The Reading Reconsidered curriculum is designed to build and reinforce students’ knowledge for two primary purposes: first, to provide all students with access to a complex text and second, to create interconnected networks of knowledge that enable the skilled reading of future texts. Each lesson includes relevant knowledge to support comprehension of the central text in each unit and uses deliberate practice and retrieval to build a strong base of knowledge in long-term memory.

Unit Documents

Essential Understandings: This unit is designed with repeated exposure to the following conceptual understandings and themes:

- Memoir gives authors an opportunity to share meaningful personal stories about their lives in the context of a specific time and place; through brown girl dreaming, we learn about both Woodson’s personal history and the events in history she lives through.
- Poetry is a different type of writing than prose, so some of our vocabulary and processes as readers change when we read poems.
- People are complex; their young life, experiences, and family history shape their world view as they grow. Part of growing up and developing one’s beliefs is understanding the perspectives and beliefs of those around you.
- Woodson writes her memoir by combining the stories and memories of others with her own. Memory is subjective and unreliable, so it can be both beautiful and challenging to try to recount stories from memories.

Units provide repeated exposure to knowledge. These examples from the brown girl dreaming unit trace the introduction and reinforcement of two understandings: ancestry and memory.

Contextual Knowledge:
- History of the American civil rights movement
- Language of ancestry and family history
- South Carolina and New York City in the 1960s-1970s

Literary Knowledge:
- Terms of poetic construction and analysis (e.g., enjambment, anaphora, caesura, rhythm)
- Autobiographical writing and the language of memory in storytelling

Key Background Knowledge: Below is a list of some of the core knowledge emphasized over the course of the unit to interact with these concepts, in addition to other ancillary topics that will strengthen their understanding.

Poetic and Literary Terms
Unlike prose, the ordinary language used in speaking or writing, verse has a rhythmic structure and often rhymes. Poems are written in verse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anaphora</td>
<td>the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of lines or stanzas</td>
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<tr>
<td>caesura</td>
<td>a pause within a line of poetry, usually marked by punctuation</td>
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<tr>
<td>end-stopped</td>
<td>a poetic line ending with punctuation to show the completion of a phrase</td>
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<td>enjambment</td>
<td>the running-over of a sentence or phrase from one poetic line to the next, without end punctuation</td>
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<tr>
<td>haiku</td>
<td>a Japanese poetic form; three unrhymed lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables</td>
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<tr>
<td>poetic license</td>
<td>the understanding that a poet might change or “break” rules of grammar that govern other forms of writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>rhythm</td>
<td>a pattern of sound set by the syllables in lines of poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stanza</td>
<td>a series of lines arranged together to create divisions in a poem</td>
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Brown Girl Dreaming Knowledge Organizer

Poetic and Literary Terms

Language of Memory and Storytelling

- memoir: a collection of memories written about important moments and events in a person’s life
- subjectivity: the way in which a person’s memory or judgment is shaped by their personal opinions or experiences
- reliability: the degree to which a person’s narration or memory is trustworthy or accurate

Words to Describe Family and Legacy

- ancestry: the line of people in a family’s past
- genealogy: an account of a person or family’s descent from past generations
- heredity: the passing of personal characteristics from one family’s generation to another; we say that a trait that is passed (e.g., brown eyes) is inherited or hereditary
- heritage: something acquired from the past; a person’s cultural, religious, or racial background

Historical Terms

- segregation: the practice of requiring separate housing, busing, education, and other services for people based on race
- civil rights movement: the struggle for social justice, beginning in the 1950s, in which activists fought for Black Americans to gain equal rights under the law
- nonviolent resistance: the idea that a person can resist and defeat an oppressive system without violence; examples of nonviolent protest include sit-ins, marches, and boycotts
- Great Migration: the movement of more than 6 million Black Americans from the rural South to cities in the North, Midwest, and West from about 1910-1960
- Black Power Movement: a movement within the civil rights movement focused on Black pride and self-defense

Each unit includes a Knowledge Organizer, a one-page document that organizes high-priority knowledge for students to store in long-term memory.
Sample Lesson

- **Lesson Objective**: Describe how Woodson connects herself to her family’s history.
- **In the Lesson**: Students analyze the first poem in the memoir in order to consider the way Woodson places her birth in the context of both her family’s and America’s history.
- **Priority Standard**: Reading Anchor Standard 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

**Pages 1-2**

*Annotation Task*: brown girl dreaming is a memoir, meaning it is a collection of memories written about important moments and events in a person’s life. As we read the first poem in Jaqueline Woodson’s memoir, circle the words, phrases, or lines that you find most *evocative*.

1. **Turn and Talk**: Share your annotations with a partner. Why did you choose these moments? What images or feelings do they *evoke* for you?
2. What is Woodson describing in this poem? Why is it called “february 12, 1963”?

**Notes**

3. **Reread this stanza from p. 1**:

   I am born not long from the time
   or far from the place
   where
   my great-great-grandparents
   worked the deep rich land
   unfree
   dawn till dusk
   unpaid
   drank cool water from scooped-out gourds
   looked up and followed
   the sky’s mirrored constellation
   to freedom.

   a. **Turn and Talk**: What is Woodson sharing about her great-great-grandparents in this stanza? How do you know? **Challenge**: How might the rhythm of the poem emphasize this idea?

   b. Slavery was declared illegal in 1865, almost 100 years before Woodson was born. What might Woodson be suggesting when she says she was born “not long from the time” of her great-great-grandparents’ enslavement?

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**Introduction of the term memoir**

Students unlock the memoir’s complexity with the knowledge they bring and build.

**Students practice applying the concept of a memoir.**

Knowledge is introduced through direct instruction and students apply it to the text to support their comprehension and deepen analysis.
Nonfiction articles are to introduce terms, explain references, or explain relevant concepts. Students apply their knowledge by responding to overlapping questions drawing on both texts.

Students use the embedded text “Follow the Drinking Gourd” to understand Woodson’s allusion in the poem and learn about the author’s ancestry.

Students use a variety of discussion and writing prompts to analyze the novel through a knowledge lens while developing other core skills.

Students discuss and write about ancestry using different conjunctions to develop their thinking and vary sentence construction.
Lesson plan provides additional questioning to support student understanding of a memoir.

Memoir

The word memoir comes from the French word for “memory.” This is a helpful way of understanding what a memoir is: an author’s telling of their own life, the way they remember it. Even though memoirs are nonfiction—the author tells the true story of their real life—memoirs are uniquely subjective because they are told from just one person’s experience and perspective. A memoir can be honest, but still not perfectly accurate; in fact, most of them are probably not.

Memoirs are extremely popular, often topping best-seller lists. Reading memoir gives us a personal and immediate sense of others, and also helps us understand what life was like in a particular place during a particular time. Authors of memoir often weave personal stories with broader historical and social context so that they can more vividly evoke the time and place of their experiences.

• **Read: Read Aloud** or use FASE Reading to read the embedded text titled “Memoir” to build students’ genre knowledge. While reading, you may wish to ask one or more of the following questions to establish meaning:
  - **Possible Establish Meaning Questions**
    - _Is memoir fiction or nonfiction? What does that mean?_
    - _Subjectivity is a term on your Knowledge Organizer that means the way in which a person’s memory or judgment is shaped by their personal opinions or experiences. What does it mean that memoirs are “uniquely subjective”?_
    - _Can you think of any memoirs you’ve read and enjoyed? Whose memoir are you most interested in learning about?_

Every lesson plan includes guidance to help teachers make knowledge purposeful and relevant for students and increase their investment.

Exit Ticket

1. What does it mean that _brown girl dreaming_ is a memoir? What do you anticipate we will learn in this memoir? Include a reference to a specific place and/or time.

Daily Exit Tickets assess student understanding of the novel, often through a knowledge-driven lens.
Additional Opportunities for Retrieval

In addition to the knowledge introduced and reinforced in daily lessons through embedded texts and questioning, each unit includes further opportunities for retrieval, practice, and application of knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do Now Quiz—Knowledge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is a <em>memoir</em>? (1 point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. the way in which a person’s memory or judgment is shaped by their personal opinions or experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. a collection of memories written about important moments and events in a person’s life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. the degree to which a person’s narration or memory is trustworthy or accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. a fond remembering of the past, especially a longing for a time or place with happy personal memories</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. What does *ancestry* mean? Describe one thing we know about Jacqueline Woodson’s *ancestry*. (2 points)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retrieval Practice</th>
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Use the word or phrase from the Knowledge Organizer in your response.

1. What is *ancestry*?

2. What is a trait that might be *hereditary*?

3. Name the movement happening in America in the 1960s.

4. What term refers to an account of a person or family’s descent from past generations?

5. What is a *memoir*?

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Weekly Knowledge and Vocabulary Quizzes reinforce important knowledge in the unit.

Frequent, low-stakes Retrieval Practice helps students encode knowledge into long-term memory.
Vocabulary is considered an important form of knowledge and is explicitly taught.

Students spend time practicing and applying their vocabulary knowledge.
Evidence of Impact

Students are given a pre- and post-unit assessment that ask the same questions in order to gauge the extent to which they retain and apply knowledge of core concepts by the end of the unit.

Pre-Assessment

1. Your ancestry is the line of people in your family’s past. What are some different ways that your ancestry can shape or influence who you will become? Try to think of more than one.

   by my ancestor knowing someone famous or starting a business that was passed down to their and to their kids.

2. A memoir is a collection of memories written about important moments and events in a person’s life.
   a. Why might an author want to write a memoir?

      to see what his life was like for him and

Post-Assessment

1. What is ancestry? What are some different ways that ancestry can shape or influence who a person will become? Use details from brown girl dreaming to support your response. Include a form of the word inherited, hereditary, or genealogy in your response.

   Ancestors are the line of people in a family or person’s past. Your ancestry can shape you of how you will become. Listening to their pasts, their stories, their wisdom, it can be hereditary.

2. Answer the following questions, using details from Jacqueline Woodson’s memoir, brown girl dreaming, in your responses.
   a. Define memoir. Why might an author want to write a memoir?

      A memoir is a very important collection of memories that have meaning of events in a person’s life. The author wants to write a memoir because it tells us about a person’s past, the stories of South Carolina flowing through Jac’s veins according to Page 2.