

## Component Parts of a Thematic Unit:

1. **Theme:** Select an appropriate theme reflecting curriculum topics (text), student interests, experiences, issues, and/or problems. (See list of websites at the end of this document-for ideas.)
2. **Grade Level Appropriateness:** Use the Scope and Sequence matrices to find appropriate ASOL.
3. **Focus:** Develop a one-sentence focus statement that summarizes the direction and intent of the unit.
4. **Objectives:** Identify three or four specific objectives you wish students to master by the completion of the unit.
5. **Materials and Resources:** It is advantageous to determine all the necessary materials and resources after the unit has been written-so that you are not limited to a few familiar items.
  - a. **Printed Resources:** newspapers, pamphlets, notices, travel guides, junk mail, journals, diaries, letters, maps, advertisements, brochures, flyers, encyclopedias, dictionaries, magazines, booklets, and professional journals, etc.
  - b. **Computer and CD-ROM Resources:** Educational software, reference works, educational games and simulations related to curriculum, and CD-ROM adaptations of literature, etc.
  - c. **Internet Resources.**
  - d. **Audio/Visual Resources:** videos, films, filmstrips, movies, slide programs,-overhead transparencies, records, audio tapes, books and tapes, and CD's, etc.
6. **Community Resources:**
  1. guest speakers
  2. field trips
7. **Instructional Television Resources:**
  1. ETV
  2. Cable
8. **Literature Resources:**
  1. fiction
  2. non-fiction
  3. poetry
9. **General Activities:** Develop activities that are broad-based, covering the range of curricular areas and reflecting elements of a literature-based program.
10. **Discussion Questions:** Include a variety of open-ended questions that help students think about the topic in varied and divergent ways.

11. **Literature Selections:** See **Materials and Resources** above. Select age appropriate books related to the topic of each thematic unit from a variety of genres. For literature selections you may wish to develop a pre-reading activity, a variety of cross-curricular learning activities, and open-ended discussion questions.
12. **Culminating Activity:** The culminating activity engages students in a meaningful summarization of their discoveries and leads to new ideas, understandings, and connections. Ideas include: a video, interviews, power point, newspaper article, etc.
13. **Evaluation:** Select a variety of appropriate means of evaluating student progress and growth. Avoid relying on formal pencil and paper tests, making sure active student participation is documented. Ideas include: conferences, logs, and student journal writing, etc.
14. **Related Works of Literature:** Select books that relate to the theme and make these available for independent reading and reading aloud.

This Thematic Unit Model is based on those found in Chapter 13, "Literature and the Curriculum: A Thematic Approach," of *Legacies: Using Children's Literature in the Classroom* by Liz Rothlein and Anita Meyer Meinbach. HarperCollins College Publishers, 1996.

#### **Websites that provide ideas for thematic units:**

1. <http://www.theteachersguide.com/thematicunits.htm>
2. <http://atozteacherstuff.com/Themes/index.shtml>
3. <http://www.theteacherscorner.net/thematicunits/>
4. [http://www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/)

## THEMATIC PLANNING SHEET

1. **Theme:**
2. **Curricular Areas: Which curricular areas are being addressed?**
3. **Time Span:**
4. **General Goal(s) or Focus:**
5. **Specific ASOL to be addressed:**
6. **Classroom Management:** How will you meet individual needs and multiple learning styles? How will you adapt group activities for individual lessons? Places to consider delivering lessons (Story Corner, Math Station, Computer Station, Snack Time, Music & Songs, Art Station, PE / Movement / Dance, Multi-sensory Play Area)
7. **Critical Thinking Strategies:**

**8. Traditional Materials:**

- Books, Folk Tales:
- Songs, Chants, Poems:
- Props for Books, Songs, Dance:
- Supplies for Other Toys & Games:
- Manipulatives:
- Art Supplies:
- Snacks & Cooking Tools:

**• Low Tech Materials:**

- Ability Switches (#\_\_\_)
- Power Link &/or \_\_\_ switch latch/timer
- Voice Output Device:
- Battery-Operated Toys:
- Other Low-Tech Adaptations:

**• Computer Hardware:**

- Computer(s) (#\_\_\_)
- IntelliKeys (#\_\_\_)
- Switches (#\_\_\_)
- Printer
- Digital Camera
- Other:

**• Software:**

- BoardMaker V.6
- Classroom Suite
- Text to Speech Software
- Clicker Software
- Educational Software:
- Books on CD-ROM:
- iPad apps
- Other Software:

**Critical Communication and Functional Skills to Embed in Theme:**

**Supplemental Materials:**

**Testing for Student Understanding/Assessment(s):**

## Creating Cross-Curricular Thematic Lessons

As you design a thematic unit, take the time to assess its structure based on the following rubric. This will help you to produce quality instructional units designed to thoroughly integrate learning and meet the needs of your students.

### Thematic Unit Rubric

	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Exemplary 4	Score
Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no theme evident</li> <li>purpose is unclear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some attempt at a theme is evident but mostly unclear</li> <li>various discipline connections are weak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>theme is evident</li> <li>most disciplines are included</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>theme is clear;</li> <li>purpose of unit is clear</li> </ul>	
Focus Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no focus question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>focus question is too specific</li> <li>focus question oriented to one discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>focus question is broad but not necessarily real-world oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>focus question is broad, global</li> <li>focus question encourages exploration</li> <li>focus question applies to real-world issues</li> </ul>	
Instructional Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no goals or objectives listed</li> <li>unit not age appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>goals and objectives lack inter-discipline approach</li> <li>activities are age appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>goals and objectives based on standards</li> <li>objectives written in measurable terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>objectives integrate all disciplines</li> <li>objectives encourage higher order thinking skills</li> </ul>	
Materials & Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>textbooks serve as sole resource</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of print sources are made available to students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>inclusion of non-print resources is encouraged</li> <li>coordination among team members allocates resources effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students are encouraged to locate resources independently</li> <li>use of web resources is appropriate and effective</li> </ul>	
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activities are not clearly defined</li> <li>students are required to simply restate facts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activities focus on knowledge level of Bloom's Taxonomy</li> <li>students are not provided a choice in activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activities are project oriented</li> <li>activities draw upon several disciplines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activities provide for multiple intelligences</li> <li>activities encourage creative expression and problem solving</li> <li>activities can be student originated</li> </ul>	
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no evidence of evaluation for students or for the unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assessment is conducted only at the culmination of the unit</li> <li>assessment focuses on student performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assessment is a continuous processes throughout the unit</li> <li>assessment criteria developed with student input</li> <li>assessment correlates with unit objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students are encouraged to self-assess their participation and performance in the unit</li> <li>peer assessment is utilized with group activities</li> <li>team members share perceptions throughout the unit and modify as necessary</li> </ul>	

Information obtained from "Creating Cross-Curricular Thematic Units" by Patricia J. Terry