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World Changers: Social Justice at the Heart of Middle School Language Arts Curriculum

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World Changers:

Social Justice at the Heart of Middle School Language Arts Curriculum

Mackenzie McClain

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Abstract

English classrooms, at their best, are safe places for adolescents to critically engage with difficult issues presented in novels and the real world. One such issue is human trafficking, which is expected to soon become the world's most profitable criminal industry (Knudsen, 2015).

Incorporating values and instructional approaches from social justice pedagogy, I have designed a sixth-grade language arts unit plan about human trafficking based upon Francesco D'Adamo's novel, *Iqbal* (2003). My purpose was to create resources, such as standards-based learning objectives, text sets, lesson plans, and student projects to use in my own classroom, as well as for teachers across the country to consider using in their own classrooms. I aimed to represent the issue of human trafficking and the cultural groups represented throughout the unit as accurately as possible.

Keywords: social justice, pedagogy, *Iqbal*, human trafficking, middle school, language arts

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World Changers:

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My Purpose

One of my guiding principles as an educator is that there is beauty in the content I teach. The literature I present my students is more than just a set of sentences to be diagrammed, figurative language to be analyzed, and plots to be dissected. Instead, there are rich, life-altering, world-changing themes to be explored. With appropriate scaffolds in place, our students are capable of tackling complex issues, ranging from immigration to racial equity. I am grateful for the many teachers before me who have blazed the trail in social justice teaching. One such teacher, Katie, a sixth-grade English teacher described her objective in this area of instruction: “to engage students in as much, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking as possible as they explored their passion for a topic and engaged in civic action” (Tracy, Menickelli, & Scales, 2017, p. 528). I echo her sentiments, as I have set out to create my own unit plan following social justice pedagogy, which aims to transform students into empathetic, critical, and involved citizens.

I have put together a unit that I, as well as other teachers, could employ in our own classrooms to specifically explore the theme of human trafficking, a social justice issue that has haunted my heart for the past decade. Basing the unit on Francesco D’Adamo’s middle-grade novel, *Iqbal* (2003), students will explore questions such as, *what is human trafficking? What is child labor? Where does human trafficking take place? How are human trafficking and consumerism linked? How can I be an advocate for social justice issues? What do social justice advocates have in common?* Students will delve into what it means to be an advocate for social justice, taking inspiration from renowned activists who have changed the world and ordinary

people from their own communities, such as first responders, nonprofit founders, organ donors, and local politicians. The goal is to provide students with resources to grapple with challenging questions in order to move them from bystanders to agents of change in their own communities

In recent years, there is more curriculum in this area available; unfortunately, it is not always accessible to educators because of rigid expectations set by the district, unsupportive administration, parents with conflicting opinions, and a teacher's own unfamiliarity with social justice teaching. While this unit plan could support a five-week whole-class novel study on *Iqbal*, teachers have the freedom to adjust the ideas presented to fit their purpose and timeline. I, too, will likely have to adjust how I use this material in a classroom of my own. I recognize that, depending on the environment of the school I find employment at, I will have greater or lesser leeway in how I can incorporate social justice pedagogy. Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2019) guide teachers in how to incorporate LGBTQ literature in the classroom, but their advice applies to any potentially controversial content—like human trafficking. They contend that the first, easiest step is to place the book on the shelf of your classroom library for a child to find on their own. Then, perhaps, you recommend the novel to a child who would likely be interested. Further still, you can offer the book as a choice for small group literature circles. Finally, you can read the book aloud to the class; “reading a book can be a wonderful way to open up conversations about topics we don’t often discuss in schools because the book can do so much of the work” (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019, p. 19). No matter the extent I will be able to implement this unit in my own classroom, this thesis project has given me ideas of how to incorporate meaningful themes into my teaching. We, as educators, hold the honor of exposing students to a variety of perspectives exploring international themes that have relevance in their own communities.

Social Justice Pedagogy

Traditionally, language arts classes focused on teaching basic literacy skills; now, we know they have the additional role of exposing students to social justice issues (Sun, 2017). One prominent goal of social justice teaching is to transform students into agents of change, who are discontented with oppressive practices and aware of their position as influencers (Zhu, Crenshaw, Scott, 2020). This happens through taking a critical stance while reading—asking questions, participating in discussions, critiquing characters, questioning stereotypes, examining their own social practices, and making connections to the real world (Sun, 2017). In this framework of teaching Language Arts, students are not mere receptacles of learning, but they are active participants in constructing meaning and making change. As Paulo Freire famously wrote, teachers must partner with their students to “undermine the power of oppression and serve the cause of liberation” (Freire, 1973/2000, p. 75). Within the social justice teaching framework, the educator’s role is to “equip students with perspectives, skills, experiences, and tools necessary to promote awareness, enact change, and increase justice for society” (Zhu, Crenshaw, Scott, 2020, p. 1353).

Equity and inclusion are currently buzz words in the world of education, as schools around the country engage in professional development in how to make learning accessible to a diverse body of students. The National Council of Teaching English (NCTE) posits that “teachers and teacher educators need to be advocates for and models of social justice and equity” (NCTE, 2005). Social justice pedagogy, then, is a means of placing increased emphasis on equity and inclusion in the classroom. Through exploring the rich themes found in contemporary middle-grade literature, teachers can make learning both accessible and meaningful for all students. For instance, books such as Alan Gratz’s *Refugee* (2017) and Jasmine Warga’s *Other*

Words for Home (2019) could be used as whole-class novels to critically think about the experiences of refugees in the United States. On the other hand, *Ghost Boys* (2019) by Jewell Parker Rhodes could serve as a catalyst for discussing topics like racism, gun violence, privilege, and police brutality. It is our job as English teachers to present students with stimulating material like *Ghost Boys* and walk alongside them as they grapple with its real-life consequences.

The unit plan I have created adheres to this social justice pedagogy and explores human trafficking. One way to bring the social justice themes of a novel alive is through text sets, “a collection of materials...composed of diverse resources on a specific subject matter, genre or theme” (Lent, 2012, p. 148). I supplemented the whole-class novel, Francesco D’Adamo’s *Iqbal*, with other multimodal texts; some of the texts include Maya Angelou’s poem “I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings,” the U.S. Department of Labor’s “List of Products produced by forced or Indentured Child Labor,” Lura Funk’s picture book *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*, and various videos and articles about human trafficking. In the twenty-first century text sets can include many different types of media such as virtual field trips, videos, cartoons, paintings, public service announcements, brochures, tables and graphs, websites, song lyrics, podcasts, primary sources, and Tweets (Tracy, Menickelli, & Scales, 2017). In addition, each lesson starts with a book talk about another child, whether historical, modern, or fictional, who took a stand for social justice like *Iqbal*.

Reading about the same theme across different genres benefits students in several ways. First of all, it pushes students to think critically about the topic (Tracy, Menickelli, & Scales, 2017). They learn not to immediately accept what is written as fact, as they cross-examine the texts to determine each source’s accuracy and validity. Another advantage of reading across genres is the additional access points to the material, especially for reluctant readers, English

language learners, and those reading below grade level (Bersh, 2013). Their comprehension of the material is supported through the pictures, audio, and graphic organizers found in the multimodal texts. Lastly, text sets expose students to multiple texts about the same topic, confronting the idea that there is a single story. For instance, in my unit, I counter the notion that all child laborers live in the Middle East by including research, videos, and articles about human trafficking cases in the United States.

Throughout the unit, students will be creating a variety of artifacts in an effort to promote awareness and enact change in their community. They will create a social media graphic raising awareness about human trafficking, write a biography about a social justice activist, and make a podcast in which they interview a world changer from their own community. Just as multimodal texts made learning more accessible to struggling readers, multimodal responses provide options for struggling writers to demonstrate their understanding. Essentially, students will be positioned to take their newfound understandings and produce a variety of artifacts that raise awareness about human trafficking and child labor. In this way, they follow in the footsteps of activists like Iqbal Masih.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking, which includes bonded labor, sex trafficking, and domestic servitude, is expected to soon become the world's most profitable criminal industry (Knudsen, 2015). Across the world, 40 million people were victims of modern slavery in 2016 (International Labour Organization, 2017). This huge issue, which is arguably the most inhumane practice still alive in the twenty-first century, has attracted unprecedented amounts of attention in the last fifteen years. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2009), the world is finally waking up to the reality that slavery still exists today. The public is more aware, the

media is covering more stories, legislatures are passing more laws, judicial systems are making more convictions, and the private sector is giving more aid to victims (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2009). Hopefully, the more we shine a light on this dark practice, the less room there will be for traffickers to hide.

Human trafficking is a social justice issue appropriate for young adolescents, like the sixth graders I designed this unit for, to learn about because it is relevant to their lives. It is an issue that affects children across the world. In 2016, one in four victims of human trafficking were children under the age of 18 (International Labour Office, 2017). One of the goals of social justice teaching is building empathy; through reading literature, students learn to empathize with characters' feelings, thoughts, and experiences (Beach, Haertling Thein, Webb, 2012). Children can naturally empathize with other children, which makes child labor an appropriate topic to introduce social justice activism. Also, it is essential for young students to learn about modern day slavery because the United States' 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report named youth in welfare, foster care, and juvenile justice systems as well as runaway, homeless, and unaccompanied children as some of the most vulnerable in the United States to become victims of trafficking (Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, 2021). This fact highlights the need for preventive measures against human trafficking in schools.

This is an appropriate time to present a unit focused on human trafficking, as more and more schools are taking on the fight against human trafficking. Since school-aged children are vulnerable to being trafficked, schools should recognize their role in educating students about human trafficking (Zhu, Crenshaw, Scott, 2020). Sadly, predators have been frequenting public schools as "a new hunting ground" (Salas & Didier, 2020, p. 12). Thus, it makes sense for schools to be a touch point in the fight against trafficking. Some state legislatures are even

requiring public schools to address this issue. As of 2019, eight states in the U.S. have passed legislation that involves the public education system in the fight to prevent human trafficking. These states include California, Florida, Idaho, Massachusetts, Missouri, Ohio, and Texas (Lemke, 2019). For instance, in 2017, California enacted a law that requires public schools to adopt anti-trafficking curriculum from 7th to 12th grade (Salas & Didier, 2020).

It is imperative to recognize that discussing human trafficking in a middle school classroom will likely be controversial. Of course, I would argue that sixth graders are not too young to learn about human trafficking because they are not too young to become victims. According to the Child Welfare Council, among girls in foster care who are trafficked, the average age of victims is 12. Horrifyingly, victims as young as 9 have been identified in the United States (Salas & Didier, 2020). Regardless, there will likely be parents who have concerns about discussing such provocative matters at school. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) strongly opposes censorship of sensitive material and asserts that providing students “unfettered” access to the quality literature in our curriculum is an essential English education principle (NCTE, 2018). When introducing literature with sensitive themes, the NCTE recommends notifying parents upfront about the inherent value of the book selected, and about your thought process in recommending the book. This initial step “encourages the opportunity for student and parental choice, while honoring the expertise of teachers” (NCTE, 2018). As educators, we want to have an open dialogue with parents about their child’s learning; however, when a parent moves to remove a book for a student that is not their own child, that is censorship (NCTE, 2018).

The Merit of *Iqbal*

Francesco D'Adamo's *Iqbal* is a fictionalized account of the real-life Iqbal Masih, a child laborer in Pakistan who advocated for the liberation of child slaves until his murder in 1995 at just twelve years of age. The story is told from the perspective of Fatima, a fictional girl who works alongside Iqbal in a carpet factory. In the opening of the first chapter, Fatima says, "Yes, I know Iqbal. I think about him often. I like to. I feel I owe it to him. You see, for Iqbal I was not invisible. I existed, and he made me free. So here is his story. As I remember it. As I knew it." (p. 1). Fatima's account is incredibly moving, and young readers are sure to cheer on Iqbal from beginning to end.

Among novels about modern day slavery, there is a strong gender discrepancy; the majority of characters are female (James, 2018). This is logical, as women and girls make up 71% of modern slavery victims (International Labour Office, 2017). Interestingly, *Iqbal* gives insight into the perspective of both boy and girl victims, as the reader becomes deeply invested in both Fatimah and Iqbal's lives. In a 2018 survey of children's literature on human trafficking, 43% of the novels primarily discussed forced labor and, surprisingly, 39% of the books discussed sexual exploitation (James, 2018). *Iqbal* focuses on forced labor, which makes it a more understandable story for young readers. In other words, students feel equipped with the necessary tools to engage knowledgably with the material. In 2016 in Argyle, Texas, several parents argued that *Iqbal* discussed themes that were too inappropriate for sixth graders (McCabe, 2016). However, the school board upheld *Iqbal*'s position in the curriculum because of the need for representation of diverse cultures, the book's advertising toward 11- and 12-year-olds, and the awards the book received (McCabe, 2016). After all, the International Literacy

Association deemed it a Notable Book for a Global Society (NBGS) in 2004, and it received an International Reading Association Teachers' Choice award.

Accurate Representation

The danger of including multicultural literature, such as *Iqbal*, in reading curriculum is that many children's books "promote misunderstandings through exotic representation, stereotyping and inauthentic portrayal of the ideologies, viewpoints and lifestyles of non-dominant cultural groups" (Adam & Barratt-Pugh, 2019, p. 818). Gultekin and May (2020) have parodied Bishop's (1990) well-known metaphor of books as mirrors, windows, and doors. They contend that, if not carefully addressed, books about other communities can easily become fun-house mirrors, blind spots, and curtains. They may distort reality by relying on stereotypes, magnify just a few single stories, or disclose sensitive cultural information that was never meant to be publicly shared (Gultekin & May, 2020). In that same article, Gultekin and May (2020) pose the question, "if the characters in your classroom books provide the only connection your students have to a community, what would they know about that community?" (p. 628). This made me reflect upon the types of misconceptions students might glean from studying *Iqbal*. Will students think all Pakistani children work in carpet factories? Will they see Middle Eastern men and only think of Hussain Kahn, the brutal master of the carpet factory? Will they assume human trafficking only occurs in Middle Eastern countries? Will they fail to see the beauty, diversity, and complexity of Pakistan? I would do a huge disservice to students by only showing them one view of Pakistan, the oppressive country that is portrayed in *Iqbal*.

The key to helping students understand the nuanced reality of Pakistan and human trafficking is to supplement *Iqbal* with additional multimedia resources. In NCTE's "Position Statement on Indigenous Peoples and People of Color (IPOC) in English and Language Arts

Materials,” they necessitate that “robust and appropriate contextual materials” are provided to enhance literature about other cultures (NCTE, 2020). One way I will provide these materials is through a jigsaw activity; students will be completing a jigsaw activity in which they explore Pakistan’s culture, geography, contributions to society, and other world-changers from the country. I want to provide students a three-dimensional, accurate, and nuanced view of Pakistan.

In addition to addressing misunderstandings about Pakistan, I also want to ensure students understand that human trafficking is an issue everywhere. No country, rich or poor, is immune to modern day slavery. In the International Labour Organization’s 2017 report, they emphasize that modern slavery occurs in every region of the world. In the United States, the FBI has identified 13 cities as “High Intensity Child Prostitution” areas, such as Oakland, California, where an estimated 100 children are trafficked each night on the streets (Salas & Didier, 2020, p. 12). This issue is rampant in our own cities—in our own streets. I will make this fact clear to students by providing accounts of human trafficking in the United States.

Unit Overview

The appendix includes two sections: an overall guide to the unit and an example lesson plan. The purpose of the lesson plan is to demonstrate how a typical class following the social justice pedagogy might flow. The overall guide includes Common Core standards, learning objectives, essential questions, supplemental texts in the text set, student artifacts to show mastery of the content and skills, a daily schedule to follow, and the overall sequence of lessons. The Common Core standards and learning objectives are categorized into reading, writing, or communication. In general, the first two weeks of the unit focus on reading, the next two weeks focus on writing, and the last week focuses on communication. Students go from reading to learn the content, writing to share their understanding of the content, and, lastly, using twenty-first

century skills to communicate the content to a larger audience. However, each discipline is integrated throughout the weeks. For example, students will still write journal entries and communicate with peers in discussion circles during the reading-centered weeks. It is important to note that each Common Core standard is linked to a learning objective and success criteria. The learning objective puts the standard into student-friendly language in the form of an “I can” statement. Then, the success criterium is an “I will” statement that tells the student how they will meet that standard in that lesson. In other words, how will the student show mastery of the concept or skill? All of these learning objectives and success criteria are designed to meet sixth grade Common Core standards, but they could be tweaked to better fit the standards of the middle grade you teach.

Of course, it is not necessary to follow the unit exactly as I have planned. if you do not have five weeks to dedicate to this study, you can pick and choose which activities from the plan to incorporate into your classroom. The student artifacts detailed in the plan include the World Changer Biography, Community Changer Podcast, Writing Journal Entries, Modern Day Slavery Graphic, and Character Charts. For the World Changer Biography, students will research a social justice activist, whether modern or historical, and write about their personal life, accomplishments, and legacy. Another option is the Community Changer Podcast, which requires students to create a podcast in which they interview a community member who demonstrates the power of one in making change, such as a first responder, local politician, principal, organ donor, or nonprofit employee. At any rate, I would recommend giving opportunities to write informally through journal entries. Students will respond to prompts that include personal reflection, responding to literature, discussing social justice themes, or imitating mentor texts. Consider having students polish one entry and turn it in as an artifact of their

learning. Another activity is the Modern-Day Slavery Graphic, using Canva to create a social media graphic with the purpose to inform the public about modern day slavery. Finally, students can analyze the characterization of the main characters of *Iqbal* through ongoing character charts.

Conclusion

Throughout my undergraduate teacher preparation courses, I have learned about the movement towards and importance of social justice pedagogy. By designing this unit plan, I have grown in my ability as an educator to strategically scaffold learning experiences that adhere to the social justice teaching framework. Not only am I prepared to teach about human trafficking in a classroom of my own, but I feel more equipped to tackle a variety of social justice issue alongside my students. This thesis project has given me experience creating multimodal text sets, linking Common Core standards to learning outcomes, designing formative and summative assessments, and, most importantly, defending the validity of social justice teaching.

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Appendix A: Unit Overview

UNIT PLAN
IQBAL: I CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

OVERVIEW

Grade: 6**Subject:** Language Arts**Anchor Text:** *Iqbal* by Francesco D'Adamo**Pace:** 5 weeks

STANDARDS

Reading:CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5

Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6

Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5.A

Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.

Writing:CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.A

Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.B

Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.C

Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.E

Establish and maintain a formal style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.F

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.5

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

(Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 6 [here](#).)

Communication:CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.5

Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Reading: Students will be able to...

- Dissect the characterization of main characters in a novel.
- Draw connections between themes in literature and the real world.
- Notice and imitate author's craft.

Writing: Students will be able to...

- Incorporate research into their writing.
- Write a biography about a social justice activist.
- Follow the steps of the writing process.

Communication: Students will be able to...

- Facilitate small group discussions about the themes, characters, events, and language in a story.
- Lead an interview.
- Create and use visuals to communicate information.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is human trafficking? What is child labor?
- How are human trafficking and consumerism linked?
- How can I be an advocate for social justice issues?
- What do social justice advocates have in common?

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS

- Poem: "[Child Labour](#)" by Mehreen Mujeeb
- Newsela Article: "[Some say greedy bosses will try to get around new child-labor laws in India](#)"
- "[List of Products Produced by Forced or Indentured Child Labor](#)" by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs
- Picture book: *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* by Kathleen Krull
- Picture book: *Ada's Violin* by Susan Hood
- Poem: "Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou
- Picture book: *I am One* by Susan Verde

STUDENT ARTIFACTS

- **World Changer Biography** – Write about a social justice activist, either modern or historical. Research and write about their personal life, accomplishments, and legacy.
- **Community Changer Podcast** – Create a podcast in which you interview a community member who has demonstrated the power of one in making change (i.e., first responder, local politician, principal, organ donor, nonprofit employee).
- **Writing Journal Entries** – Throughout the unit, respond to a variety of writing prompts. Entries may include personal reflection, responding to literature, discussion of social justice themes, or imitating mentor texts.
- **Modern Day Slavery Graphic** – Use Canva to create a social media graphic with the purpose to inform others about modern day slavery. Incorporate research and communicate it visually to a real audience.
- **Character Charts** – Analyze the characterization of the main characters: Iqbal, Fatima, and Hussain Kahn throughout the novel.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The following schedule is based upon a 55-minute Language Arts block:

Reading Focus (Weeks 1 & 2)

Book Talk (3 min)

Read (10 min)

Write into the Day (10 min)

Analyze the Text (20 min)

Whole Group Discussion (10 min)

Writing Focus (Weeks 3 & 4)

Read (10 min)

Write into the Day (10 min)

Mini Lesson (10 min)

Work on an Evolving Draft (20 min)

Share Beautiful Words (3 min)

Communication Focus (Week 5)

Each day's schedule this week varies.

READING SCHEDULE

Reading will be done independently as homework according to the following schedule:

Due Date	Chapter(s)
Day 3	2 & 3 (pp.9-22)
Day 4	4 & 5 (pp. 23-37)
Day 5	6 & 7 (pp. 38-55)
Day 6	8 & 9 (pp. 56-74)
Day 7	10 & 11 (pp. 75-90)
Day 8	12 & 13 (91-106)
Day 9	14, 15, & Epilogue (pp. 107-121)

LESSON SEQUENCE:

Week 1 - Reading Focus

Day 1: Building background & stimulating interest - Go through stations that will set the stage for the reading *Iqbal*. These stations will explore following topics: modern-day slavery, child labor, Pakistani culture, and carpet factories. In the child labor station, students will read the poem, "[Child Labour](#)" by Mehreen Mujeeb.

Day 2: Introduce *Iqbal* - Read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of *Iqbal* together. As you read together, stop to talk about the plot and take noticing of author's craft. In writing, respond to Tony Kirwan's quote: "Dare to enter the darkness to bring another into the light." What does it mean to you? How does it relate to *Iqbal*?

Day 3: Introduce assignment - Character Charts - Start the character charts for Iqbal, Fatima, and Hussain Kahn using details from what you have read so far. Begin by working independently, but eventually meet in small groups to share the information you have gathered about each character. Finally, discuss each character as a whole class.

Day 4: Making connections - Read the Newsela article: Newsela Article: "[Some say greedy bosses will try to get around new child-labor laws in India.](#)" Students will write about and discuss the connection between *Iqbal*'s Hussain Kahn and real-life traffickers.

Day 5: Discussion circles - Meet in discussion circles to discuss the plot and author's craft of *Iqbal* so far. First, however, model how to engage productively in discussion circles. Each member is responsible for coming to class with questions to ask the group about the novel.

Common Core ELA Standards	Learning Objectives	Success Criteria
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2	I CAN draw connections between the themes in literature and the real world.	I WILL discuss with others and independently journal about the connections I see between the themes in <i>Iqbal</i> and the real world. (i.e., human trafficking, bravery, social justice activism, the power of one).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1	I CAN dissect the characterization of main characters in a novel.	I WILL produce a character chart for each of the main characters: Iqbal, Fatima, and Hussain Kahn.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.A CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C	I CAN facilitate small group discussions about the themes, characters, events, and language in a story.	I WILL come prepared to discussions having read the required materials and written two questions for my group (one "right there" question and one "dig deeper" question).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5.A	I CAN notice and imitate author's craft	I WILL analyze specific passages from <i>Iqbal</i> , naming the author's craft I see. I WILL practice imitating the author's craft I see in <i>Iqbal</i> in my journal.

Week 2 - Reading Focus

Day 1: Jigsaw - Pakistan - Using the jigsaw format (learn about a topic in your expert group and then share what you learned in a group of experts of other topics), explore Pakistan's rich culture, geography, contributions to society, and other important people from the country.

Day 2: Introduce project - Modern-Day Slavery Graphic - Conduct research about human trafficking to use in your graphic. Look at examples of social media graphics as a whole class and examine their effectiveness. Together, create a list of what to include/not include in your own graphic.

Day 3: Graphic work time - Use Canva, a free graphic design software, to create your graphic. Your purpose is to use twenty-first century skills to raise awareness of human trafficking.

Day 4: Discussion circles - Listen to Maya Angelou's poem, "Caged Bird," making connections between the poem and *Iqbal* in your journal. Meet in discussion circles to discuss the plot and author's craft of *Iqbal*. Each member is responsible for coming to class with questions to ask the group about the novel.

Day 5: Making connections - Examine the Bureau of International Labor Affairs' ["List of Products Produced by Forced or Indentured Child Labor."](#) As a whole class, discuss the connection between consumerism and modern-day slavery. Discuss how consumers can better make better choices about what they buy to promote fair labor.

Common Core ELA Standards	Learning Objectives	Success Criteria
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2	I CAN draw connections between the themes in literature and the real world.	I WILL discuss with others and independently journal about the connections I see between the themes in <i>Iqbal</i> and the real world. (i.e., human trafficking, bravery, social justice activism, the power of one).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3	I CAN dissect the characterization of main characters in a novel.	I WILL produce a character chart for each of the main characters: Iqbal, Fatima, and Hussain Kahn.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.A CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C	I CAN facilitate small group discussions about the themes, characters, events, and language in a story.	I WILL come prepared to discussions having read the required materials and written two questions for my group (one "right there" question and one "dig deeper" question).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5.A	I CAN notice and imitate author's craft	I WILL analyze specific passages from <i>Iqbal</i> , naming the author's craft I see. I WILL practice imitating the author's craft I see in <i>Iqbal</i> in my journal.

Week 3 - Writing Focus

Day 1: Update assignment - Character Charts - Finish the character charts for Iqbal, Fatima, and Hussain Kahn using details from the latter half of the book.

Day 2: Introduce project - World Changer Biography - First, read together Kathleen Krull's picture book, *The Story of Cesar Chavez*. Then, introduce the writing project and spend time doing preliminary research about social justice activists before selecting which activist you would like to complete your project on.

Day 3: Research - Gather research about your activist's personal life, accomplishments, and legacy to use in your biography.

Day 4: Research - Continue to gather research about your activist's personal life, accomplishments, and legacy to use in your biography.

Day 5: Research - Continue to gather research about your activist's personal life, accomplishments, and legacy to use in your biography. Read together Susan Hood's picture book, *Ada's Violin*, as a mentor text of a biography.

Common Core ELA Standards	Learning Objectives	Success Criteria
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3	I CAN dissect the characterization of main characters in a novel.	I WILL produce a character chart for each of the main characters: Iqbal, Fatima, and Hussain Kahn.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.8	I CAN incorporate research into my writing.	I WILL gather research about my social justice activist from reliable sources.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10	I CAN follow the writing process.	I WILL complete each step of the writing process: pre-writing, researching, drafting, revising, and editing.

Week 4 - Writing Focus

Day 1: Introduction - Closely analyze a model introduction paragraph and write your own introduction giving background information about your social justice activist. This is the first draft of your World Changer Biography.

Day 2: First body paragraph - Closely analyze a model body paragraph and write your own body paragraph about your activist's personal life. This is the first draft of your World Changer Biography.

Day 3: Second body paragraph - Closely analyze a model body paragraph and write your own body paragraph about your activist's accomplishments. This is the first draft of your World Changer Biography.

Day 4: Third body paragraph - Closely analyze a model body paragraph and write your own body paragraph about your activist's legacy. This is the first draft of your World Changer Biography.

Day 5: Conclusion paragraph - Closely analyze a model conclusion paragraph and write your own conclusion paragraph about your social justice activist. This is the first draft of your World Changer Biography.

Common Core ELA Standard	Learning Objective	Success Criteria
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.A CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.B CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.C CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.D CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.E CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.F	I CAN write a biography about a social justice activist.	I WILL write an introduction paragraph to hook the reader, give background information, and tell the purpose of my paper. I WILL write three organized body paragraphs with details about my social justice activist. I WILL write a conclusion paragraph that wraps up my paper and inspires my readers.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10	I CAN follow the writing process.	I WILL complete each step of the writing process: pre-writing, researching, drafting, revising, and editing.

Week 5

Day 1: Peer review – Meet in small groups to revise the first draft of your World Changer Biography.

Day 2: Publish and share – Make the final edits to your World Changer Biography and then read aloud your work to a small group. Share your work digitally with the entire class.

Day 3: Introduce project - Community Changer Podcast – Discuss the power of one in making change using Susan Verde’s picture book, *I am One*, as a springboard. Brainstorm who in your community has made an impact on others’ lives.

Day 4: Draft podcast questions – Meet in small groups to draft questions you will ask your community member for tomorrow’s interview.

Day 5: Record the podcast – Conduct the interview alongside your small group with your community member. Share your interview digitally as a podcast.

Common Core ELA Standards	Learning Objectives	Success Criteria
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CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10	I CAN follow the writing process.	I WILL complete each step of the writing process: pre-writing, researching, drafting, revising, and editing.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C	I CAN lead an interview	I WILL prepare a list of questions to ask a local community-changer for my podcast.

Appendix B: Lesson Materials

WEEK 2 | DAY 4
IQBAL: CAGED OR FREE?

Common Core ELA Standards	Learning Objectives	Success Criteria
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.A CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C	I CAN facilitate small group discussions about the themes, characters, events, and language in a story.	I WILL come prepared to discussions having read the required materials and written two questions for my group (one "right there" question and one "dig deeper" question).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5.A	I CAN notice and imitate author's craft	I WILL analyze specific stanzas from Maya Angelou's poem, "I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings," naming the author's craft I see.

BOOK TALK

Front Desk by Kelly Yang

Memorable Quote

"So what'd you write about?"

"I wrote about how last weekend my parents and I waited in line at the movies for an hour, and when we finally got up to the ticket booth lady, they were sold out! Isn't that sad?"

"That is super sad," I said, wishing, hoping, one day that would be my super sad."

Book Blurb

"My parents told me that America would be this amazing place where we could live in a house with a dog, do whatever we want, and eat hamburgers till we were red in the face.

So far, the only part of that we've achieved is the hamburger part, but I'm still holding out hope and the hamburgers here are pretty good."

You'll like this book because...

Yang bases the story off her own experiences. Her character, Mia, is an immigrant whose family works at a motel. She heroically and hilariously adapts to life in a new country, while her family tries to keep a big secret.

READ

Listen to the reading of **Maya Angelou's poem: "I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings."** Highlight in one color the parts of the poem that describe the free bird; use another color to highlight the parts that describe the caged bird.

WRITE INTO THE DAY

Would you describe Iqbal as the caged or free bird? Why? Use evidence from both *Iqbal* and *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* to support your answer.

Iqbal: Caged or Free?
Would you describe Iqbal as the caged or free bird? Why? Use evidence from both *Iqbal* and *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*.
Write here

ANALYZE THE TEXT

Students will meet in discussion circles (groups of 4-5). Each person will take turns posing their questions (one “right there” question and one “dig deeper” question) to the group. Each member is expected to participate in the discussion.

WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION

Together, watch the [news story about Iqbal Masih](#). Discuss the Write Into the Day prompt: Do you think Iqbal is more like the caged or free bird? Why? In what ways is Iqbal similar to the caged bird? As an exit ticket, allow students to revisit their Write Into the Day prompt and make any edits as desired.