

# THE COLOR OF COURAGE

## A BOY AT WAR: THE WORLD WAR II DIARY OF JULIAN KULSKI

**EDUCATORS' GUIDE**

Prepared by Kathleen Odean

Includes  
**DIGITAL  
EXTRAS!**

Foreword by Lech Wałęsa, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Introduction by Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Chief Rabbi of Poland



Winner GOLD & SILVER  
2015 Benjamin Franklin Awards  
Interior Design & Autobiography/Memoir



## FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear Educator —

*The Color of Courage* is the remarkable diary of a boy soldier in World War II. Powerful in its storytelling and imagery, this diary stayed with me long after I finished reading it—I know it will do the same for you and your students.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Lech Wałęsa wrote the Foreword for the book, calling *The Color of Courage* “a superb lesson of humanity.”

In his Introduction, the Chief Rabbi of Poland says that Julian’s diary is “an inspiring read,” and concludes: “*The Color of Courage* is for everyone—but particularly young people, as they are maturing and searching for meaning in life and for the strength to stand up for what is good and meaningful.”

Julian Kulski was a 10-year-old Boy Scout in Warsaw when the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939 to begin World War II. His diary chronicles his experiences over the next six years of war. He wrote it when he was a 16-year-old army veteran during the summer of 1945, as doctor-prescribed therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Julian’s words are enriched in this book by more than 150 photos and illustrations, 13 maps, and 11 “Digital Extras,” which are short videos that we created from original historical film and audio material. This multimedia element really brings Julian’s story to life in an unprecedented way.

The book also includes a detailed Index, as well as an Historical Horizon section titled “Poland in World War II: A Brief Summary” to help place Julian’s experience in its broader context. Finally, the Discussion Questions at the end of the book augment those contained in this Educators’ Guide—and raise thought-provoking points, such as the Germans’ use of the classic two-part strategy of totalitarian regimes for subjugating the populace: information control and physical force, which the First and Second Amendments of the U.S. Constitution were enacted to guard against.

I hope you will enjoy reading and teaching from *The Color of Courage*. I’d love to hear from you with your feedback, suggestions and experiences as you introduce this material to your students, many of whom may have family members who served in World War II. Please email me at [info@aquilapolonica.com](mailto:info@aquilapolonica.com)

Best regards,



Terry Tegnazian  
President  
Aquila Polonica Publishing



## The Color of Courage

Soon after the Germans occupy Poland, Julian begins waging his own private war with small acts of sabotage. At age 12, he is recruited into the clandestine Underground Army by his Scoutmaster, and begins training in military tactics and weapons handling. At 13, he accompanies his commander on a secret mission into the Warsaw Ghetto to liaise with Jewish resistance leaders. The following year, he is arrested by the Gestapo, imprisoned, beaten, interrogated and sentenced to Auschwitz, but released in a devious German plan to follow him to find his commander. At 15, Julian fights in a Commando unit in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising and is taken prisoner by the Germans. He ends the war as a 16-year-old German POW, finally risking a dash for freedom onto an American truck instead of waiting for “liberation” by the Soviets.

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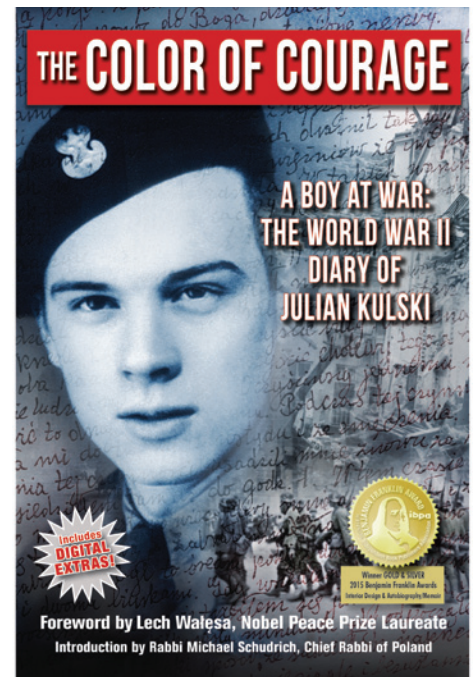
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Nonfiction • History • World War II  
 ISBN 978-1-60772-015-7 (Hardcover, \$29.95)  
 ISBN 978-1-60772-016-4 (Trade Paperback, \$19.95)  
 496 pages 6" x 9"  
 More than 150 photos, maps and illustrations,  
 plus 11 groundbreaking Digital Extras,  
 contextualizing historical material, 2 Appendices,  
 Discussion Questions and Index.

### THE COLOR OF COURAGE



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[www.polww2.com/CourageTrailer](http://www.polww2.com/CourageTrailer)



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# THE COLOR OF COURAGE

by Julian Kulski

## Pre-Reading

Before reading *The Color of Courage*, have one or more students read the preface aloud to the class. Then hold a discussion for students to share their knowledge of World War II, the German occupation in Europe, and specifically the role of Poland in the war. Extend the discussion to Kulski's comments about the "inhumanity of the period" and "the triumph of the human spirit over oppression and terror" (p. xxiii), having students connect the concepts to their knowledge of the war.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.2, 11-12.2; SL.9-10.1, 11-12.1

## Discussion Questions

1. Re-read the poem that opens the book and discuss its connection with the story and with the deeds of Kulski and his compatriots. Is courage in wartime different than courage during peacetime? What is the meaning of honor during war and during peace?

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RH.9-10.2, 11-12.2

2. In addition to the preface, the beginning of the book offers an introduction by the Chief Rabbi of Poland, a foreword by Lech Wałęsa, and a publisher's note. Read each section carefully and discuss its impact. How do these sections prepare the reader for the book? How do they add to the power of Kulski's story for those unfamiliar with Polish history in World War II and before?

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.1, 11-12.1

3. *The Color of Courage* is written in a diary format. Compare a diary format to a straight chronological narrative which is more typical of historical works. What are the advantages of each? How different would the reading experience be if this were a traditional narrative? Discuss possible structures other than chronological that Kulski could have used for the book, and what impact a different structure might have had.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.5, 11-12.5; RH.9-10.5, 11-12.5

4. Kulski often quotes from speeches, newspapers, and various documents of the time. For example, between pages 111 and 115, he quotes from Winston Churchill, the *New Warsaw Courier*, and the soldier's oath. Find other examples of primary documents and discuss what they add to Kulski's narrative.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RH.9-10.1, 11-12.1

5. The design has clear headings for each day and date, and chapter titles across the top of each page. In what ways, if any, does the design help the reader? Discuss the significance of chapter titles and why the chapters each cover a year instead of a shorter period of time. What is the impact of having his age included in the chapter headings? Analyze the use of pull-out quotes throughout the book and how they affect the reader.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.7, 11-12.7; RH.9-10.5, 11-12.5

6. How do the photographs and maps supplement the narrative? Choose five photographs and analyze what they add that isn't explicit in the text in terms of information, emotion and a sense of the people involved. Choose one map and discuss what aspects of it are related to details in the narrative. How different would your reading experience be without the photos and maps?

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.7, 11-12.7; RH.11-12.7



Author, age 10, with his family.

**“If there is  
going to  
be a war,  
I do not want  
to miss it.”**

— Julian Kulski, age 10



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7. In the course of the diary, Kulski goes from age ten to age sixteen. Discuss the ways that he changes during that time, using specifics from the diary entries. What does he lose and what does he gain during those years? Compare that time for him to your own experience of growing up at those ages.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.3, 11-12.3

8. Describe Julian Kulski's father, his work and some of the conflicts he faces as an official under the German occupation. How does Julian's relationship with his father evolve over the course of the book? Give specific examples from the text to back up your response.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.3, 11-12.3

9. An important figure in Kulski's life is his Scoutmaster, Ludwik Berger, whom he calls a "born leader" (p. 108). Describe Berger, his role in the war, and how he changes over the years of fighting. How is he important in Kulski's life and especially in the boy's involvement as a soldier?

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.3, 11-12.3

10. Kulski writes about girls and women, including his mother, who were important to him during this period. What happened to his mother during the six years? What other girls and women mattered to him? Find examples in the book of the roles females played in the Underground.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RH.9-10.1, 11-12.1

11. The Underground Army became central to Kulski's life when he was twelve. Describe how he was trained and what kind of resistance work he did both for the army and on his own. Discuss small examples like sabotaging street signs and larger ones like fighting in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. What were the dangers involved?

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.1, 11-12.1

12. In trying to secure weapons, Kulski and a friend killed a German soldier (p. 227). As a consequence, twenty civilians were rounded up and killed by a German firing squad two days later. Kulski and his friend risked their lives for the cause but others ended up paying the price. Discuss the morality of this situation and talk about other examples from the book of war harming innocent people.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.2, 11-12.2

13. One important aspect of German occupation was their control of the media to further their own propaganda. A striking example is the use of an outdoor screen (pp. 195–196) at a public square to broadcast a propaganda movie. Find other examples and discuss why controlling the news and other forms of information (such as libraries, newspapers and radios) was so vital to the Germans.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.1, 9-10.2, 11-12.1, 11-12.2

14. The book ends with a moving epilogue in which Kulski briefly describes his life after the war. Discuss how his wartime experiences influenced his future and his attitude towards life. How does the epilogue put his sacrifices in perspective? Discuss the quote from Browning in relationship to what Kulski expresses.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.2, 11-12.2



## Vocabulary

As the violence in Warsaw worsens, the diary increasingly uses words connected to conflict, war, and resistance. For example, the following words and phrases appear in the first ten pages of Chapter 5. Define these words based on their context and check unfamiliar ones in a dictionary, or find another section of the book and analyze the new vocabulary in it.

- oppression (p. 167)
- reprisals (p. 168)
- sabotage (p. 168)
- collaborator (p. 169)
- detachment (p. 169)
- Underground (p. 169)
- pseudonym (p. 170)
- sentries (p. 170)
- couriers (p. 171)
- liberating (p. 172)
- extermination (p. 173)
- foreign legions (p. 174)

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.4, 11-12.4; RH.9-10.4, 11-12.4



## Digital Tie-Ins

A tenet of the Common Core English Language Arts Standards is to compare and contrast different ways of presenting the story or information. As a class, watch online interviews with Julian Kulski (<http://www.polww2.com/CourageAuthorInterviews>). Have students jot down differences between getting some of the same information through the book and through the videos. Hold a class discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the two mediums in this case and in general.

In a related activity, have students watch some of the Digital Extras listed throughout the book. Have each student choose one of the videos and write a short paper on its relationship to the narrative, addressing what it adds to the written text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.7, 11-12.7; W.9-10.4, 11-12.4; SL.9-10.1, 9-10.2, 11-12.1, 11-12.2; RH.11-12.7

## LIST OF DIGITAL EXTRAS

### Chapter 1 – 1939

*Warsaw Will Rebuild!*  
Warsaw Mayor Stefan Starzyński  
Radio Address  
September 17, 1939

*Siege: World War II Begins*  
Excerpt from the 1940 Academy  
Award-nominated newsreel

*Warsaw Surrenders*  
September 1939

*German Victory Parade*  
Warsaw  
October 5, 1939

### Chapter 2 – 1940

*Adam Czerniaków*  
Warsaw Ghetto  
May 1942

### Chapter 5 – 1943

*Katyń Forest Massacre:*  
*German Propaganda*  
April 1943

*Katyń Forest Massacre:*  
*Masked Man Testifies*  
U.S. Congressional Committee  
February 1952

### Chapter 6 – 1944

*1944 Warsaw Uprising:*  
*Polish Underground Army*  
*Radio Broadcast*  
Excerpts  
August 24, 1944

*1944 Warsaw Uprising:*  
*Poles Surrender*

*1944 Warsaw Uprising:*  
*German Propaganda*

*1944 Warsaw Uprising:*  
*American Report*

**DIGITAL  
EXTRAS!**

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[www.polww2.com/GermanVictoryParade](http://www.polww2.com/GermanVictoryParade)

### GERMAN VICTORY PARADE

Warsaw  
October 5, 1939



[www.polww2.com/MaskedMan](http://www.polww2.com/MaskedMan)

Katyń Forest Massacre:

### MASKED MAN TESTIFIES

U.S. Congressional Committee  
February 1952





## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

In his preface and in an interview, Julian Kulski explains that after the war, he suffered from what is now known as PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder. Have students research PTSD, starting at the Veterans' Administration website (<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/basics/index.asp>), which includes a history of PTSD. Have students break into small groups and focus on one aspect of PTSD, such as its manifestation in different wars, its symptoms, its treatment, and so on. The groups can report back to the class on their findings.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:SL.9-10.1, 11-12.1

## Research Projects

*The Color of Courage*, which focuses on six crucial years, mentions many topics about Poland and history without discussing them in detail. Have students individually or in pairs choose a topic from the list below or another topic mentioned in the book. They should compile information from the book, then conduct research using several other books and digital resources such as the internet or databases. The project should require a written report, and culminate in a spoken presentation to the class that includes multimedia.

- Polish heroes
- Polish history
- Lech Wałęsa & Solidarity
- WWII – European Theater
- WWII – Pacific Theater
- The Holocaust
- WWII POW camps
- Warsaw Ghetto
- Soviet Union in WWII
- Soviet Takeover of Poland
- Cold War
- Ukraine in WWII



Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.7, 11-12.7; W.9-10.1, 9-10.2, 9-10.7, 9-10.8, 11-12.1, 11-12.2, 11-12.7, 11-12.8; SL.9-10.2, 9-10.4, 9-10.5, 11-12.2, 11-12.4, 11-12.5



## Dear Mr. Kulski

How does Julian Kulski's journal and his experiences in the war relate to the world today? Have each student write a letter to the author about what lessons they see in *The Color of Courage* that apply to their lives. Have them also write about what they think they would have done in his position or if our country were occupied by an enemy power.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: CCSS:RI.9-10.2, 11-12.2; W.9-10.2, 9-10.4, 11-12.2, 11-12.4

**“I can't say  
I really want to die,  
but I can see now  
that there are times  
when one has  
to be prepared to  
do just that.”**

— Julian Kulski, age 12



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## AUTHOR BIO



**Julian E. Kulski**, born in 1929 in Warsaw, Poland, is descended from a 19th century Chief Rabbi of Warsaw, Dov Beer Meisels, and an 18th century King of Poland, Stanisław Leszczyński.

After the war, Kulski studied architecture in England and the U.S., receiving his B.Arch. in 1953 and M.Arch. in 1955 from Yale University, and a Ph.D. in Urban Planning in 1966 from the Warsaw Institute of Technology. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (FAIA) (an honor bestowed upon less than 2 percent of American architects) and a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).

Now semi-retired from a distinguished architectural career, Kulski led the urban and regional planning programs at Notre Dame University and at George Washington University, and later established the first city planning program at Howard University. For twenty years he served as a consultant to the World Bank, traveling around the world designing buildings in twenty-nine developing countries.

Kulski has authored several books, published more than a hundred articles in professional journals, and produced an award-winning documentary about World War II, titled *Legacy of the White Eagle*. Kulski is a frequent speaker to audiences ranging in age from junior high school to adult.

The recipient of numerous decorations awarded by the Polish government, Kulski lives in Washington, D.C. with his wife.

### Further Reading

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Hitler Youth: Growing up in Hitler's Shadow*. Scholastic Nonfiction, 2005.

Fiedler, Arkady and Jarek Garlinski. *303 Squadron: The Legendary Battle of Britain Fighter Squadron*. Aquila Polonica, 2010.

Giblin, James Cross. *The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler*. Clarion, 2002.

Jopek, Krysia. *Maps and Shadows: A Novel*. Aquila Polonica, 2010.

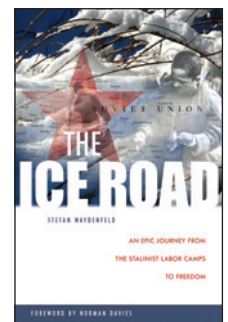
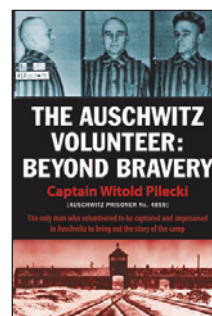
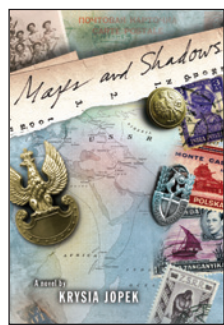
Karski, Jan. *Story of a Secret State: My Report to the World*. Georgetown University Press, 2013.

Michener, James A. *Poland*. Dial Press (reprint edition), 2015.

Langer, Rulka. *The Mermaid and the Messerschmitt: War Through a Woman's Eyes, 1939-1940*. Aquila Polonica, 2010.

Pilecki, Captain Witold and Jarek Garlinski. *The Auschwitz Volunteer: Beyond Bravery*. Aquila Polonica, 2012.

Waydenfeld, Stefan. *The Ice Road: An Epic Journey from the Stalinist Labor Camps to Freedom*. Aquila Polonica, 2010.



Guide prepared by **Kathleen Odean**, a nationally recognized expert on literature for young people. She was a librarian for 17 years and now gives all-day workshops on new books for teens and Common Core Standards. She reviews for *Kirkus Reviews*, *The Providence Journal*, and *Teacher-Librarian*. Kathleen chaired the 2002 Newbery Award Committee.



# COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ADDRESSED IN THIS GUIDE

## READING: INFORMATIONAL TEXT

### CCSS:RI.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

### CCSS:RI.9-10.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

### CCSS:RI.9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

### CCSS:RI.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

### CCSS:RI.9-10.5

Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

### CCSS:RI.9-10.7

Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

### CCSS:RI.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

### CCSS:RI.11-12.2

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.

### CCSS:RI.11-12.3

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.

### CCSS:RI.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist No. 10*).

### CCSS:RI.11-12.5

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.

### CCSS:RI.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

## WRITING

### CCSS:W.9-10.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

### CCSS:W.9-10.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### CCSS:W.9-10.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### CCSS:W.9-10.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

### CCSS:W.9-10.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

### CCSS:W.11-12.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

### CCSS:W.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### CCSS:W.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### CCSS:W.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

#### CCSS:W.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.



### SPEAKING & LISTENING

#### CCSS:SL.9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### CCSS:SL.9-10.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

#### CCSS:SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

#### CCSS:SL.9-10.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

#### CCSS:SL.11-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### CCSS:SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

#### CCSS:SL.11-12.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

#### CCSS:SL.11-12.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

### READING: HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

#### CCSS:RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

#### CCSS:RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

#### CCSS:RH.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

#### CCSS:RH.9-10.5

Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

#### CCSS:RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

#### CCSS:RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

#### CCSS:RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist No. 10*).

#### CCSS:RH.11-12.5

Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

#### CCSS:RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.