

# **FOUNDATIONS OF ENGLISH II-IV GRADES 10-12**

EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2099 Pennington Road  
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In accordance with The Ewing Public Schools' Policy 2230, Course Guides, this curriculum has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with all policies and all affirmative action criteria.
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## **Course Description**

Foundations of English courses were designed to assist students who are still working to develop the skills necessary to be successful on state standardized assessments.

Foundations of English classes serve as electives and provide supplemental instruction in the area of English Language Arts; they do not fulfill one of the four units of English required for graduation. Enrollment is based upon standardized or diagnostic tests scores as well as performance in English courses.

Intensive reading exercises stressing comprehension, inference and vocabulary, are one portion of Foundations courses. The second portion is composed of skill development in expository writing and literary analysis.

### **Scope and Sequence for Units of Study:**

Course Instructional Time: 87 minutes 5 days per week for one semester  
Specific pacing information is included within each unit of study for Grades 9-12.

## **21st Century Life and Careers**

In today's global economy, students need to be lifelong learners who have the knowledge and skills to adapt to an evolving workplace and world. To address these demands, Standard 9, 21st Century Life and Careers, which includes the 12 Career Ready Practices, establishes clear guidelines for what students need to know and be able to do in order to be successful in their future careers.

### **The 12 Career Ready Practices**

These practices outline the skills that all individuals need to have to truly be adaptable, reflective, and proactive in life and careers. These are researched practices that are essential to career readiness.

#### **CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.**

In English Language Arts, it is essential for students to communicate clearly and effectively. This is demonstrated through writing with a clear purpose and an appropriate audience in mind. Students also need to clearly communicate verbally, which is practiced in the English Language Arts classroom. Effective communicators are also active listeners. These skills are essential in the academic setting and in the workplace.

#### **CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.**

Research strategies are infused throughout the English Language Arts curriculum. It is imperative for students to utilize effective research strategies in order to formulate an argument, to support a thesis, and to research across content areas. Students need to use multiple sources in order to write a comprehensive research paper. Finally, students need to discern whether sources are reliable in order to present strong pieces of information and argument essays. Research skills are essential in the academic setting and in the workplace.

#### **CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.**

In order for students to be successful in school, in life, and in their career, they need to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. In English Language Arts classes, students learn to read and write critically. Through discussions and by actively engaging in speaking and listening, students will develop the necessary skills to be critical thinkers. In order to be productive citizens of the 21st century we need to ensure students can persevere in order to reach the solution of any problem.

### **Technology Integration:**

#### **8.1 Educational Technology**

All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and create and communicate knowledge.

#### **8.2 Technology Education, Engineering, Design and Computational Thinking - Programming**

All students will develop an understanding of the nature and impact of technology, engineering, technological design, computational thinking and the designed world as they relate to the individual, global society, and the environment.

### **Social Studies Integration:**

The social studies and English departments worked to integrate Research Simulation Tasks into both sets of curricula to provide ample opportunities to respond across content areas. The Research Simulation Task requires students to analyze an informational topic through several articles or multimedia stimuli. Students read and respond to a series of questions and synthesize information from multiple sources in order to write an analytic essay.

Companion Standards 10-12 - History, Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects

## **Unit 1: Expository Essay Writing (Pacing-17 Days)**

### **Why Is This Unit Important?**

This unit will focus on the craft of expository essay writing and will help students to develop the skills needed to effectively analyze a topic, supporting his or her thoughts using specific evidence from literature, history, contemporary issues or personal experience. Quotes or statements presented for expository writing may be based upon teacher selected topics or they can be quotes taken from or connected to the literature read in English II, III or IV. The skills of focus within this unit of study will help students to prepare for the WritePlacer section of the Accuplacer assessment. The Big Ideas embedded throughout this unit are:

- The purpose of expository essay writing is for the writer to draw from what he/she already knows and from primary and secondary sources in order to *analyze* (not define) a thought or quote.
- The essay must focus on a clear thesis which is supported with relevant examples from literature, history, science, film or personal experience.
- Thoughts must be organized logically and coherently.
- A writer's selection of words is one of the most important factors he/she must consider when writing; precision of language and the use of domain-specific vocabulary are essential.
- An effective conclusion is one that summarizes the main idea and reviews key concepts, without repeating or introducing new ideas.
- Strong essays must meet certain criteria (i.e., focus and clarity of main idea, organization and development of a logical sequence, elaboration of key ideas and supporting details, strong sentence structure and correct mechanical conventions) to be considered proficient.
- Writers continually revise and edit their work to improve their writing, specifically focusing on organization, development, voice, word choice, sentence structure and the conventions of writing.

## Enduring Understandings:

- Expository essay writing requires one to *analyze* (not define) a statement or quote that focuses on an abstract concept (i.e., responsibility, imagination, etc.).
- A topic must be supported using relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations or other information and examples, all of which should be taken from literature, history, contemporary issues or, if necessary, personal experiences.
- Specific examples must be provided as support and the writer must further explain how each example provided connects to the statement or quote in question; development must be thorough and even from paragraph to paragraph.
- Transition words or phrases must be used to assist with the organization and flow of the writing.
- A writer's voice and word choice must be passionate and deliberate so his/her message is clearly conveyed and the tone used must be appropriate to the writing task.
- When writing in an academic setting, the rules of Standard English must be applied.
- Writing is never 'done' and can always be improved. It is a recursive process, so writers can move from stage to stage, either forward or backward.

## Essential Questions:

- What is the purpose of expository writing? When would one be asked to write in such a way?
- What differentiates essay writing from other forms of writing (i.e., narrative, nonfiction or research writing, etc.)?
- What is the difference between discussing/defining a statement/quote and analyzing it, as is required in expository essay writing?
- How does a writer support his or her thoughts without repeating himself or herself? How does one use support to strengthen a work?
- Why is it important to consider audience and purpose when organizing one's writing?
- What does the literary term *voice* mean? How does one include *voice* in his or her writing?
- Why is vivid and precise use of language so important?
- What is *Standard English* and why is it important to use *Standard English* in academic writing?

## **Acquired Knowledge:**

- The purpose of expository essay writing (i.e., on the WritePlacer assessment) is to *analyze* a statement or quote, which is quite different from discussing it.
- Specific evidence from works of literature, episodes in history, contemporary issues or current events, or personal experiences are required to support an analysis; each example must be clearly connected to the statement or quote and an explanation of the connection must be thorough.
- Key ideas must be connected to the topic and must flow with transitions from one point to the next, creating cohesion and clarifying information and ideas.
- Precise language, domain-specific wording and technical wording (where appropriate) will help to sustain a formal objective style that is straightforward and appropriate for a reader seeking information.
- A concluding paragraph or section must flow logically from the information or explanation provided, restate the main idea and summarize key points, all without repeating what was already stated or introducing new information.

## **Acquired Skills:**

- Analyze a statement or quote using specific and relevant evidence.
- Support his/her thesis with well-chosen, relevant and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations or other information and examples.
- Utilize specific examples from literature, history, contemporary issues or personal experiences as support and explain how each specific example supports his/her thesis.
- Connect all key ideas to the topic and/or writing prompt utilizing transitions, thus clearly creating fluency and cohesion.
- Utilize precise language, domain-specific wording and technical wording (where appropriate) to communicate information in a formal, objective style.
- Include compositional risks (i.e., anecdote, rhetorical question, development of mood, etc.) that create a voice appropriate to the audience and purpose.
- Draft a conclusion paragraph or section that flows logically from the information or explanation presented in the essay and effectively concludes thoughts presented in the work, all without repeating what was already stated or introducing new information.
- Apply the rules of Standard English presented through mini-lessons as well as those offered during teacher conferences when drafting and when editing his/her draft.

## **Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed:**

### Formative:

- Prewriting graphic organizer
- Teacher conference, observations and anecdotal records
- Writer's notebook
- Self-editing, peer-editing or teacher-editing checklists

Summative:

- Variety of expository pieces

Benchmark:

- WritePlacer Holistic Scoring Rubric, 8-point; proficiency = 6

### **Instructional Materials:**

Core:

- WritePlacer Holistic Scoring Rubric, 8-point rubric
- Quotes or adages to serve as prompts
- Graphic organizers
- District provided materials and prompts

Supplemental:

- Sample prompts provided by College Board, available at <https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students/accuplacer-tests>

### **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- One method a writer can use to support his/her opinion is to use evidence from history. Thus, including the history teacher in the discussion of expository writing is key. Co-planning and co-teaching lessons on how to support one's opinion using evidence from history would provide a wonderful co-teaching opportunity.
- Contemporary events that connect to historical or scientific topics also provide an opportunity for cross-content reading and writing.

### **Technology Connections:**

- Accuplacer WritePlacer information, sample questions and annotated responses are available through College Board at <https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students/accuplacer-tests>
- Student responses can be submitted through Google Drive.

## **Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:**

- It is important to note that students enrolled in English IV may have already passed PARCC, so their prompts may be differentiated to include quotes or statements connected to the literature being read or to common themes discussed in class.
- Quotes or adages provided as writing prompts can be differentiated based upon student interest, difficulty of interpretation, etc. Students can also be asked to choose the quote/adage or to bring a quote that is important to them as the focus of an expository essay.
- In the writing workshop, mini-lessons provide guidance for students to improve their writing. Such mini-lessons are planned based upon the needs of the students, thus incorporating differentiation into planning and instruction.
- Individual conferences are held, at which time teachers model good writing and provide individual instruction and/or feedback to students to meet each child's individual needs. Such a format supports the struggling writer while challenging the gifted writer.
- Models and mentor texts must be provided so that students struggling with a concept or who are reluctant writers have exemplars surrounding them; individual or small group conferences provide time for a teacher to help students make connections between a mentor text(s) and their own writing.
- Gifted writers and thinkers can be challenged to think beyond the literal by providing them with insightful, powerful, somewhat challenging quotes as the focus of explanatory essays. Students can also be given time to conduct research on the history, interpretation and use of selected quotes.

## **List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:**

**Foundations II:** Writing Standards W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.5, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.9, W.9-10.10

**Foundations III and IV:** Writing Standards W.11-12.2, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.5, W.11-12.7, W.11-12.9, W.11-12.10

## **Unit 2: Argumentative Essay Writing Unit (Pacing-17 Days)**

### **Why Is This Unit Important?**

This unit will focus on the craft of argument writing and will help students to develop the skills needed to effectively persuade an audience. Topics presented for argumentative written responses may be based upon age-appropriate controversial issues, current events or controversial topics that reveal themselves when reading the literature assigned during Foundations classes. The big ideas embedded throughout this unit are:

- The purpose of persuasive essay writing is for the writer to clearly and powerfully communicate his or her position to a reader while supporting his/her claim using facts, statistics, quotes, research, examples and anecdotes.
- Strong essays must meet certain criteria (i.e., opening and closing are evident, main idea is clearly expressed and is evenly developed using specific details, word choice is powerful and language is skillfully used, voice is clear and powerful, tone is appropriate, sentence structure is varied and grammatically correct, consistent verb tense is maintained and Standard English is used effectively) to be considered proficient.
- Writers continually revise and edit their work to improve their writing, specifically focusing on organization, development, voice, word choice, sentence structure and the conventions of writing.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

- Argumentative writing can be compared to arguing and is often considered *arguing on paper*.
- A writing task or scenario presented in a prompt will have an influence on a writer's tone, style and technique.
- The facts, statistics, quotes, research and anecdotes presented in an argumentative piece must be well-organized and extremely detailed resulting in an evenly-developed, clearly articulated thesis.
- A writer's voice must be passionate and powerful so his/her message is clearly conveyed and the tone used must be appropriate given the topic.
- A writer's selection of words is one of the most important factors he/she must consider when writing; precision of language is essential.
- Writing is never 'done' and can always be improved. It is a recursive process, so writers can move from stage to stage, either forward or backward.
- The rules of grammar, mechanics and usage must be applied to all rough and final drafts.

## Essential Questions:

- What is the purpose of argumentative essay writing?
- Why is argument writing important?
- What differentiates argument writing from other forms of writing (i.e., informational, expository, narrative, speculative)?
- How can one utilize evidence, factual or anecdotal, when supporting one's position in an argumentative piece?
- How does one consider audience and purpose when organizing one's writing?
- What does the literary term *voice* mean? How does one include *voice* in his or her writing?
- Why is vivid and precise use of language so important?
- What is *Standard English* and why is it necessary to use *Standard English* in academic writing?

## Acquired Knowledge:

- An effective argument not only acknowledges the opposing point of view, but also distinguishes it from the opposing claim and discredits it using logical reasoning and detailed evidence from credible sources (i.e., I know there is another side and this is why it is wrong).
- To demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the topic, one must support a claim with valid reasoning and detailed, relevant and sufficient evidence from credible sources.
- Both claims and counterclaims must be presented fairly, evidence for each must be supplied and strengths and limitations of both are necessary. In doing so, a clear argument can be developed based upon the strength of one particular side.
- Predicting the audience's knowledge and level of concern is essential and must be addressed when presenting claims and counterclaims.
- Argumentative writing sustains a formal style and objective tone based solely on fact.
- The voice a writer projects in an argumentative piece must be passionate and convincing; the voice must match the purpose.
- A concluding paragraph or section must flow from the argument and end powerfully (i.e., call to action, symbolic ending, reconnection to the beginning, etc.).

## **Acquired Skills:**

- Provide both claims and counterclaims in an organized manner, anticipating the level of knowledge and concerns of an audience and addressing such issues, culminating in an argument or persuasive position.
- Use credible sources when supporting his or her position, fully explain the relevance of both claims and counterclaims and present a logical, detailed explanation of his/her reasoning.
- Utilize transitions to create a natural flow among ideas, specifically noting the differences between claims and counterclaims so the writer does not change 'positions'.
- Maintain an objective style and tone appropriate for the purpose and audience of the piece.
- Create arguments based solely on fact.
- Write with a passionate, authentic and convincing voice that is appropriate to the purpose of the piece.
- Draft a conclusion section that flows naturally from the argument, ends powerfully and attempts to leave the reader thinking (i.e., call to action, symbolic ending, circular ending, etc.).
- Apply the rules of Standard English presented through mini-lessons as well as those offered during teacher conferences when drafting and when editing his/her draft.

## **Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed**

### Formative:

- Graphic organizer, such as a Roman Numeral outline
- Teacher conference, observations and anecdotal records
- Writer's notebook
- Self-editing, peer-editing or teacher-editing checklists

### Summative:

- Variety of argument pieces

### Benchmark:

- Completed argument essay, using Argument Writing Rubric, adapted from *Collections*

## **Instructional Materials:**

### Core:

- Argument Writing Rubric, adapted from *Collections* (benchmark)
- Graphic organizers
- Articles and texts related to age-appropriate controversial issues, presenting information related to both sides of the argument
- Self, peer and teacher revising and editing checklists

Supplemental:

- District database login information (i.e., Facts on File, Issues and Controversies)

### **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- Argumentative essay prompts can connect to topics that are presented in other content areas.
  - Environmental issues such as pollution and recycling can be addressed
  - Controversial issues connect to the first amendment and freedom of speech can be discussed in history class
  - Seatbelt laws or drug testing in schools easily connect to content discussed in health classes

### **Technology Connections:**

- District databases such as Facts on File: Issues and Controversies
- Professional websites such as Web English Teacher (<http://www.varsitytutors.com/englishteacher>) and Read Write Think ([www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)) provide a plethora of lesson plan ideas focusing on persuasive/argumentative writing in the high school. A simple Google search will generate thousands of hits as well.

### **Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:**

- Writing prompts can be differentiated based upon student interest, difficulty of content, etc. Students can also be asked to self-select the topic of their argumentative essay, especially when initially introducing form and structure; providing choice has been shown to motivate reluctant writers.
- In the writing workshop, mini-lessons provide guidance for students to improve their writing. Such mini-lessons are planned based upon the needs of the students, thus incorporating differentiation into planning and instruction.
- Individual conferences are held, at which time teachers model good writing and provide individual instruction and/or feedback to students to meet each child's individual needs. Such a format supports the struggling writer while challenging the gifted writer.
- Models and exemplary benchmarks must be provided so that students struggling with a concept or who are reluctant writers have exemplars surrounding them; individual or small group conferences provide time for a teacher to help students make connections between a mentor text(s) and their own writing.

**List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:**

**Foundations II:** Writing Standards W.9-10.1, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.5, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.10

**Foundations III and IV:** Writing Standards W.11-12.1, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.5, W.11-12.7, W.11-12.10

### **Unit 3: Reading Literary Texts and Writing Narrative Pieces (Pacing - 26 Days)**

#### **Why Is This Unit Important?**

Reading is essential for survival in the real world, it can improve the quality of one's life and increase one's success; beyond that, it can be a lifelong pleasure. Reading is an active process and requires interaction between a reader and a text created by a writer. Moral issues often appear in narrative works of literature, but seldom does narration articulate these issues; it requires the teacher's guidance for the student to become more sensitive to them and infer meaning beyond the text. If students can be made aware of the moral dimensions of narrative texts, they may even find a truth in fiction and thus make connections between the fiction and their own lives. Further, "strategic readers" (Harvey and Goudvis) take responsibility for comprehending the full meaning set forth by an author and they use strategies to 'dialogue' with an author; they also apply word knowledge to aid in comprehension. When a reader fully comprehends a text, he/she is able to use the literary work to spark narrative writing connected to or extending from the original work. The Big ideas embedded in this unit include:

- Acquiring the skills necessary to read independently will positively impact one's life, at present and in the future.
- Writers most often develop a lesson, moral or theme throughout a literary work; it is the responsibility of a reader to infer beyond a text to determine that theme.
- There are specific reading strategies that actively engage a reader into the process of reading and help him/her to improve his/her comprehension of a text.
- Readers must apply word knowledge to fully understand the words and bigger ideas presented in a narrative work.
- After reading a fictional work, one can continue narrating the story, applying the information learned in this unit of study and writing the next chapter or retelling the story from a different perspective.

#### **Enduring Understandings:**

- It is essential for one to read and comprehend independently to excel, both in and out of the academic setting.
- Gender, age, race and culture all impact an individual's definition of his/her role and others' roles in society. Such definitions are often utilized by writers to develop character, present conflict and create theme in a work of literature.
- Reading strategies such as making connections, questioning, visualizing, inferring, summarizing and synthesizing improve comprehension and increase one's ability to extend understanding beyond a text.
- Reading is an active, two-way process requiring interaction between a reader and a writer.

## **Essential Questions:**

- What impact do literacy, illiteracy and 'aliteracy' (Allington) have on one's future?
- How can a "dependent reader" (Beers) practice using reading strategies to foster growth and progress toward becoming an independent reader?
- What can a reader do to stay actively involved during the reading process?
- How/Why does active reading improve one's comprehension?
- How does a writer incorporate theme in a narrative work without stating the lesson or moral explicitly?
- What should a reader 'look for' to help him/her identify a narrative text's theme?

## **Acquired Knowledge:**

- Literacy is imperative to being a productive, contributing member of a 21<sup>st</sup> century society.
- Graphic organizers can be used to extrapolate key information from a text.
- There are specific activities that a reader can/should perform in order to stay actively involved with and engaged in a narrative text.
- When one reads 'actively', he/she is attuned to subtle cues that a writer includes in a text that help to communicate a message or theme.
- Writers utilize text clues to help readers identify a theme including those outlined by educator and researcher Kylene Beers: Again and Again (repeated images, actions or words), Lesson of the Elder (meaningful advice offered by an older or wiser character), Lesson of Contradictions (internal character development or conflict focused on resolving the conflict), Tough Questions (rhetorical questions presented directly in a text, sometimes stated explicitly by a character), Last Line (meaningful last line of a section, chapter or full text), Memory Moment (meaningful flashback or remembering at a key point in the story), What's in a Name (symbolic names often provide clues) and Uncover the Cover (clues provided on the cover or in the artwork provided in a text).
- After reading a literary work, one can rewrite an event or scene from a different character's point of view or write a continuation of the story, staying true to the characters and plot progression. Such narrative writing allows a reader to demonstrate reading comprehension while applying creative writing techniques.

**Acquired Skills:**

- Independently read an assigned or an independently selected narrative text for an extended period of time.
- Remain active during the independent reading process by utilizing active reading strategies provided in class.
- Extrapolate key information from a text and utilize a graphic organizer to organize information for a given task.
- Utilize information gathered on a graphic organizer to respond to a multi-part open-ended question.
- Attend to textual cues provided in a text (i.e., parallel plots, pacing, flashback, point of view, etc.) to infer meaning beyond a text.
- Identify the theme of a work by synthesizing information and inferring beyond a text.
- Rewrite a specific scene from a different character's point of view, staying true to setting, events and thematic development.
- Draft a 'next chapter' to continue with the progression of plot as it was originally presented in the primary text.

**Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed:**

Formative:

- Graphic organizers
- Book Club Discussions

Summative:

- Tests/quizzes including written responses to open-ended questions
- Essays (i.e., compare two narrative works that share a common theme using evidence from each text to support the analysis; track the development of two parallel themes over the course of two texts)
- Authentic assessments such as projects or literature discussion opportunities
- OEQs

Benchmark:

- Think-aloud Pre-Post Self-Assessment

**Instructional Materials:**

Core:

- *Nathan Levy's Thinking and Writing for the Brain!*, Volume 1 and Volume 2
- *Strange Bedfellows: Surprising Text Pairs* by Carol Rawlings Miller
- Core books and novels used to facilitate book clubs

Supplemental:

- Common Lit (<https://www.commonlit.org/>) is a website with thousands of literary and informational texts and resources geared to students in middle or high school.

### **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- Nonfiction texts will be incorporated into lessons to build background knowledge.
- Social, economic and historical information will be researched in order to more fully comprehend information provided in a narrative text.

### **Technology Connections:**

- Common Literature available online at <https://www.commonlit.org/>
- Read, Write, Think at [www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org). This website provides educators and students access to the highest quality practices and resources in reading and language arts instruction.

### **Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:**

- Foundations courses are required for students who struggle with reading and/or writing as demonstrated on state assessments or school benchmark assessments. Although this is a heterogeneously grouped class, differentiation is essential.
  - One-on-one instruction
  - Differentiated topics and/or assignments
  - Extended time (as scaffolding or as specified in a 504 Plan or IEP)
  - Clarification of material
  - Use of a variety of modalities

### **List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:**

#### **Foundations II:**

- Reading Standards for Literature R.L.9-10.1, R.L.9-10.2, R.L.9-10.3, R.L.9-10.4, R.L.9-10.5, R.L.9-10.6, R.L.9-10.10
- Writing Standards W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9a
- Speaking and Listening Standards S.L.9-10.1, S.L.9-10.3, S.L.9-10.4, S.L.9-10.6
- Language Standards L.9-10.1a, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.3a, L.9-10.4a, L.9-10.4c, L.9-10.4d, L.9-10.5, L.9-10.6

**Foundations III and IV:**

- Reading Standards for Literature R.L.11-12.1, R.L. 11-12.2, R.L. 11-12.3, R.L. 11-12.4, R.L. 11-12.5, R.L. 11-12.6, R.L. 11-12.10
- Writing Standards W. 11-12.4, W. 11-12.9a
- Speaking and Listening Standards S.L. 11-12.1, S.L. 11-12.3, S.L. 11-12.4, S.L. 11-12.6
- Language Standards L. 11-12.1a, L. 11-12.2, L. 11-12.3a, L. 11-12.4a, L. 11-12.4c, L. 11-12.4d, L. 11-12.5, L. 11-12.6

## **Unit 4: Reading and Analyzing Argumentative Texts (Pacing-30 Days)**

### **Why Is This Unit Important?**

At times, authors write to convey their opinion or to persuade an audience using facts, statistics, research, quotes and sometimes personal experience or editorial explanation. When writing to persuade, an author often includes editorial bias in a text and it is the responsibility of a reader to understand the text and recognize bias, ultimately forming a conclusion based upon the information presented.

Authors of argumentative/persuasive texts use specific vocabulary to convince a reader and again, it is the reader's responsibility to understand the vocabulary focusing on possible figurative, connotative and technical meanings and consider them within the context of their uses. Good or strategic readers take responsibility for comprehending the full meaning set forth by an author and recognize the use and implications of editorial wording and/or bias when it is used in persuasive writing. The big ideas embedded in this unit include:

- One purpose for writing is to persuade and when a writer is writing with this purpose, certain biases may exist.
- Argumentative writing is a craft where much time must be spent on evaluating and using evidence, thoroughly developing ideas, carefully organizing the text and considering and evaluating counter-claims.
- Readers of argumentative texts must evaluate a writer's argument, recognize potential bias, assess whether the evidence is accurate and relevant and determine if the reasoning is valid.
- Writers intentionally use specific words or phrases to communicate literally as well as metaphorically.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

- It is essential for one to read an argumentative text with the knowledge that the writer's purpose is to support one side of an issue; such a purpose permits a writer to write with bias.
- To best analyze an argumentative text, a reader must delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims made in the text, assess whether the author's reasoning is valid and identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.
- A reader's background knowledge and personal experience must connect to or interact with the argumentative text to help him/her take a stand on the central issue presented in the text.
- The words or phrases used by the writer of a persuasive piece are carefully selected and include figurative, connotative and technical meanings and each has an impact on the meaning and tone of the text.

**Essential Questions:**

- How can a reader determine the personal biases of a writer?
- How are biases presented in an argumentative text?
- How can a reader determine if an author's argument and/or reasoning is valid?
- Do readers bring personal biases to a text? How might such biases impact his/her interpretation of the author's meaning and/or arguments?
- What strategies can a reader use to determine the figurative, connotative and technical meanings presented in an argumentative text?

**Acquired Knowledge:**

- Authors of argumentative texts write with the purpose of persuading a reader; such a purpose allows a writer to include bias in his/her writing.
- It is the responsibility of a reader to evaluate the facts, statistics, details, research and quotes presented in the text for reliability.
- A reader must identify false statements and fallacious reasoning, making the analysis of the argument more thoughtful.
- A reader must be aware of his/her potential biases based upon his/her background knowledge and personal experiences related to the text at hand.
- Analyzing the context in which a word or phrase is used and considering the word choice an author makes is important, especially when considering the meaning and tone of an argumentative/persuasive text.

**Acquired Skills:**

- Describe the position a writer takes on an issue and identify the potential biases that may impact his/her position.
- Use his/her knowledge of an author's bias to more thoughtfully understand the meaning of a text.
- Understand the author's bias and evaluate the details presented in a text for reliability.
- Identify false statements or fallacious reasoning presented in an argumentative text.
- Identify personal experiences or knowledge that could potentially impact his/her understanding or interpretation of a particular argumentative text.
- Utilize context clues to define unknown words or phrases.
- Explain the impact that word choice has on the meaning and/or tone of an argumentative text.

**Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed:**

Formative:

- Graphic organizers to record notes related to both sides of an argument
- Class Discussions
- Teacher conferences

#### Summative:

- Text-specific assessments, including written responses to open-ended questions
- Essays (i.e., compare two argumentative/persuasive works that present different sides to a similar issue)
- Authentic assessments such as projects or literature discussion opportunities

#### Benchmark:

- Pros and Cons of an Issue

#### Core Instructional Materials:

- District databases including Facts on File: Issues and Controversies
- Persuasive current events or newspaper articles downloaded from the Internet
- *Strange Bedfellows: Surprising Text Pairs* by Carol Rawlings Miller
- Current events, often focused on controversial topics, can be found online at Kelly Gallagher's Article of the Week (<http://www.kellygallagher.org/article-of-the-week/>)

#### Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Students will delve into science and social studies topics (i.e., civics, culture, tradition, etc.) when reading persuasive editorial passages, especially current events articles.

#### Technology Connections:

- District databases such as Facts on File: Issues and Controversies
- All student writing can be submitted via Google Drive
- Current events, often focused on controversial topics, can be found online at Kelly Gallagher's Article of the Week (<http://www.kellygallagher.org/article-of-the-week/>)

#### Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:

- Foundations courses are required for students who struggle with reading and/or writing as demonstrated on state assessments or school benchmark assessments. Although this is a heterogeneously grouped class, differentiation is essential.
  - One-on-one instruction
  - Differentiated topics and/or assignments
  - Extended time (as scaffolding or as specified in a 504 Plan or IEP)
  - Clarification of material
  - Use of a variety of modalities

## **List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:**

### **Foundations II:**

- Reading Standards for Informational Texts RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.2, RI.9-10.4, RI.9-10.6, RI.9-10.8, RI.9-10.10
- Writing Standards W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9b
- Speaking and Listening Standards SL.9-10.1a, SL.9-10.1c, SL.9-10.1d, SL.9-10.3, SL.9-10.4
- Language Standards L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.4, L.9-10.5, L.9-10.6

### **Foundations III and IV:**

- Reading Standards for Informational Texts RI.11-12.1, RI.11-12.2, RI.11-12.4, RI.11-12.5, RI.11-12.6, RI.11-12.8, RI.11-12.10
- Writing Standards W.11-12.4, W. 11-12.9b

## **Sample Standards Integration**

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills & Career Readiness Practices:**

#### **CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.**

Unit 2 teaches students to write argumentative essays. The unit focuses on the craft of argument writing and helps students to develop the skills needed to effectively persuade an audience. The purpose of persuasive essay writing is for the writer to clearly and powerfully communicate his or her position to a reader while supporting his/her claim using facts, statistics, quotes, research, examples and anecdotes. Topics presented for argumentative written responses may be based upon age-appropriate controversial issues, current events or controversial topics that reveal themselves when reading the literature assigned during Foundations classes.

### **Technology Integration:**

#### **8.1.12.A.1 Create a personal digital portfolio which reflects personal and academic interests, achievements, and career aspirations by using a variety of digital tools and resources.**

Throughout Real World Writing, students are producing multiple writing pieces across several genres. Work collected in the portfolio may also include Power Point Presentations and other types of assignments. Students keep all of their work in a digital portfolio for the duration of the course. Many teachers use Google classroom for students to maintain and edit their portfolio. Using this platform allows for students to share their work with teachers and other students. Students reflect on their work throughout the semester and keep reflections on their body of work in the portfolio.

### **Interdisciplinary Connection: Social Studies**

#### **6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century: All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world.**

Throughout the course, students are asked to research, evaluate, read, and write about controversial issues. Additionally, students will read nonfiction texts to build background knowledge on social, economical, and historical issues.

In unit 2, students select a controversial issue to research and evaluate. Topics may include, but are not limited to, environmental justice and freedom of speech (First Amendment) outlined in 6.3.A, B, and D). Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate how they are active citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.