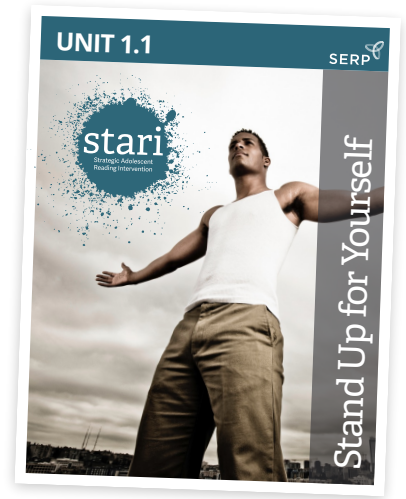


Dear Families,

In STARI, we will be using **Unit 1.1: Stand Up for Yourself**. This unit focuses on characters who build up the self-confidence to stand up for themselves against bullying.



Which books will students read?

Students begin the unit by reading the short story “Blackmail,” a humorous short story set in the Latino community of Fresno, California, from the collection *Local News*, by Gary Soto. This story introduces the themes of bullying and standing up for yourself with a shorter, simpler text than a full novel.



Next, students read *Middle School Confidential: Be Confident in Who You Are*, a nonfiction book with graphic novel text features. Students will practice nonfiction reading skills, while building background knowledge to support their comprehension of the unit novel. The graphic novel format of this text allows serious topics (like bullying and developing personal confidence) to be presented in a lighter way.

Finally, students read *The Skin I'm In*, by Sharon Flake, a gripping first person novel about a dark-skinned Black girl who over time stands up to a “frenemy.” *The Skin I'm In* has been a bestseller for over twenty years, and has won dozens of awards, including the Coretta Scott King award. Sharon Flake says that she wrote the book for her daughter, Brittany, because “I wanted her to feel good about the skin she was in.”

Which reading skills will students develop?

STARI applies the science of reading to upper grades (6+) by focusing on both word recognition and language comprehension. In this unit, students will:

- ▶ Build their **fluency skills** by engaging in repeated readings of leveled texts
- ▶ Build their **background knowledge** by reading nonfiction texts about identity, self-esteem, bullying, peer pressure, and other topics related to standing up for yourself
- ▶ Build their **decoding skills** by identifying base words, chunking compound words, and practicing reading consonant blends
- ▶ Build their **comprehension skills** by using the 5 Ws to summarize text, identifying and clarifying unfamiliar words in text, and using and citing evidence from a text
- ▶ Build their **literacy knowledge** by identifying elements of fiction (character, setting, plot) and tracing a narrative arc in fiction
- ▶ Build their **reading stamina** by silently and independently reading a full-length, age-appropriate novel, as well as several shorter texts
- ▶ Build their **motivation to read** by discussing and debating engaging topics, such as: Which character in *The Skin I'm In* has the power?

More about the Strategic Adolescent Reading Intervention (STARI) at serpinstitute.org/stari