

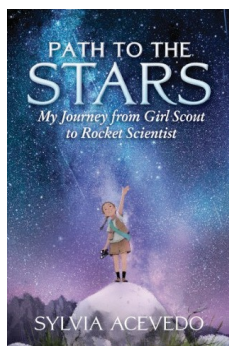
PATH TO THE STARS

By Sylvia Acevedo

Text Study Unit

Developed for Students in Grades 5-6

Aligned to Common Core State Standards



About the Author

Sylvia Acevedo is a rocket scientist, technology executive and award-winning entrepreneur who served on the President's Advisory Commission for Educational Excellence for Hispanics and as CEO of the Girl Scouts of the USA. Visit her online at sylviaacevedo.org, on [linkedin.com/in/sylviaacevedo](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sylviaacevedo) and on Twitter @SylviaAcevedo.

Purpose of the Text Study

As noted in the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards (CCSS), "To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts." (ELA-CCSS, pg. 10) https://learning.ccsso.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ELA_Standards1.pdf

During this text study, students will read a memoir, *Path to the Stars: My Journey from Girl Scout to Rocket Scientist* by Sylvia Acevedo, and engage in text-based discussions and tasks toward mastery of a set of ELA Common Core standards. The Common Core State Standards alignment chart may be found on pages 12 - 13 of this text study unit.

Text Study Contents

This text study unit was designed for 5th and 6th graders with the expectation that students will read the text and successfully engage in learning tasks and discussions. The unit of study is organized in three sections: before, during, and after reading.

Section 1. Before Reading	pages 2-3
• Setting the stage	
• Establishing a purpose for reading	
Section 2. During Reading	pages 3-9
• Independent, partner, and/or group reading	
• Written responses to reading	
• Comprehension discussions and tasks	
Section 3. After Reading	pages 9-11
• Independent memoir writing	
• Individual or collaborative research projects	
• Collaborative science and engineering explorations	
ELA Common Core Standards Alignment for Grades 5 and 6	pages 12-13

While the text should be accessible to 5th and 6th graders, some students, such as emergent multi-lingual learners and learners reading below grade level may need instructional supports

and scaffolds to fully engage with the text. A Spanish version of the text and an audible English version are available.

Planning the Text Study

As with any study of a lengthy text, instructional planning and pacing will depend upon the daily schedule, the amount of time available for engaging in the unit, the teacher’s goals for the text study, and the learning expectations and pacing of the overall curriculum.

One possible framework for consideration is “chunking” of several chapters per week accompanied by discussion questions, learning tasks and a culminating task or project. Here is one possible pacing option for this text study pacing:

- Week One: Introduction and Chapters 1-7
- Week Two: Chapters 8-12
- Week Three: Chapters 13-18
- Week Four: Writing a Memoir and/or Completing a Project

The tasks and discussions outline in sections 1-3 of this unit plan are designed to fit within this type of pacing structure. Teachers may choose to follow the unit plan as designed or modify it as needed to accommodate student needs, curricular goals, or instructional schedules.

Section 1: Before Reading Task and Discussion

Task: Exploring the importance of setting to plot and character development

CCSS: [Research to Build and Present Knowledge 5.8, 6.8](#)

Teacher: Ask students to turn to a partner and share one or two places they have lived or visited and discuss how those places may have influenced their lives. Have a few willing students share their discussion with the whole class. Explain to students that the book they are about to read is a memoir—a text written by someone about their own life—and that the author of this memoir, Sylvia Acevedo, lived in several places that influenced her life.

Students: Using a map of the United States and Mexico—and other resources provided by your teacher—work with a partner to locate the following locations important in the author’s life:

- Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota
- Mt. Rushmore, South Dakota
- Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico
- New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico
- El Paso, Texas
- West Point Military Academy, New York
- Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California
- Stanford University in Stanford, California
- Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico
- Mexico City, Mexico

Work with your partner to write a short response to the following questions and be prepared to share your thinking with others:

1. What observations can you make about the locations on the map?
2. What would you like to know about these places or the author who lived in them?

Discussion: Establishing a purpose for reading

CCSS: Listening and Speaking 5.1, 6.1

Teacher: Tell students that as they read the memoir, *A Path to the Stars*, they will develop an understanding of how the places Sylvia lived as a child helped shape her life as an adult. Explain that they will also examine how Sylvia’s family, heritage, and community influenced her life and her decisions about education and career. To set the stage for the unit, read the *Introduction* section of the memoir (pages 1-4) aloud to students. Ask them to think about what they know about the author now that they didn’t know before, and have students jot down two things they learned about Sylvia from the introduction. Select a few students to share something they learned about Sylvia. Then ask, “What do you hope to learn more about as you read her book?” Have a few students share their thinking. Let students know that after reading the memoir, they will have an opportunity to write their own memoir about an important influence on their lives, such as a place, a family member, or a meaningful experience.

Section 2. During Reading Tasks and Discussions

Prior to engaging with students in the text, teachers should determine when and how the text will be read (chapter-by-chapter, at home, in class, individually, with a partner, etc.). These decisions will guide how students will interact with the suggested tasks and discussions detailed below. Because comprehension is key to deeper analysis and interpretation of a text, you will note that a comprehension quick write task is proposed for each chapter. Quick writes are a rapid way of making sure students are “getting the gist” of a text prior to engaging in analysis or interpretation. One option for composing and storing comprehension quick writes is through the use of a journal. Teacher Note: Over the course of the chapters, teachers may choose to adjust quick write guiding questions (see task below), but remember the goal is to support deepening comprehension of the text prior to analysis or interpretation.

Chapters 1-7

Task: Comprehension quick writes (for each chapter)

CCSS: Reading Fluency 5.4; Reading Literature 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2; Speaking and Listening 5.1, 6.1

Teacher: Explain the comprehension quick write process to be used with each chapter. Tell students they will have 5 minutes to compose their quick write and that they will be expected to share their writing with others.

Students: Read the chapter. Compose a quick write (3-4 sentences) to answer these questions:

- What is this chapter mostly about?
- What do we know about Sylvia or her family by the end of this chapter that we did not know before?
- What surprised you or what do you want to know more about?

After writing, share your thinking with a small group and then decide what key ideas your group will share with the whole class.

Teacher: Debrief quick writes to highlight key ideas, advance comprehension, and address confusion or misunderstanding.

Discussion questions

CCSS: Reading Literature 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 6.1, 6.3, 6.6; Listening and Speaking 5.1, 6.1

1. Refer students to page 8 and to the lines where Acevedo writes, “Papá’s family was from Mexico, but he had grown up in Texas...But Mamí had grown up in Parral, Mexico, in the state of Chihuahua...and didn’t understand a word of English.” Pose the following question for discussion:

- How did Mamí’s (pronounced like Mommy) and Papá’s backgrounds—with some enormous differences but also important similarities—influence their personalities and behaviors?

Remind students to cite text evidence to support their responses. Ask several students to share their thinking building on each other’s ideas.

Sample answer:

Sylvia Acevedo’s parents were similar in that they were both of Mexican heritage and spoke Spanish. Papa was born in the USA in El Paso, TX to a small, well-educated family and also spoke English. He learned German in college. Mamí was born in Mexico to a large family and learned English as an adult. Mamí’s education was not as extensive as Papá, and she never had a job outside the home. Their upbringing was steeped in religious beliefs and they held fast to the traditional family values of their Mexican culture. These factors influenced their behaviors and personalities in a several ways. For instance, during Sylvia’s early life in South Dakota, her mother had a few friends, spending much of her time with her family and especially her children, Mario and Sylvia. However, after their move to New Mexico, her mother found it easier to make friends. While both parents valued education, her father had more traditional views about girls’ roles and was not as supportive of Sylvia’s educational aspirations as her mother was. Her father loved all his children deeply, expressing pride in them. However, he struggled to accept their daughter Laura’s challenges following her illness.

Sample text evidence quotes:

- Page 8, “Mamí didn’t speak a word of English...Mamí had no adults to talk to except Papá.”
- Page 10, “For my father, who grew up with one much older sister, the noise of five small children was a trial.”
- Page 11, “Mamí grew up poor with thirteen brothers and sisters.”
- Page 11, “Papá was a college graduate...Mamí knew his family would have preferred that he’d married someone with more education than she had.”
- Page 66, “Mamí was the first to realize that Laura would never fully recover, and she was frustrated that my father didn’t seem to understand.”

2. Ask students to think about the differences between Sylvia’s account of her family’s visit with Abuelito (Grandfather) Mario and her father’s version as described on pages 23-26.

Pose these questions:

- How are the two versions of this visit different?
- How did this incident influence Mamí’s attitude toward her husband during the car ride home, as well as future encounters between Sylvia’s family and Papá’s dad?

Remind students to cite text evidence to support their responses.

Sample answer:

Sylvia described the visit as awkward and felt as if her grandfather wasn't interested in seeing them. Papá described the visit with his father in a much more favorable way. Mamí was very kind to Papá on the way home as if she felt sorry for him because of the way his father had treated Papá and the family.

Sample text evidence quotes:

- Page 24, "My abuelito and his wife didn't seem interested in seeing us. We sat around awkwardly while Papá and his father talked."
- Page 24, "I was surprised that my grandfather's family seemed to think we were a bother."
- Page 24, "On the drive home, my father kept talking about the visit with his wonderful father...It was as if Papá was describing an entirely different visit than the one we had just experienced."
- Page 24, "This time, she [my mother] was very kind and gentle with my father, not disagreeing with him, even though it was clear to me that my grandfather had not been excited to see us."

3. Ask student to think about Sylvia's sister Laura and what happened to her. You can refer students to pages 43-48. Discussion this question:

- What clues in the text foreshadow that young Laura Acevedo will become gravely ill? Remind student to cite text evidence to support your responses.

Sample answer:

Laura was loved by everyone in the family and had a "hold on their hearts." But one day she didn't wake up at the usual time, and when Mamí checked on her, she seemed to be very ill and have a high fever. There was not a phone in the house, Mamí did not drive, so to get help for Laura, Mamí ran to the neighbors asking for a ride to the hospital. It turns out that Laura had contracted a very serious disease, meningitis.

Sample text evidence quotes:

- Page 43, "From the time she was born, Laura had a special hold on everyone's heart."
- Page 45, "Then one day when she was nineteen months old, Laura didn't wake up at her usual time."
- Page 46, "I knew something was really wrong when my mother snatched up Laura and ran outside."

4. In various places throughout the text, the author describes how she and her family experienced being treated differently because of their language and heritage. Ask students to work with a partner to explore and discuss the following questions: Ask students to work with a partner to explore and discuss the following questions:

- How are Sylvia and her family discriminated against as Mexican Americans? Quote specific passages that convey these occurrences.
- What do the Acevedo's do to assimilate, or fit in with their larger communities?

After discussion have several students share their examples, quotes, and responses.

Sample answer:

Sylvia had several moments when she experienced being treated differently, sometimes it was because she was a girl, or that her family had lived in a part of town with dirt streets or because of her heritage. Some of her teachers in the new school of Alameda Elementary didn't think Sylvia was smart because she was a girl and from the Bradley Elementary school which was from a lower income area of town. Sylvia liked to read and go with her father to the library, but she had to save money before she could get her own library card to

demonstrate responsibility.

Sample text evidence quotes:

- Page 76, “I felt crushed as if a part of me had been wadded up and discarded along with the two names I wasn’t allowed to use.”
- Page 85, “...That I could have a library card, if I saved up five dollars. She explained that Papá was worried that if I somehow damaged any of the books I borrowed, the library would charge us to replace them.”
- Page 104, “He just assumed that because I was from Bradley, I was not a good student. Did he think that because most of the kids from Bradley were poor? Because we were Mexicans?”

Chapters 8-12

Task: Comprehension Quick Writes

CCSS: Reading Fluency 5.4; Reading Literature 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2; Speaking and Listening 5.1, 6.1

Teacher: Remind students of the comprehension quick write process and five-minute time limit.

Students: Read the chapter. Compose a quick write (3-4 sentences) to answer these questions:

- What is this chapter mostly about?
- What do we know about Sylvia or her family by the end of this chapter that we did not know before?
- What surprised you or what do you want to know more about?

After writing, share your thinking with a small group and then decide what key ideas your group will share with the whole class.

Teacher: Debrief quick writes to highlight key ideas, advance comprehension, and address confusion or misunderstanding.

Discussion Questions

CCSS: Reading Literature 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 6.1, 6.3, 6.6; Listening and Speaking 5.1, 6.1

5. Ask students to reflect on the impact that joining the after school activity of Girl Scouts had on Sylvia’s life.

Pose this question:

- What skills and abilities did Sylvia acquire as a Girl Scout?
- What picture did her 4th grade teacher show her class that inspired Sylvia to set a goal for college?

Remind students to cite text evidence to support their responses.

Sample answer:

Sylvia acquired many new skills and abilities in school and the after school program of the Girl Scouts. Through the Girl Scout activities, she learned how to be persistent and resilient and to find ways to create opportunity. She discovered other girls like herself who wanted to be adventurous and pursue their dreams. Sylvia also learned the importance of making plans, and how to save for the future. She also learned that she could set goals and achieve them. When her teacher showed her pictures of universities, Sylvia was inspired to go to Stanford University for college.

Sample text evidence quotes:

- Page 124, “Brownies and Girl Scouts make plans...They care about how to do things correctly and safely.”
- Page 126, “Maybe this was a way to find girls like those I’d seen on TV, girls like me, who wanted to have adventures!”
- Page 156, “Now the Girl Scouts were teaching me how to plan and save for the future.”
- Page 167, “I had learned invaluable skills: how to sell and how to create opportunity for my Girl Scout troop—and for me.”
- Page 182, “A college was a real place, I realized. It wasn’t just something people talked about to get kids to do their homework.”

6. In various places throughout the text, the author describes how she is treated differently than her brother just because she is a girl. Ask students to think about the author’s descriptions of being treated differently than her brother. Ask these questions:

- In what specific ways do Sylvia’s parents treat her differently than her brother Mario?
- What were the disadvantages of this treatment? Were there any advantages to this treatment?

Remind students to cite text evidence to supports their thinking.

Sample answer:

Sylvia’s father let Mario get a library card, while Sylvia had to work hard to earn her own library card by saving money and beg him to take her. Because of this, Sylvia learned about responsibility and even opened a savings account, which she continued to add money to even after getting her library card. Papá pushed Mario to be the best, teasing him if he was outperformed by Sylvia, who was a girl. However, Papá didn't cheer Sylvia on in the same way. Sylvia felt that Mario was favored by Papá, so she put a lot of effort into scoring high grades in school and performing well to win his approval.

Sample text evidence quotes from chapters 8-13:

- Page 155, “I had my own savings account, the one I started so I could get a library card, and I’d been adding to it over the years. I liked the way the total in my passbook grew with each deposit.”
- Page 171, “Papá would take Mario to the library, but I had to beg to go with him.”
- Page 171, “My father would chide my brother, ‘Beaten by a girl, Mario?’”
- Page 172, “Because he was a boy, Mario got the lion’s share of Papá’s attention.”
- Page 182, “If the other girls I knew wanted to get married and have children, I could still choose to do other things.”

7. Ask students to think about how the lives of women and girls in general were different when Sylvia Acevedo was a child and teenager. Students should find 2-3 examples to share with the class. Remind them to cite specific text examples. Pose these questions:

- How were the lives of women and girls in general different when Sylvia Acevedo was a child and teenager.
- What surprised you about this?
- How have things changed for women and girls since then?

Sample answer:

In Sylvia’s home, Papá expected Mamí to keep house and raise the children. He didn’t think she needed to get her US citizenship because she already had a green card visa. People in Sylvia’s life, including Papá, didn’t think women and girls needed an education in the same way as boys and men. Girls and women were treated differently in other ways, too. For example, women couldn’t open a bank account or get a credit card without their husband’s

permission. Some things have changed since then, like the bank account and credit card permission and more girls going to college, but some challenges still exist for girls and women, like equal pay equity between men and women and “glass ceilings” for women in some leadership positions.

Sample text evidence quotes:

- Page 163, “As far as he [Papá] was concerned, Mamí needed only to keep house and care for his children.”
- Page 180, “I knew that I would be going to college one day, though most of the adult women I knew had finished their education in high school—or even grade school, as Mamí had.”
- Page 181, “Except for my teachers, Tiá Alma was the only woman I knew with a college degree.
- Page 200, “Mamí even opened her own savings account. In those days women needed their husband’s permission to open a bank account.”

Chapters 13-18

Task: Comprehension Quick Writes

CCSS: Reading Fluency 5.4; Reading Literature 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2; Speaking and Listening 5.1, 6.1

Teacher: Remind students of the comprehension quick write process and five-minute time limit.

Students: Read the chapter. Compose a quick write (3-4 sentences) to answer these questions:

- What is this chapter mostly about?
- What do we know about Sylvia or her family by the end of this chapter that we did not know before?
- What surprised you or what do you want to know more about?

After writing, share your thinking with a small group and then decide what key ideas your group will share with the whole class.

Teacher: Debrief quick writes to highlight key ideas, advance comprehension, and address confusion or misunderstanding.

Discussion Questions

CCSS: Reading Literature 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 6.1, 6.3, 6.6; Listening and Speaking 5.1, 6.1

8. Ask students to think about how the author describes her success and her failures and her perspective, or point of view, about failure and success. Discuss these questions:
 - While Sylvia emphasizes her many successes, she also discusses some of her failures. What are they?
 - How does she respond to them?

Remind students to cite text evidence that supports their thinking.

Sample answer:

Sylvia tried many new things. She worked hard at school and wanted to learn new things. She joined Girl Scouts and also joined a bowling league where she learned to bowl. There were no sports teams for girls in schools so Sylvia taught herself to play basketball. She succeeded at many things, such as Girl Scout cookie sales and learning how to make plans. She took a class before she could drive to learn to maintain the family car and make a budget. But she also sometimes failed. For example, she did not make the cut for the state band competition when all of her friends made it. She also found that she could not afford to go to Stanford University for her undergraduate degree even though that had been her goal.

Sylvia didn't let these setbacks deter her. They served as motivation, fueling her pursuit of her dreams and goals. She had a great education at New Mexico State University which was right in her home town.

Sample text evidence quotes:

- Page 218, "Now I realized I might have to be the one who did the planning ahead for my family."
- Page 266, "My bank account had grown significantly. I didn't have the full cost of a college education...but I was on my way."
- Page 269, "To my surprise, when they announced the students who'd been selected, my name wasn't on the list...I was devastated."
- Page 271, "I had put aside my dream of Stanford, but I could at least learn more about engineering much closer to home."

9. Ask students to think about how Sylvia experiences and relationships influenced who she became as an adult. Some of the things they might reflect on are her experiences with her family, the Girl Scouts, church, schools she attended, band and athletics, friends, and college and career choices. After they have a few minutes to reflect, pose these discussion questions:

- What were some of the significant experiences or relationships in Sylvia's life?
- What barriers did she overcome?
- How did these experiences influence her decisions and life choices?

Sample answer:

Sylvia was influenced by her family, the Girl Scouts, and her experiences at school. She described how her mother's support, her parents' work ethic, and her education helped forge her character and resolve to go to college and have a successful career. She also described the significant impact of the Girl Scouts on her developing important life skills and abilities, such as making a plan and budget and not taking "no" for an answer until she had heard it at least 3 times. These are important positive forces in her life. However, she also faced significant difficulties and obstacles in her life too. These experiences were difficult and presented barriers to Sylvia, such as lowered expectations for college, no girls sports teams, clash between her father's traditional culture and what she'd like to do and lack of money to pursue them as well as people doubting her ability to study engineering and math because she was a girl.

Sample text evidence quotes:

- Page 238, "...I was going to play basketball. On weekends, I would ride my bike by the school, hoping to see one of my classmates playing basketball so I could join in. The only time I skipped basketball at recess was when the Girl Scouts had a meeting..."
- Page 259, "Even before I started high school, I felt pulled between different worlds: home and school, Spanish and English, traditional and modern."
- Page 263, "My family loved me, but they didn't understand me, and I often felt like an outsider in my own home"
- Page 283, "Papá and I had clashed many times over the years. I just didn't fit into his idea of a traditional daughter."
- Page 284, "There just weren't many women working in the sciences or engineering in those days."
- Page 288, "One reason I succeeded was that I wasn't afraid of math."
- Page 295, "...but in the end, he [Papá] was proud of me...Mamá was proud of me too, but in a different way."

10. Ask students to think back across the whole text, and pose these questions:
- Now that you've read the full memoir, "Path to the Stars," what were the most significant ideas in the text to you?
 - Why did you select these ideas as the most significant to you?

Note to teacher: Student answers will vary, but should be linked to the key ideas in the text. Students should provide a logical rationale for their responses, something beyond "I liked that part."

Section 3. After Reading Composition Task and Culminating Projects

The recommended culminating project for this text study is a memoir composition. To support students in developing a quality memoir, teachers may choose to have students read other memoir texts, perhaps shorter narratives to study authors' craft related to memoir development. The teacher may choose to work with students to develop a memoir criteria chart and/or a process for drafting a memoir using what they learned from discussing the author's craft.

Composition Task: Writing a Memoir

CCSS: Writing Text Types and Purposes: 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5; Speaking and Listening 5.1, 6.1

Teacher: Engage students in the writing process to compose a memoir about an important influence on their lives, such as a place, a family member, or a meaningful experience. Explain that they will be expected to share how this has influenced their lives. Depending upon the time you have set aside for this task, your goals for student writing, and students' previous experience with memoir writing, you may decide to follow an in-depth writing process from prewriting through drafting, editing, revision, and publication, or you may choose this task as a rough draft single lesson task.

Students: Draft a memoir about an important influence on your life, such as a place, a family member, or a meaningful experience. Explain how it has impacted your life already and how it might influence future actions or choices. Be prepared to share your memoir with others as guided by your teacher.

Culminating Projects

The projects described below provide a menu of optional tasks for students. Some tasks require more time and resources to complete than others. Relevant TEKS are indicated for each project.

Write a Personal Narrative

CCSS: Writing Text Types and Purposes: 5.3, 6.3

Sylvia writes that the vestry in her Baptist church where the choir robes were kept was "off-limits to children, so of course we were fascinated with it, and we made up crazy stories about what might be inside." Have students write a story about a place in their own lives that is also mysterious or intriguing because it is off limits.

Create a Comic Strip

CCSS: Range of Writing 5.10, 6.10

Sylvia compromises with her father by getting dressed up and getting her photograph taken rather than having a big party for her quinceañera, a Latina coming of age ceremony and celebration. Create a six-panel comic strip with narration and dialogue balloons that chronicles a religious, social, cultural, or civic ceremony that symbolizes your transition from childhood to adulthood.

Create a Math/Science Class Dictionary

CCSS: Range of Writing 5.10, 6.10

Design and publish an online class dictionary that reflects Sylvia’s passion for math and science. On each page, provide a definition of a relevant term (for instance, measurement, chemical reaction, algorithm, combustion engine), a quotation that features the word or phrase in the text, and a visual representation.

View a Video and Compare with the Text

CCSS: Research to Build and Present Knowledge 5.8, 6.8; Range of Writing 5.10, 6.10

View the Academy Award–winning film *Hidden Figures* (2016), about four black women mathematicians working at NASA in the 1960s. How is Sylvia’s experience at Sandia National Laboratories most like that of these equally brilliant female mathematicians? Write a tweet-style piece or short Twitter-like thread that makes this connection.

Compare an Online Video and Biography of the Author with the Book

CCSS: Research to Build and Present Knowledge 5.8, 6.8; Range of Writing 5.10, 6.10

View the video “Meet Sylvia Acevedo” on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeTZTaNBqNw) and read Sylvia Acevedo’s biography on her website (sylviaacevedo.org/about). Write a response to this question: What new information about Sylvia Acevedo did you acquire from these online resources that you did not learn in the book?

Research a Female Scientist or Mathematician

CCSS: Research to Build and Present Knowledge 5.7, 6.7

Visit your school or public library and check out a recent picture book or illustrated biography about a previously unappreciated female scientist or mathematician. What is a characteristic that she and Sylvia Acevedo share? Using print and online resources, find a poem that reflects this essential trait. Share the poem with the class.

Research Meningitis

CCSS: Research to Build and Present Knowledge 5.7, 5.8, 6.7, 6.8; Range of Writing 5.10, 6.10; Speaking and Listening 5.1, 6.1

Have students work in groups and research meningitis: its signs and symptoms, risk factors, diagnosis and treatments, complications, and prevention. Incorporate this information into an illustrated print or digital poster that emphasizes essential features of the disease that devastated Laura Acevedo as a toddler.

Complete an Engineering Project

CCSS: Speaking and Listening 5.1, 6.1

Have students work with a partner to engage in a hands-on engineering task such as building a catapult or drinking glass waterwheel. (Note: this task requires setting up a “makerspace” with step-by-step directions, supplies, safety instructions, etc.)

Hold a Cultural Class Feast, ideal for the holidays

CCSS: Speaking and Listening 5.1, 6.1

Acevedo writes in detail about the traditional Mexican foods her family eats during the Christmas holiday season. Working in small groups, have students collaborate to plan and prepare for a cultural class feast: locating recipes, making a budget, collecting funds, shopping for groceries, writing invitations, cooking the food, serving the meal, and cleaning up afterward.

Learning Standards Alignment

Instructional tasks and activities outlined in the “Path to the Stars” text study are geared to the Common Core standards as identified in the tables below. While teachers may use or modify the questions or tasks to address other learning standards, these tables summarize the concepts and skills most clearly aligned to the discussion questions and tasks outlined in the unit.

Grade 5 English Language Arts Common Core State Standards*

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

5.2 Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

Craft and Structure

5.6 Describe how a narrator’s or speaker’s point of view influences how events are described.

Fluency

5.4. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

5.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

5.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

5.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. 5.6

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

5.7 Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

5.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.

Range of Writing

5.10 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.

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Grade 6 English Language Arts Common Core State Standards *

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

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

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.

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.

Craft and Structure

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

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

6.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

6.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

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.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

6.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

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.

6.10 *Range of Writing*

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 tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

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 statements are summarized to communicate key content expectations geared to specific text study tasks and discussions. Complete Common Core State Standards may be found at https://learning.ccsso.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ELA_Standards1.pdf.