

***The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls**

English Language Arts, 11th Grade

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Jeannette Walls begins her memoir with a scene from adulthood. While in a cab in New York City, Jeannette looks out the window and sees her mother dumpster diving. She ducks down in her seat to avoid being recognized, but later invites her mother to lunch to talk about how she can help. Mom insists that she and Dad like being homeless and admonishes Jeannette for being ashamed of her own family. From here, Jeannette's narration goes back in time to her very first memory. At three years old, Jeannette lives in a trailer park with Mom, Dad, her older sister Lori, and her little brother Brian. Jeannette's tutu catches fire while she cooks hot dogs over a stove, and her mother rushes her to the hospital for an emergency skin graft. After six weeks in the hospital, Dad smuggles her out without paying the bill. Back at home, Jeannette goes back to cooking unsupervised and starts playing with matches. The book goes on to recount the unconventional, poverty-stricken upbringing Jeannette and her siblings had at the hands of their deeply dysfunctional parents. The title refers to her father's long held intention of building his dream house, a glass castle.

CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM

The following are some, but not all, of the connections to curriculum for this novel.

- **Unit 1: Language and Perspective**

- Essential Questions: How do texts reflect society both historically and linguistically? How can crafting your story reflect personal identity?

- **Unit 3: Universal Human Experience**

- Essential Questions: How does sustained inquiry of the past inform and motivate change? How do we prepare for an uncertain future?

- **Unit 4: Personal Responsibility**

- Essential Questions: How can we challenge and develop our perspective on a real world issue? How can I use my voice to create an impactful contribution?

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. W.11.5
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information. W.11.6
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes. W.11.12
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. W.11.3
- Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text. RL.11.2
- Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant. RL.11.6
- Demonstrate knowledge of foundational works of American and world literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics. RL.11.9
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading. RL.11.10
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. W.11.4
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. RL.11.12
- Read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems. RL.11.13
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. RI.11.11
- Read and comprehend grade-level appropriate nonfiction literature. RI.11.13
- Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data. SL.11.2