

Unit 2.1 • Bearing Witness

Unit Overview

In this unit, students consider the meaning of justice, the importance of bearing witness to acts of injustice, and whether bearing witness can be a form of justice.

Unit texts

The unit's nonfiction text, *The Murder of Emmett Till*, provides background knowledge on Emmett Till's life and murder, and the important contributions his story made to the Civil Rights movement. *A Wreath for Emmett Till* offers a response to this tragedy in poetry. The unit novel, *Ghost Boys*, is an engaging magical realist text about a young African-American boy who is shot by a White police officer in modern-day Chicago. His ghost then meets the ghost of Emmett Till. The novel explores themes of race-based violence, justice and bearing witness.



Literature Used in Unit 2.1:

- *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes
- *The Murder of Emmett Till* by Henrietta Toth
- *A Wreath for Emmett Till* by Marilyn Nelson

Unit skills and topics

Literary analysis	• Analyzing interrelation of character, plot and setting • Comparing and contrasting a fictional portrayal and a historical account of the same event
Reading comprehension	• Summarizing and clarifying as components of Reciprocal Teaching • Using 5 Ws (who, did what, when, etc.) as a scaffold for summarizing • Using and citing evidence from a text
Decoding	• Identifying base words and chunking compound words • Recognizing and chunking words with a base plus a prefix or suffix
Debate	• What could bring justice for Jerome?
Fluency topics	• Trayvon Martin, Jim Crow, the KKK, Civil Rights, Tamir Rice, the South Side of Chicago, Peter Pan, polio, the Negro Leagues, anti-Semitism, Day of the Dead, Thurgood Marshall
English language development	• Orally and in writing, summarizing most important aspects of information • Understanding figurative language and figures of speech in context