

CURRICULUM SUGGESTIONS FOR *MY SIDE OF THE RIVER*

Unit Overview

Grade Level: High School (Grades 9–12)

Duration: 2 Weeks (10 class periods)

Main Themes: Identity, Immigration, Resilience, Family, Voice

Standards Aligned: Reading Informational Text, Writing, Speaking & Listening, Critical Thinking

Unit Goals

- Analyze the author's purpose, tone, and message
 - Explore complex themes like identity and immigration
 - Connect personal experiences to the memoir
 - Collaborate and present findings through a culminating group project
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WEEK 1

Day 1: Introduction to the Memoir & Immigration Background

- **Objective:** Understand the genre of memoir and learn about U.S. immigration context.
 - **Activities:**
 - Hook: Watch a video interview with author <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlh9YfuHF38> (14 mins)
 - Class discussion: What is a memoir? How does personal truth impact us?
 - Pre-reading reflection: “What does ‘home’ mean to you?”
 - **Homework:** Read Chapters 1–2 and annotate for first impressions.
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Day 2: Family & Displacement

- **Objective:** Identify how family and deportation shape Elizabeth's early life.
 - **Activities:**
 - Group reading/discussion of Chapters 1–2
 - Small group question circles (e.g., How does fear affect Elizabeth's family?)
 - Vocabulary review: displacement, deportation, instability
 - **Homework:** Read Chapters 3–4 and highlight examples of sacrifice.
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Day 3: Identity & Belonging

- **Objective:** Explore dual identity and what it means to belong.
 - **Activities:**
 - Journal: "Have you ever felt like you didn't belong? How did you respond?"
 - Group discussion on cultural expectations and bilingual experiences
 - T-Chart: American vs. Mexican identity in Elizabeth's life
 - **Homework:** Read Chapters 5–6.
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Day 4: Resilience and Education

- **Objective:** Analyze how education serves as a coping mechanism and opportunity.
 - **Activities:**
 - Read aloud and discuss Elizabeth's experiences with school
 - Mini-lecture: Barriers to education for immigrant students
 - Watch this video about barriers to education:
<https://youtu.be/VzUr36Di1-M?si=RZxnuljKXXHeaOyK>
 - Exit Slip: 1 word that captures Elizabeth's resilience + short explanation
 - **Homework:** Read Chapters 7–8.
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Day 5: Close Reading + Textual Analysis

- **Objective:** Conduct a close reading of a key passage and explore author's tone.
 - **Activities:**
 - Model annotation of a passage on the river or separation
 - Small group analysis using the T.E.X.A.S. structure
 - Introduce **Final Group Project** (see below for details)
 - **Homework:** Begin brainstorming group project ideas
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WEEK 2

Day 6: Finding Her Voice

- **Objective:** Evaluate how Elizabeth transitions from silence to advocacy.
 - **Activities:**
 - Read & discuss Chapters 9–10
 - Quote scavenger hunt: Find lines where she reclaims her voice
 - Group brainstorm: How can we advocate in our own communities?
 - **Homework:** Begin working on group project (initial outline due Day 8)
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Day 7: Writing Workshop – Literary Analysis Paragraphs

- **Objective:** Write an analytical paragraph with evidence from the text.
 - **Activities:**
 - Mini-lesson on T.E.X.A.S. paragraph structure
 - Students write a response to: “How does Elizabeth demonstrate resilience?”
 - Peer feedback and revision
 - **Homework:** Polish paragraph for submission
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Day 8: Group Project Work Day

- **Objective:** Collaborate on creating your final project.
 - **Activities:**
 - Groups finalize ideas and begin building presentations, posters, or products
 - Teacher circulates for guidance and feedback
 - **Homework:** Prepare project for presentations
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Day 9: Group Presentations

- **Objective:** Present understanding of memoir themes through a creative lens.
 - **Activities:**
 - Each group presents their project (7–10 minutes)
 - Peer feedback sheets + brief reflection after each group
 - **Homework:** Write individual reflection on project process
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Day 10: Unit Wrap-Up & Reflection

- **Objective:** Reflect on learning and connect to real-world implications.
 - **Activities:**
 - Memoir exit survey: What stuck with you? What surprised you?
 - Final group discussion: “What does Elizabeth’s story teach us about America today?”
 - Turn in reflections and final assignments
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Final Group Project (50 Points Total)

Title: *“Across the River: Telling the Story of Identity, Family, and Hope”*

Goal: Create a multimedia or creative project that captures one or more central themes from the memoir.

Options:

- **Short Documentary/Video (3–5 min)**
Highlight one major theme through interviews, narration, and visuals.
- **Visual Timeline**
Track key events in Elizabeth’s journey with images, quotes, and commentary.
- **Podcast Episode (5–7 min)**
Discuss a theme from the book with scripted interviews or a roundtable format.
- **Art & Poetry Exhibit**
Create original art pieces (drawings, digital, mixed media) and poems inspired by her story.
- **Advocacy Campaign**
Design a real or mock campaign inspired by Elizabeth’s story (poster, slogan, call to action).

Grading Breakdown (50 pts)

Criteria	Points
Clear understanding of theme	15 pts
Use of textual evidence/quotes	10 pts
Creativity and originality	10 pts
Team collaboration	10 pts
Presentation skills	5 pts

Reflection Component (Optional Bonus 5 pts)

Each student writes a 1-paragraph reflection on their role and what they learned.