**Content Text Set Assignment**

**Overview**

Link to my website with all texts and text aids: <http://mrsbonn6.weebly.com/utopian-unit.html>

In this unit, we are discussing the concept of a utopian society and how that can impact the individuals that live within that society. This reading unit is also in combination with our social studies unit of forms of government. Throughout the unit, we will use the following questions to guide content and discussion:

* What illusion of a perfect society is depicted in this book? What is the society like in reality?
* How are the members of this society being oppressed?
* What kind of control is used to keep the members of this society oppressed?
* What current trend, societal norm, or political system is exaggerated?
* What criticism is made through this exaggeration? What current trend, societal norm, or political system is addressed?

This unit was created as my first attempt to create a workshop model or learning in the classroom. I am implementing this unit in the final trimester of the school year of my 6th grade class. I teach a total of 63 students broken into two blocks. Eight of those students receive pull out assistance from my special education partner teacher. This class falls on a wide range of reading abilities. The majority of my students are reading at about a 4/5th grade level or lexile level of 700 to 850. But I do have a few students reading at a 3rd grade level, and a few at high school levels.

**Individual texts**

**Main Text Set**

**Topic**: The backbone of this unit are our three main texts: *The Hunger Games, The Giver, and Bridge to Terabithia.* These three text are used for students’ independent reading. Each week students are to complete assigned chapters working independently or with partners. At least once a week students will also meet with me to discuss the chapters. With each completed chapter, students will complete a Double Entry Journal and Vocabulary Building Activity. I wanted to give students some choice in their book to help encourage engagement. Prior to our unit, we had a mini lesson on book choice and a “book tasting” student picked a book that was both entertaining and at a level that would be readable for them.

**Rationale**: These three texts were chosen for their range of readability and provide a great rage of complexity in understanding. Not only where these text chosen with student choice and individual abilities in mind but I wanted to provide as many examples of a “utopian” society as possible for students to pull from during our whole class discussions.

1. ***The Hunger Games***
   1. APA format Resource Citation

Collins, S. (2014). *The Hunger Games*. London: Scholastic Children's Books.

* 1. Summary of text

In future North America, our main character Katniss Everdeen lives in in a new government called Panam, which is comprised of one lavash capital and twelve less fortunate districts. Every year each district is forced to provide one female and one male child to participate in the “festive” and televised Hunger Games. The twenty-four tributes must fight to the death till one remains, reminiscent of the Ancient Roman gladiator games.. The story follows Katniss as she prepares for the Games, encountering the many conflicts with her society and within herself.

* 1. Readability of text

Lexile level of 810 or grade equivalent of 5.3.

1. ***The Giver***
   1. APA format Resource Citation

Lowry, L. (2004). *The giver*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

* 1. Summary of text

The main character, Jonas, finds himself living in a futuristic community where conformity is necessary and ignorance about the human condition is strictly enforced. As Jonas comes of age at the ripe old age of 12, he find himself being placed in the assignment of Receiver. As he takes on his new role, Jonas is introduced to the wider world of knowledge and memory that the rest of his community has been denied. As Jonas develops this new knowledge, he starts to question the society in which he lives and begins to push back against the establishment.

* 1. Readability of text

Lexile level of 760 or grade equivalent of 4.6. However given the deep complexity and nature of the text, I have encouraged my highest readers to chose this text.

1. ***Bridge to Terabithia***
   1. APA format Resource Citation

PATERSON, K. (2011). *BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA*. S.l.: HARPERCOLLINS.

* 1. Summary of text

The book opens following the ordinary life of Jess and new girl Leslie as they deal with school, bullies and their families. One day Jess and Leslie create the imaginary world of Terabithia where they are King and Queen of their own utopian community. At book's end, Jess relies on the comforting nature of their utopia to help with the loss of his friend Leslie.

* 1. Readability of text

Lexile level of 810 or grade equivalent of 5.3.

**Additional Texts**

1. ***Divergent***

Topic/Rational: Divergent is another popular text that fits well into our utopian theme. There are a few students who consistently complete their independent work quicker than the rest of the class. Those students have created a book club where they complete the text together discussing it as they go. This gives my students an additional viewpoint on the possibilities of an utopian society. Furthermore, those students who have chosen to participate in this book club has shown great enthusiasm for their group. The majority of these students opt to do their weekly independent work as homework so they can use the majority of class time working together. They have grown strong in their collaborative abilities and have become leaders in the classroom.

* 1. APA format Resource Citation

Roth, V. (2014). *Divergent*. London: HarperCollins.

* 1. Summary of text

Divergent is set in a futuristic community that is once in the location of Chicago. Our main character, Beatrice lives in a society that is divided into five separate factions each taking on the values of the human nature; bravery, selflessness, intelligence, honesty and kindness. As Trice comes of age, she must choose which faction she will belong to, either the faction of her family to the faction that is most true to her nature. As Trice chooses to turn away from her family, we follow her has she tries to fit is as a dauntless. However, as Trice is divergent (having the nature of all five factions) she starts to question the society in which she lives.

* 1. Readability of text

Lexile level of 700 or grade equivalent of 4.0.

1. ***Among the Hidden***

**Topic/Rationale**: This text is used as our classroom read aloud. This test was chosen for several reasons. First, this text is excellent for read alouds since it has many short chapters that can be read daily within about 10 minutes. Secondly, while this falls inline with our utopian theme, it provides a more unique perspective on the topic. Instead of the violence of the more popular text previously mentioned, this text takes on a calmer, more realistic viewpoint.

* 1. APA format Resource Citation

Haddix, M. P., & Weisshaar, H. (2012). *Among the hidden*. Stuttgart: Klett Sprachen.

* 1. Summary of text

Luke is growing up as the third child in his family, when the government has paced a law only allowing families to have two children. Previous to the start of our story, Luke has been able to lead a decent life in hiding thanks to his family farm being located far from any neighbors. However that quickly changes when his family is forced to give up their land for wealthy family home. This forces Luke to remain in his attic bedroom at all times. As families move into the new home, Luke pushes the boundaries of safety to investigate the intriguing possibility of a third child hiding in a nearby home.

* 1. Readability of text

Lexile level of 800 or grade equivalent of 5.0.

1. ***Harrison Bergeron***

**Topic/ Rationale**: Harrison Bergeron is an excellent short story to start our utopian unit. Prior to starting our texts, I wanted to give students the ability to read something smaller to be able to apply the utopian society themes to a story. This also allows students to have a whole group conversations to practice expectations of work habits before they started working with independent texts. Additionally, the ideals of this particular society, equality, is a concept that our students can relate to well.

* 1. APA format Resource Citation

Vonnegut, K. (1961). *Harrison Bergeron*. New York: Mercury Press.

* 1. Summary of text

It is 2081 in America and there have been nearly 200 amendments added to the constitution to ensure that everyone is equal. Those who show signs of being better are forced to wear accommodations to keep them equal, no one is allowed to be better than anyone else. The main characters, Hazel and George, recently lost their son to the government because he stood out too much. While watching TV, Hazel and George, see their son Harrison break into TV studio before he was shot dead.

* 1. Readability of text

Lexile level of 750 or grade equivalent of 4.5.

1. **“Utopias in America”**

**Topic/Rational**: This text was used to help introduce the concept of utopian societies. Previously students participated in an anticipation guide and discussion to define what a utopian society is. This article give several examples of real utopian societies, this provided students with the opportunity to discuss if a true utopian society could really exist or if given human nature, does it become a dystopian society? This text was also used to help teach students how to use a double entry journal effectively.

* 1. APA format Resource Citation

Utopian Communities in America. (n.d.). Retrieved April 20, 2017, from https://newsela.com/articles/govt-us-history-utopia/id/26144/

* 1. Summary of text

This article provides a historical review of the major utopian communities that existed in America, mostly within the 18th and 19th centuries. First the article explains the origins of the concept of a utopian society then goes into detail of the major American utopian societies, Brook Farm, the Shakers, the Rappites, the Oneida community and the Amana colonies.

* 1. Readability of text

This article was taken from NEWSELA and was able to be printed in multiple lexile levels based on student ability. I used lexile levels 830 and 570.

* 1. Rationale for the texts inclusion in the text set and how resource will be used in instruction

1. **Time - “Mohandas Gandhi”**

**Topic/Rationale**: This article from Time Magazine was used as an additional resource for my higher level students. Those students who read The Giver started to discuss how the main character Jonas, once ignorant, became a vessel of change as he learned of his community memories. Those students then read this article on Gandhi and how he was a vessel of positive change for his community to be able to compare it to our novel’s protagonist.

* 1. APA format Resource Citation

Rushdie, S. (1998, April 13). Mohandas Gandhi. Retrieved April 20, 2017, from http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,988159-3,00.html

* 1. Summary of text

This article details the life of Gandhi and his ability to “think differently” in a society that is growing towards dystopian norms. It then continues to discuss the concept of Gandhi as a symbol for positive change and how each individual’s interpretation of that symbol varies and may contradict the true reality. Given the depth of the article, students were only required to read the first half of the article.

* 1. Readability of text

Lexile Level of 1160.

1. **NEWSELA - “China Ends One Child Policy”**

**Topic/Rationale**: For our read aloud, Among the Hidden, students became intrigued with realistic society that was portrayed and how such government oversight could be possible. Playing off of that interest, I pulled this article for their analysis. In this way, students were able to compare a real world example of government oversight to their fictional novel. To encourage conversation, this text was read as an interactive read aloud as students filled out a double entry journals.

* 1. APA format Resource Citation

China ends one-child policy for some couples. (n.d.). Retrieved April 20, 2017, from https://newsela.com/articles/china-babyboom/id/1939/

* 1. Summary of text

The article starts by briefly describing China’s one child policy and follows Luo in her excitement to potentially have a second child. The article continues by describing how the policy needs to be adjusted due to birth rates becoming too low to maintain the population. Finally it details how not all families will be able to have a second child, but despite the potential problems it is still a major milestone.

* 1. Readability of text

Lexile level of 820.

1. **Time for Kids - “Top Secret”**

**Topic/Rationale**: Playing off of the success of China’s one child policy discussion, I decided to find an article that showed government oversight here in America. I wanted students to be able to draw the connection between societies that may not be classified as dystopian, may still have dystopian traits. This article was also completed as a whole group, interactive read aloud. Most students showed great interest in trying to understand at what point does a society become dystopian. Many students were taken back because they were directly affected by their government showing dystopian traits.

* 1. APA format Resource Citation

News. (2013, June 10). Retrieved April 26, 2017, from http://www.timeforkids.com/news/top-secret/95951

* 1. Summary of text

This Time of Kids article was published in the wake of the NSA scandal. It briefly summarizes events that took place in the uncovering of the NSA’s data collection of civilian phone records, Snowden as a whistle blower and the journalists who helped make this information public.

* 1. Readability of text

Lexile level of 950.