

# HUMANITAS INTERDISCIPLINARY THEMATIC UNIT

School: Reseda High School

Grade: 11

Team Members:

Darren Borg  
American Lit.

Paul Miller  
American Lit.

Heather Penrod  
U.S. History

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Subjects:

## THEME/OUTCOMES

Overall Theme: Individualism and an Evolving National Identity

Unit Theme: The Individual vs. the State: Challenging the Ideal of Freedom

**Rationale**  
Students will understand the nature of the contract between the individual and the state in a democratic republic. Specifically, students will examine how human rights have historically come into conflict with the interests of the dominant culture, as exemplified by the literature and political movements of the 50s and 60s.

**Outcomes for Students**  
Students will analyze political allegory, trace the origins and geopolitical consequences of the Cold War and containment policies (Communism, McCarthyism), evaluate the influences of various social institutions of the 50s and 60s on the literature and art of the period, examine the roles of civil rights advocates, and interpret the dynamic relationship between the individual and the state.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**  
**How does the balance of power between the individual and the state necessitate compromise?**  
**How does the power of a dominant class influence the kinds of compromises people make?**  
**What does “freedom” mean?**

**INTERDISCIPLINARY ESSAY PROMPT**  
**We have studied several examples of how fear has influenced the balance of power between the individual and the State. Often a people may believe a compromise of freedom to be necessary in the interest of security, order, or the cultural values of a dominant class. However, sometimes authorities may overstep the bounds of a nation’s ideals. With this in mind, describe the steps in the process by which the political environment of the fifties and sixties affected the human rights of Americans, providing examples from the government policies, historical documents, literature, art, or music of the period. Finally, what evidence of tension between the individual and the State do you observe in today’s society, and what might be our concerns about its outcome?**

*Shared instructional strategies (Cooperative grouping, Shared Inquiry, common graphic organizations)*  
*\_\_\_\_\_Socratic seminar(shared inquiry), electronic research, dialectical journals\_\_\_\_\_*

Name: Miller, Borg

Subject: American Lit.

Focus Standards:

**Standards:**

**Reading**

2.4 Make warranted and reasonable assertions about the author's arguments by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations.

2.5 Analyze an author's implicit and explicit philosophical assumptions and beliefs about a subject

**Literary Response and Analysis**

3.5 Analyze recognized works of American literature representing a variety of genres and traditions:

- Trace the development of American literature from the colonial period forward.
- Contrast the major periods, themes, styles, and trends and describe how works by members of different cultures relate to one another in each period.
- Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings.

(One to two primary standards per subject area. Write abbreviated standard after number.)

Materials:

**Materials:**

- *The Crucible* text
- "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
- Primary (letters of the accused) and secondary sources
- Research Materials
- Scavenger Hunt List
- Responses Worksheet
- "Undue Process" flowchart
- Selected current event excerpts for contemporary connection

Activities:

**Cold War Scavenger Hunt, Bibliography (Library Research) Responses to Investigation Activity (parallels between responses of blacklisted and accused characters) "Undue Process" Flowchart "Forms of Evil" Jigsaw, discussion (students define evil through the eyes of different characters) "Who's Presumed Guilty and Why?" Tituba vs. Proctor Human Rights Comparison (bridge to Civil Rights) Dissent and the Moral Conscience: Hale and MLK comparison Current Event jigsaw (block activity)**

The Humanities Connection...  
Film, artwork, music of the 50s and 60s

Name: Penrod

Subject: US History

Focus Standards:

- 11.9.3** Trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of the Cold War and containment policy
- 11.10.2** Examine and analyze the key events, policies, and court cases in the evolution of civil rights, including *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, and California Proposition 209.
- 11.10.4** Examine the roles of civil rights advocates (e.g., A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Thurgood Marshall, James Farmer, Rosa Parks), including the significance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and "I Have a Dream" speech.
- 11.10.6** Analyze the passage and effects of civil rights and voting rights legislation (e.g., 1964 Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act of 1965) and the Twenty-Fourth Amendment, with an emphasis on equality of access to education and to the political process.

(One to two primary standards per subject area. Write abbreviated standard after number.)

Materials:

- **Textbook:** *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*
- **Video:** American Stories video series "The Cold War Comes Home."
- **Brown vs. Board of Education case**
- **Video:** "Simple Justice" Documentary on Brown vs. Board of Education
- *Autobiography of Malcolm X*.
- "I Have a Dream Speech"
- "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
- **Video:** Civil Rights

Activities:

Students will investigate and write a research paper on McCarthy's crusade against alleged Communists in the 1950s and correlate to the Salem witch trials. Students will watch the documentary of Brown vs. Board of Education and read the text, then complete a chart/timeline, and create a picture book of the history and outcomes of this event. Students will read and analyze excerpts from the Autobiography of Malcolm X, "Letter from Birmingham Jail," and "I have a Dream Speech." Students will review clips from video on Civil Rights. Students will divide into two groups and debate from either the perspective of Malcolm X, or Martin Luther King Jr. Fieldtrip to the Japanese American Museum. Students will review clips from video on Civil Rights and review their field trip experience to the Japanese American Museum, and will be assigned an ethnic identity to create an "I Am Poem."

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