

Grade 8: **Unit 7**

Freakonomics: Mastery Text Seminars

Seminar 9: Mastery Texts

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars articulate a bull's-eye main idea, dissect the author's argument, and explain how each author goes about making his or her argument.

Seminar 9: "Excerpt from *Among Whales*" by Roger Payne (pages 20-22, Delta, 1996) (Nonfiction) and "The Challenge of Thor" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Poem)

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Explain to scholars that today they will have the opportunity to independently apply their close reading and analytical skills to two texts they have never seen.

Read and Discuss 1 — 20 minutes

Read:

- Scholars independently read and annotate the first text on their Chromebooks. They jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars' work and conference with two or three scholars.

Discuss:

- Engage scholars in a discussion about the main idea. Make sure that scholars can explain why the author wrote the text.
- If scholars are not able to articulate the central idea of this text by the end of the discussion, do not move on to the questions. Spend time dissecting the text with scholars to lead them to the big idea.

Give scholars 2 minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Respond — 12 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Why has the author developed an admiration for whales? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 8 minutes

- Debrief the essay question with scholars. Demand focus and active learning. Set your expectations for what scholars must do differently when approaching the next text.

Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes

Read:

- Scholars independently read and annotate the second text on their Chromebooks. They jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars' work and conference with two or three scholars.

Discuss:

- Engage scholars in a discussion about the main idea. Make sure that scholars can explain why the author wrote the text.
- If scholars are not able to articulate the central idea of this text by the end of the discussion, do not move on to the questions. Spend time dissecting the text with scholars to lead them to the big idea.

Give scholars 2 minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Exit Ticket — 12 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Why does Thor most likely refer to his hammer, gauntlet, and girdle? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 6 minutes

- Debrief the essay question with scholars. Demand focus and active learning.

Homework

- Based on the Wrap-up, revise the essay questions.

Seminar 10: Mastery Texts

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars articulate a bull’s-eye main idea, dissect each author’s argument, and explain how each author goes about making his or her argument.

Seminar 10: “Empathy for One’s Fellow Chimp” by Jeremy Manier, from the *Chicago Tribune* (Nonfiction), and “Radio and Television Report to the American People on Civil Rights” given by John F. Kennedy (Nonfiction)

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Explain to scholars that today they will have the opportunity to independently apply their close reading and analytical skills to two texts they have never seen.

Read and Discuss 1 — 20 minutes

Read:

- Scholars independently read and annotate the first text on their Chromebooks. They jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars’ work and conference with two or three scholars.

Discuss:

- Engage scholars in a discussion about the main idea. Make sure that scholars can explain why the author wrote the text.
- If scholars are not able to articulate the central idea of this text by the end of the discussion, do not move on to the questions. Spend time dissecting the text with scholars to lead them to the big idea.

Give scholars 2 minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Respond — 12 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Why is the chimps' treatment of Knuckles interesting to the scientists? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 8 minutes

- Debrief the essay question with scholars. Demand focus and active learning. Set your expectations for what scholars must do differently when approaching the next text.

Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes

Read:

- Scholars independently read and annotate the second text on their Chromebooks. They jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars' work and conference with two or three scholars.

Discuss:

- Engage scholars in a discussion about the main idea. Make sure that scholars can explain why the author wrote the text.
- If scholars are not able to articulate the central idea of this text by the end of the discussion, do not move on to the questions. Spend time dissecting the text with scholars to lead them to the big idea.

Give scholars 2 minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Exit Ticket — 12 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What is the significance of lines 37 through 45 in the speech? Justify your argument with at least two concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 6 minutes

- Debrief the essay question with scholars. Demand focus and active learning.

Homework

- Based on the Wrap-up, revise the essay questions.

You Did It!

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Literature Unit 7: *Freakonomics*!

As a result of teaching this unit, you as the teacher have:

- Built your scholars' passion for great nonfiction by helping them understand Levitt and Dubner's *Freakonomics*.
- Built your scholars' ability to articulate their understanding of texts both orally and in writing.
- Used Mastery Texts to assess your scholars' mastery of the Top 5 Reading and Top 5 Writing Tactics.

Your scholars can:

- Articulate a bull's-eye main idea, dissect an author's argument, and explain how an author goes about making an argument.
- Notice interesting language and structures used by an author and explain how they support the big idea.
- Write and revise arguments of 200 words to demonstrate their understanding of texts.

Celebrate your scholars' successes by acknowledging what they can now do as readers as a result of their work during this unit. Invite scholars to share how much fun they had reading *Freakonomics* and making connections to other texts.

Reflect on your successes and stretches, as well as those of your scholars. Have your scholars grown as readers over the last month? Do you have any readers who are not reading at Level Z? Your scholars should all be reading at Level Z. Enlist parents to help get scholars over this hump!

Use the Mastery Texts from the end of the unit to identify scholars' next steps. After each Mastery Text, sort scholars' work by effort, intellectual struggles, the need to think more precisely, and lack of parental support. Use your diagnosis to plan and carry out next steps. Mastery Texts are key to scholars doing well on midterms and finals! You must use each Mastery Text to assess and hold scholars accountable for growing.

Scholars must read at home, as well as in school. Do you have 100% of your scholars reading nightly at home? Make sure at-home reading is happening, and meet with families who are falling short to recommit them to this team effort.

Do you have 100% of your scholars reading fluently? Using all of the tools at their disposal to figure out the meaning of what they are reading?

Do you have 100% of your scholars doing their literacy homework? You must insist that 100% of scholars complete their homework nightly.

As you end this final unit, your role is to set up your scholars for summer reading. All scholars should have a reading goal before they leave for the summer. Set a goal for moving any scholars stuck below Level Z. Why are they stuck? Do they read fluently? Do they understand what they're

reading? Do they understand the big idea? How will you partner with parents to support consistent at-home reading?

If you are having trouble meeting your goals, do not wait until you have not succeeded. Consult your colleagues. Consult your leaders. Ask for help so you can meet your goals!