

HIGH SCHOOL | BLUE VALLEY DISTRICT NOVEL RATIONALE

Educated by Tara Westover

English Language Arts, 11th Grade

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Educated is a personal memoir, retelling the upbringing of author Tara Westover in rural Idaho. Tara grows up with a fundamentalist Mormon father seized by paranoia that the world will soon end and the government is surveilling them, resulting in him withdrawing them from any public life, including school or even visiting the doctor. Tara's father insists his children (Tara is the youngest of seven) work with him in their junk yard, often endangering their lives to collect scraps for cash. When another of her brothers defies the family and seeks a formal education, Westover determines to follow suit. She begins educating herself and, against all odds, is admitted to Brigham Young University. Westover's world rapidly expands, and she eventually enters a PhD program at Cambridge University followed by a fellowship at Harvard. As an adult, Westover struggles with a sense of self-worthlessness, inadequacy, and insecurity—as well as the consequences of breaking away from her family. Her refuge is her education and the new relationships she forges. For Westover, education is not linked simply to texts and knowledge; it is about personal growth, self-acceptance, and coping with the inevitable triumphs and tragedies of life.

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?" and "How can crafting your story reflect personal identity?"
- **Unit 2: Complex Issues**
 - Essential Questions: "How does written language challenge and change an individual's mind?" and "What role does the writer play in challenging and changing an individual's mind?"

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text. RI.11.2
- 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. RI.11.10
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including

**based on BV School District Curriculum adopted Fall 2020*

- determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. RI.11.1
- Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text. RI.11.3
 - Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging. RI.11.5
 - Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text. RI.11.6
 - Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. and world texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy. RI.11.8
 - Analyze foundational documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features. RI.11.9