

The purpose of this tool is to help educators understand each of the grade level standards and how those standards connect to the students' overall preparation for college and career readiness.

Standards are defined as the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge. This document is color-coded to reflect both anchor and priority standards. Though previous emphasis was placed on priority standards to address lost learning due to COVID-19, New Mexico teachers should note that moving forward, while priority standards allow for acceleration of learning, all standards should be addressed in instruction throughout the school year.

In this guide you will find:

- A [breakdown](#) of each of the grade level standards within the literature strand, including:
 - Vertical alignment guidance
 - Essential vocabulary related to the standard
 - Identification of anchor standards as identified by the CCSS and priority standards as identified by NMPED
- Sample aligned [assessment items](#)
- Companion resources guides that address:
 - [Planning Literacy Instruction with MLSS Guide](#)
 - [Choosing a Complex Text](#)
 - [Text Dependent Questions with Complex Texts](#)
 - [Vocabulary Instruction with Complex Texts](#)
 - [Speaking, Listening, and Writing](#)
 - [Differentiating Support for All Learners](#)
 - [Cross-Curricular Connections with Literacy](#)
 - [Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness in Literacy](#)

Key		
	<i>Anchor Standard</i>	Anchor standards, as identified by the Common Core, are denoted with an anchor icon. Anchor standards are the fundamental skills we want students to have when they graduate. The College and Career Ready (CCR) and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. Anchor standards appear from Kindergarten to 12th grade and are aligned to what colleges and workplaces expect students to be able to do.
	<i>Priority Standard</i>	Priority standards, as identified by NMPED, are denoted with red highlighting. Priority standards are the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge a student needs. This does not mean that these are only standards required to be taught, just these are the standards that will allow for the acceleration the students of New Mexico need during this time.

STANDARDS BREAKDOWN

- **Key Ideas and Details**

- [CCSS.RL.8.1](#)
- [CCSS.RL.8.2](#)
- [CCSS.RL.8.3](#)
- [NMSS.8.a](#)
- [NMSS.8.b](#)
- [NMSS.8.c](#)

- **Craft and Structure**

- [CCSS.RL.8.4](#)
- [CCSS.RL.8.5](#)
- [CCSS.RL.8.6](#)

- **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

- [CCSS.RL.8.7](#)
- CCSS.RL.8.8 (not applicable to Literature)
- [CCSS.RL.8.9](#)
- [NMSS.8](#)

- **Range of Reading Level and Text Complexity**

- [CCSS.RL.8.10](#)

RL.8.1				
	Anchor Standard: Key Ideas and Details <i>R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</i>			
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand		
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Key Ideas and Details		
Standard		Vertical Alignment		
Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1, RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.6.1, RL.7.1</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.1, RL.11-12.1</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1, RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.6.1, RL.7.1	<i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.1, RL.11-12.1
<i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1, RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.6.1, RL.7.1	<i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.1, RL.11-12.1			
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development		
Students carefully choose evidence that best supports their analyses of what the text directly and indirectly states.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analysis – a detailed examination of the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● explicit, explicitly – stated clearly and directly, leaving no room for confusion or interpretation ● inference – a conclusion derived from logical reasoning following an investigation of available evidence ● text – any media that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more ● textual evidence – evidence found within a particular text used to support or explain conclusions, opinions, and/or assertions about the text itself 		
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use details in a poem to make conclusions about the action. ● select the best evidence from a text to support an analysis. ● draw inferences from textual evidence to support a claim. 				

RL.8.2		
	Anchor Standard: Key Ideas and Details <i>R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</i>	
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Key Ideas and Details
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.2, RL.2.2, RL.3.2, RL.4.2, RL.5.2, RL.6.2, RL.7.2	<i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.2, RL.11-12.2
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students determine the theme of a literary text, examine how it progresses, and note how it connects to the characters, setting, and plot. Using the theme and key details, students summarize the text without personal feelings or judgments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● central idea – what the text is mainly about ● objective summary – a brief account of a text’s central or main points, themes, or ideas that is free of bias, prejudice, and personal opinion and does not incorporate outside information ● plot – the sequence of events in a story, play, movie, etc. ● setting – the time and place of the action in a book, play, story, etc. ● text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more ● theme – the subject or underlying meaning that a literary text directly or indirectly explains, develops, and/or explores 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● determine central ideas in a story. ● analyze how the setting helps develop the theme in a story. 		

- explain a central idea of a story using key details.

RL.8.3		
	<p>Anchor Standard: Key Ideas and Details</p> <p><i>R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</i></p>	
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Key Ideas and Details
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.	<p><i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.3, RL.2.3, RL.3.3, RL.4.3, RL.5.3, RL.6.3, RL.7.3</p>	<p><i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.3, RL.11-12.3</p>
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students examine how lines of dialogue or certain events in a story or drama expose the traits of a character, influence a character’s decisions, or move a plot forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● drama – a genre or category of literature generally designed to be presented to an audience by actors on stage that relies heavily on dialogue 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze how an incident propels the action in a story. ● analyze how lines of dialogue reveal aspects of a character in a story. 		

8.a		
Grade	NMSS Domain	
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Grade 8 students will analyze how a cultural work of literature, including oral tradition, draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types, and how the differing structure of the text contributes to society, past or present.	<i>Previous Grades:</i> 5.A, 6.A, 7.A	<i>Future Grades:</i> 9-10.1, 11-12.1
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students will analyze cultural works of literature, examining how they draw on themes, patterns of events or character types. Students will be able to identify and discuss the differing structures of these texts as well as analyze their contribution to New Mexico society today and in the past.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● character types – a common type of person, animal or figure represented in a literary work. ● cultural – related to the beliefs, customs, values, and activities of a particular group of people at a particular time ● oral tradition – a form of human communication wherein knowledge, art, ideas and cultural material is received, preserved and transmitted through speech from one generation to another ● patterns of events – a series of actions that together show how things normally happen or are done 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze a pattern of events in a story and discuss what that tells the reader about the setting and characters in that story. ● identify how a story’s structure differs from other stories and describe the impact of the author’s choice. 		

8.b		
Grade	NMSS Domain	
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Grade 8 students will analyze works of Hispanic and Native American text by showing how it reflects the heritage, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs of the author and how it applies to society	<i>Previous Grades:</i> 6.B, 7.B	<i>Future Grades:</i> N/A
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students will read works of Hispanic and Native American text and analyze how the work shows the heritage, tradition, attitudes and beliefs of the author. They will be able to identify how these works apply to New Mexico society today and in the past.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● attitude – a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something ● belief – a firmly held opinion or conviction ● heritage – practices or characteristics that are passed down through the years, from one generation to the next ● tradition – a longstanding custom or practice 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● identify in a text where an author is showing specific beliefs or attitudes. ● analyze what specific traditions described in a text tell the reader about the environment in which they are practiced. 		

8.c		
Grade	NMSS Domain	
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Grade 8 students will use oral or written texts from various cultures, cite textual evidence that supports or negates reader inference of a cultural value.	<i>Previous Grades:</i> 5.C, 6.C, 7.C	<i>Future Grades:</i> N/A
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students will read or listen to a text and analyze whether evidence in a text either affirms or negates what they have read about a culture or inferred from a text the culture values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● cultural value – one of a set of core principles and ideals upon which an entire community exists ● negate – to deny the existence, evidence, or truth of ● oral – expressing information or ideas by word of mouth 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● cite evidence from an oral or written text which supports their understanding of a value from a given culture. ● identify where their understanding of a cultural value is negated by evidence in a text from that culture. ● analyze the thinking behind an author’s choice to include information that negates an understood cultural value. 		

RL.8.4				
	Anchor Standard: Craft and Structure <i>R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.</i>			
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand		
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Craft and Structure		
Standard		Vertical Alignment		
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.4, RL.2.4, RL.3.4, RL.4.4, RL.5.4, RL.6.4, RL.7.4 </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.4, RL.11-12.4 </td> </tr> </table>	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.4, RL.2.4, RL.3.4, RL.4.4, RL.5.4, RL.6.4, RL.7.4	<i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.4, RL.11-12.4
<i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.4, RL.2.4, RL.3.4, RL.4.4, RL.5.4, RL.6.4, RL.7.4	<i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.4, RL.11-12.4			
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development		
Students analyze the text to understand the meaning of words or phrases, using the context to inform their thinking. Students consider how words and phrases chosen by the author, including analogies or allusions to other texts, contribute to the meaning and tone.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● allusion – an indirect reference to a person, place, object, literary work, historical event, etc. from an external context ● analogy – a comparison drawn between two things for the sake of clarification or explanation ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● connotative – the emotions and associations connected to a word ● figurative – departing from a literal use of words; metaphorical ● phrase(s) – a small group of words representing a conceptual unit, containing either a subject or a verb, but not both. Both a subject and a verb would constitute a clause (e.g., “Running through the forest, she breathed in the fresh, crisp air.”) ● text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more ● tone – the attitude an author takes toward 		

	the subject or topic of a text, generally revealed through word choice, perspective, or point of view
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● determine the meaning of words from context.● determine the effect of word choice on a text.● discuss how the analogies and allusions to other texts affect the text’s meaning and tone.● determine which words contribute the most to the meaning or tone of the text.	

RL.8.5		
	Anchor Standard: Craft and Structure <i>R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.</i>	
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Craft and Structure
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.5, RL.2.5, RL.3.5, RL.4.5, RL.5.5, RL.6.5, RL.7.5	<i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.5, RL.11-12.5
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students examine the similarities and differences in the organization of two or more texts. They analyze how each of these different structures adds to the meaning and style of the texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● compare – in a general sense, this is to measure or note the similarities and differences between or among objects, people, etc.; however, when used together with contrast, this refers to the highlighting of the ways in which two or more objects, people, etc. are alike or similar ● style – a particular manner of doing something (e.g., writing, painting, speaking, etc.) characteristic to an individual (e.g., author, singer, etc.), region, time, artistic/literary movement, etc.; in writing, style includes word choice, fluency, voice, sentence structure, figurative language, and syntax ● text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more ● text structure – refers to how a text is organized 	

Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...

- create and annotate diagrams of two or more text's structure.
- examine the structures of three literary texts and discuss the similarities and differences in how each is organized.
- develop written analyses of how structure contributes to the meaning and style of a text.

RL.8.6		
	<p>Anchor Standard: Craft and Structure</p> <p><i>R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</i></p>	
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Craft and Structure
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.	<p><i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.6, RL.2.6, RL.3.6, RL.4.6, RL.5.6, RL.6.6, RL.7.6</p>	<p><i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.6, RL.11-12.6</p>
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students analyze how the characters’ perspectives or frame of references in a story can differ from that of the audience or reader, creating such techniques as dramatic irony and producing effects such as suspense or humor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● audience – the people who watch, listen to, view, and/or read something presented via an artistic medium ● dramatic irony – when the audience knows something that the characters don't ● humor – a literary tool that makes audiences laugh, or that intends to induce amusement or laughter ● perspective – an attitude toward or outlook on something ● suspense – the anticipation of the outcome of a plot or of the solution to an uncertainty, puzzle, or mystery, particularly as it affects a character for whom one has sympathy 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use graphic organizers such as a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast what a character knows, thinks, and feels in a text to what the reader is aware of and how he/she feels about the events. ● analyze whether an author was successful at creating suspense or humor. ● find examples of irony in a text and discuss what effect it creates. 		

RL.8.7		
	<p>Anchor Standard: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas <i>R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</i></p>	
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.7, RL.2.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7, RL.5.7, RL.6.7, RL.7.7	<i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.7, RL.11-12.7
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students examine how similar or different a movie or live adaptation of a literary text is from its original text or script. Students also assess the decisions the director or actors made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● drama – a genre or category of literature generally designed to be presented to an audience by actors on stage that relies heavily on dialogue ● text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● compare and contrast changes from a fictional text to video version of the story using a variety of means, such as a graphic organizer. ● discuss departures from the original texts as well as the effects the changes had on the audience and story as a whole, possibly through movie or play reviews. 		

RL.8.9		
	<p>Anchor Standard: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas <i>R.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.</i></p>	
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.9, RL.2.9, RL.3.9, RL.4.9, RL.5.9, RL.6.9, RL.7.9	<i>Future Grades:</i> RL 9-10.9, RL 11-12.9
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students examine how a current literary text uses themes, events, or character types from either a myth, traditional story, or religious text and explain how the element is transformed in the newer text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● character types – refers to the idea that many characters in literature can be grouped broadly into a variety of overarching types that share common characteristics (e.g., static and dynamic characters, round and flat characters, etc.) ● event – a thing that happens; an occurrence ● myths – traditional, legendary stories, featuring supernatural beings, heroes, and/or ancestral figures which often explain the history and/or culture of a people or explain a natural phenomenon ● theme – the subject or underlying meaning that a literary text directly or indirectly explains, develops, and/or explores 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● compare and contrast a modern character with a mythological character. ● discuss how a theme/event/character from a myth has been modernized in a contemporary text. ● compare the theme/event/character in a traditional story to the same in a modern work of fiction. 		

8		
Grade	NMSS Domain	
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Grade 8 students will, by the end of the year, read and comprehend significant works of 18 th , 19 th , and 20 th century literature including stories, dramas, and poems independently and proficiently.	<i>Previous Grades:</i> N/A	<i>Future Grades:</i> N/A
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
By the end of Grade 8, students will be able to capably and independently read and understand significant works of literature from the 18 th , 19 th , and 20 th century. This will include poems, stories, and plays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> independently – on one’s own, without aid from another (such as a teacher) proficient/proficiently – competent, skilled, and/or showing knowledge and aptitude in doing something; the level at which one is able to complete a particular skill, such as reading complex texts, with success 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use a variety of reading strategies (notetaking, predicting, visualizing, etc.) to understand texts, including those with unfamiliar language. use pre- and post-reading strategies to understand the context of a piece of literature and ask questions to further their understanding. 		

RL.8.10

	<p>Anchor Standard: Range of Reading Level and Text Complexity <i>R.10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.</i></p>
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Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand		
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Range of Reading Level and Text Complexity		
Standard		Vertical Alignment		
<p>By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p>		<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.10, RL.2.10, RL.3.10, RL.4.10, RL.5.10, RL.6.10, RL.7.10</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <p><i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.10, RL.11-12.10</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.10, RL.2.10, RL.3.10, RL.4.10, RL.5.10, RL.6.10, RL.7.10</p>	<p><i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.10, RL.11-12.10</p>
<p><i>Previous Grades:</i> RL.1.10, RL.2.10, RL.3.10, RL.4.10, RL.5.10, RL.6.10, RL.7.10</p>	<p><i>Future Grades:</i> RL.9-10.10, RL.11-12.10</p>			
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development		
<p>By the end of Grade 8, students competently read and understand literature within the 6-8 text complexity band (Lexile: 925-1185). They are able to read independently for an extended time. Students make connections to their background knowledge and relevant experiences to engage with text.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> independently – on one’s own, without aid from another (such as a teacher) proficient/proficiently – competent, skilled, and/or showing knowledge and aptitude in doing something; the level at which one is able to complete a particular skill, such as reading complex texts, with success text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more text complexity band – stratification of the levels of intricacy and/or difficulty of texts, corresponding to associated grade levels (2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-10, 11-12) determined by three factors: 1) qualitative dimensions (levels of meaning, language complexity as determined by the attentive reader), 2) quantitative dimensions (word length and frequency, sentence length, and cohesion), and 3) reader and task considerations (factors related to a specific reader such as motivation, background knowledge, persistence; others associated with the task itself such as the purpose or demands of the task itself) 		

Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...

- keep a given purpose in mind to help them monitor their comprehension.
- use a wide variety of reading strategies to comprehend grade level text (strategies include using prior knowledge, predicting, questioning, making inferences, determining purpose, visualizing, and making connections).
- discuss with partners how a personal experience connects to the text.

ASSESSMENT GUIDE

- **Constructed Response Assessment Task aligned to RL.8.1, RL8.2, RL.8.3, NMSS C**
- **Constructed Response Assessment Task aligned to RL.8.6**
 - **Evidence of Text Complexity and Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness**
 - **VABB Analysis with Example Questions and Exemplar Student Responses**
 - **Example MLSS Universal Supports**
- **Multiple Choice Assessment Items**

Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Key Ideas and Details
Sample Task #1 (Constructed Response)		
<p>After reading “I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman and “I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes students must answer: Langston Hughes cited Walt Whitman as one of his greatest influences, and some believe that Hughes wrote “I, Too, Sing America” in response to Whitman’s “I Hear America Singing.” Using textual evidence from both poems to support your answer, describe how Hughes’s poem builds on Whitman’s poem. Consider aspects such as structure, theme, and word choice as you craft your response.</p>		
Exemplar Student Responses		
<p>A strong student response where the student analyzes, and references text evidence would address some or all of the following ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How Hughes’s description of separation/exclusion (“I am the darker brother,” “They send me to eat in the kitchen,” “They’ll see how beautiful I am/And be ashamed—”) shows a different perspective/side of life than Whitman’s description of equality/inclusion (“I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,” “Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else”). ● How Whitman’s idea of diversity in America (all the people’s different careers— “mechanics,” “carpenter,” “shoemaker,” etc.) attempts to address all citizens collectively, while Hughes’s poem instead shows the divisions among race/class, as Hughes’s speaker is likely a worker/servant in a higher-class household (“They send me to eat in the kitchen/When company comes,”). ● How Whitman’s speaker shows people who have arrived at the American dream (all characters “Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs”), while Hughes’s speaker shows people who struggle to be included in this dream (“They’ll see how beautiful I am/And be ashamed”) and whose singing does not seem to be acknowledged (“I, too, am America”). ● How both authors use free verse structure to share different perspectives of the freedoms Americans experience. 		
DOK		
Level 3		
Blooms		
Applying		
Possible Aligned Language Objectives		Possible Misconceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will cite textual evidence to explain how one poem builds off another. ● Students will determine the theme of each poem and analyze its development over the course of the poem. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students may focus on analyzing just one poem instead of making a connection to how Hughes’s poem builds off Whitman’s. ● Students may cite insignificant similarities between the poems instead of focusing on

RL.8.1
RL.8.2
RL.8.3
NMSS C

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will analyze particular lines to determine if they show a strong connection to themes in the poem(s).	important themes, language use, craft, structure, etc.
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Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Craft and Structure
RL.8.6	Sample Task #2 (Constructed Response)	
	<p>After reading “To Build a Fire” by Jack London, students will respond to the following prompt: Choose two statements from the excerpt that foreshadow the collapse of the snow on the fire the character builds and explain your choices.</p>	
	Exemplar Student Responses	
	<p>A strong student response could include the following two sentences and explanations (other sentence choices are possible as long as the student’s rationale is sound):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “On top, tangled in the underbrush about the trunks of several small spruce trees, was a high-water deposit of dry fire-wood....” (paragraph 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This statement indicates that the character is building a fire near the trunks of several small spruce trees, which, the reader later discovers, is the source of the collapsed snow. ● “He worked slowly and carefully, keenly aware of his danger.” (paragraph 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This statement explains that the character understands the danger of building a fire in the snow, and he is taking precautions to prevent the fire from being extinguished. 	
	DOK	Blooms
	Level 3	Analyzing
	Possible Aligned Language Objectives	Possible Misconceptions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will analyze how the author builds suspense by using foreshadowing. ● Students will distinguish the point of view of the author from the point of view of the character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students may struggle with unfamiliar language (i.e. “underbrush”) and need scaffolding in order to determine meaning. ● Students may give responses that are related simply to building the fire, not foreshadowing the collapse of snow.

Evidence of Text Complexity and Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

Text Summary and evidence of Complexity:

- The 1908 version is about an unnamed male protagonist who ventures out in the sub-zero boreal forest of the Yukon Territory. He is followed by a native dog and is en route to visit his friends—ignoring warnings from an older man from Sulphur Creek about the dangers of hiking alone in extreme cold. Stops to build several fires, eventually running out of supplies. The protagonist underestimates the harsh conditions and slowly freezes to death.
- 750 Lexile

Evidence of Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness:

- **Who is represented in the text used to assess this cluster of standards?**
The main character is new to the Yukon and appears to be white. There are references to the “Old Man” being native to the Yukon. Neither race is explicitly stated. There is also a native husky dog that travels with the man.
- **How are those groups and individuals portrayed?**
The protagonist is being portrayed as not having good judgment when he does not listen to the warnings of the older man to not travel alone. Throughout the story the dog seems to have more knowledge of survival than the man. The animal's instincts warn it about the dangers of the extreme cold, but the dog reluctantly follows the man. With no way to start another fire, the man thinks of killing the dog and using its body heat to save himself, but his hands are so stiff that he can neither strangle the animal nor draw his knife to cut its throat.
- **Does the text provoke critical questions about cultural and linguistic diversity, especially within marginalized communities?**
The man ignores warnings from the older man about the weather and danger of traveling alone. Although there is a strong theme of perseverance, his sense of judgement contrasts with the dog’s animal instinct. The “newcomer” not listening or giving credence to the older, wiser man who has been there the longest. Man vs. nature and individualism combined with arrogance.
- **What supports are provided to teachers to identify blind spots?**
Supports are minimal. A blind spot would be if the teacher did not know anything about survival in the wilderness. Background knowledge may need to be given to help the teacher and students make connections.
- **How is this text culturally/linguistically responsive?**
One of the characters is referred to as a native of the Yukon. That character has wisdom that (had the main character listened to it) would have changed the outcome of the story.

RL.8.6

VABB Analysis	
RL.8.6	Validate
	<i>The intentional and purposeful legitimization of the home culture and language of the student.</i>
	<p>Question: The story would have had a different outcome if the protagonist had listened to the older man in the village. Can you give an example from your own life in which you took the advice given to you from someone older?</p> <p>ESR: Answers will vary. Students will reflect that older family and community members have knowledge to impart that correlates with the journeys they themselves are facing.</p>
	Build
<i>Create the connections between the home culture/language and the school culture/language through instruction for success in school and the broader social context.</i>	
<p>Question: What is the moral lesson in the story?</p> <p>ESR: People should not think they are more powerful than nature. In addition, people should listen to others who have more experience than they do. In the end, the man realizes that nature is more powerful than he is and that he should've listened to people with more experience in the region.</p>	
Affirm	
<i>The intentional and purposeful effort to reverse the negative stereotypes, images, and representations of marginalized cultures and languages promoted by corporate mainstream.</i>	
<p>Question: Because of his own pride, the man makes several bad decisions. What would you have done differently and how would that have changed the outcome?</p> <p>ESR: Answers will vary. Students will realize they have reason, foresight, and knowledge that would have made the journey a successful one. The man was foolish in thinking he knew what was best and not listening to the advice and experience of the older man.</p>	
Bridge	
<i>Create opportunities for situational appropriateness that provides the academic and social skills that students will need to have success beyond school culture.</i>	
<p>Question: What does the relationship between the dog and the man reveal? What signs does the dog sense that the man ignores?</p> <p>ESR: The dog retains an instinct that the man does not. This contrast is fully expressed in the ending with the man dying, and the dog continuing on alone. We learn that it is acceptable to follow our own instincts to keep ourselves out of danger.</p>	

Layer 1: Universal Supports

High-quality core instruction for all students

In New Mexico we believe that all students deserve access to high-quality grade-level texts to show proficiency with reading and comprehension as outlined in the New Mexico standards. These universal supports provide core instruction that allow students to comprehend complex texts by providing access points and opportunities for deep thinking.

1. Pre-teach Tier 2 Vocabulary Words
 - Tier 2 Vocabulary are words that are more likely to appear in text than speech. Pre-teaching these words before diving into a text allows students to better understand the text because their cognitive load can be focused more on comprehension. To learn more, please visit Resource Guide on [Vocabulary Instruction with Complex Texts](#)
 - Choose words that are not implicitly or explicitly defined within the text.
2. Annotate/Create Text-Dependent questions to push student thinking to think about themes and central ideas, knowledge of vocabulary, or syntax and structure following the steps outlined in this resource guide. To learn more, please visit Resource Guide on [Text Dependent Questions with Complex Texts](#)
 - Crafting and using text dependent questions throughout a complex text allows the reader to chunk the text to better focus on meaning. They also teach the reader how to think deeply about a text and use evidence from the text to support that thinking.

Universal Supports

The details listed below apply to the specific text in the bottom-most box and are meant to offer examples of how universal supports can be planned for lessons using an appropriately complex text.

Tier 2 Vocabulary to Preteach	Text Dependent Question
<p>Word: Moccasins</p> <p>Think Aloud: The word "moccasin" is traced back to Scottish Gaelic language. "Mo chasin" means "my feet" in Gaelic. Its root comes from the wild tribes Algonquin language Powhatan word "makasin", meaning shoe. Native American are one of the original groups we have to thank for moccasins.</p>	<p>Question: What is a moccasin? How were you able to figure that out?</p> <p>ESR: The next time we hear about moccasins the man is talking about the danger of getting his feet wet and having to stop and build a fire to dry his socks and moccasins. I used context clues to figure out that moccasins were a type of shoe.</p>
<p>Tier 2 Vocabulary: "50 degrees below zero meant a bite of frost that hurt and that must be guarded against by the use of mittens, ear coverings, warm moccasins, and thick socks.</p> <p>From "To Build a Fire" by Jack London Link to Full Text</p>	
<p>Text Dependent Question:</p> <p>"And to get his feet wet in such a temperature meant trouble and danger. At the very least it meant delay, because he would be forced to stop and build a fire. Only under its protection could he bare his feet while he dried his socks and moccasins."</p> <p>From "To Build a Fire" by Jack London Link to Full Text</p>	

Multiple Choice Assessment Items		
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Craft and Structure
RL.8.4	<p>In paragraph 1, what does the phrase “clattering nerve center of the restaurant” suggest?</p> <p>A. messiness, chaos B. energy, core C. Tension, anxiety D. greatness, stability</p> <p>Text Reference: Excerpt from <i>A la Carte</i> by Tanita S. Davis from New York State Testing Program Grade 8 ELA Test Released Questions 2021</p>	
	<p>What does the statement “I know I’m going to have to pay my dues” (paragraph 11) show about the narrator’s attitude toward her plans?</p> <p>A. She thinks the price of her fame might be too high. B. She realizes success depends on more than setting a goal. C. She is highly motivated by the idea of becoming famous. D. She thinks becoming a celebrity chef requires only money.</p> <p>Text Reference: Excerpt from <i>A la Carte</i> by Tanita S. Davis from New York State Testing Program Grade 8 ELA Test Released Questions 2021</p>	
RL.8.5	<p>How do lines 14 through 21 of “Excerpt from <i>The Watcher</i>” contribute to the plot of the story? Use two details from the story to support your response.</p> <p>Text Reference: Excerpt from <i>The Watcher</i> by James Howe from New York State Testing Program Grade 8 ELA Test Released Questions 2021</p>	
	<p>How does the structure of the story contribute to its meaning?</p> <p>A. The narrator describes how she differs from her brothers, which leads to a conflict with her father. B. The narrator expresses her point of view, which provides background for the conflict with her father. C. The narrator describes her frustration with life at home and school, which leads to problems with her father. D. The narrator begins with a reflection on rules, which leads to an improvement in her relationship to her father.</p>	

Text Reference: [Excerpt from *The Peerless Four* by Victoria Patterson](#) from New York State Testing Program
Grade 8 ELA Test Released Questions 2016

Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
8	Reading: Literature (RL)	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
RL.8.9	<p>How does Calpurnia explain the idea of treating others the way you would want to be treated to Scout?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Calpurnia explains that since Scout considers her family to be ‘better,’ she should act as she normally does B. Walter is considered to be company and Scout needs to treat him with equal respect and courtesy C. Calpurnia uses a fable to discuss the Golden Rule with Scout D. Calpurnia is always kind to everyone; Scout follows her example <p>Text Reference: <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> by Harper Lee and Materials from Unit 2A, Lesson 12 from EngageNY discussing elements of the book and the Golden Rule</p> <p>How is Little Chuck a ‘born gentleman’?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. He comforts Ms. Caroline and tries to calm her down B. He uses his manners C. He treats Scout with respect D. He was born into a wealthy family <p>Text Reference: <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> by Harper Lee and Materials from Unit 2A, Lesson 12 from EngageNY discussing elements of the book and the Golden Rule</p>	

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RL.8.4

Excerpt from *A la Carte*

by *Tanita S. Davis*

1 “Homework?” My mother mouths the word exaggeratedly, eyebrows raised, and I roll my eyes. Frowning, she points with her chin to the side door that leads to the stairs. I roll my eyes again, mouthing, Okay, okay, not needing her to pantomime further what she wants me to do. I hate the thought of leaving the clattering nerve center of the restaurant to wrestle with my trigonometry homework in my mother’s quiet office downstairs.

2 “Order!”

3 The bright lights and swirl of noise and motion are muffled as the kitchen door swings closed behind me.

4 It’s hard to remember a time when the restaurant hasn’t been the center of our lives. Mom used to be a copy editor and wrote food features for our local paper, the *Clarion*, and she met Pia when she did a write-up on the culinary school Pia attended. Pia thinks it was fate that Mom wanted to invest in a restaurant at the same time Pia wanted to buy the old bank building.

5 La Salle Rouge doesn’t serve much in the way of “kid” food, since the menu doesn’t cater to people my age on a cheap date, but I’ve loved everything about it from the first. I started experimenting with being a vegetarian when I turned fourteen, but Pia still found things to feed me and taught me to be creative with vegetables and tofu. I like to think I’m the best-fed vegetarian in the state of California.

6 Pia’s been really good about teaching what she knows, and I decided early on that this is the work I want to do—get out of school and get into the kitchen for good. Mom and Pia have created a popular French-Asian-Californian fusion restaurant that has gotten great reviews from food critics. They took the best of each other’s tastes—Mom’s traditional Southern flavors and Pia’s French training combined with her vegetable- and spice-savvy Cambodian tastes—and pulled off what one food critic called “stylized food with unique flavor combinations in an intimate setting.”

7 Whatever that means.

- 8 Three years ago, when I started high school thirty pounds heavier than everyone in my class, Mom and I came up with a light menu for La Salle Rouge, and it's been such a popular idea that Mom lets me come up with tasty, low-calorie desserts, which is one of my favorite things to do. It hardly seems fair that I have to walk away from all of that just to do trigonometry, but my mom says I have to finish school before I concentrate on cooking. She says it's smarter to have a "backup plan," and she's made me apply to plenty of colleges and check out business majors just in case I ever want to do anything else with my life. I guess that makes sense if you're anybody other than me. When I turn eighteen, I already know what I'm going to do.
- 9 First, I'm going to buy a plane ticket to D.C. and go to Julia Child's kitchen at the Smithsonian and leave roses. They don't let you walk through it, but somewhere—I don't know where—I'm going to leave a bouquet and a little note for her. Julia Child is my patron saint.¹ She's the queen of all reasons people can do anything they want in life. Saint Julia didn't start cooking until she was practically forty, and she went on to do TV shows and make cookbooks and be this huge part of culinary history. She never got too fancy, she never freaked out, and she was never afraid to try new things. I want to be just like her—except maybe get famous faster.
- 10 The second thing I'm going to do is buy myself a set of knives. Pia swears by this set of German steel knives she got when she graduated, but I've seen the TV chef Kylie Kwong use a phenomenal-looking ceramic knife on her show on the Discovery Channel. Either way, knives are what the best chefs have of their very own.
- 11 The third thing I'm going to do, after I get back from Washington and get my knives, is . . . get discovered. Somehow. I know I'm going to have to pay my dues, but I'm so ready for my real life to start. It's not something I admit to a lot, but my real dream is to be a celebrity chef. Do you know how many African American female chefs there aren't? And how many vegetarian chefs have their own shows? The field is wide open for stardom. Every time I watch old episodes of Saint Julia, I imagine that I have my own cooking show. The way celebrity chefs do it now, I could also have a line of cooking gear, cookbooks, aprons, the works. People would know my name, ask for my autograph, and try my recipes. All I have to do is finish my trig homework and get back into the kitchen.

¹**patron saint:** an inspiring person admired for his or her work

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RL.8.5

Excerpt from *The Watcher*

by James Howe

Evan hated Holden Caulfield. Really hated him. Maybe he was only a character in a book but to Evan he felt real, like one of those people you get stuck sitting next to on an airplane and they won't shut up about their totally uninteresting lives. Evan could in no way understand why his father had been shoving this book at him for the entire past year, insisting he read it, telling him it was one of the most important books of the twentieth century. His father got like that sometimes.

He decided to read it anyway. He'd seen it on his freshman reading list so he figured why not get it over with and get his father off his back at the same time. Two birds, one stone. In a weak moment, he'd admitted to his father that he hated Holden with a passion, and his father had given him this solemn look and said, "My guess is that this book is touching something deep inside you, Evan." To which he'd said, "Yeah, right, Dad." But sometimes in the middle of the night when he couldn't sleep, Evan wondered if maybe what his father said was true.

He was down at the beach reading the book one Friday afternoon when someone came up and said *hey* and asked if he wanted to hang out. It was Shane, one of what Evan referred to as the "boys in black." Evan often labeled people. He liked to think this was the product of a creative mind, but his best friend last year in eighth grade, right before he stopped being his best friend, had told Evan he thought he was basically a snob. Which Evan knew for a certifiable fact wasn't true, although no matter how many times he replayed the conversation in his head he couldn't come up with what he *was*, if he wasn't a snob.

The boys in black had caught Evan's attention the first week he and his family were out at the beach house. It was five o'clock, and like every other day at five o'clock, after the lifeguards blew their whistles and waved their arms to let everybody know they were going off duty, little kids in bunches, Callie¹ included, ran to the abandoned lifeguard stand to clamber to the top, hurl themselves off onto the huge pile of sand at the base, then repeat the process over and over until they were called away for dinner.

"Watch me, Evan!" Callie shouted. Evan watched, at the same time keeping an eye on the retreating figure of the lifeguard named Chris who secretly Evan thought was the coolest guy on the beach. Who secretly Evan wished he could be. Evan admired Chris's mirrored sunglasses and had decided he was going over to Fair Harbor one of these days to get a pair just like them. The only question was whether he'd have the nerve to wear them to the beach, although he wasn't sure why this was even a question.

¹**Callie:** Evan's younger sister

35 Evan was imagining himself sitting up on top of the lifeguard stand in his mirrored sunglasses, twirling a whistle cord around his index finger and looking seriously cool, when five boys in black wet suits, shiny and snug as coats of fresh paint, raced past and plunged into the water. Once in, they pulled themselves onto their surfboards and paddled furiously over and through the rolling waves, calling to each other all the while like crows cawing. Everything about them worked together as one: their bodies, their suits, their
40 boards, the water, their coded calls. Evan wished he could be out there with them, envying not their surfboards but their ease with themselves and one another.

He saw them other times after that, other places. Sometimes there'd be just one of them, eating an ice cream out in front of the all-purpose store in town, or two of them, with fishing poles in hand, headed for the bay. But most times he saw all five, moving
45 shoulder-to-shoulder along the boardwalks, a basketball in constant play, looking, in their high-style shorts and ankle bracelets and backward baseball caps, like a pack of Gap-ad Huckleberry Finns.

At the beginning of their vacation his mother had been bugging him. "Why don't you make some friends, Evan? Those boys, you know the ones I mean, they look nice, don't
50 you think?" He had come up with reasons, then excuses, and finally had just ignored his mother until she backed off.

Then there he was, hearing somebody say *hey*, and looking up at this tall, tightly muscled kid with shoulder-length dirty-blond hair whom he recognized immediately as the one he'd heard the others call Shane.

55 "I see you sittin' here," Shane said, squinting down at Evan. "How come you're always sittin' here reading?"

"I'm not always reading."

"I never see you in the water."

"I go in the water. Maybe not when you're looking."

60 Evan's cheeks were hot. He prayed that his mother, stretched out on a towel several feet behind him, was plugged into her music or one of those meditation tapes she was always listening to these days and wasn't paying attention to this conversation.

"So what's your name?" he heard Shane ask.

"Evan. What's yours?"

65 "Shane," Shane said in a bored voice. "So you want to hang out? I mean, you know, you want to hang out?"

"I guess," Evan said. His eyes were level with Shane's knees. He noticed now many pink scars and scabs dotted the landscape of the other boy's sun-brown legs. He imagined all the falls and mishaps it must have taken to create so many scars and felt a deep sense
70 of shame that at fourteen his own body revealed so little history.

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RL.8.5

Excerpt from *The Peerless Four*

by Victoria Patterson

Basketball brought me to life, and once I was awake and alive, there was no turning back. I'm not good at school, never have been. There's a clarity and straightforwardness to basketball, to sports, that I understand. There are rules. You follow the rules and try to win. Life isn't like that. Too bad, because in life you have to work to make anything make sense. Life is deceptive. In basketball, I'm asked to be smart: to get the ball, pass the ball, fake a pass, dribble, and to shoot the ball through the hoop. When I run, I'm asked to run as fast as I can, beat the others. Cross the finish line first. I have a job to do, and I either get it done or don't. There's nothing vague about it. It's very clear. Life is tough and disappointing and I can't control anything, so to me the best answer is sports. There's no right or wrong answer like with arithmetic. I'm not asked to come up with something like you have to in English. I don't have to decipher a story or a poem. I'm connected to others, and we're connected through time, when it was clear and straightforward then, like it is now. There's no trick answer, nothing that you have to interpret or guess. I don't understand Shakespeare or algebra or why a poem makes people cry, but give me the ball, and I'll dribble and pass, and I'll take the elbow to the face, the lumps and the bruises, gladly, to know that I'm doing something truly fine, something that's as good as Shakespeare, if you ask me, as good as any poem, even better, if you ask me. It's action. It has the kind of power and force of the known, and I gave myself over as soon as I discovered basketball. I knew that I'd found an answer to my life. I was alive.

At first, my dad wouldn't let me play basketball. I was ten and we would go to my brother's games at the high school. I'm the only girl of five children, and being from a family of boys, I did everything that they did, which confused my dad, since it wasn't ladylike. That's how I got into running, because of my three older brothers. I ran to keep away from them.

"I want to do that," I told my dad at the basketball game, and he shook his head and said, "That's not for girls." It's very simple, really. Boys play sports and girls watch the boys play sports. My dad believes that girls should stay home and work and bring the money home until they get married. Girls shouldn't go to college—fine by me! Only the boys should. But I wanted to be on the basketball court, and I didn't care what my dad said.

I'd watch my brother with his squeaking shoes crossing the court, dribbling and passing, making his shots, and he gave meaning to my life, gave me a purpose. I cheered for him with such yearning and enthusiasm that my dad would put his hands on my

35 shoulders, beg me to sit back down. But he couldn't keep me sitting. It was bigger than him, bigger than me. I became so involved in the games, in my desire to break free from life's confusions, to have a purpose within me. It was like I became my brother, and I was in the competitive world of men, and I was important.

40 Before the games, I couldn't eat because of nerves. I'd pace the house, going over game plans in my head. "Sit down!" my dad would say. "You're making everyone nervous." During the games, I'd pace the stands, clenching my fists, waving my fists, shouting. I couldn't stay still. Cheering is what you call it, but it was more than that. I strutted up and down the aisles, dribbling my imaginary ball with my brother. I faked defenders, turned and made my shots. I took low, sweeping passes. I trotted and swerved and blocked players, careful not to foul. All this I did with a very loud commentary, letting my dad and the spectators and the refs know that I knew everything, that I was in the game, and that I was part of this world whether my dad let me play for real or not. Truly, I believed that my brother depended on me, that in some magical way, I was him, and that his success and his team's depended on my vigilance. When he made a shot, when he passed the ball with beauty, and the crowd clapped and roared, I believed that they were roaring for me, as much as for him. It felt like an assurance that life could be understandable.

50 I couldn't stop moving and talking and my dad became concerned. People stared, moved away from us. A few stayed, fascinated by my antics.

"You're like a crazy person," my dad said.

55 Then my dad decided that I couldn't come to the basketball games anymore. My cheering was too much. The games were my delight, my reason for living, and I locked myself in a closet and cried for two days. I refused to eat. My family couldn't get me to come out. Even my brother, whom I love with all my heart, because he believes in me and plays sports with me, and he taught me what he knows about basketball—he couldn't get me to come out. My mom made blueberry pie, my favorite, put it right outside the closet so that I smelled it. But I didn't care.

60 "Let her play," I heard my mom tell my dad. "Girls play basketball all the time now," said my brother, and my dad said, "Not my daughter." But he gave in, because I wouldn't come out of the closet or eat, and I'm his daughter, and he loves me.