



Perspectives of Power: ELA Lessons for Gifted and Advanced Learners in Grades 6-8

Emily Mofield, Tamra Stambaugh Ph.D.

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Perspectives of Power explores the nature of power in literature, historical documents, poetry, and art. Lessons include a major focus on rigorous evidence-based discourse through the study of common themes and content-rich, challenging nonfiction and fictional texts. This unit, developed by Vanderbilt University's Programs for Talented Youth and aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), guides students to explore the power of oppression; the power of the past, present, and future; and the power of personal response by engaging in simulations, skits, creative projects, literary analyses, Socratic seminars, and debates. Texts illuminate content extensions that interest many high-ability students including bystander effect, social class structure, game theory, the use and abuse of technology, cultural conflict, the butterfly effect, women's suffrage, and surrealism as each relates to power. Lessons include close readings with text-dependent questions, choice-based differentiated products, rubrics, formative assessments, and ELA writing tasks that require students to analyze texts for rhetorical features, literary elements, and themes through argument, explanatory, and/or prose-constructed writing. The unit features texts from Emily Dickinson, William B. Yeats, and Charles Perrault; art from Moyo Okediji and Salvador Dali; and speeches by Elie Wiesel, Susan B. Anthony, and John F. Kennedy. As a result from the learning in the unit, students will be able to examine powerful influences in their own lives and identify their own power in personal responsibility.

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