

DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

*LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM GUIDELINES*  
*2006*

## PREFACE

Jesus Christ and the Good News of the Gospel is the basis of the Catholic school curriculum, through which all other curricula spring and flow. A developmentally appropriate curriculum for students is designed so as to be appropriate for the age span of the children within the group, with attention to different levels and learning styles of the students.

Curriculum guides – unlike well defined programs – are written with the understanding that there is a responsibility for decision making on the part of teachers. Curriculum guides provide a framework, not a daily plan for instruction. Since teachers are responsible for the scope of any curriculum content during a given school year, they must also be the final determiners of the sequence of content and skills, the use of instructional strategies, and the degree of content detail.

Given the nature of the actual classroom, certain factors will drive these choices: student need, student developmental level, and realistic time limitations. Teachers are encouraged to integrate curriculum in order to maximize instructional time and to facilitate the transfer of skills and understanding.

Curriculum guides are written in a spiraling framework articulated from the earliest grades through the high school. Learning builds upon previous knowledge and skills, which are repeated and reinforced to ensure mastery learning. As a result, it is impossible to expect that everything contained within any curriculum guide will be taught in the same sequence, style, and depth each year. Teachers need the flexibility to make choices to ensure that the student needs are met and that the scope of the curriculum is addressed.

## **MISSION**

Teaching, proclaiming, serving and worshipping – the works of the dedicated Christian in the modern world – require the ability to read, write, speak and listen. All students in the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wilmington will work to develop effective communication skills. Using the greatest example of God’s Word, Jesus, all students will learn to communicate to reach the human heart, the human community, and indeed, the entire world.

## **VISION**

An integrated Language Arts program will prepare students to respond to the call of Jesus Christ and the Church and to live a life of public witness. The program will assist students to develop greater confidence and self-esteem with emphasis on receptive and expressive language skills. All students will learn to exhibit a sense of mutual respect for speaker and listener, reader and writer, and will work to become life long readers and learners.

## PHILOSOPHY

Language is the heart of all human interaction. The goal of the study of Language Arts is the development of the five basic communications skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and thinking.

We believe in providing an environment in which each child can achieve his or her greatest spiritual and academic potential. In light of the complex, interdependent relationships among the language processes, the Language Arts curriculum guide for schools in the Diocese of Wilmington integrates all areas of Language Arts to ensure complete development of the students. This integration permeates all content areas, as students and teachers explore and develop the relationships between language, learning and thought. Teachers and students experience, on a daily basis, the use and understanding of language and how it can function to affect learning in all academic areas.

Students need to develop language and communication skills that will allow them to function in a complex society and in a variety of workplaces. We hope that through the use of these guidelines, students will become effective listeners, thinkers, speakers, readers, and writers both inside and outside of the school community. The skills they develop within Catholic schools will help them to meet the academic and employment challenges of the future and will enable them to become effective lifelong communicators.

In the development of the Language Arts Curriculum Guidelines, we believe all students can listen, speak, read and write when given adequate time to practice each skill and when these skills are modeled by adults in a nurturing and supportive environment. When these skills are presented through students' real life experiences and for real life purposes, students develop a joy in communicating, become confident in their communication, and more boldly own and proclaim the Christian message that has become a part of their lives.

## **LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM STANDARDS**

- 1. All students will understand and apply the knowledge of sounds, letters and words in written English to become independent and fluent readers and will read a variety of materials and texts with fluency and comprehension.**
- 2. All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.**
- 3. All students will speak in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.**
- 4. All students will listen actively to information from a variety of sources in a variety of situations.**
- 5. All students will access, view, evaluate and respond to print, non-print, and electronic texts and resources.**

## EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

We commit to the following expectations:

That at all grade levels students:

- Think critically, logically, analytically and ethically.
- Express ideas orally and in writing using correct terminology.
- Apply techniques to real world situations, identifying and solving problems within the situation.
- Integrate learning into their everyday lives.
- Engage in learning activities, willingly take risks and demonstrate confidence in their skills.
- Utilize technology correctly.
- Recognize the importance of life long learning.

That all teachers:

- Apply a variety of strategies which reflect Catholic values and beliefs.
- Use professional and instructional resources appropriate to the teaching/learning process.
- Use technology and manipulatives as an integral part of instruction and assessment.
- Use a variety of formal and informal assessments.
- Provide varied learning situations such as small group, whole group, cooperative and peer leadership.
- Collaborate with their colleagues to ensure the continuum of learning.
- Use diocesan curriculum guidelines.
- Be skilled and/or certified in their discipline.
- Participate in professional development.

- Who serve as coordinators or department chairs hold regularly scheduled curriculum meetings throughout the year to facilitate communication among teachers and analyze student progress.

That all administrators:

- Provide a learning environment which reflects Catholic values and beliefs.
- Monitor and regularly assess the curriculum.
- Provide curriculum guidelines and professional and instructional resources, including technology, for all teachers.
- Monitor instruction and evaluation through regular classroom observation and review of lesson plans.
- Communicate periodically to parents the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the school's curriculum.

That all diocesan personnel:

- Provide a plan for curriculum.
- Initiate, develop, and implement curriculum guidelines in collaboration with Catholic school administrators and teachers.
- Offer professional development and disseminate information regarding other available opportunities and resources for teachers and administrators.
- Encourage regular articulation between elementary and secondary educators.
- Act as liaisons with national and state departments of education regarding curriculum.

## LANGUAGE ARTS GOALS

All students will:

- Value literature, especially the Gospels and use it in daily life.
- Choose reading materials that are suitable for an intended purpose and evaluate the accuracy of these materials.
- Acquire and apply reading skills and understand symbolism in word.
- Develop a love for reading and become life-long readers.
- Write concisely and cohesively within the framework of a given topic in all curricular areas as well as in real life situations.
- Value writing and understand its importance and impact in their daily lives.
- Choose and use appropriate written format that clearly communicates the intended message.
- Articulate and apply oral communication skills.
- Articulate reflective responses that incorporate Catholic Christian beliefs and values.
- Confidently communicate in small and large groups.
- Actively listen.
- Listen so as to understand another person's viewpoint.
- Follow oral directions.
- Access, view, evaluate, and respond to print and non-print resources in order to promote truth, justice, and freedom.