

When Things Pass Away

Unit Title: Exploring Change, Loss, and Growth Through Storytelling

Grade Level: 9-12

Duration: 3 Weeks (15 Days)

Theme: *Examining how personal, societal, and environmental changes shape identity, relationships, and resilience.*

Essential Questions:

1. What does *When Things Pass Away* reveal about human emotions and responses to loss and change?
2. How do different disciplines (literature, history, science, art, and music) interpret and process change?
3. What strategies help individuals and communities cope with transformation and adversity?
4. How can storytelling, technology, and artistic expression facilitate healing?

Common Core Standards Addressed:

English Language Arts (ELA)

- **RL.9-12.1:** Cite textual evidence to support inferences.
- **RL.9-12.2:** Analyze themes and their development over time.
- **W.9-12.3:** Write narratives with strong structure, character development, and themes.
- **SL.9-12.1:** Engage in discussions, integrating multiple perspectives.

Science

- **HS-LS2-7:** Investigate ecosystem changes and human impacts.
- **HS-ESS3-1:** Analyze how natural disasters shape human societies.

Social Studies

- **D2.His.14.9-12:** Evaluate historical responses to societal changes.

- **D2.Civ.2.9-12:** Investigate how communities address trauma and transformation.

Arts & Music

- **Anchor Standard 3:** Express meaning through creative arts.
 - **MU:Cr2.1.9-12:** Use music to convey complex emotions.
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Week 1: Personal & Societal Responses to Change



Day 1: Introduction & Literary Analysis (ELA, Social Studies)

Objective: Examine *When Things Pass Away* as a reflection of human responses to change.

1. **Discussion:** How do people react to loss and transformation?
 2. **Textual Analysis:** Identify passages that illustrate emotional and psychological growth.
 3. **Exit Ticket:** Write a 2-sentence response on how the book connects to personal experiences.
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Day 2: Personal Narrative Writing (ELA)

Objective: Write a reflective narrative on personal change.

1. **Brainstorming:** Use a "Life Timeline" to identify key transitions.
 2. **Mini-Lesson:** Structuring personal narratives with vivid imagery.
 3. **Drafting & Peer Review.**
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Day 3: Empathy Poetry & Spoken Word (ELA, Art, SEL)

Objective: Create an empathy poem reflecting a different perspective.

1. **Watch Spoken Word Performances (e.g., Sarah Kay, Rudy Francisco).**
 2. **Writing Exercise:** Choose a perspective (e.g., a grieving child, a displaced community, an aging tree).
 3. **Performance & Feedback.**
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Day 4: The Science of Grief & Resilience (Science, Psychology, SEL)

Objective: Explore the physiological and psychological effects of loss.

1. **Lecture & Discussion:**
 - Stages of grief (Kubler-Ross model).
 - Brain chemistry and stress responses.
2. **Lab Activity:** Heart rate and cortisol levels in stress scenarios.
3. **Reflection:** How does understanding science help with emotional resilience?

Day 5: Historical & Cultural Responses to Change (Social Studies, ELA)

Objective: Investigate how different cultures address grief and transformation.

1. **Research Topics:**
 - The Black Death's impact on European society.
 - Post-9/11 memorials and cultural shifts.
 - Indigenous perspectives on cycles of life and nature.
2. **Student-Led Presentations.**

Week 2: Art, Music, & Digital Storytelling

Day 6: Musical Interpretations of Change (Music, SEL, Technology)

Objective: Analyze and compose music reflecting transitions.

1. **Song Analysis:** Discuss themes in songs about change (e.g., "Landslide" by Fleetwood Mac; "The Times They Are A-Changin'" by Bob Dylan).
2. **GarageBand or Soundtrap Activity:** Students compose their own short instrumental track.

Day 7: Digital Storyboarding & Film Analysis (ELA, Art, Technology)

Objective: Create a digital storyboard exploring a personal or historical change.

1. **Film Clips:** Analyze movies like *The Pursuit of Happyness* or *Coco* for themes of loss and resilience.
2. **Storyboard Activity:** Use Canva or Storyboard That to plan an original short film idea.

Day 8: Role-Playing Real-World Scenarios (SEL, ELA, Social Studies)

Objective: Simulate counseling, teaching, and crisis response situations.

1. **Scenario-Based Role-Plays:**
 - A teacher helping a grieving student.
 - A community leader responding to disaster relief.
 - A journalist covering a community rebuilding.
2. **Debrief & Discussion.**

Day 9: Climate Change & Adaptation (Science, Social Studies, STEM)

Objective: Examine how communities adapt to environmental shifts.

1. **Case Study Analysis:**
 - Rising sea levels and coastal migration.
 - Wildfire recovery efforts.
2. **Design Challenge:** Create a sustainable rebuilding plan for a disaster-affected area.

Day 10: Letters of Reflection & Advocacy (ELA, SEL)

Objective: Write letters of support or advocacy addressing change.

1. **Choose an Audience:**
 - A future self-reflection letter.
 - A letter to a policymaker on grief education.
 - A note of encouragement to someone experiencing loss.
2. **Peer Review & Sharing.**

Week 3: Final Projects & Presentation

Day 11-12: Multimedia Expression of Change (Technology, Art, ELA)

Objective: Create a final project demonstrating understanding of transformation.

1. **Options:**

- Podcast Episode (recording an interview on overcoming hardship).
- Digital Collage (art representing personal/societal change).
- Short Film (2-5 min using personal stories or historical events).

Day 13: Photography & Writing (Art, ELA, Technology)

Objective: Express change through photography and reflection.

1. **Photography Walk:** Capture images symbolizing transformation.
2. **Write Accompanying Narratives.**

Day 14: Presentations & Peer Feedback

1. **Student Showcase.**
2. **Feedback & Reflection.**

Day 15: Final Reflection & Discussion

1. **Class Discussion:**
 - What has this unit taught you about resilience?
 - How can storytelling be a tool for healing?
2. **Final Writing:** Personal Manifesto on Change & Growth.

Assessment:

- **Narrative & Poetry Writing** (rubric-based).
- **Research Presentation.**
- **Music/Art/Multimedia Projects.**
- **Science & Social Studies Inquiry.**

