



# Journalism Curriculum

Board Approved: March 21, 2024

## Course Information

### Course Description:

Students will explore all aspects of written journalism in a hands-on, real-world application of news, feature, and opinion writing. Topics covered will include news, feature, and opinion writing, digital storytelling, as well as media law and ethics. Work produced in this course will be published on multiple student-run media platforms and offers opportunities for wider recognition and visibility. This is an introductory journalism course that prepares students to produce effective and efficient communications for a variety of purposes.

### Transfer Goals:

- Understand the impact of storytelling in different media forms and how that can be used to enhance publications.
- Demonstrate the ability to adhere to media law and ethics.
- Understand how to tell different stories (news/sports, feature, opinion, digital) through the written word.
- Demonstrate understanding of how to effectively and ethically report different types of stories for different media.

**Curriculum Standards:** [Missouri ELA Standards 9-12](#)

**Curriculum Resource(s):** N/A

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

Journalism - Page 1

BOE Approved: 3/21/2024

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# Family Notification Procedures

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Grades 9-12</b> | <p><b><u>Whole Class Books</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Titles for books that will be assigned to a whole class will be available on Canvas and on course overviews/syllabi. If this changes during the class term, families will be notified.</li><li>• If a teacher plans to offer a choice from a small set of pre-identified books, those titles will be available on Canvas and on course overviews/syllabi. If this changes during the class term, families will be notified.</li></ul> <p><b><u>Library Books</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Families may contact their school's library media specialists to sign up for email notices in Destiny to be made aware of books checked out from district libraries.</li><li>• <a href="#">How Parents/Guardians Can Monitor Student Book Selections</a></li></ul> <p><b><u>Open Choice Books</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When a class begins a unit involving the selection of open-choice books, teachers notify families and prompt them to ask their students.</li><li>• For classes where students can select choice books at a faster pace, teachers will send quarterly emails to families reminding them to regularly ask their students.</li></ul> |
|--------------------|---|

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

Journalism - Page 2

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# Unit 1: What is Storytelling

Timeframe: 3 weeks

**Unit Description:** In this unit students will get an introduction to journalism and an overview of the course. Students will learn the basics of interviewing techniques, learn key vocabulary that journalists use, and understand the valuable role that journalists play in the constantly changing and evolving world of journalism.

**Enduring Understandings:**

*Students will understand that:*

- news is an important part of our world today.
- the important skills necessary to employ for effective interviews.
- journalism has evolved and changed over time to keep the audience engaged.

**Essential Questions:**

- What is the role of journalism in our world today?
- What strategies should journalists use when interviewing for articles?
- How has journalism changed over time to engage the interests of the audience?

## Unit 1 Standards

| STANDARD CODE        | STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:  |
|----------------------|--|
| <a href="#">RL1A</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can use relevant evidence from the text to draw conclusions, make inferences, and analyze what the text is saying.</li> <li>● I can support my analysis by using specific and detailed examples from the text.</li> </ul>   |
| <a href="#">RL1B</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can figure out what words and phrases mean in the text.</li> <li>● I can use the context of the sentence, and word parts, or look up definitions in reference materials to understand the meanings.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">RL2A</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can examine how an author decides to organize a story, arrange events, or play with the passage of time, and see how these choices affect the reader's experience.</li> <li>● I can analyze how the author's structure of events influence the way we feel, think, and understand the story.</li> </ul> |
| <a href="#">RL2B</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can analyze how the author's point of view is expressed through the setting, characters, and plot.</li> </ul>   |
| <a href="#">RL2C</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices and syntax on meaning and tone.</li> </ul>   |

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

Journalism - Page 3

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|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <a href="#">RL3A</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can compare and analyze different performances of a story, play, or poem to see how each version interprets the original text.</li> <li>● I can understand how various performances can give different meanings or emotions to the same source material.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">RL3B</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can describe how and why an author references or changes existing stories or information in their own writing.</li> <li>● I can understand how authors draw upon familiar sources to add depth, meaning, or a new perspective to their own text.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">RI1B</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text using context, affixes, or reference materials.</li> </ul>   |
| <a href="#">RI1C</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can look at visual elements in a text and understand what they mean.</li> <li>● I can analyze them to make conclusions and understand the information they convey.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">RI2A</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can study how an author decides to organize a story or arrange information in a certain order, and see how these choices affect the reader's experience.</li> <li>● I can understand how they influence the way we understand the text, follow the plot, and engage with the information presented.</li> </ul> |
| <a href="#">RI2B</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance the point of view or purpose.</li> </ul>  |

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

Journalism - Page 4

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# Unit 2: Basics of News Writing

Timeframe: 2 weeks

**Unit Description:** In this unit students will learn about the structure and components that make a good news story. Students will learn about the importance of gathering information from several different sources and then gathering the most important information for the news story. Students will learn to compose an objective news story with all of the critical components that make up an effective news story (lede, nut graf, style/voice, punctuation, 5 W's, quotes, AP style, etc.)

**Enduring Understandings:**

*Students will understand that:*

- news values make information newsworthy.
- leads provide context and information for a story.
- headlines motivate a reader and persuade them to engage in a story.

**Essential Questions:**

- What is news?
- What makes something newsworthy?
- How do I summarize a news article?
- How do I present a news article in an objective way?

**Unit 2 Standards**

| STANDARD CODE        | STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:   |
|----------------------|---|
| <a href="#">RI2A</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can analyze how an author decides to organize a story or arrange information in a certain order, and illustrate how these choices affect the reader's experience.</li> <li>● I can understand how they influence the way we understand the text, follow the plot, and engage with the information presented.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">RI2B</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance point of view or purpose.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">RI2D</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can evaluate an author's argument, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient.</li> <li>● I can identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.</li> </ul>   |
| <a href="#">RI3D</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>I can read and comprehend informational text independently and proficiently.</b></li> </ul>   |
| <a href="#">W1A</a>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>I can conduct research to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem.</b></li> <li>● <b>I can narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate.</b></li> <li>● <b>I can gather multiple relevant, credible sources, print and digital.</b></li> <li>● <b>I can integrate information using a standard citation system.</b></li> </ul> |

*Priority standards indicated in bold*

Journalism - Page 5

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|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <u>W2A</u>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can follow a writing process to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, style, and voice are appropriate to the task, audience, and purpose.</li> <li>● I can self-select and blend (when appropriate) previously learned genre (narrative, expository, and argumentative) writing techniques.</li> </ul>  |
| <u>W3A</u>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can review, revise, and edit my writing while considering the task, purpose, and audience.</li> </ul>   |
| <u>SL1B</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can analyze a speaker's argument and claims, evaluate the speaker's point of view, reasoning, and evidence to propel conversations.</li> <li>● I can actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.</li> </ul>   |
| <u>SL1C</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can respond in a thoughtful way to different perspectives, including those I encounter in various forms of media.</li> <li>● I can summarize the points where I agree or disagree with others.</li> <li>● I can recognize when I need more information or research to fully understand the topic or make a well-informed judgment.</li> </ul> |

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

Journalism - Page 6

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# Unit 3: Basics of Feature Writing

Timeframe: 2 weeks

**Unit Description:** In this unit students will learn about the structure and components that make a feature story. Students will learn about the importance of gathering information and doing in-depth research from different sources for the most pertinent information to put into the feature story. Students will learn to compose a feature story with all of the critical components that make up an effective feature story.

**Enduring Understandings:**

*Students will understand that:*

- feature stories differ from other news stories based on very specific writing features.
- a feature story requires in-depth research and revision.
- feature stories require strong quotes from reliable sources and thorough note-taking skills.

**Essential Questions:**

- What makes a story a feature story?
- What does a strong interview look like?
- What format does a feature story follow?
- How are good quotes selected for a feature article?

## Unit 3 Standards

**STANDARD CODE**

**STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:**

RI2A, RI2B, RI2D,  
**RI3D, W1A, W2A,**  
**W3A, SL1B,**  
 SL1C

- Continue “I can” statements from previous units.

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

Journalism - Page 7

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# Unit 4: Basics of Opinion Writing

Timeframe: 2 Weeks

**Unit Description:** In this unit students will learn about the structure and components that make up the three types of opinion writing. Students will learn about the importance of gathering research and providing strong and compelling evidence in order to make strong arguments in opinion writing. Students will learn to compose different opinion writing pieces with all of the critical components that make up the categories of opinion stories.

## Enduring Understandings:

*Students will understand that:*

- opinion stories differ from other news stories based on very specific writing features.
- opinion stories follow a format that relies on heavy elements of argument with strong claims and evidence and require a large body of research to compose effectively.

## Essential Questions:

- What makes a story an opinion story?
- What format does an opinion story follow?
- What are the three categories of opinion stories?

## Unit 4 Standards

### STANDARD CODE

### STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:

[RI2A](#), [RI2B](#), [RI2D](#),  
[RI3D](#), [W1A](#), [W2A](#),  
[W3A](#), [SL1B](#),  
[SL1C](#)

- Continue “I can” statements from previous units.

Priority standards indicated in **bold**

Journalism - Page 8

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# Unit 5: Basics of Digital Storytelling

Timeframe: 3 Weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will understand how digital storytelling differs from print storytelling and learn a variety of ways stories can be told digitally.

## Enduring Understandings:

*Students will understand that:*

- digital equipment can be used to communicate with others.
- audio recordings are effective ways to communicate stories and ideas.
- a published news story requires in-depth research and revision.

## Essential Questions:

- How can audio be used for digital communication?
- How can digital storytelling enhance a news story's message to the audience?

## Unit 5 Standards

| STANDARD CODE  | STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:  |
|--|--|
| <a href="#">RI2A</a> , <a href="#">RI2C</a> , <a href="#">W1A</a> ,<br><a href="#">W2A</a> , <a href="#">W3A</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue “I can” statements from previous units.</li> </ul>   |
| <a href="#">RI1A</a>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can draw conclusions, infer, and analyze by citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">RI1B</a>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text using context, affixes, or reference materials.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">RI1C</a>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can look at visual elements in a text and understand what they mean.</li> <li>• I can analyze them to make conclusions and understand the information they convey.</li> </ul>   |
| <a href="#">RI1D</a>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can find the central ideas in a text. I can analyze the development throughout the text and provide explanations of the significance of the central ideas . I can provide a short and unbiased summary of what the text is about.(written in teacher friendly language.)</li> </ul> |
| <a href="#">RI2C</a>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices and syntax on meaning and tone.</li> </ul>   |
| <a href="#">RI3A</a>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can analyze how similar topics or ideas are portrayed in different media forms.</li> </ul>  |

*Priority standards indicated in bold*

Journalism - Page 9

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|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <a href="#">RI3D</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can read and comprehend informational text independently and proficiently.</li> </ul>   |
| <a href="#">SL1A</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, clear goals, deadlines, and individual roles.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">SL2C</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>I can plan and deliver appropriate presentations concisely and logically based on the task, audience, and purpose.</b></li> <li><b>I can use multimedia in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.</b></li> </ul> |

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

Journalism - Page 10

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# Unit 6: Media Law and Ethics

Timeframe: 3 Weeks

**Unit Description:** In this unit students will explore how historical events have shaped journalism and its role in our society. Students will understand how media laws and ethics impact journalism and how student freedoms differ from state to state.

**Enduring Understandings:**

*Students will understand that:*

- the First Amendment protects American freedoms.
- legal precedent shapes their rights and responsibilities as student journalists.
- student freedoms differ from state to state.

**Essential Questions:**

- What does the First Amendment say?
- How do student freedoms differ?
- What are student press and speech freedoms in my state?

## Unit 6 Standards

| STANDARD CODE   | STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:  |
|---|--|
| <a href="#">RL1A</a> , <a href="#">RL1B</a> , <a href="#">RL2B</a> , <a href="#">RL3A</a> , <a href="#">RL3C</a> , <a href="#">RI3C</a> , <a href="#">W1A</a> , <a href="#">SL1C</a> , <a href="#">SL2C</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue “I can” statements from previous units.</li> </ul>   |
| <a href="#">RL3C</a>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can analyze how multiple texts reflect historical and/or cultural contexts.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">RI3C</a>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can analyze how multiple texts reflect the historical and/or cultural contexts.</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">SL1C</a>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can respond in a thoughtful way to different perspectives, including those I encounter in various forms of media. I can summarize the points where I agree or disagree with others. I can recognize when I need more information or research to fully understand the topic or make a well-informed judgment.</li> </ul> |

*Priority standards indicated in bold*

Journalism - Page 11

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