

# Insight Humanities™

The curriculum landscape is so often riddled with false choices: deciding between a content-based approach or explicit reading instruction, planning backward from authentic projects or demonstrating mastery on external assessments. Lavinia Group is thrilled to launch an integrated K-5 humanities curriculum that rejects these dichotomies, the **Insight Humanities™** program.

Insight Humanities™ is an inquiry-driven, results-based approach that dramatically improves literacy achievement for all kids by teaching reading and writing in the context of cohesive social studies content. Drawing upon world-class multicultural texts, authentic learning tasks, and field trips, the **Insight Humanities™** program addresses the transferable habits of reading, writing, and thinking called for by both rigorous literacy standards and the National Standards for History.

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“Insight Humanities has been a game changer for our school. Children are learning how to read and write in the context of learning history. But it’s not a history that is disconnected from them. It’s a history which includes and is reflective of them. It is the first truly culturally responsive curriculum I have ever seen in my 28 years as an educator. The work is highly sophisticated and challenges both our teachers and students to reach higher and think more critically about how history is shaped by the perspective of who is telling the story. The Lavinia team has done an incredible job presenting a balanced and honest accounting of history. Equally important has been their careful attention to text selection. My teachers have never been as excited and energized by anything as they have been with Insight.”

Kevin Tallat-Kelpsa – Principal, Harlem Village Academies

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## Why Insight Humanities™ ?

### Insight Humanities™ blends reading, writing, and history content seamlessly.

In **K–5**, the Insight Humanities™ program teaches core history content through literacy and project-based learning. Our scope and sequence applies an “expanding environments” approach, starting with the localized study of family and community in Kindergarten and expanding both back in time and outward to a global scale by Fifth Grade. Units are designed to develop both content knowledge and strong reading and writing habits across grades. All units are thematically linked to the content focus throughout the year and work backward from inquiry-based essential questions. To do so, units incorporate:

- Whole-class **Read Aloud, Shared Novel™ and Close Reading**
- **Reading Lessons**, with robust dedicated time for independent reading and application
- **Writing Lessons**, including authentic genre immersion and a focus on quality writing through robust shared writing, independent writing, and revision
- Authentic individual and group **project work** that reflects student mastery of key content in each unit
- **Field trips** or in-class guests and presentations that bring the topics students study in their classroom to life through experiential learning

### It’s comprehensive and teacher-friendly.

Our curriculum includes detailed unit overviews and scripted daily lessons, making it easy for teachers and leaders to implement with a high level of quality and consistency. From read alouds to project-based lessons, we take the guesswork out of planning to free teachers up to intellectually prepare by engaging with the rich literature and content in each unit.

### It reflects principles of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Our scope and sequence and content selections were intentionally designed using culturally responsive principles and practices. Across our units, we:

- Select **diverse authors and books** which provide affirming mirrors that reflect students’ experiences as well as windows into people, places, and periods that are new.
- Organize our scope and sequence around **community and social justice-oriented themes**, or the “Content Focus,” in each grade.
- **Disrupt the “single story” of history**. Our history-driven units highlight topics and narratives that are often marginalized, teaching a more complete and balanced history.
- Include **robust world history studies** to instill students’ connection with and empathy for the shared human experience across cultural contexts.
- Provide daily lesson plans that incorporate essential elements of culturally responsive teaching and learning, including time spent on robust **whole-class, small group, and partner discourse**, honoring **student choice** during independent reading and project work, and infusing structures for **collaboration and learning partnerships**.

### It supports English Language Learners.

Our unit design intentionally supports English Language Learners. Specifically, we:

- Incorporate robust opportunities for **group and partner discussion** allowing students to practice their oral speaking skills,
- Give students access to information in **various modalities**, such as text, diagrams, maps, etc.
- Create opportunities for students to learn and keep track of **content-area vocabulary**.
- Teach students how to **organize their thinking visually** using reading and writing notebooks and, where appropriate, additional graphic organizers for notes and writing.
- Include partner reading and read aloud work so students are able to **hear models of fluent reading** and discuss their ideas with classmates.

## Unifying Themes by Grade Level

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Our K-5 scope and sequence begins with a “here-there-then” approach, orienting Kindergarten students to reading, writing, and social studies through a focus on the things closest to them. Anchored around a unifying focus on fostering “empathy and identity,” Kindergarteners study their own identity, families here and around the world, and diverse school communities throughout the past and present in their nonfiction units. In fiction units, students build the foundation for strong reading and writing through emergent storybook reading and storytelling, author studies, and a poetry immersion.
- 1

In Grade 1, our scope and sequence broadens to study how people have organized themselves in communities in different times and places worldwide. Through content-driven nonfiction units, first grade students study the knights and castles of medieval European communities, the incredible diversity of American Indian communities, and then how these worlds combine in their study of Mexico. In fiction-focused units, first graders engage in an author study centered on the works of Alma Flor Ada and study multicultural fairy tales and poetry from around the world.
- 2

In Grade 2, we continue to build on our community studies in K-1 by introducing students to the diverse people who have contributed to the cultural heritage of the United States. Oriented around this content focus, nonfiction units introduce second graders to the Northeast Indians and early colonization, the contributions and experiences of generations of American immigrants, and the cultural achievements and legacy of the Harlem Renaissance. Literature-driven units further develop the grade-level theme of diversity through a series book immersion drawing from the works of Nikki Grimes, Patricia McKissack, and Judy Blume, as well as a study of folklore from around the world.
- 3

In Grade 3, students explore the origins of our country’s democratic values and how individuals and movements fought to expand the rights of citizenship, equality, and justice over time. Third grade nonfiction units introduce students to the promises and contradictions of the American Revolution, then how abolitionists and suffragettes expanded that promise, and, finally, how the Civil Rights movement made real our national rhetoric about “liberty and justice for all.” In fiction units, third graders deepen their study of equality and justice through literature, with novel studies focused on understanding the characters in stories through the lens of social justice through books like *One Crazy Summer* as well as a poetry unit inspired by the Harlem Renaissance and contemporary spoken word.
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In Grade 4, students will continue to expand their study of history from the United States to a broader, global perspective centered around a content focus on “humanity and multiculturalism.” Fourth graders use their nonfiction units to travel backwards in time to the origins of human societies and study the core characteristics of civilization, including culture, government, and social organization, across the ancient empires of Egypt, Greece, and China. In fiction-focused units, students deepen their understanding of author’s craft through a study of Kadir Nelson and his work and dive into subsequent units that further develop concepts of character and perspective and expose students to elements of mythology from different cultures around the world.
- 5

Our world history scope and sequence provides a balanced immersion across major regions and cultures. In Grade 5, students will continue to develop ideas about multiculturalism and humanity, shifting the focus of study from the ancient to the medieval world. Fifth grade students engage in nonfiction units about the Islamic Golden Age and the great medieval empires of Africa and Asia in order to develop a connection with and empathy for the shared human experience across time, place, and cultural context. Fiction-focused units further develop this grade-level theme of multiculturalism and humanity through novel studies set in diverse global contexts, including *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, *The Night Diary*, and *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*.

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