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## CONNECTING WITH THE COMMON CORE

This book responds to the Common Core State Standards' goals of helping students develop the skills necessary to be successful in college and career. Through focused analysis, comparison, and synthesis of two texts, students will strengthen their understanding of literary conventions and build on analytical and argumentation skills. The texts selected for this book represent the high-quality, complex, and engaging new literature that is being produced in today's middle-grade publishing. These contemporary titles are easily relatable to the 21st-century child's experiences and knowledge, creating deeper connections between reader and text and giving the young reader a sense of ownership over the material.

The Common Core State Standards call for emphasis on assignments that encourage students to think critically, analyze deeply, and cite extensively from texts. Under the Common Core Standards, students are expected to progress in their level of comprehension and acquire appropriate academic vocabulary. In addition to building their reading and writing skills, students must also develop their listening and speaking skills in ways that will prepare them for the academic rigor of college.

To increase college readiness, Language Arts assignments are moving away from personal response and toward critical analysis based on information from texts. To prepare for the work they will encounter in college, students must become skilled at developing a strong claim and defending it with evidence from texts. To that end, *Using Paired Novels to Build Close Reading Skills* provides students with opportunities to interact with reading material deeply and in a variety of ways. Comparison activities strengthen students' understanding of the novels themselves, as well as the craft of writing. These activities prompt students to examine how each author approaches literary elements such as characterization, theme, and point of view, and to draw conclusions based on the similarities or differences. In order to complete the tasks in these activities, students will need to reflect on their understanding of one book before making connections to the other, a process that will naturally support comprehension skills. The activities in this resource focus on two specific novels—*Wonder* and *Inside Out & Back Again*—but this same approach can be similarly applied when analyzing and comparing literature in general.

The activities in this resource focus on two specific novels—*Wonder* and *Inside Out & Back Again*—but this same approach can be similarly applied when analyzing and comparing literature in general.

The activities in this book provide opportunities for individual and collaborative experiences. The individual activities build reading and writing skills by prompting students to draw logical conclusions and cite evidence from the texts. The collaborative activities help students develop critical speaking and listening skills in the context of literary analysis.

Ultimately, we want our children to develop a love of books and to become life-long readers. They can and should be encouraged to make personal connections to the texts and express their feelings about the stories they read. In fact, these types of connections often form the starting point for activities with more academic rigor. To provide students with freedom to interact with texts in more personal and creative ways, we have included Interactive Literature Notebook assignments as well as creative collaborative activities that are intended to enrich the reading experience and foster deeper personal enjoyment of the novels while still providing the foundation for critical engagement.

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

## Section I (Units 1-6)

The purpose of this book is to provide you with a variety of activities that connect the two novels in ways that will foster deeper critical and analytical thinking in your students. Section I contains worksheets to be completed after both novels have been read. This section is divided into six units, five of which are based on the following literary elements: **Characterization** (pages 8-18), **Plot** (pages 19-29), **Setting and Genre** (pages 30-36), **Theme** (pages 37-48), and **Craft and Structure** (pages 49-56). A culminating sixth unit (pages 57-68) contains longer writing assignments and projects.

*Unit features include . . .*

### \* Teacher Instructions

The first page of each unit provides you with an overview of the concept, the relevance to student learning, and brief descriptions and suggestions for each activity in the unit.

### \* Quick Guide to the Concept

The top portion of this page provides your students with an introduction to the literary concept around which the unit is built, along with a list of related vocabulary words. The bottom portion contains a list of suggestions for **Interactive Literature Notebook** entries. The Interactive Literature Notebook can be used to allow students to think creatively about the reading and make personal connections to the novels. Some of the ideas can apply to both books, while others are specific to one or the other novel. You can assign a specific topic to your students or allow them to pick from these suggestions. More detailed instructions for the Interactive Literature Notebook can be found on page 6.

### \* Unit Activities

Each unit contains **individual** and **collaborative** activities that support your students' understanding of literary elements and author's craft. Most of the activities also emphasize the use of textual evidence in the form of summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting. In addition, some are meant to be used as **linked** assignments, with one activity laying the foundation for the next. In some cases, a collaborative activity allows students to brainstorm ideas and discuss the books together before completing a more challenging task in an individual worksheet. Alternately, an individual activity may provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the reading and then practice listening, speaking, and paraphrasing skills in a linked collaborative activity. Look for the following icons in the upper-right corner of each activity page:



= individual



= collaborative



= linked

## Section II (Units 7-9)

In this section, you will find activities to use during the reading of the individual books. These activities are divided into three groups: those that can be used with either novel, those intended to be used with *Wonder*, and those intended to be used with *Inside Out & Back Again*. These activities are meant to supplement the single-novel study activities you may already use. You may want to have students keep all of their single-novel worksheets in a folder and refer back to them when they are completing the novel-comparison activities. This will provide your students with opportunities to review the material, refresh their memories of the books, and practice using notes as a reference for a current assignment.

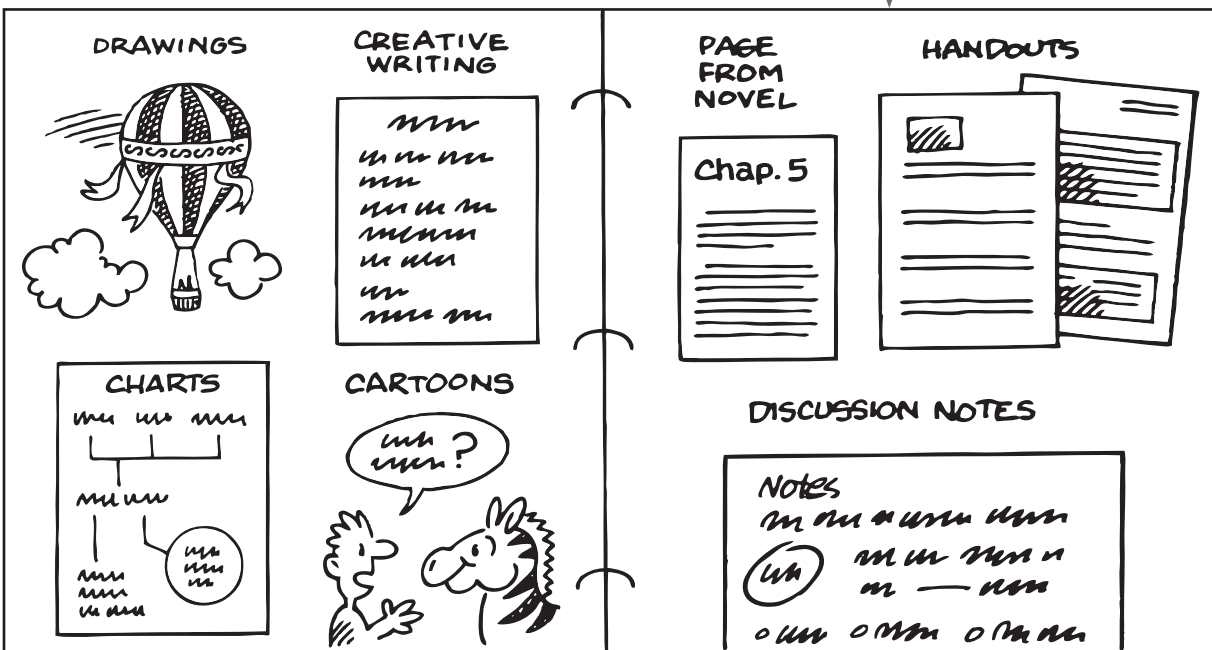
# WHAT IS AN INTERACTIVE LITERATURE NOTEBOOK?

An Interactive Literature Notebook is a notebook that combines learning materials with personal response. For each student, his or her notebook will serve as a place to record and organize the information learned about the elements of literature. The response pages also encourage a deeper level of creativity and personal reflection toward the novels being analyzed and discussed in class.

For this resource, students may use a composition book, a spiral notebook, or a three-ring binder, depending on teacher preferences and needs. Instruct students to organize their notebooks as follows:

**On the RIGHT side of the notebook:**

Students record new information they are learning about literary elements and writer's craft.



**On the LEFT side of the notebook:**

Students create a personal-response page. This encourages students to process and apply the concepts in ways of their choosing.

**TIP:** Leave a blank page at the beginning and have students keep a table of contents as they go so they can easily find information in the future.

Interactive Literature Notebooks help your students hone the organizational skills they will need to be successful learners in high school and college by developing their competence in note-taking and record-keeping. These notebooks are excellent tools for visual as well as linguistic learners, and they give all students experience in connecting visual and multimedia components with text.

# CONTEMPORARY CLASSICS

## *Wonder*

**R.J. Palacio (2012)**

*Wonder* tells the story of August Pullman, a 10-year-old boy who was born with facial deformities, as he experiences school for the first time. August endures stares, isolation, and bullying as he struggles to find his place in the world beyond his neighborhood.

The eight-part novel is told from the perspectives of August, his sister, and their classmates, creating the emotional immediacy of a first-person narrative while allowing the reader to understand multiple viewpoints of the events taking place.

Palacio has created an authentic-sounding young boy in Auggie, whose humor and insecurities will resonate with young readers. The fast-paced and memorable novel addresses important themes of friendship, perseverance, transformation, and kindness.

### *Awards and Honors*

- *New York Times* #1 Best Seller
- Named Best Children's Book 2012 by the following:
  - *School Library Journal*
  - *Publisher's Weekly*
  - *Kirkus Reviews*
  - *Booklist*

**Note:** Page numbers in this guide refer to the 2012 hardcover edition published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

## *Inside Out & Back Again*

**Thanhha Lai (2011)**

*Inside Out & Back Again* is a work of historical fiction told through free-verse poetry. Ten-year-old Hà, her mother, and her three older brothers must flee from their beloved home in Vietnam, escaping just as Saigon falls. After a difficult journey to America, the family, and especially Hà, struggles to assimilate to American culture, learn the language of their new country, and endure the prejudices of those around them.

The verse-novel format is especially powerful for succinctly capturing the emotions and images of Hà's literal and figurative journey to finding her place in a new world. Hà's independent spirit captures the readers immediately; and her frustrations with her family, her education, and the English language are expertly conveyed. Readers will connect with the story's themes of the power of friendship and family support, confronting prejudice, perseverance, and starting over.

### *Awards and Honors*

- *New York Times* Best Seller
- Newbery Medal Honor Book
- National Book Award for Young People's Literature winner

**Note:** Page numbers in this guide refer to the 2011 paperback edition published by HarperCollins Children's Books, New York.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## OPPOSITES REACT

Think about the first day of school for both characters. Reread the following passages about going to the lunchroom on the first day of school. On a separate piece of paper, summarize what happens in these passages.

### *Wonder*

Chapter	Pages
"Lunch"	49–51

### *Inside Out & Back Again*

Poem	Pages
"Black and White and Red and Yellow"	143–144

1. Describe how Auggie and Hà feel in these two scenes. How are they similar?

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Reread the sections named below about the first months in school. On a separate piece of paper, summarize what happens in these passages.

### *Wonder*

Chapter	Pages
"Wake Me Up when September Ends"	61–62

### *Inside Out & Back Again*

Poem	Pages
"Hiding"	160–161

2. Hà and Auggie both feel bad about the way they are treated at school, but how are their attitudes and reactions to the kids at school different?

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3. Why do you think Hà's reaction is so different from Auggie's reaction?

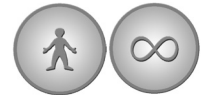
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## TYPES OF CONFLICT

The *conflict* of the story is the problem the main character faces. Most stories have more than one conflict, but one is more important than the rest.

Complete the chart below. In each novel, find a quotation that shows evidence of the type of conflict described at the top of each column on the chart.

	<b>Person vs. Person</b> Who is the person or people who act against the main character?	<b>Person vs. Self</b> What thought, behavior, or emotion does the main character struggle to overcome?	<b>Person vs. Society</b> How do attitudes and behaviors of the general public cause conflict for the main characters?
<i>Wonder</i>			
Quotation that shows this conflict:			
Page number(s):			
<i>Inside Out &amp; Back Again</i>			
Quotation that shows this conflict:			
Page number(s):			



Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_



## TAKING THE CONFLICT FURTHER

With your group, share your chart from the “Types of Conflict” worksheet. Each person in the group should share at least one conflict and example. When one person is talking, the rest of the group should listen carefully.

1. Were everyone’s answers more similar or different?

	Similar	Different
<i>Wonder</i>		
➤ Person vs. Person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
➤ Person vs. Self	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
➤ Person vs. Society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Inside Out &amp; Back Again</i>		
➤ Person vs. Person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
➤ Person vs. Self	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
➤ Person vs. Society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Which type of conflict does your group think is the most important conflict for Auggie?

\_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which type of conflict does your group think is the most important conflict for Hà?

\_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Did your group pick the same type of conflict for both answers?    **Yes**    **No**

Why do you think your answers were the same or different?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## A SENSE OF PLACE

Authors use descriptive language to make the setting come to life. Reread the passages listed. Find examples of words or phrases that help the reader understand the setting.

### *Wonder*

Chapter	Pages
"Alien"	265–267

Where does this chapter take place?

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Find words and phrases that describe sensory images you can . . .

See \_\_\_\_\_

Hear \_\_\_\_\_

Touch \_\_\_\_\_

Taste \_\_\_\_\_

Smell \_\_\_\_\_

How do these words and phrases help you understand the settings?

---

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### *Inside Out & Back Again*

Poem	Pages
"Neighbors"	162–165

Where does this poem take place?

---

---

Find words and phrases that describe sensory images you can . . .

See \_\_\_\_\_

Hear \_\_\_\_\_

Touch \_\_\_\_\_

Taste \_\_\_\_\_

Smell \_\_\_\_\_

How do these words and phrases help you understand the settings?

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---

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1. What are the similarities in these two passages?

---

---

2. What are the differences?

---

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## TITLE SWAP

Authors choose titles that reflect the meaning of the book. They may even have several meanings. For example, the title *Charlotte's Web* refers to the spiderweb that Charlotte creates, but it also refers to the way that the animals in the barn become emotionally connected in the story. Think about the titles of *Wonder* and *Inside Out & Back Again*. What if these books switched titles? Could the title of one book work for the other?

### *Inside Out & Back Again*

How does this title fit Auggie's story? Think about the ways Auggie's life is turned inside out and back again in the book.

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Quotation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Page number: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Wonder*

How does this title fit Hà's story? Think about the different meanings of the word *wonder*.

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Quotation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Page number: \_\_\_\_\_