

Burning Coal Theatre Presents

ART

January 27 - February 13, 2022

By Yasmina Reza, Directed By Ken Hinton
All Shows Are In-Person And Livestreamed



A STUDY GUIDE

PLOT SYNOPSIS

It all starts in Paris when Serge spends 200,000 francs (roughly \$38,100 in 1994, when the play was written. Roughly \$71,000 adjusted for inflation) on a painting by the obscure painter Antrios. The canvas is completely white, with several fine white lines on the canvas. The purchase is so controversial that it threatens to undermine a solid 15-year friendship between Serge, Marc, and Yvan.

Marc is largely dismissive of the painting, calling it “a piece of white shit.” Serge argues that it was worth the hefty price tag, due to the growing reputation of the artist, Marc is not convinced.

Both Marc and Serge confide in their mutual friend Yvan about the disagreement. Yvan, who is busy with an upcoming wedding but also having cold feet, does what he can to remain neutral. Yvan admits to Serge that he doesn't quite get the point of the painting, but is generally polite. On the other hand, he laughs with Marc about the high price tag, though rejects the idea that the painting is meaningless. His attempts to have it both ways essentially backfire, with both Marc and Serge taking him to task for his supposed “neutrality.”

When the three gather for dinner, an argument spins out of control, with each of the men using the painting as grounds to criticize the others over perceived failures. Marc skewers Yvan for his neutrality, and expounds about his weaknesses regarding his fiancée, in-laws, and his mother. Both Marc and Serge agree that Yvan should call off the wedding, which Yvan tries to deflect. Serge reveals that he despises Marc's girlfriend.

Marc is forced to admit that the painting is not so much the issue as the effect it has had on Serge, which is a new and growing sense of independence. Marc essentially feels abandoned by Serge as Serge has developed new taste, particularly in Modern arts. Though Marc feels that friends should strongly influence one another, Serge feels that this is a possessive approach to a relationship. Yvan finally breaks down in tears and admits that he tries the tolerant route because he values companionship over dominance, viewing their friendship as the only bright spot in a burdensome life.

Following this breakdown, things calm down. Serge allows Marc to deface the painting with a blue felt-tip pen, which Marc uses to draw a skier on one of the white lines. They agree to rebuild their friendship and clean the ink off the painting. Though Serge claims he did not know the ink to be washable, he later admits that he did and is troubled by the lie.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reza's was born in 1959 to a Russian-born Jewish engineer and a Hungarian Jewish violinist. Her father, though born in Russia, was living in France during the Nazi occupation of the country and was deported from Nice to the Drancy internment camp. Yasmina Reza began her career in the theatre by acting in several new plays, as well as classics.

Her first breakthrough came in 1987 when she wrote *Conversations after a Burial* which won the Moliere Award for Best Author. The United State premier of this play was at Players By the Sea in Jacksonville Beach, Florida in 2013. Her next play, *Winter Crossing*, won the 1990 Moliere Award for Best Fringe Production, while her followup *The Unexpected Man*, enjoyed numerous productions in New York and Europe.

He play *Art* premiered in Paris in 1994 and went on to win the Moliere Award for Best Author. It was translated by Christopher Hampton into English, winning the 1996 Laurence Olivier Award and Tony Award for Best Play. It has since been translated and performed in over 30 languages. At this time she also wrote for the film *See You Tomorrow*.

Reza published her first novel *Hammerklavier* in 1997, followed by another work *Une Desolation* in 2001. She moved to nonfiction in 2007 with *Dawn Evening or Night* about the campaign of Nicholas Sarkozy in France.

Also in 2007, her play *The God of Carnage* premiered in Zurich. It won the Nestroy Theatre Prize for the best German-language production of the season. It opened in London in 2008, winning the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Comedy. It premiered in New York in 2009 and won Best Play at the 2009 Tony Awards.

Throughout her career, Reza has collaborated with noted child rapist and director Roman Polanski. She first translated his stage adaptation of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, and then later she adapted her play *God of Carnage* into the screenplay *Carnage* in 2011. She has gone on record as saying "Theatre is a mirror, a sharp reflection of society. The greatest playwrights are moralists." However, she stated she felt there was nothing wrong with collaborating with Polanski.



MODERN ART & COLOUR FIELD PAINTING

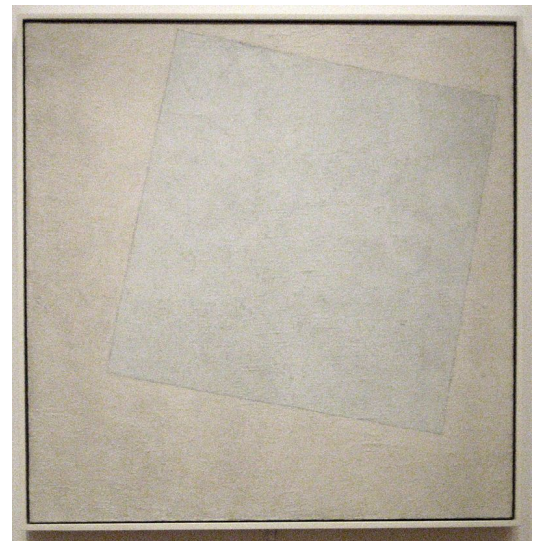
Though fictional, the painting by Antrios has a great deal in common with the scandal-plagued world for Modern Art in the Twentieth Century. Though, as a movement, Modern Art rejects tradition in favour of innovation and exploration, it has no shortages of masterpieces, many, if not most, of which are controversial for one reason or another. There has been a great deal of debate over the basic questions of “What is art?” and “What is good art?” to the point that massively fluctuating standards of judgment mean that one person's trash is another's treasure.

Perhaps one of the first pieces to trigger major debate regarding the nature of art is the piece known as *Fountain* by Marcel Duchamp. The work consists of a porcelain urinal signed “R. Mutt” and submitted to the 1917 show of the Society of Independent Artists. *Fountain* was not rejected by the society, as the rules explicitly stated that all work would be accepted from fee-paying artists, it never made it to the show area. It was then photographed in the studio of Alfred Stieglitz, but the original has been lost. Duchamp, who became known for such “readymades” argued that the work qualified as art because they are “everyday objects raised to the dignity of a work of art by the artist's act of choice.” This began a worldwide debate on the nature of art and the value which people give to it. *Fountain* proved to be incredibly influential for a new generation of artists, to the point that Duchamp authorized the creation of eight replicas, which now reside in museums around the world.



Around the same time Duchamp was upending urinals (and the art world), painted Kasimir Malevich was experimenting with color block and monochromatic painting. His *White on White*, consisting of an off-white square off center on a white background, was intended to express a “distilled feeling” so intense that it went beyond pictorial painting. In the 1950's and 60's painters such as Robert Ryman (sometimes considered inspiration for the play's “Antrios”) painted such surfaces for his entire career.

Though monochromatic paintings and painting using color fields dates back to at least 1882, the color field movement was particularly prominent around the 50's and 60's in New York and other major cities. “Color Field Painting” made use



of solid colours in simple geometric patterns and featured works by artists such as Barnett Newman, Kenneth Noland, Jack Bush, and Clement Greenberg (who preferred the term post-painterly abstraction). Artist Mark Rothko is also identified with this movement.

In regards to art, and life, there is a Latin phrase: *De gustibus non est disputandum*. "In matters of taste, there can be no dispute." Modern art puts this definitely to the test, as often these works have been either revered, or even outright attacked, both in the critical press and in quite literal, physical ways. As one example, the Barnett Newman painting *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue III* was attacked in Amsterdam by Gerard van Bladeren in 1986. *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue IV* was attacked in 1982 by Nikolaus Kleer, who viewed it as a "perversion of the German flag." Just as with the Antrios in *Art*, a simple painting can inspire wildly different responses.



Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue III



Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue IV

COMPANY BIOS

Byron Jennings (Actor, Marc)

Byron is excited to be returning to the stages of Burning Coal! Previous credits include Bruce in "The Normal Heart," Colin Powell in "Stuff Happens, and the one-man show, "Until the Flood (all with Burning Coal Theatre Company), Coalhouse Walker, Jr. in NC State University Theatre's production of "Ragtime," Henry Drummond in Justice Theatre Project's "Inherit the Wind," Lopakhin in Little Green Pig's "Cherry Orchard" Othello in Bare Theatre's "Othello," and Williamson in Deep Dish Theater's "Glen Garry Glenross." All of the thanks and love to supporters of local theater. We are grateful that you continue to stick with us and support us through such a difficult time.

Preston Campbell (Actor, Serge)

Preston is thrilled to be returning to the Burning Coal Theatre Company in this production of Art. Preston is a Raleigh native who received his Bachelor of Arts in Drama from UNCG. Preston has appeared in theatre productions across the Raleigh area such as, A Raisin in the Sun at Raleigh Little Theatre, Coriolanus with Bare Theatre, and Psycho Beach Party at Theatre in the Park. Preston was last seen on the Burning Coal stage in their Second Stage Series production of the one-person show, Nine Lives. His previous Burning Coal credits include Camelot, Ashe in Johannesburg, The Normal Heart, and The Royale.

Juan Isler (Actor, Yvan / Sound Designer)

Juan Isler, a native of Kinston, NC, grew up singing and earned a music-business degree at Winston-Salem State University in 1993. He worked as a deejay before coming to Raleigh, where he got a job as technical director at what is now Spectrum News in 2004. He has worked on more than 50 plays in venues across the Triangle on both sides of the stage, as actor, technician and director. He is the resident sound designer at Justice Theater Project. He also serves on various boards, NRACT and Beltline To Broadway and is on the core leadership committee at Pure Life Theater. He is an active member of the American Theater Critics Association and a recipient of the Raleigh Arts Commission's Medal of Arts award. He is the host of the show "TORN," where he is one of the public faces of the online hub Beltline To Broadway (beltlinetobroadway.org, formerly RDU On Stage). All of this, while working as event coordinator at NC State University.

Kenneth Hinton (Director)

Asst. Professor Kenneth Hinton is an educator, Actor, Stage & Video Director, and playwright. Mr. Hinton earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Radio/TV/Film from California State University, Long Beach and a Masters of Art in Dramatic Art from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Mr. Hinton currently teaches theatre at North Carolina Central University and the Artistic Director of Agape Theatre Project. Directing credits include: "You Ain't My Daddy," by Ken Hinton, Chris Glover, "Steal Away" by Ramona King, "The Amen Corner" by James Baldwin, "Anatomy of a Woman Abused" by Jason McMillian "Ceremonies in Dark in Old Men" by Lonne Elder "Trouble in Mind" by Alice Childress.

Acting Credits: Cast as Mr. Roberts "The Watsons go to Birmingham," Durham Regional Theatre : Cast as Ozelle Graham in the play "Wise Ones" at the University of North Carolina, Sonya Haynes-Stone Center, Cast as Randolph in the Sam Art-Williams play "Dance on Widow's Row" at the Raleigh Little Theatre.

I want to thank Jerry Davis for this opportunity to direct this phenomenal play and work with this amazing cast and crew.

Amelia Lumpkin (Assistant Director)

Amelia graduated from Davidson College with a BA in Theatre and minor in Arabic. For an all-around theatre maker, arts administrator, and performer, this show marks her professional directing debut. In the past, she directed *Cloud Tectonics* and *The Purple Flower* at Davidson, site-specific one act plays for Channel Dance at Fort Point Theater Channel. She has collaborated as a theatre teacher or administrator for youth theatre programs with Choate Rosemary Hall, Davidson Community Players, The Justice Theater Project, Raleigh Little Theater, The Theater Offensive, and her elementary school students during five years of teaching. Her study abroad in Bolivia inspired *Canela, Café or Chocolate*, a bilingual play she wrote, directed, designed, and performed alongside members of *Saya Mauchi* about the black experience in Bolivia. You can check out her other current projects: *We Are Proud...* at The Justice Theater Project opens in February and *Assigned Female at Birth*: a web series about some bodies has two seasons available to watch for free on YouTube.

Cynita Lew (Production Stage Manager)

Cynita graduated from East Carolina University with a BFA in Theatre Arts - concentration in Stage Management. She has worked as a contracted Stage Manager for the past 5+ years. She's worked on shows such as; *Lion*, *Witch*, and *the Waredrobe*, *Ken Ludwig's Baskerville*, *This Wonderful Life* and *As You Like It* at Raleigh Little Theatre, *Leaving Eden*, and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* with Rhinoleap Productions, and *Little Mermaid Ballet*, and *Aladdin Ballet* with Greenville Civic Ballet. At Burning Coal she has worked on *Forever*, *Until the Flood*, *Nine Lives*, and *Girls and Boys*. She's excited to bring a comedy to this stage with this fun group of actors. In her free time she enjoys cosplaying, modeling, and binge watching TV series.

Emily Johns (Assistant Stage Manager)

Emily is a Meredith College graduate with a B.A. in Theatre. She recently designed props and worked as an ASM on *The Road to Mecca* at Burning Coal. Her other shows with the company include, *Forever* and *Girls and Boys* as an ASM. She has also worked with many theatre companies around the triangle, including Cary Players' costume design of *It's A Wonderful Life: Alive* Radio play and the tours of *The Band's Visit*, *Aint Too Proud*, *A Christmas Story*, *Les Miserable*, *Cats*, *A Bronx Tale*, *Aladdin*, *Charlie*, and *the Chocolate Factory*, *Anastasia*, and *Miss Saigon*. She hopes you enjoy the comedic timing of the cast (and Crew even, lol!) in this production of *Art*.

John Capetanos (Assistant Stage Manager)

John Capetanos is thrilled to be back with Burning Coal on ART, previously assisting on shows like "The Weir," "Ashe in Johannesburg." "The Container" and "Evita".

Courtney Pisano (Assistant Stage Manager) For Burning Coal Theatre: *Evita*, *A Hundred Words For Snow*, *Talley's Folly*, *Camelot*, *Oakwood Series* (2019, 2018, 2017, 2016), *KidsWright* (2018, 2013, 2009), *The Great Celestial Cow*, *Ashe in Johannesburg*, *The Weir*, *As You Like It*, *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, *Shape of the Table*. Courtney is a Burning Coal Company Member, and graduated from UNC Chapel Hill with a degree in Media Production – Go Heels! She would like to thank the squirrels in her backyard, because they jump in the bird bath and make her laugh.

Davyous Melvin (Assistant Stage Manager)

Davyous is a music theatre student at William Peace University. He enjoys doing onstage work with theatre and also backstage! He plans on pursuing audio engineering/ sound design once he graduates, and work within the theatre industry!

Joel Soren (Scenic Designer)

Joel Soren is a theatrical director, technical director, and designer of lighting, sound, costumes, projections, props and scenery. He has also been a production manager for NYU and Paul Taylor Dance Co. Joel has designed work in spaces ranging from inhabited studio apartments to the New York Hall of Science as well as off-broadway and off-off broadway in NYC (Playwrights Horizons, Dixon Place, HERE, The Flea, The PIT). Joel recently transplanted to NC and is happy to return as a scenic designer for the Burning Coal Theater. (BFA: NYU)

Meredith Riggan (Scenic Charge Artist).

Meredith is a North Carolina based artist and is excited to be returning to Burning Coal Theatre Company for the production of ART. She has previously painted for Burning Coal in the productions of Roaf to Mecca, I and You, Evita, 9 lives, Boys & Girls, Housecleaning Part 2 -Conversations I Always Wanted to Have, A Hundred Words for Snow, Tally's Folly, Camelot, The Container, The Great Celestial Cow, Ashe in Johannesburg, The Weir, Stuff Happens, King Charles III, Normal Heart, Peter Pan and Wendy, Darkside, The Royal, Heizenberg , Written on the Heart, Skylight, SPOONFACE STEINBERG, The Wiz, and Good. After receiving her Bachelor's Degree in Scenic Art from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Meredith has worked as the Scenic Charge Artist at several theatres around North Carolina including William Peace University, Half Pint Theatre, Sweet Tea Shakespeare, Triad Stage, City Arts-Greensboro Children's Theatre, The Winston Salem Theatre Alliance, ECU Loessin Playhouse, along with several freelance jobs such as repairing sculptures for the Greensboro Children's Library and painting custom pet portraits through her business, Riggan Originals.

ColeTrain (Shop Dog "Paint Assistant").

ColeTrain is excited to be a part of another production at Burning Coal Theatre. He has been "assisting" his Scenic Artist Mom in several theatres since he was 7 weeks old. He has no formal training in Scenic Art, but will retrieve a paint brush occasionally. He is great at supervising projects, looking cute, and tries to leave a paw print on every set. ColeTrain is a 10/10 good boy.

Greg Osbeck (Technical Director/ Master carpenter/ Properties construction)

Burning Coal Theater King Charles the III, Stuff happens,The Weir, Ash in Johannesburg, The Great Celestial Cow,The Container, Camelot, Tally's Folly, The road to Mecca. Sass Institute (Set construction, Scenic Painting) Temujin, 20,000 Leagues under the sea, Dark side of the Moon. Miss North Carolina Scholarship Pageant (Set design, Construction, Scenic painting, Technical Director). Office of the President of the United States of America (Set construction) Camp Lejeune 2002 speech. Raleigh Little Theater (Set design,Scenic painting) Godspell. Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts (Master carpenter, Scenic painting) Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer. International Focus (Sight coordinator, Master carpenter) The International Festival of Raleigh. Dickens Pen and Ink (Sight coordinator/ Master carpenter/ Scenic artist) Dickens Fair. Education: Graduate of Ringling School of Art and Design with a major in sculpture.Courses in painting, print making,figure drawing, color theory. self taught scenic painter, faux finisher, welder.

Matthew E. Adelson (Lighting Designer)

Previously for Burning Coal: Nine Lives, Girls & Boys, Conversations I Always Wanted to Have, Selene and the Dream Eater, ACCORD(ing), Talley's Folly, The Container, Churchill's Shorts, Ashe In Johannesburg, Iphigenia in Splott, Darkside, The Greek Trilogy, Written On The Heart, Dark Vanilla Jungle (London/Cockpit), Spoonface Steinberg, The Iron Curtain Trilogy (Raleigh and London/Cockpit), The Diary of Anne Frank, Ruined, Shining City, The Shape of the Table, The Seafarer, The Prisoner's Dilemma, Inherit The Wind, Pentecost, Einstein's Dreams (1998 and 2006), Miss Julie, James Joyce's The Dead, The Man Who Tried To Save The World, Travesties, The Doll's House, and Romeo and Juliet. Matthew is the Production Manager for the Five College Dance Department (Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Smith and the University of Massachusetts Amherst) and is a graduate of the Yale Drama School.

David Ray (Video Trainer)

David is a videographer and editor from Raleigh, NC. A graduate from the University of North Carolina Greensboro in 2015, he is both an independent filmmaker and screenwriter. David also spent his first few years post graduation as a studio photographer, developing family portraits as well as photographs for all kinds of special occasions. When not in the world of cameras and digital media, David can be found enjoying outdoor activities, traveling or enjoying his favorite films and television shows.

Elena Montero Mulligan (Costume Designer)

Elena is so excited to be returning to Burning Coal. She is an alumna of Meredith College, holding degrees in Theatre and Biology. Her most recent projects at Burning Coal were acting in Evita this past summer and costume designing the Oakwood and History Plays this past fall. Previous costuming credits include designing Conversations I Always Wanted to Have (Burning Coal) and Little Women: a Holiday Tea 2017 (Women's Theatre Festival), and being Assistant Costume Designer of Suddenly Last Summer (Meredith College) in addition to many shows working on costume construction and half a lifetime of cosplaying. Some previous acting credits include Jo March in Little Women the Musical (North Raleigh School of Music) and Polpoch in Marat/Sade (Bare Theatre).

Katy Koop (Props Designer)

Katy Koop is a writer and theatre artist based in Raleigh that is currently pursuing a Masters in Technical Communication from NCSU. She most recently worked with Artist's Soapbox as a writer for Jesus Pancake and the Audio Drama Dangerous. She also recently did the Kennedy Center Playwriting Intensive as a member of the organization's first BIPOC cohort. Later this year, she will be working with Bulldog Ensemble Theater directing their production of Jiehae Park's Peerless. You can find more of her work at katykoop.com and on Twitter as [@katykoop](https://twitter.com/katykoop).

Pimpila Violette (Streaming Coordinator)

Pimpila Violette is a Durham based artist with a degree in Theater from UNC-Chapel Hill. She is currently a Virtual Technical Director with Women's Theater Festival of NC. Some of her favorite acting credits include: 5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche (Dale Prist), Two Gentlemen of Verona (Panthino/Outlaw), and The Wolves (#13). Pimpila spends her days working as a Standardized Patient or live-streaming on Twitch. Find her on all social media or catch her live [@PimpilaV](https://twitter.com/PimpilaV)!

Carry Vaughan (House Manager)

Carry has been with Burning Coal since 2013. She is a graduate of Appalachian State with a BS in Theatre Education and a BA in Creative Writing. Her most recent credits include Assistant Director for A HUNDRED WORDS FOR SNOW and I AND YOU.

Barry Jaked (Master Electrician)

Eric S. Kildow (Dramaturg).

For Burning Coal Theatre: Man of La Mancha, Brigadoon, As You Like It, Shining City, Good, Ruined, The Heretic, (Three Men) Tempest, Jesus Fund, Diary of Anne Frank, Fayetteville Street, Outrunning Bullets, ASYLUM, The Wiz, Blue Sky, Spoonface Steinberg, Oakwood, Skylight, Written on the Heart, Heisenberg, The Royale, Darkside, Peter Pan & Wendy, Normal Heart, King Charles III, Stuff Happens, Ashe in Johannesburg, The Container, Camelot, Poetry in Motion, Animal Farm, A Thousand Words for Snow, Conversations I Always Wanted to Have, Evita, I & You, The Road to Mecca, Art. Eric is Associate Professor of Theatre at Kent State University in Ohio and works as a freelance dramaturg & director. As an artistic associate of the London-based Loitering With Intent Theatre, he presented the devised work TurnRight/TurnLeft: A Manual for the End of the World at the Fleet Street Theatre in Hamburg, Germany. He is a member of the Stage Directors & Choreographers Society, Literary Managers & Dramaturgs of the Americas, Lincoln Center Director's Lab and Burning Coal Company of Artists.

NC STATE EDUCATION STANDARDS

The state of North Carolina values the skills and competencies of Arts education due to their applicability to other disciplines. These productions are designed to give your students exposure to the competencies and specific standards listed below.

This production and the related study materials will provide students with specific knowledge and skills to address the following Standard Course of Study Competencies and Objectives in the Theatre Arts.

- **COMPETENCY GOAL 1:** The learner will write based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history.
 - Grades 3-5
 - 1.02: Recognize the beginning, middle, and end of a story
 - 1.03: Infer lessons from multicultural stories, fairy tales, tall tales, legends, and myths.
 - 1.06: Refine reading comprehension by using verbal and non-verbal communication.
 - Grades 6-8
 - 1.01: Recognize and explain unique characteristics of the dramatic script such as dramatic structure and dialogue.
 - 1.04: Produce written, verbal, and visual responses to written and/or performed dramatic material.
 - 1.05: Identify themes and plots from multicultural literature.
 - Grades 9-12
 - 1.03: Compare and contrast play structure in relation to other forms of literature.
- **COMPETENCY GOAL 7:** The learner will analyze, critique, and construct meaning from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions.
 - Grades 3-5
 - 7.01: Build skills to critique self and others in a respectful and constructive manner.
 - 7.03: Convey personal reactions to various texts.
 - 7.05: Communicate emotions and thoughts evoked by performance.
 - 7.07: Suggest alternative characters, settings, or events after viewing or participating in a performance.
 - Grades 6-8
 - 7.01: Recognize and practice audience etiquette.
 - 7.03: Develop verbal, visual and written responses to works of informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions from various cultures.
 - 7.04: Express meaning perceived from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions.
 - Grades 9-12
 - 7.02: Develop and relate a world view of theatre in society.

- COMPETENCY GOAL 8: The learner will understand context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and present.
 - Grades 3-5
 - 8.04: Experience live or recorded performance
 - 8.05: Discuss the similarities and differences between live and recorded theatrical events.

Stuff Happens is also designed to address the following Core Curriculum Anchor Standards in Language Arts Literacy and Social Studies.

- Reading Anchor 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Reading Anchor 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- Writing Anchor 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- Writing Anchor 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.