

Unit 6.3: Challenges and Barriers

In Unit Three students explore the complex nature of challenges and how an individual's experiences and relationships influence how he or she faces obstacles. As students research a contemporary issue, they learn to use opinions to formulate arguments supported by evidence. Opportunities to analyze themes, both societal and literary, help students view challenges and barriers from multiple perspectives. They examine how characters and people are developed through the challenges they face and the course of action they take in response to those challenges.

Enduring Understandings

- Challenges force us to choose and commit to a course of action.
- Challenges are a function of the friction between our current circumstances and our needs and ambitions.
- Barriers are challenges for which no successful solution has yet been realized.
- Effective writers manipulate information, narrative elements, and language to capture the complexity of how challenges shape us.

Essential Questions

- How can the same challenge be interpreted differently by various individuals or groups?
- When facing a challenge, how are one's choices limited by circumstance and perspective?
- How are barriers transcended and thus changed into challenges of the past?
- What deliberate choices do writers make in order to convey the difficulty inherent in facing challenges?

Students respond to oral, written, and visual texts in this unit and continue to develop and refine their writing and discussion skills, reaching for even higher levels of proficiency in their ability to express themselves clearly and cogently. In addition to oral and written responses that require analysis, synthesis, and reflection on the issues, students continue to learn how to use language effectively in their own writing and speaking.

Common Tasks

- 6.3.1 Research a contemporary issue and provide an objective summary of each source.
- 6.3.2 Write and present a speech that argues a claim.
- 6.3.3 Examine the causes and effects of conflict in a text.*
- 6.3.4 Write an original story about how a character responds to a challenge.

** Teachers who wish to make more time for re-teaching a common task may choose to omit these starred tasks or blend them into others, but the relevant skills and concepts must be incorporated into instruction during the unit.*

Advanced English 6 Texts

Unit 3: Challenges and Barriers

Throughout the year, students should read and discuss a combination of classic literature and contemporary works from a diverse group of writers. Students need to read a variety of non-print texts and print texts from different genres, including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and short stories. Employ Literature Circles to provide students with a structured choice of texts. Critical reading coupled with inquiry based discussion leads to effective writing. Since advanced readers use multiple strategies to create meaning, understand the nuances of language, and connect reading to their own lives, seek content that is provocative, ambiguous, complex, and emotionally challenging.

“To become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries. Such works offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students’ own thinking and writing.”

Common Core State Standards

Fiction

<i>Anything But Typical</i>	Nora Raleigh Baskin
<i>Among the Hidden</i>	Margaret Peterson Haddix
<i>Child of the Owl</i>	Laurence Yep
<i>The Day They Came</i>	Nat Hentoff
<i>to Arrest the Book</i>	
<i>The Dreamer</i>	Pam Munoz Ryan
<i>A Mango-Shaped Space</i>	Wendy Mass
<i>Miracle’s Boys</i>	Jacqueline Woodson
<i>One Crazy Summer</i>	Rita Williams-Garcia
<i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i>	Mildred Taylor
<i>The Secret of Gumbo Grove</i>	Elenora Tate
<i>Taking Sides</i>	Gary Soto
<i>The Watsons Go to</i>	Christopher Paul Curtis
<i>Birmingham—1963</i>	

Nonfiction

“Abd al-Rahman Ibrahim”	Walter Dean Myers
“Bringing the Prairie Home”	Patricia MacLachlan
<i>Stars Come Out Within</i>	Jean Little
<i>Starting from Home</i>	Milton Meltzer
“I Have a Dream”	Martin Luther King, Jr.
from <i>Looking Back</i>	Lois Lowry
“Oh Broom, Get to Work”	Yoshiko Uchida
from <i>The Story of My Life</i>	Helen Keller
“Summer of Fire”	Patricia Lauber

Poetry and Essays

- “Barbara Frietchie” John Greenleaf Whittier
“Growing Pains” Jean Little
Rising Voices: Writings of Young Native Americans Arlene B. Hirshfelder
“Mean Song” Eve Merriam
“Street Corner Flight” Norma Land Flores
The Surrender Tree Margarita Engle
“Words Like Freedom” Langston Hughes

Short Stories

- “Bad Characters” Jean Stafford
“Beethoven Lives Upstairs” Barbara Nichol
“The Circuit” Francisco Jimenez
“Cricket in the Road” Michael Anthony
“The First Emperor” Daniel Cohen
 from *The Tomb Robbers*
“Gaston” William Saroyan
“My Greatest Ambition” Morris Lurie
“The School Play” Gary Soto
“The Wolf and the House Dog” Aesop

Drama

- Words on a Page* Keith Leckie

Booklet

- Talking Service: Readings for Civic Reflection* Great Books Foundation

On-level English 6 Texts

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<i>Crash</i>	Jerry Spinelli
<i>The Day They Came</i>	Nat Hentoff
<i>to Arrest the Book</i>	
<i>Double Dutch</i>	Sharon Draper
<i>The Dreamer</i>	Pam Munoz Ryan
<i>The Fear Place</i>	Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
<i>Holes</i>	Louis Sachar
<i>A Mango-Shaped Space</i>	Wendy Mass
<i>Miracle’s Boys</i>	Jacqueline Woodson
<i>Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH</i>	Robert C. O’Brien
<i>One Crazy Summer</i>	Rita Williams-Garcia
<i>Planet of Junior Brown</i>	Virginia Hamilton
<i>Project Mulberry</i>	Linda Sue Park
<i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i>	Mildred Taylor
<i>The Secret of Gumbo Grove</i>	Elenora Tate
<i>Shakespeare Bats Cleanup</i>	Ron Koertge
<i>Taking Sides</i>	Gary Soto
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Drama

<i>Words on a Page</i>	Keith Leckie
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Booklet

<i>Talking Service: Readings for Civic Reflection</i>	Great Books Foundation
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Course Terms

Alliteration

Allusion

Annotate

Audience

Author’s purpose

Central idea

Character trait

Characterization

Claim

Connotation

Contemporary

Denotation

Dialogue

Figurative language

Flashback

Foreshadowing

Humor

Hyperbole

Imagery

Inference

Interpretation

Irony

Main idea

Metaphor

Monologue

Mood

Motivation

Paraphrase

Personification

Perspective

Plot structure

- Exposition

- Inciting incident

- Rising action

- Conflict

- External

- Internal

- Climax

- Falling action

- Resolution

Point of view

- First person

- Third person

Portfolio

Reading strategies

- Before

- During

- After

Refrain

Repetition

Research question

Rhetoric

- logos

- pathos

- ethos

Rhetorical devices

Rhyme

Rhythm

Self–reflection

Sensory details

Sentence structure

Setting

Simile

6–Traits of Writing

- Ideas & Development

- Organization

- Voice

- Word Choice

- Sentence Fluency

- Conventions

Stanza

Subplot

Summary

Suspense

Symbol

Theme

Tone

Topic

Works cited

Writing

Purposes

- Argument

- Informative/explanatory

- Narrative

- Research and Synthesis

- Creative

Methods of development

- Cause-Effect

- Classification

- Comparison-Contrast

- Definition

Process

- Prewriting

- Drafting

- Revising

- Editing

- Publishing

Language Standards

Teachers plan instruction to incorporate language instruction into writing; the goal is for students to think clearly about ways to improve their own writing. Exercises in sentence combining, expansion, and imitation offer ways students can compose more sophisticated and effective sentences. *Separated* and *simulated* instruction may be used to introduce concepts; include *integrated* instruction to ensure that students apply these and other skills in their writing.

Common Core Language Standards for Grade 6

- L.6.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).
 - Use intensive pronouns (e.g., *myself*, *ourselves*).
 - Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.
 - Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).
 - Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.
- L.6.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- Use punctuation** (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.
 - Spell correctly.
- L.6.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
 - Maintain consistency in style and tone.

Teachers should also consult the list of [Language Progressive Skills](#) to identify those concepts initially taught in earlier grades that are most likely to require review and re-teaching, based on students' needs. The most relevant of these may include the following:

- Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement (L.3.1f).
- Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting fragments and run-ons (L.4.1f).
- Correctly use frequently confused words (L.4.1g).
 - The document [Commonly Confused Words](#), found in the Course Materials section of the Instruction Center course page for English 6, outlines the expected sequence for teaching and reviewing the most common of these terms. Teachers should address those words identified at grade 6 but also use student writing samples and portfolios to review words that may need further instruction and practice from earlier years.
 - The words listed for English 6, which may appear on formative and final assessments, include the following:

a lot	threw/through
brake/break	to/too/two
quiet/quit/quite	you're/your
their/there/they're	

- Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense (L.5.1d).

Vocabulary acquisition continues to be a necessary and vital part of the English curriculum. Vocabulary study not only enhances understanding of the writer’s craft—how word choice creates character, defines mood, and sets tone—but also is the key to a richer reading of all texts. Determining meaning and understanding word structure give students the tools to become independent, strategic readers of challenging texts.

- L.6.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
 - Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots* as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *audience*, *auditory*, *audible*).
 - Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
 - Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
- L.6.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
 - Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.
 - Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *stingy*, *scrimping*, *economical*, *unwasteful*, *thrifty*).
- L.6.6 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Affixes and Roots

Unit One			
Structure	Term	Definition	Example
Prefixes	re-	again	revise; repetition
	sub-	below; under	subway; submerge
Roots	graph	write	autograph; photograph
	ject	to throw out	eject; project
Suffixes	-able; -ible	capable of being	likeable; terrible
	-ize	make	characterize; familiarize

Unit Two			
Structure	Term	Definition	Example
Prefixes	un-	not; opposite of	unable; unreliable
	de-	reduce; remove	depart; decrease
Roots	ced	yield; go	recede; precede
	dict	say; speak	dictate; predict
Suffixes	-ion, -tion	act or state; action or process	opinion; narration
	-ful	full of	useful; careful

Affixes and Roots

Unit Three			
Structure	Term	Definition	Example
Prefixes	il-; im-; in-	not	illegible; impossible; invisible
	ad-	to; toward	administration; adjust
Roots	ped; pod	foot	pedal; tripod
	scrib; scrip	write	scribe; description
Suffixes	-ly	In the manner of	sincerely; usually
	-ous	having the quality of	poisonous; nervous

Unit Four			
Structure	Term	Definition	Example
Prefixes	con-	together; with	connect; confide
	mis-	bad; wrong	mistake; misinform
Roots	pon; pos	set; place	postpone; position
	fac	make; do	benefactor; manufacture
Suffixes	-less	without	fearless; priceless
	-ness	state or condition of	brightness; greatness