



every child  
is capable of  
greatness



**WIT &  
WISDOM<sup>®</sup>**

*Getting Started Guide*  
Grade 6 Module 1

## Getting Started

This Getting Started Guide provides contextual information as you review the sample *Wit & Wisdom*® lesson. Follow along as we explore the contents of the lesson and learn how students gain content knowledge and develop skills in reading texts, writing, speaking, and listening.

## More Meaningful Language Arts Instruction

*Wit & Wisdom* is a knowledge-building K–8 curriculum that has transformed English language arts (ELA) instruction in classrooms across the nation. Great Minds® believes that classrooms are places where students and teachers encounter wit, wisdom, wonder, rigor, and knowledge, and that literature, history, art, and science all have a place in ELA instruction. *Wit & Wisdom* helps students build rich layers of knowledge. Our learning design inspires teachers and students to experience complex texts and ideas on a deeper level by fostering the questioning spirit that will shape the next generation of great writers, thinkers, and leaders.

## Understanding *Wit & Wisdom*

The [Wit & Wisdom Implementation Guide](#) helps educators bring the curriculum into their classrooms. The guide provides a detailed map of the resources built into the curriculum and offers advice on how to prepare to teach each module. We'll highlight some of the information covered in the Implementation Guide to help you explore *Wit & Wisdom* Grade 6 Module 1.



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## Guidance Built into *Every Lesson*

Our teacher-writers crafted *Wit & Wisdom* to provide students with a knowledge-building learning experience while giving teachers support in every module to facilitate the learning. Examples of supports include the following:

- Getting Started videos for teachers
- [The Teacher Resource Pack](#)
- Preparation Protocols
- Scaffold, extension, and differentiation notes
- Point-of-use Teacher Notes
- Multilingual Glossaries
- [Curriculum Overview for Families](#)
- Teacher Edition appendices resources

## Building Knowledge Through Complex Texts

*Wit & Wisdom* teacher-writers identified texts and topics that will build students' knowledge of key topics in history/social studies, science, literature, and the arts. These topics and associated texts increase in complexity across the year and vertically across grade bands. Students build knowledge across diverse disciplines throughout each of the modules in Grade 6.

### Grade 6 Module Topics and Texts



**Module 1:**  
*Resilience in the Great Depression*



**Module 2:**  
*A Hero's Journey*



**Module 3:**  
*Narrating the Unknown*



**Module 4:**  
*Courage in Crisis*

What students learn in one lesson, an arc of lessons, a module, and a grade level prepares them for the next lesson, arc of lessons, module, and grade level. Each experience builds on the previous one, so students establish strong background knowledge.

## A Map to the *Learning*

*Wit & Wisdom* modules are organized around a compelling topic, an **Essential Question**, a curated set of texts, and a series of **Focusing Questions** that build students' knowledge and skills and prepare students for the module's culminating assessment—the End-of-Module (EOM) Task. Modules are written in a careful horizontal progression, each one building on the previous one through routines, content knowledge, skills, developmental appropriateness, and rigor. Each module is designed to support educators with the introductory Module Overview, which reviews the module's focus, organization, and elements.

For a snapshot of Grade 6 Module 1: *Resilience in the Great Depression*, head to the **Module Overview**. The overview sums up the student learning goals, provides insights on previous knowledge students will use in this module, shows where in the curriculum students will use this module's learning to build new layers of understanding complex knowledge, lists the core texts and topics students will examine, and finally lists the standards this module will address.

## Diving into a *Lesson*

### Grade 6 Module 1: *Resilience in the Great Depression*, Lesson 19

The module we've selected gives Grade 6 students the opportunity to observe uplifting narratives of the Great Depression that support powerful themes of transcendence and transformation: people who weathered hard times, and broke in some ways because of them, but nevertheless picked themselves up. In your sampler, you will find a copy of *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse. This text captures the themes of suffering, struggle, and survival. This lesson we will be walking you through shows how *Wit & Wisdom*'s rigorous grade-level tasks allow all students to productively engage with complex texts that offer a range of information.

The image displays two overlapping screenshots of a digital curriculum interface. The left screenshot shows the 'Module Summary' page, which includes a poem titled 'The way I see it, hard times aren't only About money, Or drought, Or dust, Hard times are about losing spirit, And hope, And what happens when dreams dry up.' Below the poem is a summary of the Great Depression and a list of navigation options: Module Overview, Module Summary, Essential Question, Suggested Student Understandings, Texts, Module Learning Goals, and Module in Context. The right screenshot shows the 'Lesson 19' overview page, which includes a 'FOCUSING QUESTION: LESSONS 17-21' (What sustained people's spirits during the Great Depression?), a 'TEXT' (Out of the Dust, Karen Hesse, pages 10-33), and a 'CRAFT QUESTION: LESSON 19' (Examine and Experiment: How do I incorporate...). Below this is a 'SUMMARY' section, 'MATERIALS' (Hessels 194 Figurative Language and Imagery in Literature, Harcourt 198, Sufficient Evidence, Chart paper and markers), and an 'Agenda' with three items: Welcome (5 min.), Launch (5 min.), and Learn (50 min.).

## Achieving the *Standards*

*Wit & Wisdom* integrates practice with the reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills students need in Kindergarten through Grade 8 to prepare for the demands of future study and ultimately for college and their careers. All reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language standards appear as Focus Standards in one or more modules, where they are explicitly taught, repeatedly practiced, and formally assessed. You can see a full list of the Focus Standards and Continuing Standards under **Standards** in the **Module Overview**.

## Art in *Context*

We recognize that visual art is a universal and essential form of expression and communication, accessible to all learners. Each *Wit & Wisdom* module provides multiple opportunities for students to engage with significant works of art, such as paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, architecture, and photographs. *Wit & Wisdom* teacher-writers chose each work to inspire students to grapple with broader concepts related to each module's knowledge story. In Module 1, students analyze Dorothea Lange's photograph, *Migrant Mother*, and consider how viewing this photograph in a newspaper might have impacted readers.



*Migrant Mother*, Dorothea Lange

# Text-Dependent Questions

In all grades of *Wit & Wisdom*, students learn how to read, access, and analyze complex texts by working through a sequence of five Content Stages: Wonder, Organize, Reveal, Distill, and Know.

Each lesson begins and ends with a Content Framing Question that provides an overarching learning purpose for the text-dependent tasks and **text-dependent questions (TDQs)** in the lesson. The Content Framing Questions align with the Content Stages for close reading and follow a repeating structure. Framing each lesson with familiar questions helps students build the habits of mind they need to become independent close readers. The discussions, text-dependent tasks, and TDQs in each Content Stage serve a distinct purpose, illuminating key close-reading approaches.



**WONDER:** Students generate their own observations and questions, forming an initial impression of the text.



**ORGANIZE:** This stage ensures literal comprehension of the text's characters, events, and setting and the historical facts upon which it is based.



**REVEAL:** Readers focus intently on different and unique aspects of the text, such as language choice, literary devices, or structure and analyze how each element affects meaning.



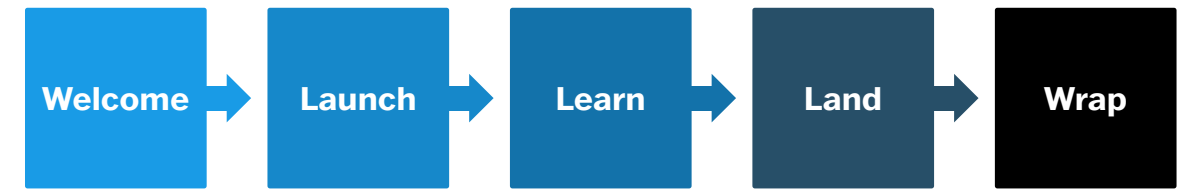
**DISTILL:** Students express the central ideas or themes of the text and determine how key aspects of the text support these ideas and themes.



**KNOW:** Students articulate how a text builds their knowledge, and they expand their knowledge by connecting the text to other texts and topics of study.

In Lesson 19, the Content Framing Question asks what does Hesse's use of figurative language and imagery reveal about Billie Jo?

All *Wit & Wisdom* lessons organize student learning in the same five sections followed by a **Deep Dive**:



## Grade 6 Module 1 Lesson 19

Lesson Section	Time	Description
Welcome	5 min.	Students engage in an activity that prepares them for the lesson's learning. The class will build on the previous lessons by having students.
Launch	5 min.	The teacher introduces the lesson's <b>Content Framing Question</b> : Reveal: What does Hesse's use of figurative language and imagery reveal about Billie Jo?
Learn	50 min.	Through a variety of instructional routines and tasks, teachers support students as they engage in productive struggle with their peers. Students will collaboratively work to identify examples of figurative language and imagery in <i>Out of the Dust</i> and incorporate textual evidence to support their writing.
Land	15 min.	The teacher facilitates student responses to the <b>Content Framing Question</b> .
Wrap	5 min.	The teacher assigns students the homework task of reading pages 37-51 of <i>Out of the Dust</i> and completing one Web Catcher for characters and one Web Catcher for setting.
Deep Dive	15 min.	Using examples from the core text, students accomplish the vocabulary learning goal of determining both the figurative and literal meanings of the words <i>dazzled</i> and <i>brewing</i> .  The Deep Dive is divided into three sections: Launch, Learn, and Land. These sections align with the core lesson structure and provide predictability for teaching and learning.
<b>Total Lesson Time = 90 min.</b>		

## Volume of Reading

In addition to core and supplementary texts, the curriculum includes a list of Volume of Reading texts. These are literary and informational texts that teachers can use for additional classroom instruction and that students can select for independent reading. *Wit & Wisdom* Volume of Reading texts help students of all abilities expand their knowledge of each module topic. [View the full Volume of Reading titles for each grade.](#)

## Multimedia Learning Approach

Great Minds gives students varied access points to learning in each module. Lessons include ways for teachers to incorporate media and create digital learning experiences to engage students in exploring module concepts. For example, in Module 1 Lesson 14, students listen to *It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got That Swing* by Duke Ellington and Irving Mills and complete a handout where they note down when they hear an instrument that matches the description from the text.



## Assessing Knowledge and Understanding

*Wit & Wisdom* provides five major types of assessments.

Assessment	Frequency	Type	What Does It Assess?
Check for Understanding	1+ per lesson	Formative	Lesson-level learning goal(s)
Focusing Question Task	3–6 per module	Formative or summative	Module learning goals for knowledge, reading, writing, speaking, and/or language
New-Read Assessment	2–3 per module	Formative or summative	Transfer of reading and/or language module learning goals to a new text or a portion of text focused on a topic that has been introduced
Socratic Seminar	2–3 per module	Formative or summative	Module learning goals for knowledge, speaking, and language
End-of-Module Task	1 per module	Summative	Module learning goals for knowledge, reading, writing, speaking, and/or language

For more information about the structure and design of major assessments in Grade 6 Module 1, look for the **Major Assessments** section under the **Module Overview**.

**Major Assessments**

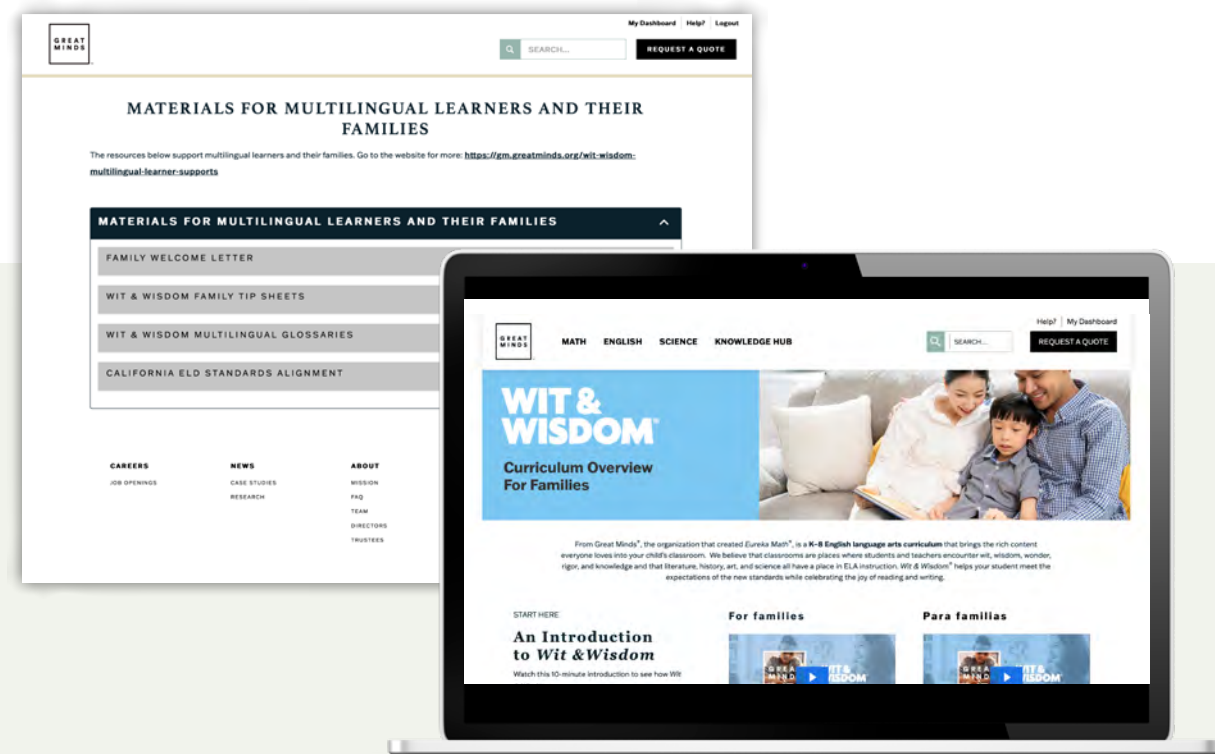
Focusing Question Tasks	Elements that Support Success on the EOM Task	Standards
1. Write a To-SEEC paragraph in which you explain what makes Bud a survivor. FQT 1 FQT 1 PDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate an understanding of events and Bud's character.</li> <li>Develop an idea using well-selected evidence from the novel.</li> <li>Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate for the task and audience.</li> </ul>	RL.6.1, RL.6.3, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.5
2. Write two To-SEEC paragraphs in which you explain two hardships people faced during the Great Depression, citing evidence from <i>Bud, Not Buddy</i> and "Hoovervilles." FQT 2 FQT 2 PDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an idea using well-selected evidence from the novel.</li> <li>Draw on multiple pieces of evidence to support analysis.</li> <li>Use appropriate transitions between ideas.</li> <li>Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate for the task and audience.</li> </ul>	RL.6.1, RL.6.3, RL.6.4, RL.6.5, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.9, L.4.3, L.4.4, L.4.6
3. Write a To-SEEC mini-essay (an introduction and two body paragraphs) in which you explain how Bud has been transformed by his journey. FQT 3 FQT 3 PDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze how Bud's responses to events in the text contribute to change in his character.</li> <li>Develop a mini-essay with an introduction and two supporting paragraphs using transitions.</li> </ul>	RL.6.1, RL.6.3, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.9, L.4.3, L.4.4, L.4.6

## Enhanced Supports for Multilingual Learners

The Multilingual Learner Resources are research-aligned supports to boost grades K-5 multilingual learners' experience with *Wit & Wisdom* and can be found within the collection for each grade in the Digital Teacher Edition. Each resource includes:

- Multilingual Learner Resource Module Map, which lists the lessons and their supports in module sequence
- Overview of module learning and alignment to WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) and ELP (English Language Proficiency) standards
- Lesson-specific supports for each literacy strand: reading, writing, language, and speaking and listening; existing supports are listed first, followed by new recommendations.

The **Materials for Multilingual Learners and Their Families** resource found on the teacher dashboard invites families and caregivers of multilingual students to participate in their learning. Supports include multilingual glossaries for each grade, Welcome Letters, and Family Tip Sheets in multiple languages.



## Engaging Learners and Boosting Literacy

At Great Minds, we strongly believe that every child is capable of greatness, especially when they're given access to engaging, knowledge-building instructional materials. For a deeper dive into the learning design behind *Wit & Wisdom*, check out the free Teacher Resource Pack or get in touch with your Great Minds representative.

## Professional Learning From Trusted Colleagues

For schools and districts adopting *Wit & Wisdom*, we offer professional learning opportunities crafted by our team of teacher-writers. We've developed two tracks of learning, one for teachers and one for leaders. Our *Wit & Wisdom* Fellows, a cohort of seasoned *Wit & Wisdom* educators, also provide guidance and share their expertise on different platforms, from blogs and social media to digital and in-person training. Through ongoing support, we will help you effectively implement the curriculum and grow in confidence as you learn to lead your *Wit & Wisdom* classroom.



Please contact your Great Minds representative to access the digital *Wit & Wisdom* resources.