

Unit 1.1 • Stand Up For Yourself

Unit Overview

This unit focuses on characters who build up the self-confidence to stand up for themselves against bullying.

Unit texts

Bullying and self-confidence are the themes of this unit. Students begin the unit by reading “**Blackmail**,” a humorous short story set in the Latino community of Fresno, California, from the collection *Local News*, by Gary Soto. Next, they read *Middle School Confidential: Be Confident in Who You Are*, a nonfiction book with graphic novel text features. This text focuses on standing up to bullies and developing personal confidence. Finally, students read the novel *The Skin I’m In*, by Sharon Flake, a gripping first person novel about a dark-skinned African American girl who over time stands up to a “frenemy.”



Literature Used in Unit 1.1:

- *The Skin I’m In* by Sharon Flake
- *Middle School Confidential: Be Confident in Who You Are* by Annie Fox
- “Blackmail” from *Local News* by Gary Soto

Unit skills and topics

Literary analysis	• Narrative arc in fiction • Characterization • Using and citing evidence from a text
Reading comprehension	• Summarizing and clarifying as components of Reciprocal Teaching • Using 5 Ws (who, did what, when, etc.) as a scaffold for summarizing • Previewing nonfiction using table of contents, index, and illustrations
Decoding	• Identifying base words and chunking compound words • Pronouncing consonant blends
Debate	• In <i>The Skin I’m In</i>, who has the power—Maleeka or Charlese?
Fluency topics	• Identity, self-esteem, bullying, peer pressure, stereotypes, skin color, “drama,” social dynamics, role models, Together for Latinas, poverty and other stressors, “snitching,” the “It Gets Better” project
English language development	• Summarizing most important aspects of information (orally and in writing) • Interpreting figures of speech in context to make inferences about character