

Borders & Belonging: Text Set (Grades 7–8)
From Fitting In to Belonging: Understanding the Forces That Shape Belonging

Essential Questions: What are the forces that shape belonging? How can we reduce barriers to belonging for ourselves and others?		
Lesson Summary	Guiding Questions	Texts and Materials
<p>Lesson 1: Exploring Identity and Belonging through Poetry (1 day)</p> <p>Students prepare a choral reading of a poem about the costs and benefits of fitting in versus standing out in order to introduce the unit’s central topic of belonging.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where does our desire to belong in a group come from? • What are some of the trade-offs between fitting in and standing out? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan on a Page: Exploring Identity and Belonging through Poetry • Image: Flower or Weed? • Reading: “Identity” by Julio Noboa Polanco
<p>Lesson 2: Identifying and Affirming Core Values (1 day)</p> <p>This values-affirmation exercise helps students identify their core values and reflect on how these values impact their sense of belonging.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What matters most to you? • How do your values shape who you are and the decisions you make? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan on a Page: Identifying and Affirming Core Values • Handout: What Do I Value? • Video: Using Your Voice Is a Political Choice
<p>Lesson 3: Fitting In versus Belonging (1 day)</p> <p>Students examine the difference between belonging and fitting in and the ways in which we may sacrifice our values in order to seek acceptance from others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to “fit in”? How is fitting in different from belonging? • How might sacrificing our values to fit in affect our relationships, self-esteem, and overall well-being? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan on a Page: Fitting In versus Belonging • Audio: Belonging, Fitting In, and Acceptance • Reading: “Chameleon” by David L.

<p>Lesson 4: Group Membership and Belonging (1 day)</p> <p>Students examine the human need to belong and how it impacts the behaviors and decisions people make when seeking group membership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do we seek out belonging in groups? • What can we gain and lose from belonging to a group? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan on a Page: Group Membership and Belonging • Reading: Why Do People Need to Belong? • Handout: Why Do People Need to Belong? Quotations
<p>Lesson 5: The Dangers of Being an Outsider (1 day)</p> <p>Students analyze a clip of poet Ada Limón on <i>The Slowdown</i> podcast and a poem by Hazem Fahmy to consider what's at stake when someone is perceived as an outsider.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the potential dangers of being outside the boundaries of a group? • What can happen when we sacrifice our values or change aspects of who we are in order to fit in? In what situations might it be beneficial or even necessary? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan on a Page: The Dangers of Being an Outsider • Audio: "Rehearsal for the New World," with Introduction by Ada Limón • Reading: "Rehearsal for the New World" Transcript
<p>Lesson 6: Navigating Social Hierarchies (2 days)</p> <p>Students analyze a short story by Misa Sugiura to consider the invisible barriers that divide "in" and "out" groups and how our efforts to seek belonging can conflict with our values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role do visible and invisible borders play in determining who is "in" and "out" of a group or community? How do these borders influence our sense of who we are and where we belong? • What are possible consequences when we prioritize our own sense of belonging over the well-being of others? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan on a Page: Navigating Social Hierarchies • Reading: "Where I'm From" by Misa Sugiura • Handout: Analyzing Eriko's Sense of Belonging • Handout: "Where I'm From" Big Paper Quotations
<p>Lesson 7: Negotiating Belonging in Trevor Noah's <i>Born a Crime</i> (2 Days)</p> <p>Students analyze a chapter from Trevor Noah's memoir <i>Born a Crime</i> to consider how cultural, linguistic, and racial borders influence one's sense of belonging.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways can cultural, linguistic, and racial boundaries influence characters' experiences of belonging? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan on a Page: Negotiating Belonging in Trevor Noah's <i>Born a Crime</i> • Slides: A Brief History of South Africa during Apartheid

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps can individuals take to find belonging in the spaces they occupy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: "Chameleon" from <i>It's Trevor Noah: Born a Crime</i> • Handout: Notable Quotable Passages from "Chameleon" by Trevor Noah
<p>Lesson 8: Belonging on Your Own Terms (2 Days)</p> <p>Students explore what it means to seek belonging on their own terms, and in alignment with their values, by reading and discussing personal narrative essays.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you navigate the tension between your desire to fit in and your need to express your own individual identity? • What steps can we take to create a more inclusive and accepting class and school community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan on a Page: Belonging on Your Own Terms • Reading: I Am the Only American Indian • Reading: I've Been Called Worse • Reading: Living in Two Worlds • Handout: Belonging on Your Own Terms: Connection Questions
<p>Summative Assessment Ideas</p> <p>Create a culminating experience for your students that helps them draw new connections between the concepts and ideas presented in this text set, themselves, and the world today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the forces that shape belonging? • How can we reduce barriers to belonging for ourselves and others? 	<p>Option 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout: Borders & Belonging Hexagonal Thinking Template • Handout: Hexagonal Thinking Written Response <p>Option 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout: Circles of Action Personal Reflection