



ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM MAP GRADE 7

Updated December 2024

District 109 Overview of Programming

Department Vision

In the English-Language Arts Department, we believe in learning environments that foster students becoming **avid readers, prolific writers, and eloquent communicators**. Throughout the K-8 journey, students in District 109 will be challenged to:

- read, comprehend, analyze and critique text,
- clearly communicate ideas through crafting writing aligned with purpose and audience,
- and collaborate with others to learn new perspectives, articulate ideas, and challenge preconceived thinking.

As educators, we are committed to helping each student develop and strengthen these skills while cultivating a **love for literacy**, ensuring that our approach is inclusive, acknowledging and celebrating the diverse backgrounds and abilities within our school community.

Elementary (K-5)

District 109 uses a workshop model to nurture engagement and motivation by integrating choice, collaboration, and targeted scaffolding into literacy tasks. This practice provides students with opportunities to engage with grade level texts across a wide range of genres; balances teacher and student-led discussions; and promotes independence by providing time for strategic support and differentiated instruction. Teachers explicitly identify and model the skills and strategies they use as readers, writers, and communicators then support students in practicing and developing these skills independently. This instructional model allows teachers to develop students through naturally occurring and intentionally designed, responsive instruction that systematically addresses the strengths and needs of each learner. In Kindergarten writing is developed orally with teacher modeling and whole group & partner discussions.

Students also engage in explicit and systematic foundational skills instruction. This supports students in becoming active word solvers that are able to recognize words and patterns, take apart or put together words, know what words mean and to connect words to other words. Word study supports students through a developmental progression of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The progression includes phonological awareness, the ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of words; phonemic awareness the ability to identify and manipulate isolated sounds in spoken words; and phonics, the relationship between letters and sounds. As students develop, they move to study word parts and associate them with meaning, and in turn develop vocabulary. Language study develops students in understanding and utilizing appropriate grammar and conventions when reading, writing and speaking.

Key tenants of literacy development in the elementary grades:

- **Foundational Skills:** Phonemic Awareness, Phonological Awareness, Decoding, Spelling, Fluency, Concepts of Print (K-1), Handwriting (Manuscript K-1 and Cursive 2nd).
- **Vocabulary Development:** Generative Vocabulary (word parts and what they mean), Word Solving Strategies (ways to solve new or unknown words), Content Vocabulary (building knowledge about specific content) and Academic Vocabulary (the language of learning).
- **Communication:** Developing specific skills to listen effectively and speak clearly and strategically.

- **Knowledge Building:** Increasing knowledge around specific content, ideas, topics and concepts in order to understand new and more complex information in the future.
- **Comprehension Strategies:** Developing intentional and strategic ways to make meaning of complex texts (i.e. making inferences, identifying main idea, etc.).
- **Genre Knowledge:** Utilizing knowledge of unique genre characteristics to locate information and make meaning (i.e. structures, features, organizational patterns, etc.).
- **Writing Process:** Approaching writing tasks with intentional moves that are specific to where they are in the progression of developing written communication (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing).

Middle School (6-8)

In District 109 a focus is placed on disciplinary literacy. This practice highlights the specific reading, writing and communicating skills in a discipline (i.e. ELA, Science, Social Studies, etc.), with a focus on how experts in that discipline think and the skills and tools they use. In the discipline of ELA, students build knowledge around a topic, idea or content to critique and analyze literature. As part of the literature critique, students discuss and debate their thinking and interpretations, resulting in the formation of an opinion. They eventually form a final impression or opinion and argue their position through writing and debate.

Students begin by setting a purpose for reading and writing, which allows them to focus on specific skills and strategies that contribute to being successful thinkers and communicators. Additionally, all students are afforded the opportunity to independently interact with high quality, complex, grade level anchor texts in order to maintain equitable access to rigorous content and instruction. Students are supported through strategic scaffolding of texts, activities and lessons when working to build knowledge and study genre. These scaffolds ensure students are successful when working with anchor texts. After developing a deep understanding of anchor texts, students employ the writing process to articulate their thoughts and opinions to others.

Instructional flow of ELA Units:

- **Introduction of Writing Prompt:** Supporting students in establishing a purpose for reading and identifying the task they will focus on.
- **Reading for Comprehension (1):** A grade-level anchor text is provided for students to independently read and develop an initial understanding.
- **Building Knowledge:** Scaffolded instruction and varied texts allow students to develop schema connected to the content of the anchor text.
- **Reading for Comprehension (2):** Students revisit the anchor text with new knowledge and re-read to deepen understanding.
- **Genre Study:** Scaffolded instruction and varied texts allow students to develop an understanding of genre characteristics connected to the content of the anchor text.
- **Reading for Comprehension (3):** Students revisit the anchor text with understanding of genre and re-read to deepen understanding.
- **Synthesis:** Students engage in a seminar connected to the anchor text to further deepen understanding and discuss/debate the

understandings of others.

- **Writing Process:** Students take their new learning, develop an idea or opinion and utilize the writing process to communicate their thinking about the anchor text, based on the posed prompt introduced at the beginning of the unit.

Students also engage in novel studies and books clubs throughout the year. These opportunities allow students to apply what they have learned during previous instruction in an authentic way. This also affords students the opportunity to have a common experience around a specific text, topic or theme. Novels and book clubs expose students to texts and/or genres that they may not have read otherwise. Book clubs are also an opportunity to increase engagement, motivation and independence, as students are able to choose the texts they are reading and lead the conversations about those texts.

Workshop Model

The primary objective of workshop teaching is to engage students in authentic learning experiences and to develop independence. Through the use of the Gradual Release of Responsibility (quickly moving from teacher modeling, to shared and guided practice, to independent practice), this model of instruction fosters creativity and leads students to be responsive and take ownership of their own learning.

Key tenets of the Workshop model include:

- **Exploration, Launch, Investigation, Dig-In, Connection:** A discovery exploration or task that encourages conceptual thinking or a meaningful connection to the teaching point and/or instructional focus for the period.
- **Mini-lessons:** The teacher provides targeted instruction, through modeling and demonstration of a specific skill, strategy, or concept. The lesson utilizes approximately 25% of the instructional period.
- **Independent Practice/Work Time:** Intentional and structured periods of time in which students are practicing and developing skills in authentic and meaningful ways. This work is targeted, based on individual learner needs. Approximately 60% of an instructional period is devoted to independent practice/work time.
- **Small Group Instruction:** During independent practice/work time, teachers may pull small groups of students to reinforce and/or extend learning. Groupings are flexible, with student data leading to the development of learning targets.
- **Conferring:** Teachers talk with students, typically 1:1, to understand the work that a student is engaged in during independent practice/work time. The teacher then uses this information to generate a teaching point and/or goal for the student to support continued growth specific to the individual student's needs.
- **Choice:** Engagement is key to learning and retention. By supporting students in choosing their learning tools, topics, and methods of communicating understanding, they will be more connected to their learning; and in turn, more engaged.
- **Routines/Structures:** Teachers spend time explicitly naming, teaching and practicing behaviors that successful learners demonstrate. Through this intentional work, students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them as learners, and are able to develop independence and take responsibility for their own learning.
- **Closure:** Instructional periods end with assessment, reflection and/or discussion to solidify student learning and provide the teacher with an

opportunity to gather information to plan next steps. The closing also provides an opportunity for students to connect the day’s learning/work to the broader content area and/or real world. The closing utilizes approximately 15% of the instructional period.

Standards

[English Language Arts Standards](#)

Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening & Language		
Unit Overview	Unit Focus Skills	Teaching Texts
Semester 1 (ELA Pilot of <i>Lenses on Literature</i>, Carnegie Learning)		
<p><u>Innocence to Experience</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does comedy help us make sense of the world? Who gets to make what jokes? Why? <p>Driving Task Prompt: Write a scene in which you use the structural elements of a play to convey a humorous experience. Then, annotate your scene to explain your important creative decisions.</p>	<p>Reading Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze structure Analyze medium and mode <p>Writing Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write narratives Address audience and purpose Adjust the plan or approach Organize ideas and events <p>Speaking & Listening Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in collegial discussions Use voice and body to enhance presentation <p>Language Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentence types Pronouns Variations in English conventions and usage 	<p>Anchor Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Novio Boy</i> by Gary Soto <p>Building Knowledge Texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Save the Cat! Beat Sheet</i> by Jessica Brody <i>Buddy Love: The Transformative Power of Love (or Friendship)</i> by Jessica Brody adapted from <i>What Makes a Joke Funny or Offensive? Who is Telling It Matters</i> by Michael Thai and Alex Borgella <p>Genre Study Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> from <i>The Clean House</i> by Sarah Ruhl
<p><u>Impact of Choices</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How might our actions have unintended consequences? How do we make ‘good’ decisions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite text evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferences derived from the text Determine main idea and/or theme in a text and analyze their development throughout the text Write an objective summary of the text Identify a character’s key traits and support with text evidence Determine the meaning of vocabulary words using context clues 	<p>Novel Study Text: <i>The Second Chance of Benjamin Waterfalls</i> by James Bird</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and analyze the impact of literary devices in a text ● Prepare for and participate in small and large group book discussions ● Refer to evidence from the text when asking and answering questions to keep the conversation moving forward ● Annotate for themes, vocabulary, character development, literary devices, key questions, and more 	
<p><u>Rites of Passage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does it mean to be an adult? ● How do different cultures and individuals define what it means to be an adult? <p>Driving Task Prompt: After reading “Ordinary Pain,” write a literary analysis in which you analyze how Larry changes through his rite of passage experience. Your analysis should explore how plot, setting and character interact to illuminate Larry’s change. Support your analysis with evidence from the text.</p>	<p><u>Reading Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comprehend and make inferences from texts ● Analyze story elements ● Analyze theme <p><u>Writing Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write informational or explanatory texts ● Address audience and purpose ● Plan for writing ● Develop ideas <p><u>Speaking & Listening Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refer to reading or research in discussion ● Establish and follow procedures for collaboration <p><u>Language Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Figurative language ● Vocabulary meaning in context 	<p><u>Anchor Text:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Ordinary Pain</i> by Michael Lowenthal <p><u>Building Knowledge Texts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Introduction to the Holocaust</i> (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) ● <i>First They Came</i> by Martin Niemollier ● <i>Archive Film Material</i> by Ruth Fainlight ● <i>The Butterfly</i> by Pavel Friedman ● <i>Rites of Passage</i> (Staff Writer) ● <i>Bar and Bat Mitzvah: Practices in Judaism</i> (BBC Bitesize) <p><u>Genre Study Tests:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The Treasure of Lemon Brown</i> by Walter Dean Myers ● <i>The Scholarship Jacket</i> by Marta Salinas ● <i>Thank you, Ma'am</i> by Langston Hughes
<p><u>Dystopian Novel</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why do people conform? ● What happens to those who don’t conform? ● Why are people threatened by differences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cite text evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferences derived from the text ● Determine theme in a text and analyze their development throughout the text ● Write an objective summary of the text ● Identify a character’s key traits and support with text evidence ● Determine the meaning of vocabulary words using context clues ● Determine the figurative and connotative meanings of words and phrases (literary devices). 	<p><u>Novel Study Text:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The Giver</i> by Lois Lowry

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and why does society encourage conformity? • How can one individual make a difference? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for and participate in small and large group book discussions • Refer to evidence from the text when asking and answering questions to keep the conversation moving forward • Annotate for themes, vocabulary, character development, literary devices, key questions, and more • Analyze how plot, characters, and setting impact one another in a story • Compare and contrast fiction and nonfiction approaches to similar topics 	
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Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening & Language		
Unit Overview	Unit Focus Skills	Teaching Texts
Semester 2 (ELA Pilot of <i>Lenses on Literature</i>, Carnegie Learning)		
<p><u>Mourning Change</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is change so painful? • How can loss lead to growth? <p>Driving Task Prompt: Write a short story about the impact of a life change or loss on one or more characters. Develop the story using contrasting points of view of characters or narrators.</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze perspective • Analyze word choice <p><u>Writing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write narratives • Address audience and purpose • Introduce ideas and set context • Evaluate and revise <p><u>Speaking and Listening:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats <p><u>Language:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syntax nuance in word meaning 	<p><u>Anchor Text:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Grace” by Darcie Little Badger <p><u>Building Knowledge Texts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Five Stages of Grief” by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler • adapted from “Why Rituals Work” by Francesca Gino and Michael I. Norton • “Missing in Action” from <i>Inside Out & Back Again</i> by Thanhha Lai • “1976: Year of the Dragon” from <i>Inside Out & Back Again</i> by Thanhha Lai • “Black Hole” from <i>Rebound</i> by Kwame Alexander • “Conversation” from <i>Rebound</i> by Kwame Alexander • “From Blossoms” by Li-Young Lee <p><u>Genre Study Texts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Blue” by Francesca Lia Block • “All Summer in a Day” by Ray Bradbury

<p><u>Poetry</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do authors and poets use symbolism, imagery, figurative language, and tone to communicate themes to their readers? ● How do poets use structure, sound, and other devices to enhance their writing? ● What is the difference between novels in verse and traditional novels? How do we approach them differently as readers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and analyze symbolism, imagery, figurative language, and tone in a poem ● Determine the theme of a poem and analyze its development ● Compare and contrast how two poets develop theme in their poems ● Explore how poems reflect the time period/historical context in which they were written ● Explore how a poet’s background and experiences shape their poetry 	<p><u>Book Club Text Choices:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>House Arrest</i> by K.A. Holt ● <i>Long Way Down</i> by Jason Reynolds ● <i>Closer to Nowhere</i> by Ellen Hopkins ● <i>Before the Ever After</i> by Jacqueline Woodson
<p><u>Speaking Up for Justice</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How is access to education a matter of justice? ● What happens when we dismiss issues as “in the past”? <p>Driving Task Prompt: After reading Malala Yousafzai’s “Address to the United Nations” speech, write a <u>rhetorical analysis</u> in which you analyze how Malala develops her perspective on education. Support your analysis with evidence from the text.</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze purpose ● Analyze perspective ● Analyze word choice ● Analyze relationships among texts <p><u>Writing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write arguments ● Address audience and purpose ● Support ideas with evidence and information from sources ● Provide closure <p><u>Speaking and Listening:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advance discussion through questioning and response <p><u>Language:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adjectives and modifiers ● Vocabulary meaning in context 	<p><u>Anchor Texts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Address to the United Nation”s by Malala Yousafzai <p><u>Building Knowledge Texts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>adapted from</i> “Why Wait 100 Years? Bridging the Gap in Global Education” by Rebecca Winthrop and Eileen McGivney ● “A Schoolgirl's Diary” from <i>I Am Malala</i> by Malala Yousafzai ● “The Taliban's Takeover of Afghanistan, Explained” (CBS Kids News) ● “What's at Stake for Afghanistan's Women, in Four Charts” by Lara Williams ● “Chapter 1” from <i>The Breadwinner</i> by Deborah Ellis <p><u>Genre Study Texts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The Problem We All Live With</i> by Norman Rockwell ● <i>I am Generation Equality: Kyz Zhibek Batyrkanoa, Champion for Women and Girls in STEM, Leader of Kyrgyzstan's</i>

		<p>First Space Programme by Kyz Zhibek Batyrkanoa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I am Generation Equality: Dilnaz Kamalova, Advocate for Girl's Empowerment in ICT by Dilnaz Kamalova ● I am Generation Equality: Mete Belovacikli, Advocate for Gender Equality in Media by Mete Belovacikli
<p><u>Diverse Perspectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does the protagonist change from the beginning of the book to the end? ● Why is it important to explore perspectives different from our own? ● What is the importance of representation in literature? ● How are we all different and the same? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cite text evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferences derived from the text ● Determine themes in a text and analyze their development throughout the text ● Write an objective summary of the text ● Analyze character development ● Determine the meaning of vocabulary words using context clues ● Identify and analyze the impact of literary devices in a text ● Prepare for and participate in small and large group book discussions ● Refer to evidence from the text when asking and answering questions to keep the conversation moving forward ● Analyze how plot, characters, and setting impact one another in a story 	<p><u>Whole Class Texts:</u> “Seventh Grade” by Gary Soto</p> <p><u>(Tentative) Book Club Text Choices:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Benefits of Being an Octopus</i> by Ann Braden ● <i>The Distance Between Us</i> (Young Reader Edition) by Reyna Grande ● <i>Finding Junie Kim</i> by Ellen Oh ● <i>Ghost Boys</i> by Jewell Parker Rhodes ● <i>How Dare the Sun Rise</i> by Sandra Uwiringiyimana and Abigail Pesta ● <i>Spin With Me</i> by Amy Polonsky