

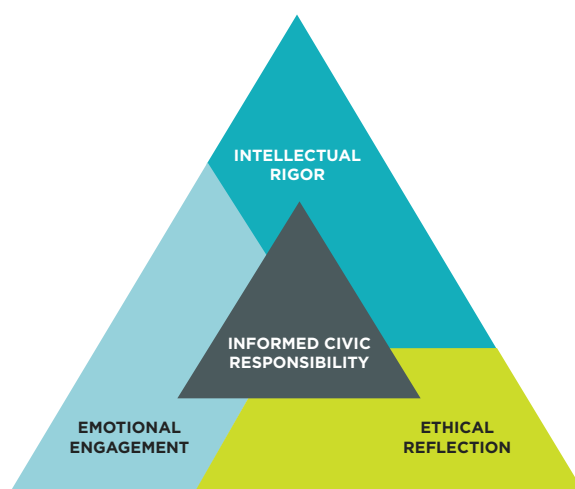
Facing History's English Language Arts Resources

Facing History's English Language Arts resources are designed to help middle and high school educators create learning environments where **students know that they belong and their voices matter**.

Our Approach to ELA

For more than 40 years, Facing History's approach to humanities education has balanced the mind, heart, and conscience. Applied to the study of literature and writing, our ELA materials integrate literacy skills development with social-emotional learning and civic education practices.

In Facing History ELA classrooms, students explore the complexity of identity, process texts through a critical and ethical lens, and develop a sense of civic agency.



ELA Collections

Best known for its history and social studies content, Facing History now has English Language Arts collections aligned to core Facing History themes.

These thematic collections support common instructional formats in language arts: text sets, whole-class reads, and book clubs. Collections include multimodal texts, engaging activities, classroom-ready student handouts, and teaching strategies for establishing a reflective and student-centered classroom community.

**Coming of Age in a
Complex World**
Full collection released!

Borders and Belonging
*Phase 1 now available;
Phase 2 coming
Winter 2024!*

**Literature of the
Holocaust**
In development

*Additional collections
released on a rolling
basis*

Each collection includes:

- A back to school toolkit to help you build community with your students
- Introductory lessons to build conceptual understanding of collection themes
- Three multi-genre text sets, one each for grades 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12
- A teaching guide with comprehensive resources for a specific work of literature
- An ELA Unit Planning Guide to help you design a thematic unit for a book of your choosing
- A book club guide with the tools to launch student-centered book clubs
- A whole-school read planning guide
- On-demand professional learning

Key Features of Facing History ELA Collections

Facing History's ELA collections seize on opportunities in classrooms that aren't always fully realized.

Diversify the range of stories students read

Central to our work is the conviction that students should read literature as “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” (Bishop, 1990). Their reading should affirm their identities and transport them to worlds that they wouldn't otherwise experience or understand. Our resources center young people's lived experiences as well as voices that have traditionally been marginalized or excluded from the curriculum.



Anchor instruction in the ethical, social, and emotional concerns of adolescence

Adolescence is a dynamic time of growth and possibility, when young people explore their identities and form values, passions, and goals that will shape their futures. The themes and activities of our ELA resources center adolescents' urgent questions about justice, support their desire for respect and belonging, and nurture their capacity for reflection.



Invite students to connect literature to history, the contemporary world, and their lives

At their core, Facing History materials invite students into explorations of human behavior and decision-making. Through literature, writing, and discussion, students connect the moral choices, systems of power, and issues of equity represented in a text to issues in the real world.



Nurture the development of reading and writing identities

Students engage with multimodal and multi-genre texts and make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections. Frequent writing opportunities — including reflective, narrative, persuasive, and creative writing — boost retention, deepen students' conceptual understanding, and prepare them to be creative participants in the world.



Foster empathy, perspective-taking, and other social-emotional competencies

The program's activities open students' eyes to new perspectives, challenge their biases, build empathy for a wide range of human experience, and prepare them to become agents of change in their schools and communities.



Prioritize student voice and agency

Materials support teachers to develop classrooms where students grapple with complex ideas in small and large groups, prioritizing dialogue as a community-building and meaning-making activity.



Collection Spotlight:

Coming of Age in a Complex World

Designed for grades 7–12, Facing History’s first ELA collection invites students to explore the complexity of identity and develop a sense of agency as they reflect on what it means to grow up in the world today. Like all of our ELA collections, this collection is designed to be flexible, so you can choose the resources that are best suited to your unique context.

Resources in the Collection



Back to School Toolkit

This toolkit will help you lay a foundation for a reflective and caring community in the first days of the school year. It includes professional learning for educators; daily routines for creating continuity; and activities that foster trust and a sense of belonging for the year ahead.

1 week



Thematic Text Sets

- Being Seen: Becoming Who You Want to Be: Grades 7-8
- Identity and Storytelling: Grades 9-10
- Power, Agency, and Voice: Grades 11-12

Each text set is organized around an essential question and includes 5-8 texts, lesson plans, and assessment ideas.

**1-2 weeks
each**



Unit Guide for *Brown Girl Dreaming*

This unit for Jacqueline Woodson’s coming-of-age memoir invites readers to consider how family and memory shape our identities and beliefs. The guide includes essential questions and learning objectives; text-based questions, activities, and formative assessments for each section of the memoir; classroom-ready handouts; and summative assessment options.

4-5 weeks



ELA Unit Planning Guide

This unit planning guide provides the framework to help you design a literature unit for a book of your choosing. It features classroom-ready resources including thematic essential questions, journal prompts, and a set of ELA learning experiences that can be adapted for the study of any literary text.

4-5 weeks



Book Club Guide: Centering Student Voice and Choice

This guide includes tools designed to help you launch student-centered book clubs including tips for identifying interesting books and getting them to students, teacher planning checklists, and student-facing handouts that support discussion and engagement.

3-4 weeks



Whole School Read Planning Guide

This guide will help you design and implement a whole-school read centered around the theme of coming of age. The questions and activities in this guide invite critical thinking and conversation about issues of identity, belonging, choices, and justice.

**2 weeks -
1
semester**

Aligned Professional Learning

Facing History offers a wide variety of professional learning experiences that support making the most of our English Language Arts curriculum.

These offerings also develop educator competencies that are foundational to our approach, including: nurturing student-centered classrooms; promoting inquiry-based learning and deliberative skills; and fostering empathy and ethical reflection.

Professional Learning for Our ELA Collections

Teaching Coming of Age: Exploring Literature and Agency with *#DisruptTexts*
Co-founder Dr. Kimberly Parker

Webinar | 60 minutes

Learn more about how to choose texts with a focus on equity and voice and how to invite students to explore literature through a critical and ethical lens.

Coming of Age in a Complex World: A Mini-Course for ELA Educators

Mini-course | Four weeks, offered multiple times per year

Explore strategies for teaching coming-of-age literature and centering students' identities and lived experiences. Mini-course content can be completed at your own pace, but each cohort will follow a weekly schedule and interact via discussion boards and other communication tools.

Exploring Borders and Belonging in Young Adult Literature

Webinar | 60 minutes

Renowned young adult authors Malaka Gharib and Randy Ribay discuss the power books have to both uphold and break down cultural and social boundaries and how educators can foster students' sense of self and agency through reading.

Additional Professional Learning for ELA Educators

Exploring ELA Text Selection
with Julia Torres

Webinar | 60 minutes

Julia Torres is a librarian, educator, author, and co-founder of *#DisruptTexts*. This webinar offers guidance for selecting culturally responsive texts and navigating the challenges of book banning and censorship.

Coming of Age: Student Perspectives on Reading, Writing, and Finding Their Voice

Webinar | 60 minutes

Join *The New York Times* Learning Network editor Katherine Schulten and winners of the *NYT* student Coming of Age contest for a panel discussion that will help educators empower students to express their ideas, perspectives, and visions for the future.


Culturally Responsive Texts with Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul

Webinar | 60 minutes

Renowned educator and researcher Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul examines how to apply the principles of anti-racism to text selection, with a special focus on celebrating Black joy.

Classroom-Ready Materials

Each ELA resource includes robust teacher guidance and student-facing materials that can be put to use immediately in the classroom.



Handout

Personal Narrative Connection Questions

Directions: After reading the personal narrative, discuss the Part 1 questions with others in your group. Support your ideas with examples from the reading and your own lives. Record notes so you can share key points with your classmates who read different narratives. Do not start the Part 2 questions until your teacher tells you to do so.

Part 1: Expert Group Discussion Questions

Reading: Lauren's Story (Lauren from Providence, RI)

1. In your opinion, what is the most valuable idea in Lauren's story?
2. What do you think Lauren means when she says, "Once I made that distinction, I began to think about what ability really means. I began to see things around me that were ableist"? How does this realization impact how Lauren understands herself and the world around her?
3. Discuss Lauren's social identity. What labels does she use to describe her identity in different social groups? What labels do others or society assign to her? How does Lauren navigate the tension between how she defines herself and how others may perceive her?


Student Handouts

Lesson plans, along with their accompanying readings and handouts, are available in English and Spanish in both PDF and Google doc format.

ELA Learning Experiences


Our 18 ELA learning experiences are classroom-ready activities that you can incorporate into your lesson plans.


They are designed to be modular and adaptable, so you can use them over and over again with a wide range of texts to help students explore characterization, point of view, perspective taking, setting, and thematic development through a Facing History lens.



Exploring Identity in Literature and Life


Students explore the complexity and fluidity of identity, both in the world of the text and in their own lives.






Exploring the Moral Universe of Setting


Students explore the concept of "moral universe" and consider how time and place influence our identities, sense of belonging, and moral decision-making processes.






Making Contemporary Connections to Literature


Students draw connections between social issues that the author explores in the text and their impact on our world today.






Map the Internal World of a Character


Students practice using evidence from the text and their own understanding of the world to analyze a character's thoughts, feelings, motivations, and sense of belonging.






Playing with Perspective


Students reflect on the concept of perspective and consider the importance and limitations of our ability to see things from another's perspective.





Poetry and Power

Students explore poetry as a powerful means of creative expression.





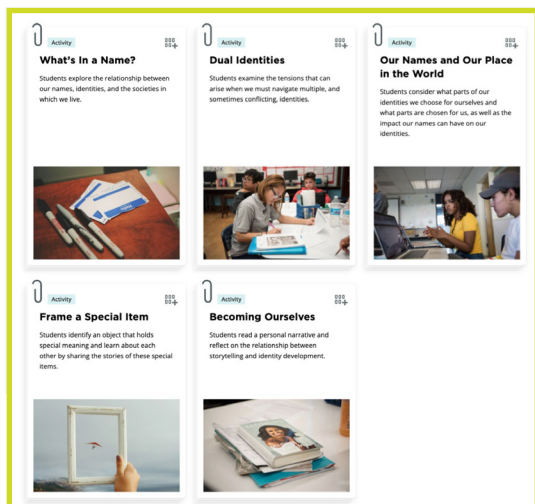
Formative and Summative Assessment Options

Each text set and unit includes multiple assessment options that help students draw connections between themselves, the concepts and ideas they've studied, and the world today.

Assessment options cover a range of modalities, allowing students to express and extend their learning in different ways. Each option offers detailed instructions but is also easily adaptable so that you can create a culminating experience that feels right for your students and your context.

Strategies for a Respectful, Inclusive Classroom Community

Social-emotional learning is one of the pillars of our approach. Strategies that build community and help students take intellectual risks are embedded throughout the curriculum.



Back to School Toolkit

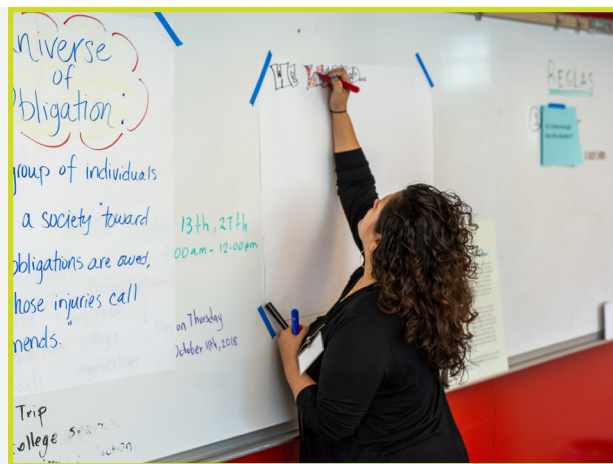
The opening days of school are a crucial time for building community. Students will be more likely to engage and support each other if they feel a sense of trust and belonging among their classmates and with their teacher.

Our back-to-school activities help reorient students to school and lay the groundwork for positive relationships.

Contracting

Reflective classroom communities are places where explicit rules and implicit norms protect everyone's right to speak; where differing perspectives can be heard and valued; and where members take responsibility for themselves, each other, and the group as a whole.

Our materials outline a process for discussing classroom norms with students and then drafting and agreeing to a formal contract of behavior.



Journals

Journals nurture classroom communities and offer a way for you to build relationships with your students through reading and commenting on their journals. Frequent journal writing also helps students become more fluent in expressing their ideas in writing or speaking.

We provide a complete implementation guide for journaling in the ELA classroom, including an extensive menu of journaling methods and response types.

How We Know It Works

Our most important measures of success are meaningful academic and civic outcomes for students.

“Facing History and Ourselves makes you think twice [about] things you would just overlook. Being a part of this particular class, I feel I became a better person. I learned I’m not the type to just turn the other way and just let things happen and that I am more than what people see on the outside. I learned that everyone is not the same and it is okay to have different views on certain situations.”

– Facing History student

In studies conducted over the past 20 years, students report the following as a result of their experiences with Facing History:

Academic
Engagement

94%

Students in a Facing History classroom were 94% more likely than their peers to report that **the class motivated them to learn.**

Civic
Agency

93%

93% of Facing History students agreed that it is important to **work for positive social change.**

School
Culture

95%

95% of students in Facing History partner schools have observed ways that Facing History **positively impacts their school community.**

Facing History’s impact on students has been affirmed by organizations such as Johns Hopkins University’s *Center for Research and Reform in Education*; the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL); and the US Department of Education.