

DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CURRICULUM GUIDE

6th Grade Language Arts

**Approved
March 23, 2004**

DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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CURRICULUM GUIDE AUTHORS

Don Fiftal, Assistant Superintendent for Grades 6-12
Barbara Cross, Grade 6 Language Arts II, Middlesex Middle School
Barbara Gill, Grade 6 Language Arts I, Middlesex Middle School
Trisha Mears, Grade 6 Language Arts II, Middlesex Middle School
Eileen Pierce, Grade 6 Language Arts I, Middlesex Middle School

DATES

Board of Education Approval: March 23, 2004

Revision

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STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY – Language Arts I and II

Middlesex Middle School's 6th Grade Language Arts curriculum is designed to produce *independent learners* and to teach the skills of communication – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – in short, to make the student literate and fluent, and to do so in such a way that he learns to love the English language and has a maximum opportunity to develop his originality, creativity, and imagination. Language Arts is the instructional program that focuses on these components as interdependent and interrelated parts of the communication process.

The curriculum also seeks to teach the student to think clearly, perceptively, and critically, and to develop discriminating taste and sound judgment.

The goal for students of the Darien Language Arts program is threefold: to become effective language users; to become citizens who demonstrate their ability to critically think, read, write, speak, and listen proficiently; and to develop language fluency, not only in the school setting but also in the wider world.

Acquisition, development, and mastery of both basic and advanced language arts skills are a continuous process. Students attain higher levels of skill development in incremental stages. Measurable gains in language arts skills are realized when challenging language activities occur in meaningful contexts and through purposeful applications.

Armed, therefore, with the skills of communication, the ability to think, and a mature set of values, the student will be prepared to respond intelligently to change and to make a constructive contribution to society.

PROGRAM GOALS – Language Arts I and II

The overarching goal of the Darien Language Arts program is to produce students capable of demonstrating the highest levels of communication proficiency and fluency in reading, writing, speaking, viewing, and listening. Reading and writing, especially, go hand-in-hand, each reinforcing the other. Because learning is an active, creative, constructive, and often collaborative process, students must learn how to learn by using a variety of cognitive strategies. Students must learn to access and create meaning from content in texts and media, to make connections with and apply content in thoughtful and meaningful ways, and to retain the content for later use.

Basic Assumptions, Instructional Principles, and Teaching Strategies

- Students come to school with different levels of knowledge and skill upon which further learning will be based. While specific language skills are initially taught to all students through direct instruction, students acquire more sophisticated levels of communication through the integration of the five primary language arts components in a variety of interrelated and interdependent activities and experiences.
- When students are immersed in an atmosphere that supports a love of learning and are engaged in topics that interest them, learning how to communicate skillfully occurs in a natural, integrated way.
- Language arts learning is enhanced when students are provided with a language-rich environment and given opportunities to communicate in a variety of ways.
- Language arts instruction must be embedded in **all** curriculum areas.
- Excellent communication models for students are essential for continued growth at all grade levels. Models of appropriate student and professional writing and speaking provide examples for students to emulate; they also set challenging standards for students to meet.
- A wide variety of high quality literature, both fiction and non-fiction, must be read.
- Building upon students' existing knowledge on a topic is a fundamental means of engaging students in reading, writing, speaking, viewing, and listening. Drawing upon students' current base of knowledge by challenging them to analyze, anticipate, and predict information and themes found within their reading develops readers who come to understand and relate to what they read.
- The most effective way to teach writing systematically is as a process: brainstorming, composing, conferring, revising, editing, and polishing for others to read.
- The teaching of writing should focus on the process of writing as a means towards an end: developing clear, thoughtful, polished pieces of writing.
- Students must learn how to assess their own writing by understanding what the "traits" of good writing are - ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. If they are able to assess their own writing, they will be capable of revising it.
- The development of strong, basic language skills, e.g., grammar, punctuation, phonics, vocabulary, and spelling are an essential part of the language arts program. Skill development is best addressed by a combination of direct instruction and individual instruction **within the context** of each student's own reading and writing experiences.
- Speaking and listening skills need to be addressed in all grade levels. Students need opportunities to speak confidently and proficiently in informal and formal settings

appropriate to grade level; they need to become adept at listening for ideas and information, tone, and point of view.

- The effective use of technological resources is an important part of developing students' skills in research and communication.
- The Language Arts Program and its stated goals must be supported by all staff members throughout the District. Regular communication among staff members and administration, as well as District support of appropriate ongoing staff development activities, is essential.

Because the two main components of language arts are reading and writing, the District has created two distinct courses for the sixth grade. Although reading and writing will be taught separately, due to the nature of their intertwining features, both the reading teacher and the writing teacher will support each other using the workshop approach. The workshop creates whole-class, small group, partner, and one-on-one instruction that include discussions about all areas of reading and writing: learning strategies, content, style, process. The result will be independent readers, writers, viewers, and learners equipped with skills and strategies they will use throughout their lives.

The workshop demonstrates that students learn best by having more time to read, write, and use effective learning strategies to explore and understand the content they are studying. The workshop also allows students to take an active role in their learning by giving them the opportunities to select books that interest them and to write about topics that are important to them. Along with the basic curriculum, this approach helps students take ownership of their learning by increasing their investment, engagement, and motivation in the curriculum. The workshop approach uses a mixture of whole-class, small group, partner, and one-on-one instruction that centers on conversations about content, strategies, and work routines. Each of these varied approaches to teaching and learning is essential to students' development as independent readers, writers, and learners.

LANGUAGE ARTS I (READING)

GRADE 6 LANGUAGE ARTS I (Reading) OVERVIEW

Reading is one of the greatest gifts bestowed upon humankind and remains, even in the wake of high-speed technology, the foremost means of communication. Reading is the gateway to the past and the key to the future. It is our responsibility to pass this gift on to our children.

What, exactly, is reading?

“Reading is the process of constructing meaning from written texts.”

Becoming a Nation of Readers

The Report of the Commission on Reading, 1985

“Reading comprehension is a dynamic interactive process of constructing meaning by combining the reader’s existing knowledge

with the text information within the context of the reading situation.

The key elements are reader, text, and context.”

A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Reading

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1986

Comprehension is a strategic process by which readers construct or assign meaning to a text by using the clues in the text and their own prior knowledge. In the broad sense this is also a definition of reading, since meaning comes primarily from our own existing knowledge.

Literacy: Helping Children Construct Meaning

J. David Cooper, 1993

Virtually all research on reading agrees on a few key concepts:

Reading is an interactive process.

Reading is strategic. Successful readers must learn to

- analyze their task
- establish reading purpose
- plan appropriate strategies
- monitor understanding while reading
- regulate by making appropriate connections
- reflect upon the task at completion

Reading, perhaps more than any other of the language arts, is central to learning. The ultimate goal of the sixth-grade reading program is to cultivate life-long readers who value the learning and enjoyment they reap through the act of reading.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS – GRADE 6 LANGUAGE ARTS I

- How can we become confident in ourselves as readers?
- How do we make connections between the text and our own lives?
- How do we make connections between one text and another?
- How do we make connections between what we read and the world?
- How does reading help us to write effectively?

PROCESS SKILLS – Language Arts I

- **Reading** – The reading program provides experiences, which help students to develop and to improve cognitive reading skills and abilities, as well as to find enjoyment in reading. Students need to become independent readers with a desire to read widely and to extend and expand their knowledge and interests. Through reading, students will gain a better understanding of themselves and others, an appreciation of their cultural heritage, and the development of discriminating tastes in reading. Teachers will use the following as guidelines to accomplish these goals:
 - Comprehending
 - main idea
 - details
 - sequencing
 - retelling
 - summarizing
 - Analysis/Inference
 - Analysis (character/mood)
 - author’s meaning
 - author’s purpose
 - predicting (cause and effect)
 - Drawing Generalizations/Conclusions
 - Literary Elements
 - Characters
 - Setting
 - Plot
 - Climax
 - Resolution
 - Reading(Evaluation)
 - fact/fiction
 - propaganda
 - fact/opinion
 - Goal Setting
- **Monitoring Comprehension**
 - determining purpose for reading
 - analyzing organizational pattern of text
 - skimming
 - re-reading
 - using context clues (illustrations, text)
 - analogies

- **Vocabulary Strategies** – The single most effective way to improve vocabulary is by reading. There has always been a high correlation between reading comprehension and vocabulary scores. Reading depends, first and foremost, on phonetic as well as visual letter recognition. To be fluent and productive, however, reading also depends on a ready knowledge of words: spellings, meaning, and pronunciations – and on consideration of the contexts in which they occur. Students must be instructed to understand letter-sound relationships (phonics), then build a sight-word vocabulary. The following are included in the development of vocabulary:
 - synonyms
 - antonyms
 - context clues
 - prefixes, suffixes, roots
 - analogies
 - dictionary/thesaurus

- **Study Skills** – Before students begin to read, they need to learn how to tap their own prior knowledge, to predict, to skim, and to set purposes for their reading. While they read, students need to monitor their reading process, adjusting their understanding of the text through self-questioning activities. After reading, students need to retain and analyze the information they have read. They need to summarize, paraphrase, use graphic organizers, and extend their reading through creative and critical thinking activities. Study skills include the following activities:
 - following directions
 - classifying and categorizing
 - skimming and scanning
 - learning from text/graphic organizers

- **Speaking and Listening** - Reading is most effectively taught within a program rich with opportunities for students to make connections to writing and speaking. Reading aloud serves to improve listening comprehension, to extend students' vocabulary, and to provide good language models as well as good models of literary styles. Reading aloud will accomplish these ends through exposure to a variety of literary genres such as fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. The speaking-listening program is planned to provide experiences which will help the student to
 - improve voice, pronunciation, and enunciation in all speaking situations
 - develop self-confidence and poise
 - express ideas clearly and freely
 - realize the value of courteous, attentive, and critical listening
 - improve listening skills

- **Viewing** – Viewing has become a major form of attaining information in our world today. Whereas students used to acquire information and pleasure from written sources, students today depend more on visual media. The viewing program is planned to provide experiences which will help the student to
 - develop and improve critical viewing skills and abilities
 - find enjoyment and enrichment in viewing
 - extend and expand his/her interests and values
 - extend and expand his/her interests from passive to active participation
 - gain an understanding of the structure of the viewing arts
 - provide an implement for creative thinking and writing

- cultivate an attitude of self-appraisal
 - develop discriminating tastes in viewing
- **Using Learning Resources and Technology**
 - library skills(OPAC)
 - Inspiration software
 - search engines
 - multi-media
- **Literature** – Reading is the interaction among reader, text, and context. This is especially true of reading literature. The nature of the reading experience varies depending on the age, gender, culture, motivation, and experiences of the reader, as well as on the content, culture, language, and attitudes expressed in the text. It also varies depending on the context that surrounds the reading: is the reader excited to read this, forced to, too tired to? No work of art is fully “made’ when it leaves the chisel, brush, or pen of its original maker. Each viewer’s or reader’s own experience of life gets related to a work of art, interprets that piece of art, and is sometimes altered temporarily or permanently by the encounter with that composition of art. The following activities will help students make meaning of literature:
 - responding to literature/relating literature to real life
 - reader’s response
 - shared reading
 - literature circles/discussions
 - independent reading
- **Experiencing Various Genres** - Students need to read a variety of fiction and non-fiction: novels (classic and contemporary), stories, essays, poems, articles, and plays, all from various times, places, and cultures, including classical and contemporary works. Textbooks meet this need to some extent, but students also need to read newspapers, news magazines, and high interest non-fiction, especially for science and social studies classes.
- **Author’s Style**

STUDENT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Examples:

Research Report

Journal

Demonstration- Nonfiction- How-To Books

Oral Presentation with Visuals -Rubric (story board, overhead transparencies, Power Point, HyperStudio, Internet site, posters, etc.)

Literature Circles

Book Talks

Written Book Reviews

Reading Record Sheets

Poetry Recitations

GRADING GUIDELINES – LA I

% of Report Card Grade

Homework	25%
Tests	30%
Quizzes	20%
Performance Tasks	15%
Class Participation	10%

Tests and quizzes include vocabulary development and reading comprehension.

Performance Tasks include book talks, poem recitations, oral presentations, book reports, author studies, research reports, etc.

SUMMARY OF UNITS – Language Arts I

Reading is a unique skill in which a child learns to decode words at an early age. The task of educators is to take this learned skill and help the student to encode, or to make meaning of, those words. In essence, educators must teach students to think critically. Variables are many and often serve as roadblocks to progress, as well as springboards to success. By using the reading workshop approach to teach reading (meaning), the skilled teacher embraces these differences and weaves them into the teaching/learning process.

Meaningful reading happens when a connection is made between the reader and the text. How this link occurs is the focus of much study. It is generally accepted that children must be engaged constantly in the reading process, whether it be small-group instruction, guided reading, independent reading, literature circles, or mini-lessons. A reader friendly environment envelops the student.

It is necessary to use different books at different reading levels in order to teach various concepts and literary terms successfully. If students are bogged down with the understanding of a book itself, the understanding of the concepts and literary terms is lost. Therefore, it may be necessary for a student to read a book s/he has already read. The second encounter with the book will be a different experience than the first exposure, not only with the understanding of the content of the book, but also with the additional knowledge of the techniques, concepts, and literary terms that is acquired.

The following “units” are fields of study that recur throughout the school year: ideas taught/presented in mini-lessons, whole group discussions, or independent study. Suggested time frames have been consciously omitted.

1. Fiction

- Independent reading, guided reading, and literature study
- Story elements
- Literary terms
- Theme

2. Nonfiction

- Textbooks
- How-To Books
- Newspapers / Magazines
- Biography
- Research
- Nonfiction narratives
- Book Reviews

3. Vocabulary - A good vocabulary is developed through extensive reading. Teachers use independent instruction along with the reading workshop.

- Strategies for using context clues – these are modeled for students for use with trade books as well as with independent reading
- Trade books – Students learn strategies to understand the meaning of words in context.
- Prefixes, suffixes, and roots (*Reader's Handbook*) – Students understand the origin of words and decipher unknown words.
- *Vocabulary Workshop (Level A)* – builds word recognition and a ready knowledge of words through drills and practice

4. Poetry - Throughout the year students are expected to memorize and recite at least two poems, do a poet study for each poem, and participate in group response to poetry readings and discussions.

- Read a variety of poems
- Memorize and recite two poems
- Poet study - (ex. Robert Frost, Robert Louis Stevenson)
- Figurative language –vocabulary
- Discussion of inferences in poem

5. Oral Presentations

- Poems
- Book reports
- Book talks – both voluntary and assigned – a daily occurrence
- Research reports

Sample Unit – Strategies for Learning Vocabulary in Context

Learning Objective:

Students will use a variety of strategies to learn the meaning of unknown or difficult words.

Input

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson

Initiation –Question

Teacher asks students, “What do you do when you come across a word in your reading that you don’t understand?”

Brainstorm/ list on a class chart strategies students use to understand unknown words in context.

Modeling: Discuss and demonstrate how authors give the reader clues to the meaning of difficult vocabulary words.

1. Before and After clues-the author provides clues in the sentences before and/or after the difficult vocabulary word. Example: “Then instead of teasing the little girls, the three of them wandered off arm in arm to watch the big boys play football. As the trio passed them, Jess could see Janice’s face all pink and prideful.” (p54 . *Bridge to Terabithia*)
2. Definition or Synonym- the author provides a definition or synonym for the difficult vocabulary word. Example: “ ‘She’s eating clabber.’ Two seats up from where he sat, Mary Lou Peoples was at work being the second snottiest girl in fifth grade. “Yogurt, stupid.” (p 23. *Bridge to Teratbithia*)
3. Concrete Examples- difficult vocabulary words are signaled by such words as for example, such as, for instance, to illustrate. Example: Wood, nails, rope, and plastic are examples of the apparatus needed to build the stronghold in Terabithia.
4. Restate Meaning- the author explains a difficult word by restating its meaning in simpler terms. Example: “ Jesse Aarons. That noise is pure repulsive. He glared at her hard and gave another slurp. You are disgusting.” (p23. *Bridge to Terabithia*)
5. Conjunctions connecting ideas or showing relationships, for example and, but, or, because. Example: Maybe, he thought, I was a foundling or an abandoned baby, like in the stories. (p58. *Bridge to Terabithia*)
6. Repeating Words- the author often repeats a difficult word in familiar, or new, situations so the reader understands what the word means. Example: America is a nation of immigrants. Immigrants are people who come to a new land to make their home. All Americans are related to immigrants or are immigrants themselves. (Coming to America, The Story of Immigration by Betsy Maestro)
7. Word Study of roots prefixes and suffixes
8. Dictionary Study

Check for Understanding/Meaning

Whole class reading of excerpts from a specific text displayed on the overhead or the LCD projector.(ex *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Patterson)

Guided Practice

Student partners will practice using these strategies to discover the meaning of unfamiliar words from selected text.(*Bridge to Terabithia*)

Independent Practice

Students, independently, will use these strategies to discover the meaning of unfamiliar words in the class text and their independent reading books. Students will record the difficult words and their meanings in their journals.

Closure

Students will explain their understanding of each strategy and give an example from their independent reading book of the author using a specific strategy.

Vocabulary

Prim, fetch, discarded, pandemonium, hypocritical, repulsive conspicuous, drought, sarcasm, consolation, ominous, contempt, intoxicated, parapets, crimson, obsessed, consolidated, speculation, surplus, grieve, grove, trio

- **Activities**
- Brainstorming
- Teacher models strategies using overhead projector/LCD projector
- Whole class reading of excerpts from book - Teacher models “Think-Aloud”
- Partners read together and identify strategies they use to learn the meaning of unknown words in the text.
- Students independently read class text, identify strategies they used, as well as the clues the author provides and records these strategies/clues in their journals.

Performance Assessment

- During whole group read aloud students identify unknown words as they are reading and discuss the strategies they use to decipher the meaning of the unknown words.
- Student debriefings, both whole group and small group, about strategies commonly used to discover the meaning of unknown words.
- Journal entry is used to record difficult words and the strategies the student used to discover the meaning.
- Assess student's knowledge of roots, prefixes, suffixes through quizzes.
- Student Self-Evaluation Checklist of strategies the student uses.
- Teacher/Student conference about the student's use of strategies to learn the meaning of unknown words in text

Core Text For Students

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Patterson

Materials and Supplies

- Overhead projector or LCD projector
- Large lined chart paper to record brainstorming strategies
- Class set of *Bridge to Terabithia*
- Student Journal to record unknown words and strategies used to learn the meaning of the unknown words.

Vocabulary Checklist of Strategies

Name_____

Date_____

Key: R= Rarely S= Sometimes U= Usually O= Often

Using the key above, identify the vocabulary strategies you have used and the frequency with which you have used them.

___ Reads sentences that come before and/or after the difficult word.

___ Looks for definitions or synonyms for the difficult word.

___ Looks for signals, such as for example, such as, for instance, or to illustrate.

___ Looks for conjunctions: and, but, or, because, and recognizes the relationship they show between words and phrases.

___ Notices the author's repetition of words in order to help the reader understand the meaning of the difficult word.

___ Uses knowledge of the meaning of prefixes and roots.

___ Uses the dictionary.

Sample Lesson – How to Become More Active Readers

Aim: To have students become more active readers

Materials: Trade book – excerpt from *Bridge to Terabithia*
Chart
Overhead projector

Strategies model and discuss strategy – overhead projector – book excerpt

Text to Self
Text to Text
Text to World

Small groups – As a group, find two examples from *Bridge to Terabithia*
For each element of this strategy

Students record group’s answers in their journal

Whole group – share findings with class

Independently each student applies this strategy to his/her reading of
Bridge to Terabithia and records in his/her journal independent responses
to the strategy. (Text to self, text-to-text, text to world)

Closure Students summarize this strategy (text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world) to
help students become more active readers.
Teacher records students’ summaries on chart paper

LANGUAGE ARTS II (WRITING)

GRADE 6 LANGUAGE ARTS II (WRITING) OVERVIEW

There are as many reasons for writing as there are writers, as many writing processes as there are writers. Donald Murray sums it up best in *Creating a Life*:

I write

to say who I am

Discover who I am

Create my life

Understand my life

Slay my dragons

Exercise my craft

Lose myself in my work

for revenge

to share

to testify

to avoid boredom

to celebrate

to surprise.

Any good writing program honors the variety of approaches writers use; good teachers resist the pressures on a writing program to simplify it, to reduce it to the easily manageable, the formulaic, the easily testable. For these reasons, the writing process, incorporating the six traits of good writing, is used in a workshop environment.

Students experience observational, descriptive, and analytical writing in all classes, especially language arts, social studies, and science.

Students write daily with a clear understanding of a variety of purposes and audiences, composing written pieces based on self-selected, teacher-assigned, and interdisciplinary topics. Teachers are encouraged to write and share their work with students whenever possible.

Students are exposed to quality literature on a regular basis and discuss how it relates to the traits of good writing: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and visual presentation. Through this process, they learn and demonstrate their ability to compose according to the traits of good writing.

Students use journals for a variety of purposes: record personal experiences, explore reactions and interpretations, record and analyze information, and use it as a form of assessment.

Students work in small and large groups to assess one another's work and to have an opportunity to revise their writing after receiving feedback on its strengths and weaknesses.

Students develop the content of the message before attending to the correctness of form.

Conventions of writing are learned in the context of the student's work and through direct instruction.

Student assessment is based on several pieces of writing, written for different audiences, and for different purposes, since single assessments are less likely to represent the range of an author's abilities.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS – GRADE 6 LANGUAGE ARTS II

- How do we become confident in ourselves as writers?
- How does writing become a tool for thinking and exploring a multitude of topics and genres?
- How do we use writing to communicate personally and professionally and to understand both others and ourselves?
- How does writing help us become sensitive to other writers, noticing techniques and style?
- How does writing help us become better readers?

PROCESS SKILLS – Language Arts II

• **Writing** – The writing program provides experiences which will help students to realize the importance of writing and to develop originality, creativity, and imagination. Students will also develop a deeper appreciation of literature through their own writing experiences; they will realize the value of their own experiences and the experiences of others as subject matter for compositions. Students will cultivate an attitude of self-appraisal, thereby becoming independent writers.

■ Writing process

- ▶ Pre-Writing
 - Brainstorms
 - Gathers information from a variety of sources
 - Discriminates between critical, captivating, and constructive information
 - Narrows or expands a topic as necessary
 - Uses graphic organizers
- ▶ Drafting
 - Elaborates and organizes prewriting activities to create a rough draft
 - Displays an awareness of focus, sequence, and pace
 - Uses transitions to maintain fluency
- ▶ Revising – Content/Ideas
 - Revises to maintain reader’s interest while accentuating the point of view and style
 - Makes changes based on knowledge of the traits of good writing
 - Seeks and provides peer input to improve draft
- ▶ Editing/Conventions
 - Edits own work and that of others for conventions
- ▶ Publishing
 - Selects a presentation form and publishing options to create a legible final product (written, oral, or multi-media) appropriate for the intended audience
 - Uses visuals to enhance the message when needed

■ Traits of Good Writing

- ▶ Ideas
 - Includes a descriptive detail, cause and effect, and comparative facts in information writing
 - Writes well-rounded, researched, and reasoned texts on a variety of topics and himself/herself
 - Analyzes a theme or issue in informational and literary texts and in poetry
 - Varies method of developing characters, setting, mood, and suspense, and of indicating resolution

- ▶ Organization
 - Uses a variety of forms: communication, process, narrative, expository (report and explanation), persuasive, poetic
 - Responds to questions and texts from a well thought-out personal stance supported by experiences or examples
 - Writes about the same topic, theme, or issue in more than one form or purpose (e.g., speeches, interviews)
 - Collaborates with peers on long-term projects (e.g., class newspaper)
- ▶ Voice
 - Uses voice appropriate to genre and audience
 - Communicates own perspective and ideas
 - Maintains own voice, experiments with other voices, explores new audiences, topics, and forms
 - Identifies, analyzes, and writes for a chosen audience
 - Selects relevant information for a specific purpose from a range of materials and paraphrases, expands, or summarizes it according to purpose
 - Pursues personal writing interests independently
 - Writes for a variety of purposes: to entertain, to retell, to classify, to describe, to explain, to argue or persuade
- ▶ Word Choice
 - Uses a wide range of words that clearly convey meaning in a particular form
 - Uses adjectives, nouns, verbs, and adverbs to enhance the meaning of sentences
 - Uses imagery and figurative language
- ▶ Sentence Fluency
 - Writing piece is smooth, natural, and easy to read
 - Creates writing with cadence, rhythm, motion, and grace
 - Invites expressive reading that brings out voice
 - Creates purposeful sentence beginnings
 - Uses variety in sentence length and structure
 - Fragments, if used, add to the style
 - Constructs sequenced paragraphs using effective transitions
- ▶ Conventions
 - Uses ending and most common internal punctuation accurately in own writing (periods, commas, apostrophes, quotation marks)
 - Uses capitals in own writing to begin sentences, proper nouns, abbreviations, titles
 - Determines when a word is misspelled
 - Spells grade-level words accurately in own writing
 - Understands spelling patterns, rules, or generalizations

■ Journals

- ▶ Reasoning and reflecting
- ▶ Brainstorming and free-writing

- **Speaking**
 - Presentation Criteria is used to help prepare and to assess “public” presentations

- **Viewing** – Students will learn to discriminate what they view the same way they discern what they read in literature and student writing pieces.

- **Using Learning Resources and Technology**
 - Inspiration Software – used as an organizational tool for brainstorming, using various webs and outlines
 - Hyperstudio – multimedia software for presentations
 - Microsoft Office – used for word processing, database, and presentations

- **Working Independently and Collaboratively**
 - Uses the Write Traits Rubrics to assess own work
 - Peer editing
 - Peer conferencing
 - Collaborative projects (Ex. newspapers, commercials)

STUDENT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY – Language Arts II

Students will be required to do the following:

Self-assessment –Write Traits Rubrics

Experience and produce various genres (including but not limited to):

- Narrative
- Expository
- Persuasive
- Letter
- Article
- Biography/Autobiography
- Folklore
- Play
- Newspaper
- Poetry
- Essay

Journal

Oral Presentation with Visuals (story board, overhead transparencies, Power Point, Hyperstudio, Internet site, etc.)

Portfolio

- Self-assessments
- Parent Responses
- Setting of Personal Goals

GRADING GUIDELINES – Language Arts II

Write Traits Rubrics will be used to assess writing pieces.

% of Report Card Grade

Homework / Journals	25%
Quizzes / Tests (Conventions)	25%
Writing Pieces	50%

SUMMARY OF UNITS – Language Arts II

Because of the recursive nature of writing, the LA II curriculum is not divided into specific units of study. Rather, the traits of good writing and the writing process are continually integrated into the study of various genres throughout the year.

The following is an example of a lesson plan for “voice,” one of the traits of good writing.

Sample Lesson #1 – Voice in Expository Writing

1. Learning Objectives:

- 1.14 Students will interact with others in creating, interpreting, and evaluating written, oral, or visual texts.
- 1.3 Students will reflect on the text (to make judgments about its meaning and quality).
- 2.1 Students will communicate effectively by determining the appropriate writing style on the basis of audience, purpose, and point of view.
- 2.2 Students will communicate effectively in descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive modes.

2. Initiation

Themes of “voice” and “expository writing”

3. Input

Skills focus: understanding voice must change to match form of writing.

4. Modeling

On overhead, show a piece of expository text that has strong voice and a piece that has weak voice. (e.g. Bill Nye vs. encyclopedia)

5. Checking for Understanding/ Monitoring and Adjusting

Read, Rate, and Rank (Write Traits Student Traitbook, pp. 47-48) in partners.

6. Guided Practice

Share ratings in class and discuss.

7. Independent Practice

Revise weaker piece to create strong voice.
Share with class.

8. Closure

Ask students to identify what they did in their revision to create stronger expository voice.

VOCABULARY

Introduction of “voice” in writing.

ACTIVITIES

Read, rate, and rank sample writings for examples of good voice and poor voice.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Use of Write Traits writing rubrics

CAREER AWARENESS (where appropriate)

Voice is necessary for all types of “good” writing.

CORE TEXT FOR STUDENTS

Modeling by teacher and use of literature samples

ADDITIONAL TEXTS/ RESOURCES FOR USE BY STUDENTS

Independent reading books, class assigned reading samples, peer conferencing

Lesson #2 – “Show” rather than “Tell”

Objective: Students will learn to see where in their writing pieces they need to add details to “show” rather than just “tell.”

Materials: Overhead projector

Procedures:

1. Show example entry on overhead and read to students. Explain what I would like to have read and what I was not able to picture from what had been written. (Ex.: The birthday party was a lot of fun.)
2. Demonstrate what I might have done with this entry had I gone back and reread it. (Insert an asterisk and explain the entry more specifically.)
3. Read some sample passages to illustrate how adding details is like zooming in with a camera. We can “see” more than if we take a picture from far away. Explain that in writing an author needs to create pictures in the readers’ minds.
4. Ask students to reread their current writing piece and search for places where they could be more specific, where they could use their zoom lens and create pictures for the reader.
5. Give students 10-15 minutes to work on their “details.”
6. Gather students together for group share. Read example entry on overhead (the ‘before’ and ‘after’). Have the students read their original entry first, then their “detailed” version.
7. After all students have read their entry, students will discuss what they learned about adding details and how to create pictures for their readers.

Lesson Plan #3 – Commercial Storyboard

Objectives: Students will

- be exposed to the steps of creating a storyboard for a commercial as preparation for creating their own storyboards for their own commercials.
- become aware of how to incorporate video, illustrations, and dialogue to create a storyboard for a successful commercial.
- demonstrate their knowledge of the elements of advertising

Materials:

Storyboard worksheet; overhead projector and transparencies; “Creative Strategy” worksheet

Procedures:

1. After students get into their groups for making a commercial, I pass out the storyboard worksheet to the captain of each group.
2. Having gone over the “Creative Strategy” sheets the day before, I review what we covered the day before and ask how far they got on completing these sheets.
3. I review the storyboards that were covered in the advertising movie they saw the day before.
4. I then demonstrate on the overhead a sample storyboard of a made-up product (a pencil/pen). Students discuss what is required on the storyboard.
5. Once I have completed the storyboard, the students will get into their groups and begin creating their own storyboards. We will talk about the elements of a commercial and how the storyboards must depict what they will create as a commercial using a video camera.

Closure: Students will review the elements of a commercial and what is needed on the storyboard. Students will continue to work in their groups until they have completed their storyboards and are ready to film their commercial.

Lesson Plan #4 – Different Rhymes in poetry

Objectives: Students will

- Explore an aspect of ‘poetic language’ through the examination of the element of rhyme
- Become aware of the different ways words can rhyme
- Demonstrate and practice through their own writing an understanding of “true” rhyme and “slant” rhyme

Materials: Copies of “People” poem and worksheet; overhead projector and transparencies.

Procedures:

1. I will pass out the poem and worksheet.
2. I will ask students, “Have you ever been to a mall? Have you ever stopped just to notice the differences in all the people you see there . . . how they look and act? Some of the people you see are tall and lanky like streetlamps, while others resemble pears; some carry worried expressions on their faces all day, while others appear as carefree as a summer day. Here’s a poem in which the poet talks about some of the differences between people. Who knows? Maybe he wrote it at the mall.”
3. I will have a student read the poem out loud, while the rest of the class follows along.
4. Another student will read the poem a second time, this time stopping after each stanza. Students will identify the rhyming words and underline them on their copies, while I do it on the overhead.
5. I will have students categorize groups of rhyming sounds according to whether they have exactly the same sounds (true rhymes) or nearly the same sounds (slant rhymes). Students will write these in the box on their worksheets.
6. I will have students continue to categorize rhyming words using my examples and then asking for their examples.
7. Students will draw two large circles on the back of the “People” poem. Over one circle they will write “LOOKS” and over the other “ACTS or BEHAVES.” I will then have them fill the circles with words describing how people might look or behave.
8. Students will be divided into groups of 3.
9. Using the circles as a resource, students will write a series of their own “People Pattern Poems.”
10. Each member of the group will contribute one of his/her stanzas to a completed poem. Together, the group will write the final ‘wrap up’ stanza for the poem.
11. Each group will then recite its “People” poem in front of the class. Students will identify the type of rhyme employed in each stanza.
12. Students will use the same pattern to write another poem about either things or emotions. I will show examples of each:

Things

There are fun games
Dumb games
Games-I've-never-won games.

Emotions

There are alone loneliness,
on-my-own loneliness
Deep-down-to-the-bone loneliness.

Emotions

There is heartbreak
A way-down-inside-of-you ache
A how-will-I-ever-make-it ache.

Sample Unit on Olympic Athletes

Objectives: Each student will research the accomplishments of one Olympic athlete from a country studied in the 6th grade social studies curriculum.

Using an Inspiration template I created, students will find the following information using Internet sites I have predetermined:

- Athlete's life: childhood, family, and interesting facts
- Athlete's country: National anthem, flag, 5 advantages of living in this country
- Athlete's sport: its history, training of this sport by the athlete, athlete's competitions and results, including the present Olympics.

Students will create a HyperStudio stack to present in front of the class.

Materials:

Reference material including Internet sites
Inspiration software
Hyperstudio software

Procedures:

1. Have students find a current Olympic athlete from a country they are studying in social studies. (No one in the class may duplicate an athlete.)
2. Introduce the Inspiration template, demonstrating/modeling by completing the template of my own athlete.
3. Demonstrate how to access the Internet sites to find information on their athletes, including the countries.
4. Pass out and explain the Olympic Athlete Project requirements.
5. Pass out and explain the project's timeline.

Assessment: First, students will assess themselves using the rubric; then I will assess them using the same rubric: Olympic Athlete Assessment



2002 Winter Olympic Project Requirements



Brainstorm and record research using Inspiration software

Create a HyperStudio presentation:

Organization:

- The stack has visual unity

- Directions for using the stack are clear in the design

Construction elements:

- Text boxes

- Title card

- Buttons

- Picture(s)/Graphic(s)

Content:

- Athlete

 - Basic facts of his life: childhood, family

 - History of athlete

 - Interesting facts

- Country

 - Flag

 - Anthem

 - Five advantages of living in this country

- Sport

 - Its history

 - Athlete's participation

 - Competitions athlete entered and results

- Bibliography



Presentation:

- Maintained eye contact with the audience

- Spoke loudly and clearly so that everyone could understand you

- Remained poised and did not fidget

- Provided sufficient information about the athlete and country

- Held the audience's attention

Olympic Athlete Assessment

	Self	Teacher
Creativity/Involvement		
The writer approaches the task from a creative and innovative standpoint.	_____	_____
The writer demonstrates concerted effort.	_____	_____
Organization		
The stack has visual unity between cards.	_____	_____
Directions for using the stack are clear in the design.	_____	_____
Construction Elements		
All of these required elements are present in the stack:		
Text Boxes	_____	_____
Title Card	_____	_____
Buttons	_____	_____
Picture(s)/Graphic(s)	_____	_____
Content		
Content is presented in a clear and organized way.	_____	_____
The required items have been included:		
Athlete		
Basic facts of sport	_____	_____
History of athlete	_____	_____
Athlete's participation in the sport	_____	_____
Events/medals	_____	_____
Country		
Flag and anthem	_____	_____
Five advantages of living here	_____	_____
Bibliography	_____	_____
Proofreading		
All text material was edited for errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling	_____	_____
Presentation of Project		
On a scale of 1-20 (Did you practice?) to 21-40 (You're starting to get my attention) to 41-60 (Wow! What a pro!), how would you rate your presentation?	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____

POINT DEFINITION

1 = No evidence

3 = OK . . .

5 = Very Strong!

2 = A little bit . . .

4 = Well Done!

RELATED GOALS AND STANDARDS

Language Arts I (Reading) Bands

Reading Strategies:

- Reads materials with a wide variety of styles and topics.
- Selects books to meet personal interest or fulfill academic requirements.
- Determines word meanings through context.
- Self-corrects, using knowledge of language structure and / or sound-symbol relationships.
- Predicts, using knowledge of language structure and / or sound-symbol to make sense of a word or phrase.

Responses:

- Discusses different types of reading materials, both fiction and nonfiction.
- Uses vocabulary and sentence structure from reading materials in written work.
- Follows multi-step written instruction.
- States main idea in reading materials.
- Supports conclusions with examples and specific references to text.
- Discusses the motives and feelings of characters or people in printed or visual texts.
- Explores printed and visual texts through an imaginative response that implies an analysis of or opinion about the text.

Interests and Attitudes:

- Recommends books to others.
- Reads often.
- Reads silently for sustained periods of time.

Language Arts II (Writing) Bands

What a writer does:

Develops ideas into paragraphs.

Writes paragraphs to develop logical sequence of ideas.

Edits work to a point where others can read it; corrects common spelling errors, punctuation and grammatical errors.

Corrects many spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors in editing others' written work.

What the writing shows:

Sentences have ideas that flow.

Paragraphs have a cohesive structure.

Brief passages written with clear meaning, accuracy of spelling, and apt punctuation.

Does not shift from first to third person (or vice-versa) in writing.

Shows consistent use of the correct tense.

Uses appropriate vocabulary for familiar audiences such as peers, younger children, or adults with only an occasional inappropriate word choice.

Uses compound sentences punctuated with commas and conjunctions.

Shows a consistent, legible handwriting style.

Longer descriptions and narratives are developed coherently.

Narratives contain introduction, complication, and resolution in a logical order.

Demonstrates the "Good Traits of Writing": ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions.

Use of writing:

Writes a properly sequenced text which has a convincing setting.

Creates characters from imagination.

Generally makes appropriate use of narrative and other forms of writing.

Connecticut Content Standards - K 12 Language Arts

1. Reading and Responding

Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical, and evaluative ways to literary, informational, and persuasive texts.

2. Producing Texts

Students will produce written, oral, and visual texts to express, develop, and substantiate ideas and experiences.

3. Applying English Language Conventions

Students will apply the conventions of standard English in oral and written communication.

4. Exploring and Responding to Texts

Students will use the language arts to explore and respond to classical and contemporary literature from many cultures and historical periods.

National Council of Teachers of English K-12 Standards

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the culture of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from any period in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g. philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g. sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, and graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g. conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g. spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique and discuss print and non-print texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g. print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g. libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g. for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

GRADE SIX MATERIALS

NOVELS/NONFICTION

Adventure and Suspense - Scholastic
African American Biographies - Globe
Arthur, For the Very First Time – Patricia MacLachlan
The Big Book for Peace – Edited by Ann Durell and Marilyn Sachs
Blackberries in the Dark - Smith
Black Star, Bright Dawn – Scott O’Dell
Bridge to Terabithia – Katherine Paterson
A Certain Small Shepherd – Rebecca Caudill
Flip Flop Girl – Katherine Paterson
Grandpa and Me – Stephanie Tolan
Literature Collection Five – Random House
Literature Collection Six – Random House
The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe – C. S. Lewis
Missing May – Cynthia Rylant
Miss Rumphius - Cooney
Sarah, Plain and Tall – Patricia MacLachlan
Sounds of a Young Hunter – Martin, Jr.
Sounds of Mystery – Martin, Jr.
The Star Fisher – Laurence Yep
Stone Fox – Gardiner
Tuck Everlasting – Babbitt
What Hearts – Bruce Brooks
Where the Red Fern Grows – Wilson Rawls
The Whipping Boy - Fleischman

SHORT STORIES

“After Twenty Years” – O. Henry
“At the Home” – E. L. Konigsburg
“The Catchee” – E. L. Konigsburg
“Charles” – Shirley Jackson (adapted)
“A Day’s Wait” – Ernest Hemingway (adapted)
“Eleven” – Sandra Cisneros
“Excerpts From Antaeus” – Borden Deal (adapted)
“A Midnight Clear” – Katherine Paterson
“The Most Dangerous Game” – Richard Connell (adapted)
“A Mystery of Heroism” – Stephen Crane
“The Ransom of Red Chief” – O. Henry
“Rikki-tikki-tavi” – Rudyard Kipling (adapted, unabridged version)
“The Stove” – Marjorie Pickthall (adapted)
“Sucker” - McCullough
“The Troublemaker” – James Herriot
“With Burt and Ray” – E. L. Konigsburg

POETRY

“Harlem” – Langston Hughes

“In Just” – e. e. cummings

Joyful Noise – Paul Fleischman

“The Road Not Taken” – Robert Frost

“Southbound on the Freeway” – May Swenson

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” – Robert Frost

“The Swing” – Robert Lewis Stevenson

MISCELLANEOUS

Cinderella Variants from around the world

Daybook of Critical Reading and Writing – 6th Grade Edition

English Workshop – Introductory Level

Variety of poetry books to create an anthology

Newspapers

READ Magazine – Weekly Reader

Writing Magazine – Weekly Reader

Vocabulary Workshop (Sadlier/Oxford) – Level A

TEACHER RESOURCES

Anderson *Research Results*
Arlington, Richard *What Really Matters For Struggling Readers*
Atwell, Nancie *In The Middle*
Atwell, Nancie *Lessons that Change Writers*
Burke, Jim *The English Teacher's Companion*
Burke, Jim *Reading Reminders – Tools, Tips, and Techniques*
Calkins, Lucy McCormack *The Art of Teaching Writing*
Culham, Ruth *6+1 Traits of Writing*
Fletcher, Ralph *What A Writer Needs*
Fletcher and Portalupi *Craft Lessons*
Fox, Mem *Radical Reflections*
Graves, Donald *A Fresh Look at Writing*
Great Source *Readers Handbook – A Student's Guide for Reading and Learning*
Great Source *Books, Lessons, Ideas for Teaching the Six Traits*
Harvey, Stephen *Non-Fiction Strategies*
Harvey, Stephen *Reading In Middle School*
Heard, Georgia *Awakening the Heart*
Heard, Georgia *The Revision Toolbox*
Janeczko, Paul B. *How to Write Poetry*
Keene and Zimmerman *Mosaic of Thought*
King, Stephen *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*
Lane, Barry *After the End*
Lane, Barry *Reviser's Toolbox*
Lane, Barry *Why We Must Run With Scissors*
Moyers, Bill *The Language of Life: A Festival of Poets*
Muschla, Gary Robert *The Writing Teacher's Book of Lists*
NCTE *Voices in the Middle Journal*
Robb, Laura *Teaching Reading In Middle School*
Reef, Linda *Seeking Diversity*
Schreengost, Maity *Writing Wizardry*
Terban, Marvin *Checking your Grammar*
Weaver, Constance *Lessons to Share on Teaching Grammar in Context*