

**PROJECT 2EXCEL CURRICULUM TEMPLATE**  
**LANGUAGE ARTS/READING**  
**“Literary Reflections” – Grades 4-5**  
**Unit: “The Power of Light” (Singer)**  
**Rogers Edition**

**OVERARCHING PROGRAM MODEL:** Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) - framework that incorporates the overarching concept of change and how it affects people and their relationships as well as the world around them. Of the 6 concept goals that focus on change in this curriculum, the concept foci for this unit are: (1) *Identify elements of change in a piece of literature*; (2) *Analyze social and individual change in a given piece of literature*.

**ACADEMIC COMPONENTS:**

- Address concept of change as present in this short story. Use either written essay, song, drawing, symbolic picture to express analysis of social and individual change in the story or develop a graphic organizer that lays this out and can be explained to others in the class.
- Research on Warsaw Ghetto details. Use research model handout in planning and conducting your research. Teach how to organize and document what research is found.
- Vocabulary web for list of words linked to this story
- Higher order discussion questions as per curriculum unit

**INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:** Literature of various genres, History (i.e., World War II)

**GIFTED EDUCATION COMPONENTS:**

- **Complexity** – intricacies of Warsaw Ghetto survival
- **Organization** – organized around concepts of change – use of concept maps regarding story sequence and “fear”
- **Study of People** – Background on Hannukah and what it symbolizes, how it began as a religious practice
- **Paradox** – In what ways was a potential unwillingness to change on Rebecca’s part likely to cause damage? Don’t we usually say when something is working, don’t change it?

- **Analogy** – How is a lit candle like learning from a book?
- **Evaluation** – Were David and Rebecca wise or foolhardy to try to get out of the ghetto. Why did they try to escape the ghetto when the threats to their safety might be greater if they placed themselves out in the open.
- **Real World Problems** – Find out about the percentage of Jews who did manage to escape the Warsaw ghettos and where did they establish a new home. How did David and Rebecca manage to overcome the odds against them when so many could not? Use guest speaker who lived through or had relative in Warsaw ghetto.

### EMOTIONAL/SUPPORT COMPONENTS:

- Learn how to develop a decision-making grid for a possible change, identifying all the possible criteria by which to judge your “yes” or “no” decisions. Make a grid to: (1) choose an option for a school project; (2) go out and play or stay inside at recess; (3) wear specific clothes on a given day; or (4) when to do homework.
- Use decision-making grid to take on the role of either David or Rebecca as you do a decision-making grid for the decision to leave or stay in the ghetto.
- Remember to consider your own personal “fears” (ones you think would apply to either David or Rebecca as well) as a part of the criteria. You could do this by checking off on a list of possible fears those that most apply to you and the actions or inactions you take. Share your grid with others who have taken the same character you did and see how your personal differences vary.
- Apply this grid to a possible change you might want to make in your own life (e.g., becoming more independent, staying on task when you don’t think you can do something, etc.) Does this grid help you make a decision more confidently?
- Second idea to explore would be optimism and pessimism and what impact one’s perspective on outcomes might play in one’s own decision-making. Look at Pollyanna (the movie or the book), the eternal optimism and what she manages to accomplish, compared to Eeyore in Winnie the Pooh (movie or book). Have children self-assess their own perspectives on optimism. Read a little about Seligman’s work on optimism, etc.

- Add a sociological experiment that interprets a phenomenon such as a glass half full of water or whether a day is partly cloudy or partly sunny.

### **BEHAVIORAL COMPONENTS:**

- Develop personal rubric for staying “on task” during classroom work that is difficult to do or is of little interest. Use this rubric to communicate with your teacher how well you believe you were able to stay on task on given days
- Provide choices for each day’s work on story
- Have children act out the events of the story
- Use nonverbal cues directed at child acting out to recognize negative behaviors and reinforce positive behaviors
- Discuss how David and Rebecca would have behaved in class.
- Experiment on how a change in behavior affects classroom dynamics (e.g., give each student a piece of paper with an acting out behavior on it. They are to do the behavior when called on. Class discusses how classroom dynamics change when behavior is shown.)

### **SOCIAL COMPONENTS:**

- Pair children with someone they usually do not work with and ask them to discover 5 things about each other. Does this change their opinions of each other?
- In development of essay or graphic organizer, use a peer to critique your ideas in their first draft. Then revise accordingly. (Teach skills of critique so that feelings are not hurt and advice is gently given. Group kids with similar abilities or styles in pairs for this critique exercise. Set rules for critique: Must provide two positive points for each negative point. Must allow partner to respond to the three remarks before adding anything more.
- Use button talk (Nielsen & Higgins strategy) in HOTS discussion time on story

### **PHYSICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT MODIFICATIONS:**

- Do experiment with environmental changes and how it personally affects learning: lights, music, movement, chair or desk arrangement, etc.).
- Story can be listened to on tape for those with reading disabilities.

- Story can be read aloud in small group for those with attention issues, each taking turns.
- Glasses that close out all lines except the one being focused on can be worn.
- A quiet place to read to oneself can be set up for those easily distracted by the actions of others.
- Instructions can be provided in more than one modality
- Time out space or study carrel when frustration, explosive episode, or inflexibility can be predicted
- Weighted blankets when reading on own
- Yoga balls when reading, according to preference