

Pequannock Township School District

Curriculum Syllabus

English Language Arts/Grade 6

Course Description:

The sixth-grade English curriculum covers multiple facets of language arts. Students will work to further develop existing communication skills through the study of literature, reading strategies, process writing, and presentation skills. A writer's workshop approach will be utilized to aid students in the development, practice, and internalization of effective writing strategies and skills. Students will explore the English language, and use their knowledge of grammar and word choice to improve writing. From simple editing and combining sentences to producing varied forms of essay and narrative writing, students will be challenged to increase and better their writing skills. The reading program will include the use of a DRA/2, Good Habits, Great Readers, class novels, informational pieces, poetry, supplementary materials, and comprehension toolkit. While reading novels such as *The Cay* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, students will build a list of literary terms and examine such literary elements as plot, setting, point of view, and character. Students will also develop higher level thinking skills by comparing and contrasting, analyzing cause and effect, and evaluating. All of these skills will be taught using a variety of methods including class discussion, cooperative group activities, differentiation of instruction, and individual assignments designed to challenge each student. In each unit, students will complete writing assignments to apply these new skills and literary terms. In addition, each unit will generate a vocabulary list for students to explore words in new ways. Finally, students will study verbal communication, practice public speaking skills, and interact with 21st Century technology skills.

Course Standards:

The following is a list of NJSLs that describe what students are expected to know and be able to do as a result of successfully completing this course. The following NJSLs are the basis of the assessment of student achievement. The learner will demonstrate mastery of:

Progress Indicators for Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

RL.6.1. Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.6.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RL.6.3. Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Craft and Structure

RL.6.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

RL.6.5. Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

RL.6.6. Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL.6.7. Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

RL.6.8. (Not applicable to literature)

RL.6.9. Compare, contrast and reflect on (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RL.6.10. By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above, scaffolding as needed.

Progress Indicators for Reading Informational Text**Key Ideas and Details**

RI.6.1. Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.6.2. Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.6.3. Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

Craft and Structure

RI.6.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

RI.6.5. Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

RI.6.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI.6.7. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

RI.6.8. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

RI.6.9. Compare, contrast and reflect on (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RI.6.10. By the end of the year read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above, with scaffolding as needed.

Progress Indicators for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

W.6.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- A. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.
- B. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.
- D. Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
- E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

W.6.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

- A. Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aiding comprehension.
- B. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- C. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- E. Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
- F. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.

W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

- A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- C. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- D. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
- E. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

Production and Distribution of Writing

W.6.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.6.5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.6.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

W.6.7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

W.6.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

W.6.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

A. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres [e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories] in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics”).

B. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not”).

Range of Writing

W.6.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Progress Indicators for Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.6.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

A. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

B. Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

C. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

D. Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

SL.6.2. Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

SL.6.3. Deconstruct a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL.6.4. Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate speaking behaviors (e.g., eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation).

SL.6.5. Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.

SL.6.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Progress Indicators for Language

Conventions of Standard English

L.6.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

A. Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).

B. Use intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).

C. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.

D. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).

E. Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.

L.6.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

A. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.

B. Spell correctly.

Knowledge of Language

L.6.3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

A. Vary sentence patterns for meaning (syntax), reader/listener interest, and style/voice.

B. Maintain consistency in style and tone.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

L.6.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

B. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., audience, auditory, audible).

C. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

D. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.6.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.

B. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.

C. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., stingy, scrimping, economical, un wasteful, thrifty).

L.6.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Technology Standards:

- 8.1.8.A.1 Demonstrate knowledge of a real world problem using digital tools.
- 8.1.8.A.2 Create a document (e.g. newsletter, reports, personalized learning plan, business letters or flyers) using one or more digital applications to be critiqued by professionals for usability.
- 8.1.8.A.3 Use and/or develop a simulation that provides an environment to solve a real world problem or theory.
- 8.1.8.B.1 Synthesize and publish information about a local or global issue or event (ex. telecollaborative project, blog, school web).
- 8.1.8.C.1 Collaborate to develop and publish work that provides perspectives on a global problem for discussions with learners from other countries.
- 8.1.8.D.2 Demonstrate the application of appropriate citations to digital content.
- 8.1.8.D.4 Assess the credibility and accuracy of digital content.
- 8.1.8.E.1 Effectively use a variety of search tools and filters in professional public databases to find information to solve a real world problem.
- 8.1.8.F.1 Explore a local issue, by using digital tools to collect and analyze data to identify a solution and make an informed decision.

Career Ready Practices:

- CRP1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee
- CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
- CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
- CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

Scope and Sequence

Unit 1: What Is Prejudice? (Trimester 1)

Students will focus on citing textual evidence to support their answers to questions. Students will examine story elements and how they are interrelated. Students will use QAR to develop and identify questions and use those questions when participating in literature circles. Students will read *The Cay* and discuss the theme of prejudice in the novel. Students will focus on argument/opinion writing. Students will use MEETS to complete opinion essays. Students will read a short nonfiction piece from which they extract evidence for opinion writing. Students will recognize the counterargument to their position and address it briefly. Grammar will be infused throughout the curriculum. Students will develop and keep a writing portfolio.

Unit 2: Myths and Legends (Trimester 1)

Unit two focuses on myths and legends. Students will read excerpts from *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths*, by Bernard Evslin. Students may also read *The Lightning Thief*. Additionally, honors students will read *Black Ships Before Troy*. Students will focus on citing textual evidence to support their answers to questions. Students will determine central ideas and details of non-fiction text. They will conduct short research projects and will use QAR to develop and identify questions and use those questions when participating in literature circles. Students will focus on informative/explanatory writing.

Unit 3: Living in a New Land/Choice Reading Unit (Trimester 2)

Unit three focuses on reading literary text, with special emphasis on a self-selected text. Students will explore immigration, diversity, and social justice while reading *Esperanza Rising*. Students will then select a choice novel to read that centers around these same themes. Students will meet in literature circles to share and discuss their reading with peers. Students will learn to independently identify conflict, theme, and resolution, and to analyze these elements in peer reading groups. They will also strengthen literary analysis skills by learning to ask questions about a text. Students will compare and contrast conflicts, themes, and other story elements with their peers in literature circle meetings. Students will continue to focus on citing textual evidence to support their answers to questions and will use background knowledge and text clues to make inferences about a text. Students will continue to focus on informative/explanatory writing, with emphasis on a literary analysis piece.

Unit 4: Visions of America (Trimesters 2 and 3)

Students will focus on visions of America. Students will examine American Democracy through the literary perspective of *Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. They will compare it to *The Tom Sawyer* graphic novel. Students will use QAR to develop and identify questions and use those questions to think critically and critique text when participating in literature circles.

Unit 5: Dystopia (Trimester 3)

Students will focus on dystopian stories. They will read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry and the short story “All Summer in a Day” by Ray Bradbury. Students will examine and compare novels, short stories, and poems, all focusing on dystopian societies. Students will examine story elements and how they are interrelated. Students will use QAR to develop and identify questions and use those questions when participating in literature circles. Students will focus on narrative writing and reflecting upon the skills built over the course of this year to analyze a variety of text.

Assessments

Evaluation of student achievement in this course will be based on the following:

All units will include evaluation tools such as short answer responses, graphic organizers, multiple choice assessments, projects, and formal writing pieces. Major assessment (summative) per unit are as follows:

Unit 1: Narrative and compare and contrast essay

Unit 2: Mini mythology-based research project

Unit 3: Literary analysis essay and begin argumentative format in preparation for formal argument essay

Unit 4: Argument essay

Unit 5: Literary analysis writing piece

Curriculum Resources

Anchor Programs/Teacher Materials

Novels and major texts:

The Cay, Theodore Taylor

Esperanza Rising, Pam Munoz Ryan

The Lightning Thief, Rick Riordan

Heroes, Gods, and Monsters of the Greek Myths, Bernard Evslin

Black Ships Before Troy, Rosemary Sutcliff

Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain

The Giver, Lois Lowry

The Number Devil, Hans Magnus Enzensberger

Kensuke's Kingdom, Michael Morpurgo

The Acorn People, Ron Jones

Chicken Soup for the Soul: Teen Talk Middle School

*Selected nonfiction, informational, short stories, and poetry from commonlit.org, readworks.org, newsela.com, and the *Elements of Literature* textbook

Short stories:

“Demeter and Persephone”

“Eleven,” Sandra Cisneros

“The Landlord’s Daughter,” from *Red Scarf Girl*, Ji-Li Jiang

“All Summer in a Day,” Ray Bradbury

Home and School Connection

The following are suggestions and/or resources that will help parents support their children:

- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html
- <https://www.khanacademy.org/signup?isparent=1>
- <https://newsela.com/join/#/teach-or-read>
- <https://www.readingrockets.org/>
- <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading.html>
- <https://www.thechildrensbookreview.com/>
- <https://www.parenttoolkit.com/>
- <https://www.quill.org/>