**Common Core Unit:**

**A Close Reading of Learned Hand’s “I am an American Day Address” (1944)**

**Unit Summary**

This unit has been developed to guide students and instructors in a close reading of Learned Hand’s “I am an American Day Address” from Appendix B of the Common Core Standards. The activities and actions described below follow a carefully developed set of steps that assist students in increasing their familiarity and understanding of Hand’s speech through a series of text-dependent tasks and questions that ultimately develop college and career ready skills identified in the Common Core standards. This unit is recommended as an activity for a “Great Conversation” Module and can be taught in two days of study and reflection on the part of students and their teachers. A third day or more could be added if the time is needed or extension activities are desired.

**Day One: Faith in Freedom**

* Activities
  + Students silently read Hand’s address and then the teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along. Teachers should reverse the order here if they feel their students need the benefit of hearing the text *while following along* first.
  + Students answer guiding questions and perform activities in order to grasp the first paragraph of Hand’s Address.
* Standards Covered
  + The following CCS standards are the focus of Day One: RI.11-12.1-6 & 8-9; W.11-12.1 & 4.
* Homework
  + Students create an outline of the first paragraph of Hand’s Address and reread the second paragraph.

**Day Two: The Spirit of Liberty**

* Activities
  + Students answer guiding questions and perform activities regarding the second paragraph of Hand’s address.
* Standards Covered
  + The following CCS standards are the focus of Day Two: RI.11-12.1-6 & 8-9.

**Rationale for Day One and Day Two Activities**

* Learned Hand’s text provides students with an excellent opportunity to closely read a text and unpack its rich meaning. The process articulated below leads students through a careful analysis of the address while fostering critical thinking and independence. The questions asked and activities performed task students with analyzing Hand’s meaning while uncovering the structure of his address.

**Cumulative Assessment**

* Students write a comparative essay using Hand’s address and another text.

**Appendices:**

* **Appendix A: Norman Rockwell’s “Four Freedoms”**
* **Appendix B: Langston Hughes’ “Let America Be America Again”**
* **Appendix C: Selected Vocabulary List**
* **Appendix D: Additional Vocabulary Resources**
* **Appendix E: Knowledge-Building Resources**

**The Text: Hand, Learned. “I am an American Day Address” (1944)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| We have gathered here to affirm a faith, a faith in a common purpose, a common conviction, a common devotion. Some of us have chosen America as the land of our adoption; the rest have come from those who did the same. For this reason we have some right to consider ourselves a picked group, a group of those who had the courage to break from the past and brave the dangers and the loneliness of a strange land. What was the object that nerved us, or those who went before us, to this choice? We sought liberty; freedom from oppression, freedom from wants, freedom to be ourselves. This we then sought; this we now believe that we are by way of winning. What do we mean when we say that first of all we seek liberty? I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and upon courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it. While it lies there it needs no constitution, no law, no court to save it. And what is this liberty which must lie in the hearts of men and women? It is not the ruthless, the unbridled will; it is not freedom to do as one likes. That is the denial of liberty, and leads straight to its overthrow. A society in which men recognize no check upon their freedom soon becomes a society where freedom is the possession of only a savage few; as we have learned to our sorrow.  What then is the spirit of liberty? I cannot define it; I can only tell you my own faith. The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which seeks to understand the mind of other men and women; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which weighs their interests alongside its own without bias; the spirit of liberty remembers that not even a sparrow falls to earth unheeded; the spirit of liberty is the spirit of Him who, near two thousand years ago, taught mankind that lesson it has never learned but never quite forgotten; that there may be a kingdom where the least shall be heard and considered side by side with the greatest. And now in that spirit, that spirit of an America which has never been, and which may never be; nay, which never will be except as the conscience and courage of Americans create it; yet in the spirit of that America which lies hidden in some form in the aspirations of us all; in the spirit of that America for which our young men are at this moment fighting and dying; in that spirit of liberty and of America I ask you to rise and with me pledge our faith in the glorious destiny of our beloved country. | *Show strength or courage*  *Unrestrained*  *To not pay attention to* |

**Day One: Faith in Freedom**

**Summary of Activities:** *As noted in the introduction, these activities could take longer than one day.*

* Teacher introduces the text with minimal commentary and students read it independently.
* Teacher or a skillful reader then reads the passage out loud to the class as students follow along. The order, here, can reversed if teachers feel students would benefit more from hearing the text read first.
* Teacher guides the students through a series of text-dependent questions and activities that analyze Hand’s argument in the opening paragraph (which has been divided into four sections).

| **Passage under Discussion** | | | **Guiding Questions and Activities/Instructional Commentary** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **First ¶, First Section**  We have gathered here to affirm a faith, a faith in a common purpose, a common conviction, a common devotion. Some of us have chosen America as the land of our adoption; the rest have come from those who did the same. For this reason we have some right to consider ourselves a picked group, a group of those who had the courage to break from the past and brave the dangers and the loneliness of a strange land. What was the object that nerved us, or those who went before us, to this choice? | *Show strength or courage* | | Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson.  Asking students to listen while following along to “I am an American Day Address” exposes students a second time to the content and structure of his argument before they begin their close reading of the text. At this point, it should be pointed out to students that texts of this complexity cannot be understood in one reading and require multiple readings as well as rereading portions of the text to address questions. The teacher should not attempt to “deliver” Hand’s address, but rather read aloud slowly and methodically. This will support weaker readers and help all students to follow the shape of Hand’s argument.  **(1) Hand uses his opening sentence to emphasize the importance of the event. How does his word choice in the first sentence reflect this?**  The teacher begins questioning the class regarding their comprehension of the text with the aim of confirming and deepening their understanding of Hand’s argument. This first text-dependent question asks students to look at the first sentence and locate critical words that create a sense of gravity and occasion. “Affirm,” “faith,” “purpose,” “conviction,” and “devotion” all stress the quasi-religious nature of the event and the importance Hand attaches to what they are about to do. | |
| **First ¶, First Section**  We have gathered here to affirm a faith, a faith in a common purpose, a common conviction, a common devotion. Some of us have chosen America as the land of our adoption; the rest have come from those who did the same. For this reason we have some right to consider ourselves a picked group, a group of those who had the courage to break from the past and brave the dangers and the loneliness of a strange land. What was the object that nerved us, or those who went before us, to this choice? | | *Show strength or courage* | | **(1a) Hand creates a growing sense of the importance of the occasion by asserting that those gathered have a common “purpose,” then a shared “conviction,” and finally a joint “devotion.” What do these words mean, and how does the progression of them emphasize the gravity of the event?**  This is an alternative question that focuses on three specific words and the progression reflected in them from sharing a common goal to sharing a mutual belief in a transcendent principle.  **(2) How does Hand create a sense of camaraderie and shared experience in the second sentence?**  Hand does this in two ways: first, by emphasizing that everyone he is speaking to is an immigrant or the descendant of an immigrant, and second, by stressing that this was a choice.  **(3) What qualities make the “picked group” so special in Hand’s eyes?**  It is important to have students capture the sense of Hand’s third sentence, as it sets up the context for understanding “nerved” in the fourth sentence; specifically, he praises those gathered as courageous to brave the solitude of a strange and unfamiliar place.  **(3a) What qualities does Hand imply the “picked group” possesses when he says they “had the courage to break from the past”?**  This alternative brings inference to the forefront of the question and relies on students stitching together the sentences so far to arrive at the insight that the past experience was both comforting and bred complacency, and that they are better for having “braved” the solitude that comes with being an immigrant.  **(4) Put Hand’s fourth and final sentence into your own words.**  The final sentence of this section gets to the heart of the matter by posing the question of what drove men to choose to come to America—faith in what principle was the cause for immigrating to a “strange land”? Students need to be able to render this question into their own words without robbing it of its depth.  Hand’s use of “object” might throw students off. If this is the case, teachers could note how Hand is using this word somewhat differently than they would usually see it. |

| **Passage under Discussion** | | | **Guiding Questions and Activities/Instructional Commentary** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **First ¶, Second Section**  We sought liberty; freedom from oppression, freedom from want, freedom to be ourselves. This we then sought; this we now believe that we are by way of winning. |  | | **(5) What is Hand’s initial answer to the question he posed at the end of section one (what motivated immigrants to come to America)?**  Hand’s initial answer is “liberty” which he subdivides into three sub-categories: freedom from oppression, freedom from want, freedom to be ourselves.  **(5a)** **Hand says that immigrants “sought liberty” in coming to this country. How do the kinds of freedoms he mentions compare to another contemporary’s conception of freedom—Norman Rockwell’s pictorial representation of FDR’s “Four Freedoms”? See Appendix A for images.**  This activity is useful if students are a little stumped by what Hand means when he says liberty is “freedom to be ourselves”, as FDR unpacks that to mean freedom of speech and freedom of worship—two values that Hand’s address implicitly relies on. There are also interesting correspondences (“freedom from want”) and slight discrepancies (“freedom from oppression” versus “freedom from fear”) in the remaining liberties Hand and FDR cite.  Inferring what might have prompted both texts to include “freedom from want” (i.e. The Great Depression) and the broader historical context of Hand’s speech (delivered at the height of WWII; “our young men are at this moment fighting and dying” in the second paragraph) may prove fruitful at this juncture (especially if a student asks what Hand means when he says “by way of winning”). | |
| **First ¶, Third Section**  What do we mean when we say that first of all we seek liberty? I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and upon courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it. While it lies there it needs no constitution, no law, no court to save it.  **First ¶, Fourth Section**  And what is this liberty which must lie in the hearts of men and women? It is not the ruthless, the unbridled will; it is not freedom to do as one likes. That is the denial of liberty, and leads straight to its overthrow. A society in which men recognize no check upon their freedom soon becomes a society where freedom is the possession of only a savage few; as we have learned to our sorrow. | | *Unrestrained* | | **(6) Does Hand think we ought to reject seeking liberty through the legal system? Write a two sentence explanation that captures the essence of Hand’s viewpoint.**  This section of the text is relatively straightforward and may not require a discussion before students write their answers. Once students complete their sentences, teachers should “pair, then square” students into groups so that they can hear different approaches to answering the question, and if time allows, ask the group to read the best explanation to the whole class. This activity foreshadows the outlining homework assignment and can be applied to the fourth section as well if teachers find it particularly successful at conveying the meaning of the passage to students.  Successful explanations will cite Hand’s belief that the hope for liberty—the faith that he mentions in the opening sentence—requires first and foremost conviction and passion “in the hearts of men and women.” A belief that the courts and the constitution will suffice to ensure liberty for all is in his view an idle and false hope.  **(7a)** **What is the problem Hand sees with granting people “unbridled will”?**  Hand sees this as the “denial of liberty”, producing a society where few are free, “freedom is the possession of a savage few”. This section is of course a reference to the war. Teachers should inquire as to who the “savage few” might be, and if necessary refer students to the date.  **(8) How has the definition of liberty evolved over the course of this first paragraph?**  Hand begins with the notion that liberty does not come from “constitutions and laws” but rather the “hearts of men”. He then goes on to state that this liberty in the, “hearts of men” is *not* “unbridled will . . . to do as one likes”. He ends the paragraph with the consequence of liberty as “unbridled will”: “. . . a society where freedom is the possession of only a savage few”. The positive account of freedom is only briefly sketched in this first paragraph, but is linked to the hearts of men and women. The limited substance here as to what liberty actually is sets up the next paragraph, the focus of which is to address this. |

**Day One: Homework**

Based on the close reading performed on Day One, students should feel confident in generating a basic outline of Hand’s analysis of the concept of liberty in the first paragraph of his address. They should also use the time allotted for homework to review the second paragraph in preparation for next class.

A successful outline of the first paragraph might look like the following:

Liberty in Hand’s First Paragraph

1. Highly valued by immigrants to America

a. choice of embracing liberty unique

b. required courage to leave homeland

2. Sought by immigrants

a. freedom from oppression

b. freedom from want

c. freedom to be ourselves

3. Not guaranteed by the judicial system

4. Lives in the hearts of the people

a. not the freedom to do anything

b. *but instead… explained in second paragraph* (This last part will be difficult for many students to catch though it might arise in the

discussion around question 8 above.)

**Day Two: The Spirit of Liberty**

**Summary of Activities:** *As noted in the introduction, these activities could take longer than one day.*

* Students begin by analyzing the first section of the second paragraph culminating in a paraphrase
* Students then read the second section of Hand’s address and answer questions about it

| **Passage under Discussion** | | | **Guiding Questions and Activities/Instructional Commentary** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Second ¶, First Section**  What then is the spirit of liberty? I cannot define it; I can only tell you my own faith. The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which seeks to understand the mind of other men and women; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which weighs their interests alongside its own without bias; the spirit of liberty remembers that not even a sparrow falls to earth unheeded; the spirit of liberty is the spirit of Him who, near two thousand years ago, taught mankind that lesson it has never learned but never quite forgotten; that there may be a kingdom where the least shall be heard and considered side by side with the greatest. | *To not pay attention to* | | **(9) How does Hand’s explication of his vision of the spirit of liberty explain why he could not define the spirit of liberty?**  Hand’s aversion to asserting a final and definitive definition of the spirit of liberty reflects his ideas of what the spirit of liberty entails. It is “not too sure that it is right” and “seeks to understand the mind of other men and women”. His toleration of alternative explanations means that he “is not too sure” that his conception of liberty “is right”. In “seek[ing] to understand” the perspective of others, Hand asserts a healthy skepticism regarding his own opinion on matters.  **(10)** **Why does Hand shift from describing a commonly held faith (“we”) in the first paragraph to describing his “own faith” in the second paragraph?**  Hand’s tolerance for the views of others is so deep that he cannot in good conscience assert a definition of the spirit of liberty that might exclude someone’s perspective. He therefore resorts to constraining himself to self-reportage which cannot fall afoul of dogmatically asserting a definition of the spirit of liberty that isn’t true for everyone.  **(11)** **Who is Hand referring to when he speaks of “the spirit of Him”? What “lesson” did he teach that has neither been learned nor forgotten?**  This question asks students to recognize that Hand is trying to promote the Christian moral message (the last shall be first and the first shall be last) for a secular world (“mankind”). “Him” in capitals should signal to students that the reference is biblical or referring to religion.  **(12)** **Paraphrase Hand’s views on the spirit of liberty and the values embodied within that perspective.**  Important elements that would appear in successful paraphrases include a lack of dogmatism (“not too sure that it is right”), inquisitiveness (“seeks to understand”), objectivity (“without bias”), and compassionate awareness (“not even a sparrow falls to earth unheeded”; “the least shall be heard”). | |
| **Second ¶, Second Section**  And now in that spirit, that spirit of an America which has never been, and which may never be; nay, which never will be except as the conscience and courage of Americans create it; yet in the spirit of that America which lies hidden in some form in the aspirations of us all; in the spirit of that America for which our young men are at this moment fighting and dying; in that spirit of liberty and of America I ask you to rise and with me pledge our faith in the glorious destiny of our beloved country. | |  | | **(13)** **Why does Hand employ the phrase “And now in that spirit”?**  Hand is segueing back to his audience and is about to ask them to do something in the spirit he’s just finished describing—namely “pledge our faith in the glorious destiny of our beloved country”, as noted in the last sentence of this section.  **(14)** **Explain the effect of progressing from “has never been” to “may never be” to “never will be” on Hand’s argument.**  Hand progressively generates increasing tension by ruling out the possibility of his vision of the spirit of liberty taking hold unless “the conscience and courage of Americans create it”. He is building up to the idea that the spirit of liberty can only come when the “conscious and courage of Americans create it”.  **(15)** **Midway through this section (second paragraph) Hand shifts from talking about the spirit of liberty to the spirit of America. Why does he do this?**  By invoking the “conscience and courage of Americans” as necessary to make his vision of the spirit of liberty a reality, Hand ties his conception to the success of America as a whole. Hence, the shift embodies Hand’s return to focusing on the principles of the opening paragraph—“faith in a common purpose”—the spirit of liberty—that those gathered together all seek.  **(16)** **Does invoking the notion of a “glorious destiny” for America contradict the skeptical vision of the spirit of liberty he articulated earlier in the paragraph?**  The possible contradiction here lies in in Hand’s invoking the notion of fate with regard to America’s destiny, especially given his (1) skepticism regarding certain knowledge in his exploration of the spirit of liberty, (2) his claim that that spirit will only live on if Americans have the courage to follow their “conscience,” and even (3) at the end of the first paragraph where he notes that history has embraced evil outcomes and the future is not one of guaranteed progress (“as we have learned to our sorrow”). This is somewhat countered by his claim that America is the land of the “picked” or chosen few who seek liberty, but still the notion of “glorious destiny” stands out in contrast to much that preceded it. |

**Day Three: Cumulative Writing Assessment**

Based on the close reading performed on Day Two, students could respond to an essay prompt regarding Hand’s Address. A third day could be added for in-class revision and editing after peer-to-peer critique or another in-class exercise. Once again, these time suggestions are an estimate.

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| **Essay Prompt** | **Instructional Commentary** |
| Hand considers a variety of ideas regarding what is meant by the term liberty. Write a comparative essay, where you compare and contrast Hand’s thoughts with another author’s writings regarding liberty. One possible text is Langston Hughes’ poem, “Let America be America Again”. | Hughes’s poem addresses much of what Hand does but with differences that are ripe for contrast. Though not as difficult as the Hand piece, it still requires a similarly careful approach. |

**Appendix A: Norman Rockwell’s “Four Freedoms” and “Freedom From Want” Illustrations**

 

**Appendix B: Langston Hughes, “Let America Be America Again”**

Let America be America again.

Let it be the dream it used to be.

Let it be the pioneer on the plain

Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed-

Let it be that great strong land of love

Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme

That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty

Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,

But opportunity is real, and life is free,

Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,

Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

*Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?*

*And who are you that draws your veil across the*

*stars*?

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,

I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.

I am the red man driven from the land,

I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek--

And finding only the same old stupid plan

Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,

Tangled in that ancient endless chain

Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!

Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying

need!

Of work the men! Of take the pay!

Of owning everything for one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil.

I am the worker sold to the machine.

I am the Negro, servant to you all.

I am the people, humble, hungry, mean--

Hungry yet today despite the dream.

Beaten yet today--O, Pioneers!

I am the man who never got ahead,

The poorest worker bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream

In the Old World while still a serf of kings,

Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,

That even yet its mighty daring sings

In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned

That's made America the land it has become.

O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas

In search of what I meant to be my home--

For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,

And Poland's plain, and England's grassy lea,

And torn from Black Africa's strand I came

To build a "homeland of the free."

The free?

Who said the free? Not me?

Surely not me? The millions on relief today?

The millions shot down when we strike?

The millions who have nothing for our pay?

For all the dreams we've dreamed

And all the songs we've sung

And all the hopes we've held

And all the flags we've hung,

The millions who have nothing for our pay--

Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again--

The land that never has been yet--

And yet must be--the land where *every* man is free.

The land that's mine--the poor man's, Indian's,

Negro's, ME--

Who made America,

Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,

Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,

Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose--

The steel of freedom does not stain.

From those who live like leeches on the people's lives,

We must take back our land again,

America!

O, yes,

I say it plain,

America never was America to me,

And yet I swear this oath--

America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,

The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,

We, the people, must redeem

The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.

The mountains and the endless plain--

All, all the stretch of these great green states--

And make America again!

**Appendix C: Selected Vocabulary List**

**The role of vocabulary in this lesson set:**

The chart below lists the vocabulary words the teachers who wrote this lesson identified as important to understanding the text for this lesson.

**It is important to note the high number of words recommended for instruction in these passages**, more than many of us have been used to teaching. This reflects the importance of vocabulary to comprehending the complex text called for by the CCSS. Students who are behind need to learn even more words. This can only happen if we can teach word meanings efficiently; devoting more time and attention to those words that merit it, and less to those that can be learned with less time and attention. There will not be time in the few days of this lesson set to explicitly and extensively teach all the words listed below. Many of the words, however, can be taught quickly, while others deserve explicit and lengthy examination. Teachers should make intentional choices based on professional judgment, the needs of students, and the guidance provided below.

**Inferring Meaning from Context**

The definitions of many words can be inferred in part or in whole from context, and practice with inferring word meanings is an integral part of instruction. At the same time some words in this passage have meanings, or are being used in ways, which cannot reasonably be inferred from context within the text alone. These words are printed in underline, here and in the text, and their definitions are provided in the margins of the text for student reference. In addition to these words we encourage you identify additional words which are valuable either for comprehension of this passage or more generally for vocabulary growth, but which students could determine the meaning of using the passage as context. Instead of directly providing definitions for these words draw students’ attention to these word and ask them to try to infer the meaning.

**Determining which words to spend more time on**

As mentioned above, some words must be taught extremely quickly, sometimes in mere seconds by providing a quick definition and moving on. Other words are both more difficult and more important to understanding this text or future texts and hence deserve time, study, discussion and/or practice. In using this lesson exemplar, teachers will need to determine for themselves which words from the list above deserve more time and which deserve less. Use the guidelines below to help you determine which words to spend more time on. In addition the additional vocabulary resources listed in Appendix B below can help you learn more about selecting and teaching vocabulary.

**Quicker and easier to learn** — words that are concrete, have only one meaning, or are limited to a specific topic area, such as fires or the ocean etc. These words should be addressed swiftly, when they are encountered and only as needed.

**Take more time and attention to master** — words that are abstract, represent concepts unlikely to be familiar to many students, have multiple meanings, are a part of a word family, and/or are likely to appear again in future texts. These words require more instructional time.

**Selected Vocabulary List**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Vocabulary Word** | **Definition** |
| nerved | show strength or courage |
| unbridled | unrestrained |
| unheeded | to not pay attention to |

**Appendix D: Additional Vocabulary Resources**

**Hungry for more vocabulary? Check out the Academic Word Finder.**

The words in the list above were selected by an expert teacher as valuable to teach **in the context of this lesson**. But these are just some of the *many* words you could draw from this passage to help your students build their vocabulary. If you are interested in a tool which can quickly help you identify more of the high-value, Tier 2 academic vocabulary words that appear in this passage, visit the free **Academic Word Finder** at <http://achievethecore.org/academic-word-finder/> (registration required).

***Please note: Some of the words you will find with this tool will not overlap with those listed above.***This is a good thing, because it points out even more words that can help your students! The list above focuses on words crucial to understanding the key points of the passage and includes both Tier 2 and Tier 3 words, whereas the Academic Word Finder focuses on high-frequency Tier 2 words which will be valuable to your students across a variety of texts, (but which may not be particularly central to the meaning of this passage). These words often have multiple meanings or are part of a word family of related words. In addition the **Academic Word Finder** provides multiple related words and the variety of shades of a word’s meaning all in one location, so teachers can see the depth and diversity of word meanings they can teach around a word. Teachers then decide how and when to expose students to different word senses to promote their vocabulary growth.

Both sources of words are valuable, but for different purposes. Ultimately you will have to rely on your professional judgment to determine which words you choose to focus on with your students.

**Eager to learn more about how to select and teach vocabulary? Check out *Vocabulary and The Common Core* by David Liben.**

This paper includes a summary of vocabulary research and practical exercises to help you learn to select and teach vocabulary. Written by classroom veteran and literacy researcher David Liben, the exercises will help you hone your professional judgment and build your skill in the vocabulary teaching crucial to success with the Common Core State Standards.

Download the paper and exercises here:

http://achievethecore.org/page/974/vocabulary-and-the-common-core-detail-pg

**Appendix E: Knowledge-Building Resources**

**Looking for ways to support all students in accessing complex text? Check out the Knowledge-Building Quad Text Sets.**

A high-leverage, evidence-based strategy to support students in accessing complex text is to anchor that text in a conceptually coherent set of resources that build needed knowledge and vocabulary. This work is particularly critical for students not yet reading at grade level. The knowledge-building resources follow a quad text set model developed by Comprehensive Reading Solutions and based on the article by Sarah Lupo and colleagues, “[Building Background Knowledge Through Reading: Rethinking Text Sets](https://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jaal.701).” In a quad text set model, three to five texts are selected that help students develop knowledge critical to the complex text at the center of the close-reading lesson. Each of these supplemental texts is paired with a lightweight text-dependent task to support students’ comprehension and knowledge-building work. Implementing these knowledge-building texts and tasks can be done in a variety of ways; they are lightweight enough to be done either during short portions of class or as homework.

Download the Knowledge-Building Quad Text Set for this lesson here:

<https://achievethecore.org/file/5892>