

Sixth Grade English

2019-2020

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Reading and writing have a powerful interrelationship. When the students are learning how to think about texts as readers, they are also learning how to notice the craft of writing. Inspiring a lifelong love of language remains a foremost goal of the 6th grade English program. The English 6 curriculum is comprised of several interconnected components including: reading, writing, grammar, word study, speaking, and listening. While specific skills in each component are taught throughout the year, the primary focus is on reading and writing. Literature selections and writing assignments are closely connected and designed to support the social and emotional development of sixth grade students.

What does diversity look like and who am I in a diverse world?

This year, we are using this overarching question to guide and scaffold our literacy work. Through a variety of reading and writing genres, students will explore the following:

What makes me, me?

How do others see the world differently than I do?

How does my identity fit in our diverse world?

Where do new/different ideas come from? How are they received in our diverse world?

How do I learn, and how do others learn? How does this affect who we are and what we do?

How do I imagine the future? How do others imagine it?

Reading

Whole-Class Novels and Student Choice:

The English 6 reading curriculum will include at least one whole-class novel. Educator and author, Kylene Beers states, “Reading is a solitary act that has a strong social connection.” (2016) Reading the same book as a community can be a rich academic experience. Additionally, the shared discovery of themes, techniques, and character perspectives can foster the powerful feeling that we are all connected.

When we begin book clubs, students will have the opportunity to self-select novels from a variety of choices. According to Kate Roberts, author of *A Novel Approach*, “Being able to choose what you read (even with some guidance) leads to higher engagement and enthusiasm for reading.” Greater engagement leads to greater volume, and both lead to increased reading competency and enjoyment.

Genres

Students will read a variety of texts such as novels, nonfiction books/articles, short stories, poems, picture books, and memoirs. Genres we will include, but are not limited to, Realistic Fiction, Historical Fiction, Science Fiction, and Nonfiction.

Literary Techniques and Skills

As students read, and as we discuss texts together, we will be exploring many aspects of the author’s craft including, but not limited to, characterization, setting, plot development, literary devices, themes, symbols, and figurative language. Additionally, students will begin to understand how text structures may differ between genres. Through guided reading, students are further taught strategies that can heighten their comprehension, enabling them to make connections with a text and engage in meaningful literary discussions with their peers.

Writing

How Writing and Reading Intersect

Reading and writing go hand-in-hand. As students study an author's craft, they simultaneously learn about the features that are inherent in all good writing—ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation. The English 6 writing program provides ample opportunities for students to try to incorporate these qualities into their own writing.

In addition to writing in response to reading, students will explore narrative and poem writing alongside their close reading of realistic fiction. They will write to inform and persuade as they explore nonfiction texts.

Grammar

The study of grammar in 6th grade is closely connected to writing and reading selections. We will pick up where we left off with sentence and paragraph development and *The Writing Revolution*. The students will continue practicing techniques for varying, expanding, and manipulating sentence structure as well as organizing effective paragraphs. Through this work, they will begin to develop an understanding of parts of speech and sentence components. Although students receive some direct skill instruction, emphasis is placed on the development and application of these skills in their own writing.

Word Work

Vocabulary and spelling instruction will take place primarily within the context of our readings. We will explore the unfamiliar words we encounter in texts and discuss frequently misused and misspelled words. Precise word choice is also stressed during writing instruction.

Communication Skills

In addition to frequent writing opportunities, sixth graders hone their oral expression and active listening skills through frequent class discussions, book club interactions, oral reports, and project presentations.

Homework

In general, homework will be assigned daily. It will connect with the work we have done in class and should require no more than about 20 minutes. The students are also expected to read nightly for 30 minutes. Students are encouraged to use the extra help time provided during the school day to get a head start on homework, particularly if they are involved in afterschool activities. Homework assignments are posted in the classroom daily and will be copied into the student planner; however, homework is also posted on the FA portal as a backup. For most English assignments, the students can also go directly to Google Classroom (GC). The best support you can offer to your child is to provide a quiet, well-supplied workspace and an occasional check-in. Establishing a routine early in the year, developing good time management and organizational skills, and seeking support from teachers when needed are key components to a successful year in 6th grade.

Grades

Academic progress is evaluated through classwork, exit tickets, homework, quizzes, and tests. While class participation and daily preparation are important factors in the student's overall success and will be tracked and recorded, it will not be used as part of the grade calculation in English. Achieving one's own personal best is encouraged at all times.

Academic Honesty

In keeping with the academic policy, the work that any student brings to class should be his or her own, irrespective of whether it is being collected or graded. More detailed information about the school's academic honesty policy can be found in the Handbook.