

Using *The Authentic Critical Inquiry* *Framework* In the Humanities Classroom

Student Work From
Composition 11
Media & Comp 12
AP Language





How Does Life Live?

[How Does Life Live?](#)

Kelly O'Brian (New York Times)

What is inquiry?

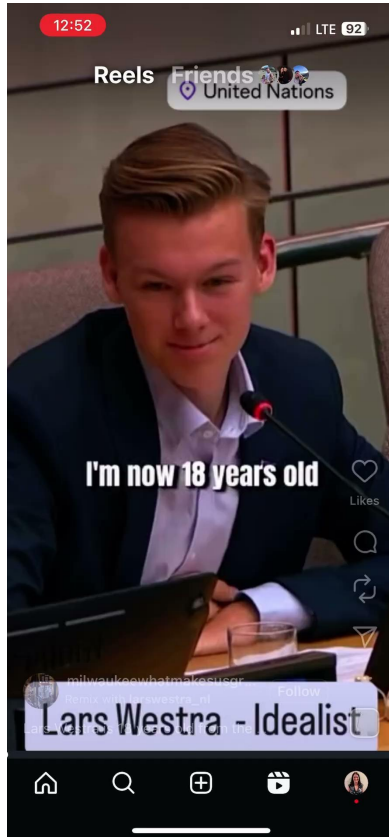
Placemat activity (Level 1)

What the Heck Is Inquiry-Based Learning? — Heather Wolpert-Gawron
(*Edutopia Article*)

“You have to bring that **“whaaa?!”** into your classroom. You have to model your own curiosity quotient—that **hunger to learn** that defines how we advance our knowledge of the world. According to the Harvard Business Review, a **higher curiosity quotient** can indicate more flexibility and help build a **greater ability to handle complexity.**”

Instagram
Reel [Link](#)

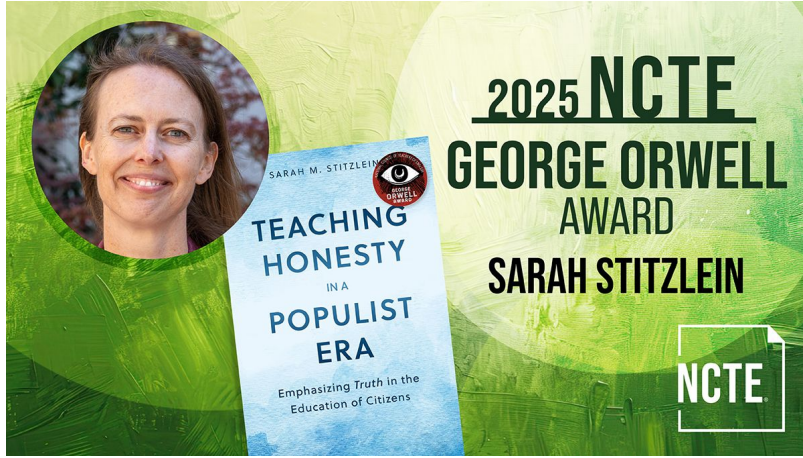
Why should young people engage in inquiry?



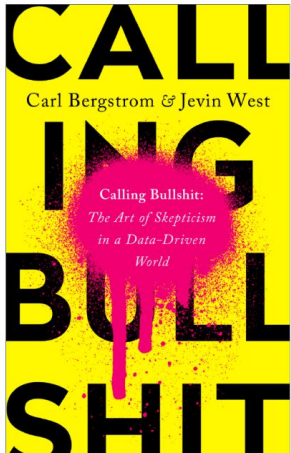
“Lars Westra, the EU Youth Delegate to the UN, is 18 years old from the Netherlands. Since he was nine years old, he has been advocating for **children’s rights** with his own organisations and later served as vice-chair of the Dutch NGO coalition on Children’s rights. He is focusing on the right to a voice, a future and a chance for every child.”

Follow Lars Westra on [LinkedIn](#)

Why is this important for educators?



- “**Honesty** is a key component of **democracy**” (13).
- “In a **post-truth setting**, objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief” (22).
- **Inquiry** is the way that we not only arrive at answers to ‘What should we do?’ but also establish evidence that leads us to those answers” (32-33).
- “Children bring valuable experiences, **common sense**, and emotions to the table... These can enrich inquiry” (65).
- “Understanding a problem often relies on **gathering multiple different viewpoints** on the issue—seeing how it impacts different people in different ways” (67).



Before:



What is authentic critical inquiry?

After:



- 1) Inspiration
- 2) Curiosity
- 3) A wondering
- 4) A question to investigate
- 5) Investigation - read widely and deeply from multiple perspectives
- 6) Develop your own thinking - position taking - **new understanding**



**No prescribed
Direction or
outcome**

AUTHENTIC CRITICAL INQUIRY FRAMEWORK

 Inquiry is organic and fluid

Before:

After:

SELF
Background
Knowledge
Bias

PRODUCT OF INQUIRY
Reframe your position on the
topic. Take all perspectives
into consideration and form a
nuanced position.

NEW
Reframing
Position
Conclusion

Your inquiry question can
change at any time

INSPIRATION:
Observation
Question

Investigate

Revise Thinking

Do you care?

source
Read
Evaluate **1**

source
Read
Evaluate **3**

source
Read
Evaluate **2**

What does it mean to evaluate?

- What are your initial thoughts?
- Is the position valid?
- Is the source reliable? Is there any bias?
- What lens is the source framed through?

What does it mean to revise thinking?

- What is your new question?
- What is your position on the topic?
- What other information or perspective will help you take a position?
- Do you want to change direction?

Haulout

“Haulout” follows a scientist on a remote Arctic beach who witnesses

A film by Evgenia Arbugaeva & Maxim Arbugaev

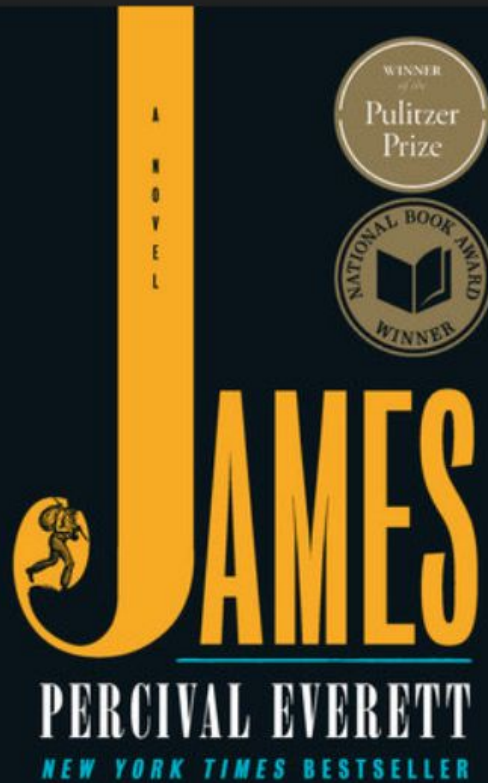


The New Yorker: Documentary Film short (Nov 2022)

Why is inquiry important?

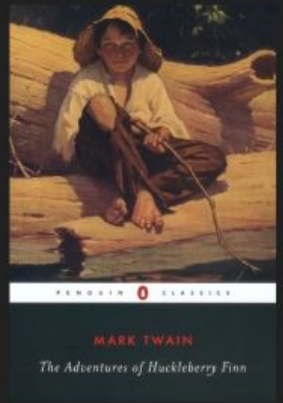
Placemat activity (Level 2)

- **In what way did your thinking change as you read more than one perspective on this topic?**
- **When you rephrased your question, how did you reach a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of the topic?**



James

By Percival Everett



“At that moment the power of reading made itself clear and real to me. If I could see the words, then no one could control them or what I got from them. They couldn’t even know if I was merely seeing them or reading them, sounding them out or comprehending them. It was a completely private affair and completely free and, therefore, completely subversive.”

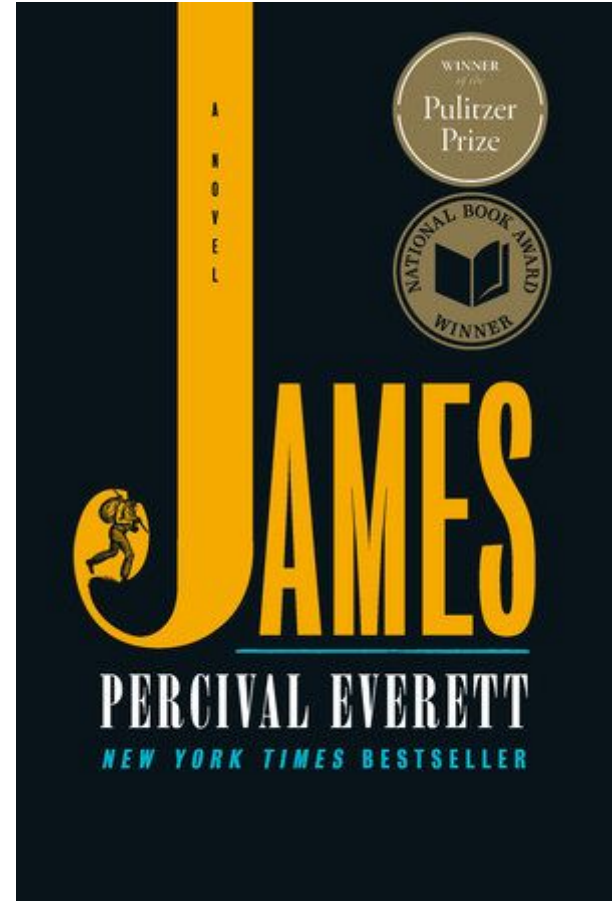
— Percival Everett, *James*

Background on the novel

Literature-based Inquiry: *James*

Mini-inquiry ([Audio](#))

- 1) What questions come to mind early on in the novel?
- 2) As you read consider the other questions you have.
- 3) Research your topic.
- 4) Ongoing: Reflect & refine your question.



Literature-based Inquiry: *James*

What questions come to mind early on in the novel?

WE WENT THE QUESTIONS STUDENTS HAD

Percival Everett: *James*

“Everybody should read fiction... I don’t think serious fiction is written for a few people. I think we live in a stupid culture that won’t educate its people to read these things. It would be a much more interesting place if it would. And it’s not just that mechanics and plumbers don’t read literary fiction, it’s that doctors and lawyers don’t read literary fiction. It has nothing to do with class, it has to do with an anti-intellectual culture that doesn’t trust art.”

– Percival Everett

How to ask good questions?

The Right Question Institute ([Link here](#))

Rules for Producing Questions

1. Ask as many questions as you can
2. Do not stop to answer, judge, or discuss
3. Write down every question exactly as stated
4. Change any statements into questions

How to ask good questions?

The Right Question Institute

- 1) Pick one of your questions from the sticky notes that you are most curious about.

2) Decide: Was your question closed or open-ended? If closed, convert it to an open-ended question.

Categorizing Questions: Closed/ Open

Definitions:

- **Closed-ended** questions can be answered with a “yes” or “no” or with a **one-word** answer.
- **Open-ended** questions require more **explanation**.

Directions: Identify your questions as closed-ended or open-ended by **marking them** with a “**C**” or an “**O**.”

3) Refine your question after reflection and further reading.

How to ask good questions?

The Right Question Institute

1) How many enslaved people were literate? (Closed)

2) Why were enslaved people not allowed to learn to read and write? (Open)

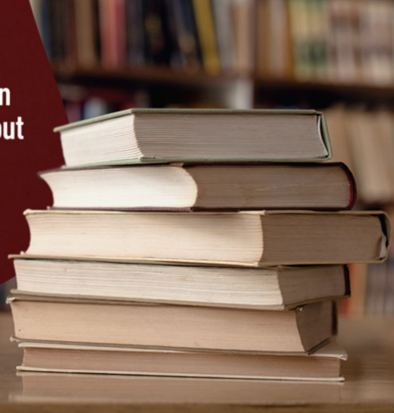
3) How can the practice of reading books be a tool for intellectual freedom and self-exploration? Is this practice of reading freely still important to promote today (Refined)?

How to ask good questions?

The Freedom to Read Statement (American Library Association [Link](#))

On June 25th, 1953 we said that we trust the people of this nation to make their own decisions about what they read and believe.

70 Years later, we still trust them to make their own decisions.



Canada has a “Freedom to Read week” each February to promote literacy and the right to read.

READING
AS A
SUPER
POWER

How can the ability to read books be a tool for intellectual freedom and self-exploration? Is the practice of reading freely still important to promote today?



Dua Lipa x Percival Everett: Truth In Art

YouTube · Service95 · Sep 15, 2025

“TRUTH IN
ART”
PERCIVAL
EVERETT

Audio



Student Work (1)

Non-fiction Book Club

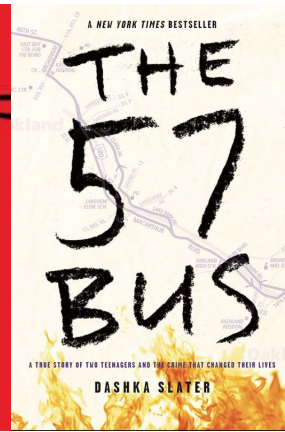
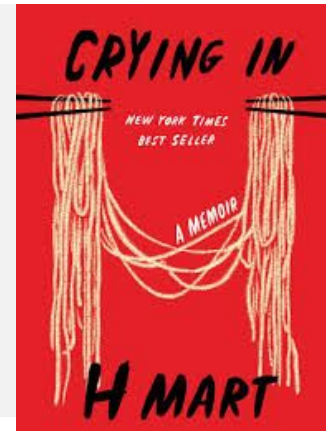
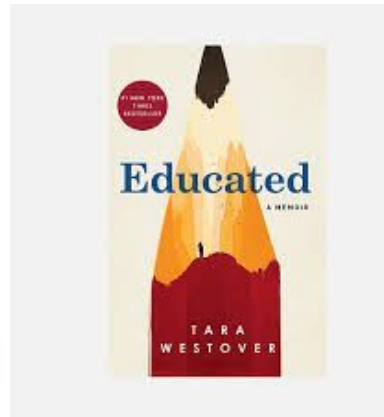
Inspo: Non-fiction Book Club

Inquiry: What question do you have when reading this book?

Product: Create a presentation.



Two+ Other Sources



Before Reading + Doing Inquiry

“Maybe the parents weren't strict enough, maybe they were too loose, like, maybe that's what caused his drug addiction.”

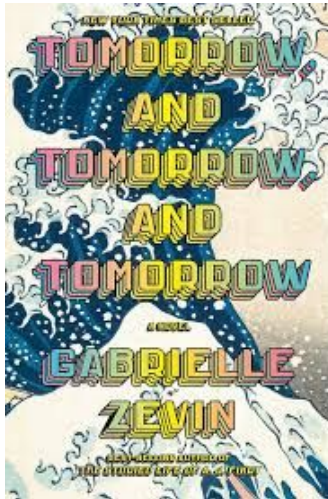
Student Work (2)

Book Club on Media & Technology

Inspo: Book Club on books related to media & technology

Inquiry: How does society benefit from media & tech?

Product: Write a research paper that explores your thinking on the question.

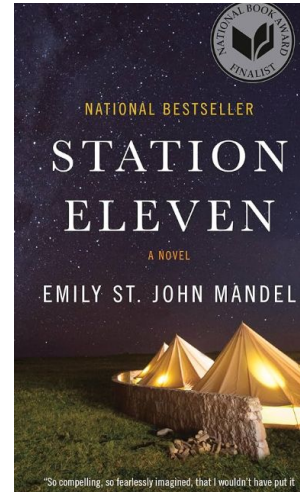
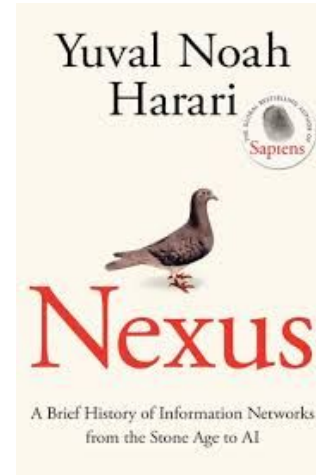


Why are graphic artists not given credit for work they put into a video game?

With the advent of flash fiction, what will the future of the publishing industry be like?

If AI were to write a creative story, is it really a creative story?

In what way is our society losing its ability to be self-sufficient due to technological reliance?



Student Work (3): Comp 11

Inspo: Field Trip to Chinatown; Short Story “Simple Recipes”

Inquiry: How can we amplify a voice in the city of Vancouver in a way that promotes a safer, fairer, more inclusive city for all?

Product: Write a research paper that explores your thinking on the question.

Restor(y)ing Voices in Vancouver

華埠掌故
CHINATOWN
STORYTELLING
CENTRE



Three or more sources (one alternate / counter pov)

My position is that...there must be more work to investigate sources of E. Coli in semi-isolated bodies of water that concentrate in small areas, such as the inlet near Science World. By understanding the relationship between human activity, civic planning, and bacterial growth, **everyone can use the space safely.**

“In Vancouver, Filipinos are the third largest immigrant group, numbering 100,000. Over a quarter of Filipino women work in health occupations which is well above average. And the majority of us are the working class. Yet there are no scholarships, no cultural centres, and little to no support when we immigrate here. The word Asian applies to us, yet the word is associated with Chinese or Japanese. Asian heritage month applies to us, yet we are rarely acknowledged.”

—***Composition 11 student***



Why is inquiry important?



Open-minded



Empathic



Engaged



Agentic



Purposeful

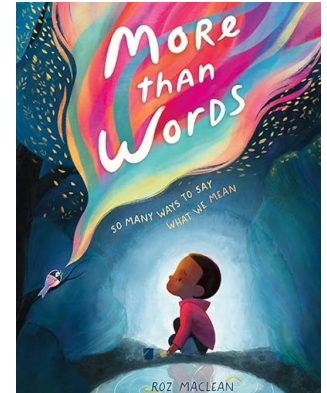
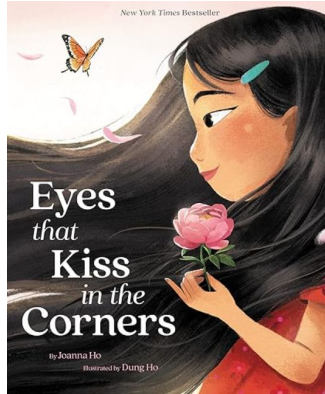
Brainstorming: How might you include inquiry in your classes?

Idea #1

Inspo: Read a short story, such as “Borders” by Thomas King

Inquiry: Children’s books on belonging. Whose voice is not here that could be uplifted?

Product: Create your own children’s book.



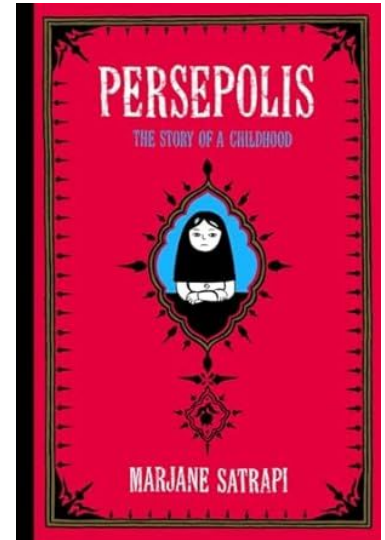
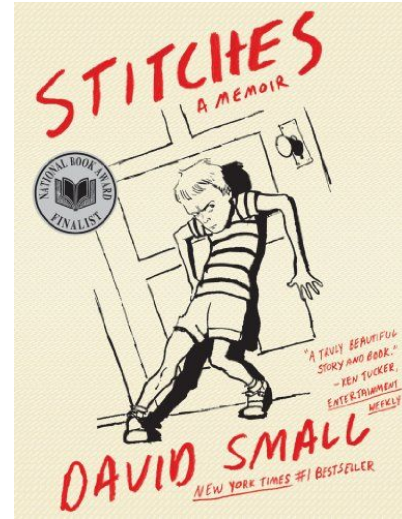
Brainstorming: How might you include inquiry in your classes?

Idea #2

Inspo: Book Club on YA Graphic Novels

Inquiry: What does it mean to grow up today?

Product: Create your own graphic comic or zine in answer to this question.



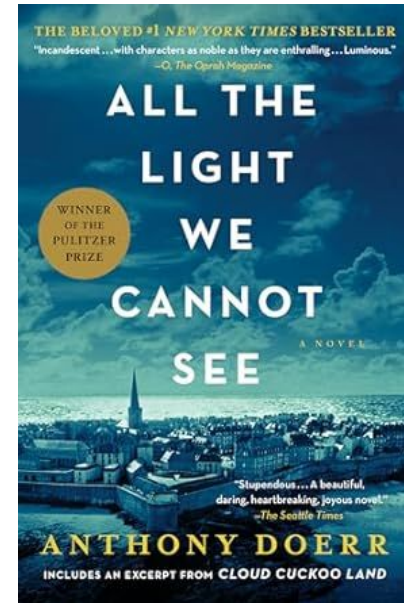
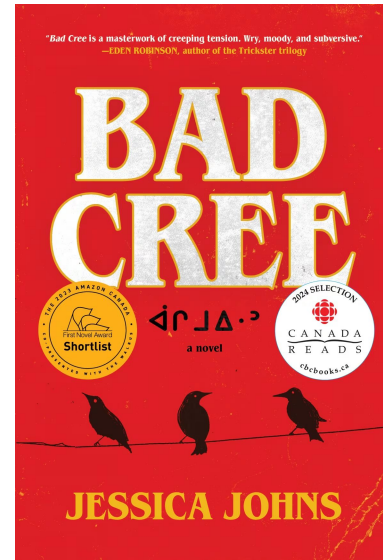
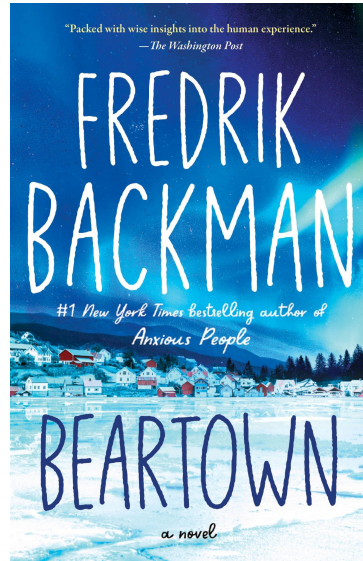
Brainstorming: How might you include inquiry in your classes?

Idea #3

Inspo: Book Club on books with multiple POV

Inquiry: How is our understanding enhanced by seeing more than one perspective?

Product: Create your own short story, screenplay, film short, or comic with two narrative perspectives.



From Inquiry to Agency

The Authentic Critical Inquiry Framework

I have a question.



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