

Grade 4

Unit 3: Contemporary Fiction: Letters from Heaven



Use the Interactive Read-Aloud lesson and text on the following page to kick off this unit with your students.

Unit-Level Essential Question

How can a story's literary elements help readers make inferences about characters, themes, and messages in the story?

Lessons 1–4

Guiding Question: How do you determine a theme of a story?

Writing Prompt: What themes appear in the excerpts you have read so far? Use details from the text to support your response.

Lessons 5–6

Guiding Question: How and why do authors use sensory and figurative language in their writing?

Writing Prompt: How does the author's use of sensory language and figurative language in *Letters from Heaven* enhance the reader's understanding of the story?

Lessons 7–10

Guiding Question: How do characters and their relationships change in a story?

Writing Prompt: How did Celeste's grandmother's letters contribute to changes in both Mami and Celeste? How did the letters impact their relationship?

Lessons 11–13

Guiding Question: How can we identify the author's purpose for writing and their message(s) in a story?

Writing Prompt: What is the message that the author is trying to convey in *Letters from Heaven*? How is this supported by what the characters learned in the story?

Unit 3 Culminating Activity

The themes of relationships and food emerge throughout the story *Letters from Heaven*. Do you think Celeste will continue to use food as a way of keeping her friends and family close to her throughout her life? Write a short narrative that picks up the story twenty years later, when Celeste is a young woman. In the scene, show whether she has continued her grandmother's traditions and learned from the lessons her grandmother taught her.