



English 9: Literature and Composition

Curriculum Reform Changes

**Based Upon the New
State of Michigan
Educational Standards**

Presented by Cheryl Wegener and Kimberly Christiansen
Brighton High School



ENGLISH 9 CURRICULUM REFORM PROPOSAL

Overview of Changes

In order to incorporate the new state standards into our curriculum, the English department has created six units to be taught in all English 9 classes. Each unit features an anchor text or activity, unifying themes and linking texts, and objectives in each of the four strands.

In addition, students will be required to maintain a portfolio of their writings throughout the year. This portfolio will make up a portion of their final exam grade and be required for “testing out” credit for the course.

The assessment for the course will consist of a common bank of objective and subjective questions. Teachers will choose a designated number of questions from each section to make up their tests.

The overall standards and benchmarks of the ninth grade curriculum will not change greatly in terms of content and objectives. Our current curriculum speaks to each of the four strands, or overlying goals, set out for us by the state. However, the delivery system by which we will achieve these objectives will change somewhat to closer align with the model units the state has provided. Also, the use of a common assessment and the requirement of six units across the ninth grade will lead to a stronger congruency among classes.

Reading 9 and Honors English 9 classes will continue to be a valuable part of our curriculum. These classes will cover the six units in a style more suited to the needs of these particular students. Reading 9 classes will involve more scaffolding and attention to the basics of reading and writing. Honors English 9 classes will cover the units in more depth and at a more rapid pace, allowing them to maintain the higher levels of reading and advanced writing that are typical in an honors classroom. Honors classes will also continue to read four assigned books each summer.

Introduction to English Language Arts

The English Language Arts Standards are built upon the expectation that students will engage in broad reading and writing experiences to encompass literary texts, nonfiction literary texts, and other informational texts. The High School Content Expectations incorporate a new emphasis on informational text comprehension and workplace reading and writing skills. They are organized into four strands, 14 standards, and 91 expectations. The skills and content addressed in these expectations will, in practice, be woven together into a coherent, integrated English language arts curriculum. The language arts processes are recursive* and reinforcing; students learn by engaging in and reflecting on these processes at increasingly complex levels over time.

Students will develop effective communication and literacy skills through rigorous and relevant units of instruction and engaging learning experiences by focusing on four key dispositions:

- Inter-Relationships and Self-Reliance
- Critical Response and Stance
- Transformational Thinking
- Leadership Qualities

English Language Arts Grade 9 Goal Statement

The goal for English Language Arts Grade 9 is to build a solid foundation of knowledge, skills, and strategies that will be refined, applied, and extended as students engage in more complex ideas, texts, and tasks. In English Language Arts Grade 9, students will be introduced to the various genre of classic and contemporary narrative and informational texts that will be read and analyzed throughout high school. Ninth graders will connect with and respond to texts by analyzing relationships within and across families, communities, societies, governments, and economies. Through the lens of Inter-Relationships and Self-Reliance, they will consider how they build relationships, how their relationships impact others, and their responsibility to society.

*Recursive is used in the context of the ELA HSCE as describing language arts processes as being addressed repeatedly and at increasingly complex levels throughout the units and lessons from grade 9 to grade 12.

Writing and speaking involve a complex process of inquiry and the discovery of meaning. Through writing, speaking, and visually expressing, students understand themselves, communicate with others, advance personal and professional goals, and participate in a democratic society. Effective communication requires an understanding of purpose and audience, and reflects well-developed ideas using appropriate conventions of genre, content, form, style, voice, and mechanics.

STANDARD 1.1 *Understand and practice writing as a recursive process.*

- CE 1.1.1 Demonstrate flexibility in using independent and collaborative strategies for planning, drafting, revising, and editing complex texts.
- CE 1.1.2 Know and use a variety of prewriting strategies to generate, focus, and organize ideas (e.g., free writing, clustering/mapping, talking with others, brainstorming, outlining, developing graphic organizers, taking notes, summarizing, paraphrasing).
- CE 1.1.3 Select and use language that is appropriate (e.g., formal, informal, literary, or technical) for the purpose, audience, and context of the text, speech, or visual representation (e.g., letter to editor, proposal, poem, or digital story).
- CE 1.1.4 Compose drafts that convey an impression, express an opinion, raise a question, argue a position, explore a topic, tell a story, or serve another purpose, while simultaneously considering the constraints and possibilities (e.g., structure, language, use of conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics) of the selected form or genre.
- CE 1.1.5 Revise drafts to more fully and/or precisely convey meaning—drawing on response from others, self-reflection, and reading one’s own work with the eye of a reader; then refine the text—deleting and/or reorganizing ideas, and addressing potential readers’ questions.
- CE 1.1.6 Reorganize sentence elements as needed and choose grammatical and stylistic options that provide sentence variety, fluency, and flow.
- CE 1.1.7 Edit for style, tone, and word choice (specificity, variety, accuracy, appropriateness, conciseness) and for conventions of grammar, usage and mechanics that are appropriate for audience.
- CE 1.1.8 Proofread to check spelling, layout, and font; and prepare selected pieces for a public audience.

STANDARD 1.2 *Use writing, speaking, and visual expression for personal understanding and growth.*

- CE 1.2.1 Write, speak, and use images and graphs to understand and discover complex ideas.
- CE 1.2.2 Write, speak, and visually represent to develop self-awareness and insight (e.g., diary, journal writing, portfolio self-assessment).
- CE 1.2.3 Write, speak, and create artistic representations to express personal experience and perspective (e.g., personal narrative, poetry, imaginative writing, slam poetry, blogs, webpages).
- CE 1.2.4 Assess strengths, weaknesses, and development as a writer by examining a collection of own writing.

STANDARD 1.4 *Develop and use the tools and practices of inquiry and research—generating, exploring, and refining important questions; creating a hypothesis or thesis; gathering and studying evidence; drawing conclusions; and composing a report.*

- CE 1.4.1 Identify, explore, and refine topics and questions appropriate for research.
- CE 1.4.2 Develop a system for gathering, organizing, paraphrasing, and summarizing information; select, evaluate, synthesize, and use multiple primary and secondary (print and electronic) resources.
- CE 1.4.3 Develop and refine a position, claim, thesis, or hypothesis that will be explored and supported by analyzing different perspectives, resolving inconsistencies, and writing about those differences in a structure appropriate for the audience (e.g., argumentative essay that avoids inconsistencies in logic and develops a single thesis; exploratory essay that explains differences and similarities and raises additional questions).
- CE 1.4.4 Interpret, synthesize, and evaluate information/findings in various print sources and media (e.g., fact and opinion, comprehensiveness of the evidence, bias, varied perspectives, motives and credibility of the author, date of publication) to draw conclusions and implications.
- CE 1.4.5 Develop organizational structures appropriate to the purpose and message, and use transitions that produce a sequential or logical flow of ideas.
- CE 1.4.6 Use appropriate conventions of textual citation in different contexts (e.g., different academic disciplines and workplace writing situations).
- CE 1.4.7 Recognize the role of research, including student research, as a contribution to collective knowledge, selecting an appropriate method or genre through which research findings will be shared and evaluated, keeping in mind the needs of the prospective audience. (e.g., presentations, online sharing, written products such as a research report, a research brief, a multi-genre report, I-Search, literary analysis, news article).

STANDARD 1.5 *Produce a variety of written, spoken, multigenre, and multimedia works, making conscious choices about language, form, style, and/or visual representation for each work (e.g., poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction stories, academic and literary essays, proposals, memos, manifestos, business letters, advertisements, prepared speeches, group and dramatic performances, poetry slams, and digital stories).*

- CE 1.5.1 Use writing, speaking, and visual expression to develop powerful, creative and critical messages.
- CE 1.5.2 Prepare spoken and multimedia presentations that effectively address audiences by careful use of voice, pacing, gestures, eye contact, visual aids, audio and video technology.
- CE 1.5.3 Select format and tone based on the desired effect and audience, using effective written and spoken language, sound, and/or visual representations (e.g., focus, transitions, facts, detail and evidence to support judgments, skillful use of rhetorical devices, and a coherent conclusion).
- CE 1.5.4 Use technology tools (e.g. word processing, presentation and multimedia software) to produce polished written and multimedia work (e.g., literary and expository works, proposals, business presentations, advertisements).
- CE 1.5.5 Respond to and use feedback to strengthen written and multimedia presentations (e.g., clarify and defend ideas, expand on a topic, use logical arguments, modify organization, evaluate effectiveness of images, set goals for future presentations).

STANDARD 2.2 *Use a variety of reading, listening, and viewing strategies to construct meaning beyond the literal level (e.g., drawing inferences; confirming and correcting; making comparisons, connections, and generalizations; and drawing conclusions).*

- CE 2.2.1 Recognize literary and persuasive strategies as ways by which authors convey ideas and readers make meaning (e.g., imagery, irony, satire, parody, propaganda, overstatement/understatement, omission, and multiple points of view).
- CE 2.2.2 Examine the ways in which prior knowledge and personal experience affect the understanding of written, spoken, or multimedia text.
- CE 2.2.3 Interpret the meaning of written, spoken, and visual texts by drawing on different cultural, theoretical, and critical perspectives.

STANDARD 2.3 *Develop as a reader, listener, and viewer for personal, social, and political purposes, through independent and collaborative reading.*

- CE 2.3.1 Read, listen to, and view diverse texts for multiple purposes such as learning complex procedures, making work-place decisions, or pursuing in-depth studies.
- CE 2.3.2 Read, view, and/or listen independently to a variety of fiction, nonfiction, and multimedia genres based on student interest and curiosity.
- CE 2.3.3 Critically read and interpret instructions for a variety of tasks (e.g., completing assignments, using software, writing college and job applications).
- CE 2.3.4 Critically interpret primary and secondary research-related documents (e.g., historical and government documents, newspapers, critical and technical articles, and subject-specific books).
- CE 2.3.5 Engage in self-assessment as a reader, listener, and viewer, while monitoring comprehension and using a variety of strategies to overcome difficulties when constructing and conveying meaning.
- CE 2.3.6 Reflect on personal understanding of reading, listening, and viewing; set personal learning goals; and take responsibility for personal growth.
- CE 2.3.7 Participate as an active member of a reading, listening, and viewing community, collaboratively selecting materials to read or events to view and enjoy (e.g., book talks, literature circles, film clubs).
- CE 2.3.8 Develop and apply personal, shared, and academic criteria to evaluate own and others' oral, written, and visual texts.

- CE 3.2.2 Identify different types of poetry (e.g., epic, lyric, sonnet, free verse) and explain how specific features (e.g., figurative language, imagery, rhythm, alliteration, etc.) influence meaning.
- CE 3.2.3 Identify how elements of dramatic literature (e.g., dramatic irony, soliloquy, stage direction, and dialogue) illuminate the meaning of the text.
- CE 3.2.4 Respond by participating actively and appropriately in small and large group discussions about literature (e.g., posing questions, listening to others, contributing ideas, reflecting on and revising initial responses).
- CE 3.2.5 Respond to literature in a variety of ways (e.g., dramatic interpretation, reader's theatre, literature circles, illustration, writing in a character's voice, engaging in social action, writing an analytic essay) providing examples of how texts affect their lives, connect them with the contemporary world, and communicate across time.

STANDARD 3.3 *Use knowledge of literary history, traditions, and theory to respond to and analyze the meaning of texts.*

- CE 3.3.1 Explore the relationships among individual works, authors, and literary movements in English and American literature (e.g., Romanticism, Puritanism, the Harlem Renaissance, Postcolonial), and consider the historical, cultural, and societal contexts in which works were produced.
- CE 3.3.2 Read and analyze classic and contemporary works of literature (American, British, world) representing a variety of genres and traditions and consider their significance in their own time period as well as how they may be relevant to contemporary society.
- CE 3.3.3 Draw on a variety of critical perspectives to respond to and analyze works of literature (e.g., religious, biographical, feminist, multicultural, political).
- CE 3.3.4 Demonstrate knowledge of American minority literature and the contributions of minority writers.
- CE 3.3.5 Demonstrate familiarity with world literature, including authors beyond American and British literary traditions.
- CE 3.3.6 Critically examine standards of literary judgment (e.g., aesthetic value, quality of writing, literary merit, social significance) and questions regarding the inclusion and/or exclusion of literary works in the curriculum (e.g., canon formation, "classic" vs. "popular" texts, traditional vs. non-traditional literature, the place of literature by women and/or minority writers).

STANDARD 3.4 *Examine mass media, film, series fiction, and other texts from popular culture.*

- CE 3.4.1 Use methods of close and contextualized reading and viewing to examine, interpret, and evaluate print and visual media and other works from popular culture.
- CE 3.4.2 Understand that media and popular texts are produced within a social context and have economic, political, social, and aesthetic purposes.
- CE 3.4.3 Understand the ways people use media in their personal and public lives.
- CE 3.4.4 Understand how the commercial and political purposes of producers and publishers influence not only the nature of advertisements and the selection of media content, but the slant of news articles in newspapers, magazines, and the visual media.

HIGHSCHOOLENGLISHLANGUAGEARTS UNITFRAMEWORKFORGRADES9-12

Michigan teachers designed the thematic units of instruction described in this booklet. Together the newly developed units meet all of the English Language Arts High School Content Expectations. They exemplify the high standards of rigor and relevance required for post secondary success. Using the framework of common features and the models as guides, teachers will develop their own thematic units of instruction.

The units use complex anchor and linking texts to teach the content expectations and to make connections that lead to the dispositions: Inter-Relationships and Self-Reliance, Critical Response and Stance, Transformational Thinking, and Leadership Qualities.

The units are designed to take advantage of what each text offers for meeting the expectations, including opportunities for direct instruction of text characteristics and features, reading and writing strategies, critical thinking, building of historical background knowledge, and On-Going Literacy development including vocabulary and grammar.

The framework includes

- Themes, Dispositions and Essential Questions
- Literary Genre Focus/Anchor Texts, Linking Texts
- Literary Analysis and Genre Study
- Reading, Listening, Viewing Strategies and Activities
- Writing, Speaking, Expressing Strategies and Activities
- On-Going Literacy Development

**12th Grade Focus
Leadership Qualities**

- How do I know if I am developing the academic skills that I will need in my future life?
- What rules or principles do I use for how I treat others?
- What responsibility do I have to society?
- How do I resolve my responsibilities to myself with those to my family members, my school, community, and world?
- How can I effectively articulate my opinions and perspectives?
- Who is in a position to help me affect change?
- What can I do to avoid repeating mistakes made in history?
- What leadership skills have I developed?
- What leadership qualities will I need to take with me from high school?
- What qualities define a good world citizen?
- How can I create the world I want to live in?
- How can I use my talents to create new opportunities for myself and for others?

**Literary Genre
Focus/Anchor Texts**

Narrative Text/Fiction (NT)

- Novels, short stories, drama, poetry, (allegory, satire, parody)

Literary Nonfiction (LNF)

- Essays, memoirs, biographies, commentaries, advertising, letters

Informational/Expository Text (IT)

- Historical documents, essays, literary analyses, speeches, research/technical reports, textbooks, technical manuals, letters, proposals, memos, presentations, legal documents, Internet sources, newspapers, magazines propaganda, articles, reference tools

Media

- Movie clips, multimedia presentations, blogs, webpages, music, works of art, digital stories, advertisements, multimedia genre, video streaming

Characteristics of Complex Text as defined by ACT:

Relationships: Interactions among ideas or characters in the text are subtle, involved, or deeply embedded.

Richness: The text possesses a sizable amount of highly sophisticated information conveyed through data or literary devices.

Structure: The text is organized in ways that are elaborate and sometimes unconventional.

Style: The author's tone and use of language are often intricate.

Vocabulary: The author's choice of words is demanding and highly context dependent.

Purpose: The author's intent in writing the text is implicit and sometimes ambiguous.

**Reading, Listening/
Viewing Strategies
and Activities**

Comprehension Strategies

- access prior knowledge
- determine importance
- make connections
- make inferences
- monitor comprehension
- annotate • ask questions
- clarify • compare
- critique • predict
- reflect • summarize
- synthesize • visualize

Comprehension Activities

- Explicit instruction on comprehension strategy use
- Focus questions for use in instruction
- Graphic organizers to identify structures, audience, and content
- Advance organizers
- Opportunities for students to make thematic and real-life connections

**Critical Reading, Listening
and Viewing Strategies**

Literary Text

- Consider themes, different points of view, and characterization within and across text
- Describe the impact of setting and characters on plot and themes
- Consider the political assumptions underlying the text and the impact of the work on society
- Analyze literal meaning, author's craft, and interpretation
- Discover and transfer abstract themes and big ideas to new situations

Informational/Expository Text

- Find the potential theses and supporting details
- Determine level(s) of relevance
- Assess statements and arguments
- Consider potential for bias
- Look for evidence to support assumptions and beliefs
- Find validity of facts in source material
- Discover and transfer abstract themes and big ideas into new situations

Vocabulary Strategies

- Define in context unfamiliar words, specialized vocabulary, figurative language, and technical terms
- Identify how common phrases (e.g., oxymoron, hyperbole) change meaning
- Recognize and use roots, affixes, and word origins
- Restate definition or example in own words
- Create a graphic representation of terms
- Compare/classify terms

**Response to Reading,
Listening, and Viewing
Activities**

- cross-text comparison writing or speaking
- critical response journals
- quotation notebooks
- critique of speech, presentation, or performance
- note taking/study guide

Research and Inquiry Process Activities

- Use research to solve problems, provide criteria, and generate new knowledge
- Engage in ethical, credible and reliable research
- Develop a research plan and carry it out
- Generate topics, seeking information from multiple perspectives and sources
- Analyze information for relevance, quality, and reliability
- Connect the information to present a coherent structure and argument
- Select modes of presentation
- Recognize the contribution to collective knowledge

Speaking, Listening, Viewing Strategies

- Lead and participate in discussions
- Apply presentation skills and protocols
- Plan based on audience and purpose
- Share, acknowledge, and build on one another's ideas
- Consolidate and refine thinking
- Evaluate the quality and relevance of the message
- Use feedback to improve effectiveness
- Advocate for ideas
- Listen with empathy
- Use techniques and media to enhance and enrich your message

On-Going Literacy Development

Student Goal Setting and Self Evaluation Strategies

- Assume ownership of academic literacy progress
- Use criteria and standards to analyze work
- Assess achievement over time
- Respond to constructive feedback
- Set new literacy goals

Daily Fluency Development Activities

Reading

- personal choice
- partner reading
- choral reading

Writing

- quickwrites
- response to literature

Vocabulary Development, Grammar Skills, and Writing Strategies

- Attend to focused skill lessons
- Practice until mastery
- Apply in context

Introduction to High School Writing Unit Overview

Units are designed to “take advantage of what each text offers for meeting the expectations, including opportunities for direct instruction of text characteristics and features, reading and writing strategies, critical thinking, building of historical background knowledge, and on-going literacy development including vocabulary and grammar.”

Big Ideas/Themes

- Effective communication/importance of
- Characteristics of effective writing:
 - engaging, clear, and focused
 - ideas and content are extensively developed and supported by concepts, examples, and details where appropriate
 - organization and transitions seem nature and moves the reader smoothly through the text
 - voice and tone are authentic and compelling
 - language use and mastery of conventions contribute to the effect of the presentation

Focus Questions

- What are the basics of good writing?
- What techniques does a good writer use?
- What purposes does writing serve in the real world?
- How can writing help people understand what they are thinking?
- How can I use writing to communicate with my teachers? my community? society?
- How important are effective writing skills in various careers?

Literary Genre Focus/Anchor Texts

- Personal narratives
- Autobiographical sketches/memoirs
- Descriptive essays
- Informational text such as current events in newspapers and magazine articles with a call for action, identifiable organizational patterns, and use of various sidebars.

Linking Texts/Media

- Video clips
- Persuasive nonfiction models that illustrate good writing and an organizational text pattern including: compare/contrast, cause/effect, or fact/opinion
- Poetry
- Student exemplars

***A Separate Peace* Unit Overview**

Big Ideas/Themes

- Identity, relationships, responsibility, morality, conflict
- The closest friendships often involve intense rivalry.
- Part of friendship consists of accepting a friend's shortcomings.
- Identity is shaped by the social context of our youth.

Essential Questions

- Who am I, and how do I find my place in the world?
- What makes a good friendship? What makes me a good friend?
- How is my identity influenced by my friendships and by society?
- How do I maintain my own identity within my friendships?
- How do I maintain my own identity and fulfill my responsibilities to society?
- What role do morality and ethics play in my actions and decisions?

Literary Genre Focus/Anchor Text

- Narrative Text:
 - Realistic fiction novel
A Separate Peace, John Knowles

Linking Texts/Media

- | | |
|----------------------|----------|
| ▪ Newspaper articles | ▪ Poetry |
| ▪ Magazine articles | ▪ Film |
| ▪ Letters | |

Genre Study, Literary Analysis and Application: Narrative Text

Students will examine the elements of a novel, with emphasis on characters, setting and conflict, literary devices such as symbolism, imagery and flashback, and historical and cultural connections including gender roles in the 1940s and World War II.

Genre Study, Literary Analysis and Application: Information Text

Students will examine elements of journalism, including objective vs. subjective writing and journalistic writing structure. They will also learn the elements of formal and informal letters through examining primary documents.

To Kill a Mockingbird **Unit Overview**

Big Ideas/Themes

- Integrity, truth, courage, relationships, responsibility, equality, justice
- One may find the truth through knowledge and experience.
- Education is key to overcoming prejudice.
- Each individual has responsibility to his or her society.

Essential Questions

- Who am I and how do I find my place in the world where I live?
- What stereotypes exist in our world?
- What is equality and how do we work to achieve it?
- How does a person separate lies from truth?
- Why is it so difficult for people to stand up for what is right?
- Do I have the courage to do what is right?
- Is it possible for one person to make a difference?
- What are the characteristics of a good leader?

Literary Genre Focus/Anchor Texts

- Narrative Text
 - Realistic Contemporary Fiction
To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Linking Texts/Media

- Newspaper articles
- News editorials
- Web sites
- Short stories
- Non-fiction
- Poetry
- Film
- Music lyrics

Introduction to Research Unit Overview

The research unit is designed to introduce students to the basics of high school research, including what sources are available, how best to find the information needed, how to determine whether the information is reliable, and how to use it ethically and effectively. The media specialist will team with the content teacher to deliver this instruction. The unit will culminate in a research essay about a societal hero.

Big Ideas/Themes

- A hero demonstrates the values of his or her society.
- A plethora of information surrounds us, but we must learn the appropriate skills to access, evaluate and use it effectively.

Essential Questions

- What resources are available to me? How/where may I locate them?
- How do I use information ethically and provide credit for the ideas of others?
- How can I most effectively search for the information I need?
- How can I determine whether a resource is reliable and authoritative?

Lessons

The unit will be delivered in the following lessons, which will be spread throughout the school year:

- **Orientation:** Students will learn the location of the media center, its policies and procedures and the types of resources it offers. The media specialist will provide a mini-lesson on the topic, after which students will conduct a scavenger hunt in the media center to demonstrate their learning.
- **Avoiding Plagiarism:** Students will learn what plagiarism is, why it is unacceptable (potential consequences), and how to avoid it in their own writing. The media specialist will provide a mini-lesson on the topic, after which students will practice distinguishing between plagiarism and acceptable use of information.
- **Locating and Evaluating Sources:** Students will learn what resources are available to them, including online, database and print sources, and how to effectively and efficiently find the information they need. They will also learn how to evaluate the sources they find. The media specialist will provide two mini-lessons on the topic, after which students will complete activities requiring them to use the variety of sources available to them, demonstrate their knowledge of searching techniques, and evaluate the sources they find.
- **Bibliography Skills:** Students will learn how to cite information from a variety of sources and compose a Works Cited page or annotated bibliography. The media specialist will provide a mini-lesson on the topic, and students will be required to demonstrate their learning through the creation of a Works Cited page or annotated bibliography for their research essay.

Literary Genre Focus/Anchor Texts

- Narrative Text
 - Drama/Tragedy
The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare

- Informational Text
 - Historical/Political Essay Speech
“The Gettysburg Address” Abraham Lincoln

Linking Texts/Media

- Film
- Video streaming
- Essays/speeches
- Poetry
- News editorial
- Newspaper articles
- Music lyrics
- Letters
- Magazine articles

Genre Study, Literary Analysis, and Application: Narrative Text

Students will examine the elements and structure of Shakespearean drama and Elizabethan syntax, as well as a variety of literary elements and devices that often accompany them. Historical and cultural connections will also be addressed regarding the influence of language, archaic language vs. modern language, social action, and social issues.

Genre Study, Literary Analysis, and Application: Informational Text

Students will examine the characteristics of literary nonfiction, historical and/or political essays, primary historical documents, and speeches. Expository elements, organizational patterns, and structure will also be addressed.

Reading, Listening, Viewing Strategies and Activities

Reading comprehension and critical thinking strategies include the use of retelling, paraphrasing, summarizing, visualization, margin and director’s notes, text mapping, the structural pyramid for five acts, questions-answer-relationship, content clues, and use of figurative language to enhance meaning.

Students will engage in independent reading as well as class reading, and will utilize listening and viewing strategies while listening to teacher read-alouds, listening for meaning, and finding intersections between visual images and verbal communication.

The Odyssey **Unit Overview**

Units are designed to “take advantage of what each text offers for meeting the expectations, including opportunities for direct instruction of text characteristics and features, reading and writing strategies, critical thinking, building of historical background knowledge, and on-going literacy development including vocabulary and grammar.”

Big Ideas

- Relationships
- Survival
- Courage/bravery
- Effects of war
- Faithfulness
- Time passage
- Journey/rite of passage/self-discovery
- Self-reliance
- Patriotism

Themes

- Balance is best in all things
- Love conquers all
- Nothing is more important than getting home
- Family relationships sustain us
- In time of tragedy, we rely on past relationships to give us hope for survival
- The displaced: which way is home?
- Dealing with bullies

Essential Questions

- What is a relationship?
- What obstacles stand in the way of enduring relationships?
- In times of adversity, do family bonds/relationships help us survive?
- Does it take courage to sustain a relationship?
- How do relationships endure over time?
- How do I relate to my family, my community, and society?
- How do I build a network of people for mutual support?

Reading, Listening, Viewing Strategies and Activities

Reading comprehension and critical thinking strategies include the use of determining importance, making inferences and connections, mental modeling, metaphorical thinking, paraphrasing, predicting, summarizing, and visualization.

Students will engage in independent reading as well as class reading, will read other epics to become more familiar with style, and will identify how figurative language such as the Homeric or epic simile can clarify the meaning of the epic. Listening and viewing strategies include researching songs that deal with relationships, listing for sound effects and literary devices within such songs, and creating a compilation of songs while reflecting on their connections and significance

Writing, Speaking, Expressing Strategies and Activities

- Writing
 - Journal entries
 - Letters
 - Memoirs
 - Narrative poem
 - Collection of poems surrounding one theme
 - Converting a published/previously written story into a narrative poem
 - Epic poem
 - Written response to focus questions
 - Persuasive essay
 - Research of heroic adventures in other cultures and/or in the present
- Speaking
 - Reader's theater and chorale reading
 - Interview of parent/guardian about relationships
 - Partnership with local care or nonprofit organization
- Expressing
 - Creation of a travel brochure
 - Creation of a photo essay

On-Going Literacy Development

- Maintain writing portfolio
- Reflect on selected journal entry
- Reflect on two pieces of unit writing that represent best effort
- Daily fluency in reading
- Vocabulary development
- Process writing
- Analysis of poetic structure
- Grammar skills

Brings Assessment in Line with Instruction

Portfolios are an effective way to bring assessment into harmony with instructional goals. Portfolios can be thought of as a form of "embedded assessment"; that is, the assessment tasks are a part of instruction. Teachers determine important instructional goals and how they might be achieved. Through observation during instruction and collecting some of the artifacts of instruction, assessment flows directly from the instruction (Shavelson, 1992).

Portfolios can contextualize and provide a basis for challenging formal test results based on testing that is not authentic or reliable. All too often students are judged on the basis of a single test score from a test of questionable worth (Darling-Hammond & Wise, 1985; Haney & Madaus, 1989). Student performance on such tests can show day-to-day variation. However, such scores diminish in importance when contrasted with the multiple measures of reading and writing that are part of a literacy portfolio.

Valid Measures of Literacy

Portfolios are extremely valid measures of literacy. A new and exciting approach to validity, known as consequential validity, maintains that a major determinant of the validity of an assessment measure is the consequence that the measure has upon the student, the instruction, and the curriculum (Linn, Baker, & Dunbar, 1991). There is evidence that portfolios inform students, as well as teachers and parents, and that the results can be used to improve instruction, another major dimension of good assessment (Gomez, Grau, & Block, 1991).

SAMPLE Portfolio Reflection Letter Assignment

As the year winds down, we need to think about bringing the portfolio to a closing point. To do this effectively, we need to get organized. If you have been keeping up with the revising of your writing experiments and assignments, then this part should be a breeze. The last thing to do (besides, of course, binding this puppy) is to write the reflective self-evaluation letter.

For the final reflection piece, which you should put as the very last item in your portfolio, I would like you to answer the list of questions that you see below. The reflection is the most important part of the writing and learning portfolio. It will really show everyone what you accomplished this year and it will fulfill some of the Michigan Content Standards that are essential to your high school education. Do not be intimidated by the length of this list. As you read the questions, you will see that they all tie together and can sometimes even be combined. Remember, this should be in a letter format, so DO NOT just list the answers. Write a letter to me!

- ❖ Explain the theme of your portfolio and how your cover and cover pages relate to it. How does the theme relate to you and to your world/growth/change this year?
- ❖ Discuss the kinds of writing you tried (poetry, short story, essay, memoir, article, book review, etc.) that worked.
- ❖ Discuss the kinds of writing you tried that didn't work.
- ❖ Explain everything you are able to do in regards to your writing process, the content of your writing, and the mechanics of your writing.
- ❖ What are the three most important things you are able to do as a writer? *Explain this thoroughly and cite examples from your writing showing your growth.*
- ❖ What are three things you want to do better as a writer? Why?
- ❖ What is one kind of writing you wish you would have tried? Why didn't you try it?
- ❖ How much have you changed/progressed as a writer since the beginning of the year? How do you know that you've changed?
- ❖ What have you discovered about yourself as a writer?
- ❖ Discuss three strengths and three weaknesses you find in your writing. *Be very specific and cite examples from your writing.*
- ❖ What has helped you the most with your writing?
- ❖ How many books/plays did you start this year? How many books/plays did you finish this year?
- ❖ What are three things you could do better as a reader?
- ❖ What is one kind of book you have never attempted to try before? Why haven't you tried it?
- ❖ Is there one book you read this year that you feel changed you as a reader? In what ways did it change you? How do you know that you've changed?
- ❖ How have you changed/progressed as a reader since the beginning of the school year?
- ❖ What have you discovered about yourself as a reader?
- ❖ In what ways have you noticed your reading affecting your writing or vice-versa?
- ❖ What is your greatest strength as a learner?
- ❖ Tell me about three of your best accomplishments this year. At least two of them should relate to this class. Describe them. What do they mean to you? Why?
- ❖ What is your greatest weakness as a learner? What can you do to overcome this weakness?
- ❖ Is there one thing that helped you to grow as a reader, writer, speaker, and/or learner this year? What was it?

Students often want to offer a personal message to me and are unsure of where to put it. Generally, this type of message works best at the very end of your letter. Remember that the letter as a whole should be reflective in nature, more so about your own growth and development than about me, but do know that I do keep your letters and appreciate any kind sentiments that you genuinely throw my way.