Greenidge describing her experiences to support their discussions. (Unit 8A: Perspectives & Narrative, Sub-unit 3, Lessons 7, 8, and 11)

## DECOLONIZATION/POWER AND PRIVILEGE

**18. Curriculum and instructional activities promote or provoke critical questions about the societal status quo. They present alternative points of view as equally worth considering.**

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to provide students with content that builds strong content knowledge, while providing them with important tools to develop a critical stance toward all content. This includes questioning the text and its context on a number of levels, exploring connections to current issues, and building their own interpretations and refining those in collaboration with a diverse set of peers.

**Example:**

- In Unit 6F: The *Titanic* Collection, students take on the identity of actual *Titanic* passengers to discuss and compare their distinct experiences and outcomes based on their travel “class” status. (Unit 6F: The *Titanic* Collection, Sub-unit 3, Lessons 1 and 2)
- In Unit 7C: Brain Science, students analyze theories of adolescent brain development and discuss how this science should or should not impact the justice system. (Unit 7C: Brain Science, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 2)

## Centering Multiple Perspectives

### 19. The curriculum recognizes the validity and integrity of knowledge systems based in communities of color, collectivist cultures, matriarchal societies, and non-Christian religions.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA ensures that a diversity of students see themselves affirmed in the curriculum and have the opportunity to explore and affirm the contributions of a range of cultures and identities.

**Example:**

- In Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, students complete a full-length novel study of Guadalupe Garcia McCall's re-imagined version of *The Odyssey*, featuring five Latina sisters being guided by their ancestors, as well as Aztec and Chicano folkloric figures. (Unit 6E: Summer of the Mariposa, Sub-unit 1, Lessons 14 and 16 )
- In Unit 7B: Character & Conflict, the immersive Quest *Black, White and Blues in Chicago* is based on a digital recreation of 1950s Chicago and includes music, photographs, essays, and video interviews. These materials showcase Black artists, intellectuals, activists, and community members; the vibrancy of the culture they created; and the effect they had on Chicago, as well as national history and culture.

### 20. The curriculum presents different points of view on the same event or experience, especially points of view from marginalized people/communities

**Evidence:** Within Amplify ELA , the critical lens embedded in the close reading activities, the focus on collaborative analysis, and the value placed on the variety of interpretations and perspectives within the classroom of readers support a robust examination of all texts and topics—including different points of view on the same event or experience.

**Example:**

- In Unit 6B: Mysteries & Investigations, students study Dr. Walter Reed's famous experiments to understand the transmission method of yellow fever. They then take on the role of the human volunteers in these experiments to understand the results more precisely, but also to debate the ethics of Reed's approach to his medical investigation. (Unit 6B: Mysteries & Investigations, Sub-unit 2, Lessons 13 and 14)
- In each grade, students work with at least one Collection unit, Amplify ELA 's research-oriented units. Each unit features a collection of primary and secondary source texts, images, and artifacts curated around a particular topic. Students work with these materials in a variety of ways, including conducting their own research and exploring the many peoples and points of views involved with the topic of focus. (Unit 7F: The Gold Rush Collection, Sub-unit 3, Lesson 1.)

## Connect Learning to Real Life & Action

### 21. The curriculum provides avenues for students to connect learning to social, political, or environmental concerns that affect them and their lives and contribute to change.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA provides opportunities for teachers and students to connect learning to interests, issues, and concerns within their own lives and/or communities.

**Example:**

- In each grade, students work with at least one Collection unit, Amplify ELA’s research-oriented units. Each unit uses a collection of primary and secondary source texts, images, and artifacts curated around a particular topic. Students work with these materials in a variety of ways, including conducting their own research and Socratic seminars on topics of their choosing. They make connections to the topics on a variety of levels and learn how these topics affect them and their lives.  
(Unit 7E: The Frida & Diego Collection, Sub-unit 4).
- In Poetry in America: Grade 7, students study “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus, analyzing the meaning of the new Colossus in the poem. They then have the opportunity to interview immigrants in their communities and use the language of these interviews to construct a “found poem” about what life is like for immigrants in the United States today.  
(Poetry in America: Grade 7, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 3)

### 22. The curriculum encourages students to take actions that combat inequity or promote equity within the school or local community.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to create an equitable classroom community of readers, writers, and thinkers, and to provide opportunities for educators to use the lesson materials to encourage students to combat inequity or promote equity within the school or local community.

**For example:**

- In Unit 6C: The Chocolate Collection, the 3,700 year history of chocolate takes students on an odyssey to ancient Mexico to investigate Olmec, Mayan, and Aztec peoples and cultures all the way through to present-day issues in chocolate production, including the movement for better labor practices and reduced habitat destruction. Students apply their knowledge of the topic and of argumentative writing to draft an argumentative letter informing a local candy store owner about issues involved in chocolate production. (Unit 6C: The Chocolate Collection, Sub-unit 3, Lesson 2)
- In Poetry in America: Grade 8, students study Robert Hayden’s poem “Those Winter Sundays,” Hayden’s stirring portrait of his hardworking father and the poet’s own conflicted feelings about this taciturn man. After analyzing the poem, students have the opportunity to write their own poem in the style of “Those Winter Sundays,” celebrating someone from their lives or communities whose heroism may go unacknowledged—someone who does difficult tasks that are easily overlooked or taken for granted.

## Teachers' Materials

**23. The authors of the teachers' materials are people of diverse identities (race/ethnicity, gender, other identities, if possible).**

**Evidence:** For a list of the authors who contributed to Amplify ELA teacher materials, please review [this document](#).

In addition, teachers and students alike can seek inspiration from Amplify ELA Illustrator Videos, short bios, and interviews with the diverse staff of illustrators hired to create the artwork that accompanies each unit.

**24. Guidance is provided on being aware of one's biases and the gaps between one's own culture and students' culture.**

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to provide teachers with the guidance they need to create and support a classroom community where students' voices and ideas drive the learning and where the variety of perspectives are a key strength that drives all students' learning.

**For Example:**

- **Amplify's Starting Points** activity set provides a vehicle for teachers to welcome students into the classroom by inviting them to consider and convey (through writing, artwork, or poetry, for example) the values that are important to the identity and life of that student. This activity has a variety of researched benefits, and immediately establishes a diversity of perspectives as a key value within the classroom.
- Amplify ELA's focus on the student lens is carried over into writing about text. Research points to the crucial role a positive teacher–student relationship plays in a student's progress and development. With that in mind, Amplify ELA provides feedback tools and a commenting routine that encourage teachers to provide meaningful feedback, noting both the student's developing skills and the impact this has on the student as a reader. This type of targeted skill and supportive feedback environment allows each student to feel recognized as an individual learner with unique strengths and a unique learning pathway. (Unit 6A: Dahl & Narrative, Sub-unit 3, Lesson 3 See the Preparation section of the Teacher Lesson Overview.)

## TEACHERS' MATERIALS

### 25. Diverse student identities are seen as assets and strengths that can advance individual and group learning, rather than seen as challenges or difficulties to be overcome.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to provide teachers with the guidance they need to create and support a classroom community where students' voices and ideas drive the learning and where the variety of perspectives are a key strength that drives all students' learning.

**Example:**

- The first contact that students have with the Amplify ELA program for grades 6–8 focuses on narrative writing. The lessons in our Get Started sub-units provide clear routines where students write and share short, focused pieces about their own experiences. Teachers use this approach to establish a vibrant classroom community of readers and writers where diverse experiences and perspectives are at the center of instruction. (Unit 8A: Perspectives & Narrative, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 6.)
- Close reading activities within Amplify ELA are designed to be highly collaborative. Just as strong readers check their analysis and understanding as new content is presented, the close reading activities provide ample opportunities for teachers to facilitate a discussion or partner students to compare their evidence and interpretations of the text. For this reason, most activities are designed to allow the classroom to develop a range of interpretations—as opposed to a pure reading comprehension exercise. (Unit 7C: Brain Science, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 2)

### 26. Guidance is provided on making real-life connections between academic content and the local neighborhood, culture, environment, and resources.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA provides opportunities for students and teachers to direct research, discussions, and/or a variety of projects toward making connections between academic content and the local neighborhood. If selected, Amplify would strengthen explicit guidance to support teachers to make these connections when these opportunities arise.

**Example:**

- In each grade, students work with a Collection unit, Amplify ELA's research-oriented units. Each unit uses a collection of primary and secondary source texts, images, and artifacts curated around a particular topic. Students work with these materials in a variety of ways, conducting their own research and completing Socratic seminars on topics of their choosing, including ways in which these topics affect them and their lives. (Unit 6C: The Chocolate Collection, Sub-unit 4.)
- In 6B: Mysteries & Investigations, teachers have the option of teaching a lesson comparing the scientific approach of Dr. Reed and his team's investigations into yellow fever (*The Secret of the Yellow Death*) to the collaborative efforts of world scientists to uncover the critical secrets of COVID-19. (Unit 6B: Mysteries & Investigations, Sub-unit 6, Lesson 1)

## TEACHERS' MATERIALS

### 27. Guidance is provided on giving students opportunities to contribute their prior knowledge and experience with a topic, not just respond to the text and information presented in class.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA is focused on creating and supporting a classroom community where students' voices and ideas drive the learning.

#### Example:

- Within Amplify ELA's collaborative close reading activities, lessons usually begin with the teacher gathering students' observations based on details they select within a short piece of the lesson passage. These observational gatherings regularly ask the students to provide their own knowledge or interpretations of the topic or theme at hand. (Unit 7C: Brain Science, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 1)
- Students are regularly asked to synthesize their experiences and knowledge with the skill or topic at hand as the key to their response, demonstrating they have met the learning objective. (Poetry in America: Grade 8, Sub-unit 1, Lesson 3)

### 28. Guidance is provided on engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning activities.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA ensures students have the opportunity to explore and affirm the contributions of a range of cultures and identities.

#### Example:

- As part of their exploration of Guadalupe Garcia McCall's re-imagining of *The Odyssey* in her novel *Summer of the Mariposas*, grade 6 students select and research one of the Aztec and Chicano folklore figures from the novel. They present their research to the class in the form of a traditional Lotería card with that figure as its subject. Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, Sub-unit 1, Lessons 14 and 16
- As students prepare to work with Greek mythology in 6D: The Greeks, they have the option to participate in the immersive Quest, *Mythworld*, a game-like environment where they accompany particular Greek gods on quests as a means of learning about some of the key traits and capabilities associated with the gods from this tradition. (See the *Mythworld* Quest.)



## TEACHERS' MATERIALS

### 29. Guidance is provided on opportunities to engage students' families to enhance lessons.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA strives to provide teachers with opportunities to engage students with their families and communities.

**Example:**

- In the Poetry in America: Grade 7 sub-unit that focuses on the poem “The New Colossus,” students study the poem and watch a variety of immigrants speak to their connections to this poem. Teachers then have the option of assigning students to interview people from their family or community about their immigration experiences. (Poetry in America: Grade 7, Sub-unit 2)
- As students complete traditional and non-traditional performance tasks (such as essays, poems authored in the style of the poet they have been studying, and multimedia projects and short stories) teachers are encouraged to find a forum to showcase students’ accomplishments—for example, a gallery walk. These types of showcases can include family and community members. (Poetry in America: Grade 6, Sub-unit 1, Lesson 3)

### 30. Guidance includes, for specific lessons, a range of possible student responses that could all be valid, given the range of student experiences and perspectives.

**Evidence:** Key reading and writing activities are designed to support a range of possible student responses. Reading activities within Amplify ELA provide teachers with student responses. In many cases, these suggest a range of possible student responses to align with Amplify’s pedagogy of providing reading questions and activities that support a range of interpretations. In cases where there is an explicit correct response, that is clearly indicated. Amplify ELA’s embedded routines, habits, and feedback tools for writing activities help teachers to teach toward a range of written responses.

**Example:**

- In Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, Sub-unit 1, Lesson 8, students consider why Odilia and her sisters make the decision to follow the sorcerer Cecilia by comparing an earlier passage where Odilia is reprimanded by her mother to the current passage where Cecilia invites them home. The teacher can use their Possible Responses tab to access a range of specific text details and inferences students might use to make a variety of valid interpretations. (Unit 6E: *Summer of the Mariposas*, Sub-unit 1, Lesson 8, Activity 3: Click on the Possible Responses tab in the teacher Instructional Guide.)
- Amplify formative writing activities at the end of every two or three lessons are designed to support a range of student responses, as students develop a claim or idea about the text and use text evidence to support that claim. (Unit 6B: *Mysteries & Investigations*, Sub-unit 2, Lesson 1)

## TEACHERS' MATERIALS

### 31. Guidance is provided on customizing and supplementing the curriculum to reflect the cultures, traditions, backgrounds, and interests of the student population.

**Evidence:** Amplify ELA is focused on creating and supporting a classroom community where students' voices and ideas drive the learning. Within the program, there are many explicit resources for teachers to customize or supplement the curriculum to reflect the cultures, traditions, backgrounds, and interests of the student population.

**For example:**

- The digital Amplify Library offers a curated collection of more than 700 classic and contemporary texts that span a full range of genres, topics, and cultural perspectives—a diversity meant to support students as they develop literacy skills and foster a love of reading. Our collection of books comprises a wide-range of genres, subjects, and authors, including Walter Mosley, Zora Neale Hurston, and Sonia Sotomayor. Amplify has also created and included in the Library full novel study guides to accompany a variety of middle school favorites. These include:
  - *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly
  - *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
  - *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai

Alongside these and other full novel studies, Amplify has curated sixteen bundles of primary source materials focused on topics related to core units. These archives offer students a valuable resource to enhance and expand upon learning in the core classroom as they practice research skills. The topics include:

- African American Women Writers
- Body Snatchers
- Cesar Chavez and Migrant Workers
- Chichen Itza
- Chinese Cultural Revolution
- Edgar Allan Poe
- Emily Dickinson
- Gandhi
- Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad
- Japanese Internment Camps
- Modern Day Romeo and Juliet
- Navajo Code Talkers
- Norse Mythology
- Sacagawea
- Silk Road
- Yosemite and John Muir

# Representation

The team of Amplify ELA recognizes and appreciates how critical a culturally responsive pedagogy is to educators. Below we have added a short description of our approach to culturally responsive pedagogy as reflected in Amplify ELA.

## Diversity of Characters Tally

	Girl/Woman	Boy/Man	Non-Binary	Total
Middle Eastern	1	1		2
Asian/Pacific Islander	16	16		31
Black/African	44	44		87
Latinx	18	18		44
Native American	4	4		7
White	239	239		341
Racially Ambiguous	5	5	1	8
Multiracial	1	1		1
Differently Abled	4	4		7
Animals	No response needed	No response needed	No response needed	48
<b>Total # of characters depicted: 576</b>				

### The tallies represent:

- Characters and people called out by name or described in some specific detail in both literary and informational texts whose ethnic and gender identities can be identified.
- Characters and people depicted in the images and photographs embedded in the core texts or used as part of the above-mentioned Collection units.

Note that these counts are skewed significantly upwards due to the large collection of primary and secondary source materials curated within each of Amplify's five Collection units. For example, in 6F: The *Titanic* Collection, students role-play the experience of passengers onboard the *Titanic* to understand how issues such as gender and class affected their onboard experience and what happened to them in the boat's sinking. For this activity, each student is assigned one passenger's "passport," which includes photographs.

This one activity adds 26 white characters to the count above. Students do a somewhat similar activity to compare the experiences of American and Soviet astronauts in the grade 8 Space Race Collection.

## REPRESENTATION

### Diversity of Characters Tally

	Girl/Woman	Boy/Man	Non-Binary	Total
<b>Middle Eastern</b>				
Asian/Pacific Islander	5			5
Black/African	16	8		24
Latinx	6	8		14
<b>Native American</b>				
White	34	90		124
Racially Ambiguous	1	1	1	2
Multiracial		1		1
<b>Differently Abled</b>				
<b>Animals</b>				
<b>Total # of authors: 170</b>				

#### The tallies represent:

- Authors of both literary and informational texts whose ethnic and gender identities can be identified as part of reading the text or through a straightforward Google search. Note that these counts are skewed significantly upwards due to the large collection of primary and secondary source materials curated within each of Amplify's five Collection units.

# Addendum

## Amplify ELA and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Amplify ELA is built on the conviction that equitable instruction is vital to an effective program—that curricula must provide all students with equitable opportunities to achieve academic success, texts and tasks must be relevant to culturally diverse classrooms, and students’ voices and ideas should be at the center of learning.

Amplify ELA’s approach to culturally responsive pedagogy centers on cultural diversity as experienced through literature, language, and classroom practices.

### Centrality of Student Voices

Amplify ELA is focused on creating and supporting a classroom community where students’ voices and ideas drive the learning.

The first contact that students have with the Amplify ELA program for grades 6–8, focuses on narrative writing. The lessons in our Get Started sub-units provide clear routines where students write and share short, focused pieces about their own experiences. Teachers use this approach to establish a vibrant classroom community of readers and writers where diverse experiences and perspectives are at the center of instruction.

Incorporating students’ ideas, concerns, and questions into dynamic group discussions and activities such as Quests, fishbowl discussions, Socratic seminars, and debates allows students to direct the conversation. All of these collaborative activities are situated within Amplify ELA’s intellectual and supportive classroom culture.

### Section II – The Culturally Diverse Classroom

Amplify ELA ensures that the diversity of students see themselves affirmed in the curriculum and have the opportunity to explore and affirm the contributions of a range of cultures and identities.

Amplify’s culturally diverse collection of authors, protagonists, and topics ensure that texts and tasks are relevant and relatable. Amplify ELA core middle school ELA lessons are crafted to expose students to a diverse array of text types, genres, authors, and time periods. By representing a wide range of student interests and perspectives, these texts develop student curiosity, while also building skills and content knowledge.

**In 8th grade**, students encounter historical figures who broke through barriers, like Katherine Johnson, the brilliant mathematician who helped launch America into space; Ada Lovelace, whose thinking laid the foundation for modern-day computing; and Jessie Owens, who “gave the lie” to Hitler’s supremacist ideology at the 1936 Olympics. Students consider seminal works by diverse writers and artists like Frederick Douglass, Mary Shelley, Harriet Jacobs. Kaitlyn Greenidge, Art Spiegelman, and Robert Hayden.

**In 7th grade**, students focus on people and characters pushing back against the society around them, as they explore the choices faced by Ji-Li Jiang during the Cultural Revolution; consider the dynamic ways in which the Younger family shapes their own futures in *A Raisin in the Sun*; explore how the choice between young love and other loyalties in *Romeo and Juliet* translates across cultures; and consider how iconic artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera shaped their artwork to reflect their individual experiences, the politics and struggles that surrounded them, and their Mexican heritage and culture.

## ADDENDUM

**In grade 6**, students focus on mischief makers whose questions, actions, or methods are innovative and lead to surprising and often heroic outcomes. From Dahl's out-of-place Norwegian schoolboy in a British school system in *Boy: Tales of Childhood*, to Arachne asserting herself in front of Minerva in Ovid's version of the Arachne myth, to the Garza sisters' bold and heroic journey into the Mexico of their ancestors in *Summer of the Mariposas*, students analyze how the seemingly less powerful make their stand.

Additionally, the digital Amplify Library offers a curated collection of more than 700 classic and contemporary texts that span a full range of genres, topics, and cultural perspectives—a diversity meant to support students as they develop literacy skills and foster a love of reading. Our collection of books comprises a wide range of genres, subjects, and authors, including Walter Mosley, Zora Neale Hurston, and Sonia Sotomayor. Amplify has also created full novel study guides to accompany a variety of middle school favorites in the Library. These include:

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## ADDENDUM

### **Section III - Academic Achievement**

Amplify's curriculum helps teachers set strong expectations in their classrooms by giving them the tools they need to meet students where they are.

As a result of educational inequities, culturally and linguistically diverse students may be offered fewer opportunities to receive instruction in high-order skills development and access to more advanced academic tasks (Zaretta Hammond, 2015). Amplify ELA's lessons work with grade-level texts and tasks to provide strong academic opportunities for all students. A diversity of complex texts, aligned with grade-level academic expectations, are at the heart of every Amplify ELA lesson. Amplify wants to ensure that all students can access the support they need to develop strong critical thinking skills and a deep understanding of new concepts and knowledge. To reach this goal, Amplify uses principles of UDL and an approach to differentiation that focus on providing wide access to rigorous, critical work.