Saucon Valley School District

Academic and Personnel Committee

April 2, 2025 – 5:00 pm

District Office Conference Room

****

Welcome to the Academic and Personnel Committee meeting. Our objective is to serve the students, parents, and residents of our community. You are an important part of this meeting, and we look forward to your questions and comments.

We are all here for the same reason. All opinions are welcomed and equally valuable. Our only request is that we address each other with civility and respect. Our courtesy toward each other is the best way to show our students how much we respect them as well.

Committee Members - William Broun, Cedric Dettmar, Tracy Magnotta, Shamim Pakzad

Committee Agenda

I. Call to the Order –*Tracy Magnotta, Committee Chair*

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Recording of Attendance – *Tracy Magnotta, Committee Chair*

IV. Motion to Approve Agenda –

V. Approval of Minutes – March 5, 2025

VI. Courtesy of the Floor to Visitors – Agenda Items Only - *Visitors should state their name and address.*

VII. Discussion & Action: Grades 6-8 ELA Recommendation

VIII. Update: IXL I/E

IX. New Business

X. Old Business

XI. Citizens' Inquiries and Comments – *Visitors should state their name and address.*

XII. Announcements

Future Meetings ~ Wednesday, May 7, 2025 – 5:00 PM

XIII. Motion to Adjourn Meeting

Saucon Valley School District
Academic and Personnel Committee
Minutes of March 5, 2025

Present at the March 5, 2025, Academic & Personnel Committee were Committee Members - Mr. William Broun, Mr. Cedric Dettmar, Mrs. Tracy Magnotta - online, and Dr. Shamim Pakzad. Also present were Superintendent Jaime Vlasaty, David Bonenberger, Business Manager, and Robert Frey, Director of Student and Community Relations.

I. **Call to the Order** – 5:03 pm – *Mr. Cedric Dettmar, Committee member*

II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

III. **Recording of Attendance** – *Mr.Cedric Dettmar, Committee member*
4-present, 0-absent

IV. **Motion to Approve Agenda –** Dr. Pakzad, seconded by Mr. Broun, moved to approve the Agenda. Vote: 4-yes, 0-no

V. **Approval of Minutes** – Dr. Pakzad, seconded by Mr. Broun, moved to approve the minutes of November 6, 2024. Vote: 4-yes, 0-no

VI. **Courtesy of the Floor to Visitors – Agenda Items Only -** None

VII. **Discussion & Action**: K-5 ELA Curriculum – Amy Braxmeier & Dr. Lensi Nikolov

Looking to replace units of study and Superkids with the following programs:
Arts and Letters, Geodes, 95 percent group, Lexia Core 5

VIII. **Discussion & Action –** Technology Plan – Pam Dobson

Ms. Dobson presented the District Technology Plan. The District needs to create guidelines for the first year of AI, not wait for 3 years. Action steps make it more specific about what expectations are. Should have a 3-month plan as to what is being put forward to the Board and community this summer.

IX. **Review:** Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is on the District website, and the public may comment via email.

X. **New Business** - None

XI. **Old Business -** None

XII. **Citizens' Inquiries and Comments** – None

XIII. **Announcements**

Future Meetings ~ Wednesday, April 2, 2025 – 5:00 PM

XIV. **Motion to Adjourn Meeting -** The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

SAUCON VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 6-8 PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

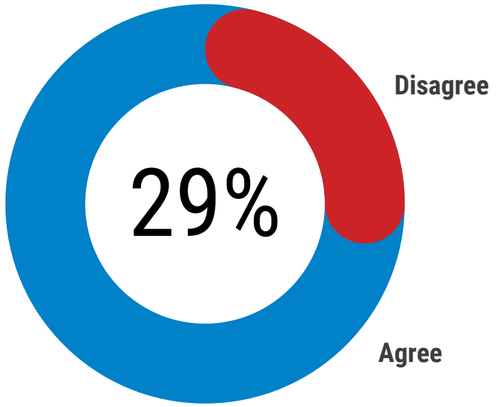


Strengths & Opportunities

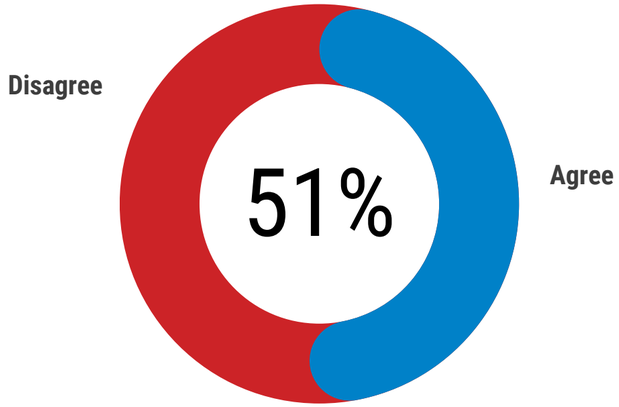
- PSSA-specific writing
- 7th & 8th novel study
- Structural supports for striving readers
  - LA 2
  - Reading Intervention
- Structured Literacy Training
- Framework for regular and consistent curriculum review
- Established Tier 1 data review cycle
- Successful MTSS Team

- Structured Literacy Training
- Improving Student Growth
- Systematic Writing Instruction
- Systematic & Explicit Instruction
  - Knowledge-building
  - Skill-embedded learning
- Using content area classes to reinforce informational reading and writing
- Programatic Challenges
  - Limited alignment with state/local goals with state ridgid/formulate structure
  - Overly complex texts
  - Heavily focused on test-prep
  - Limited discussion

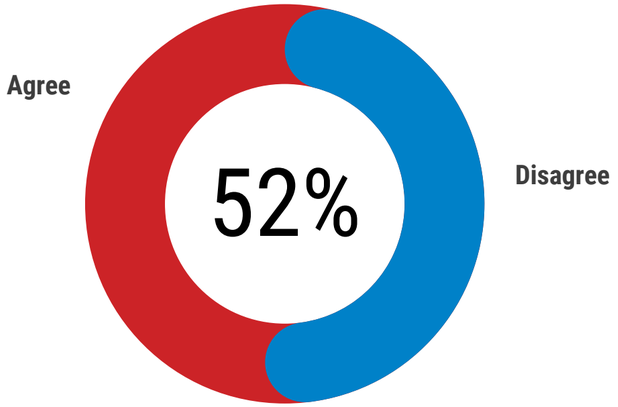
Student Surveys



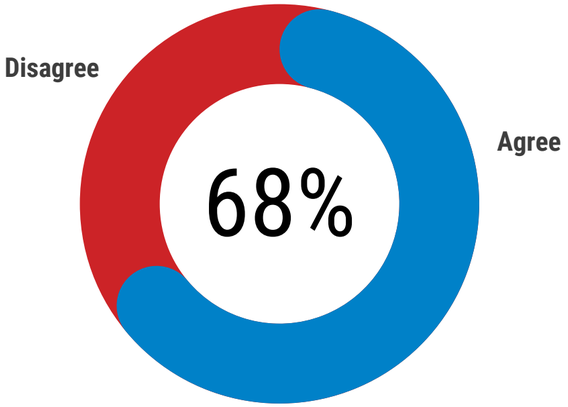
Reading is difficult



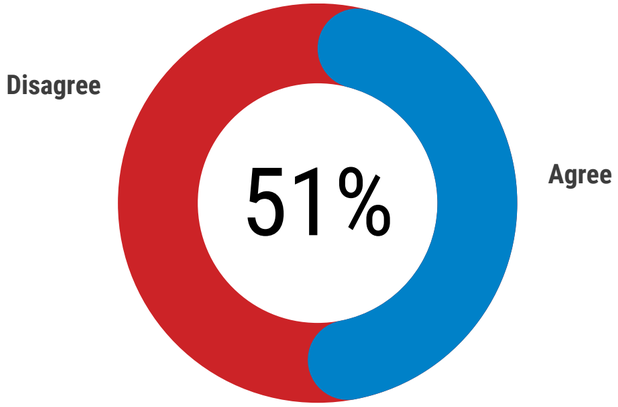
I only read when I have to.



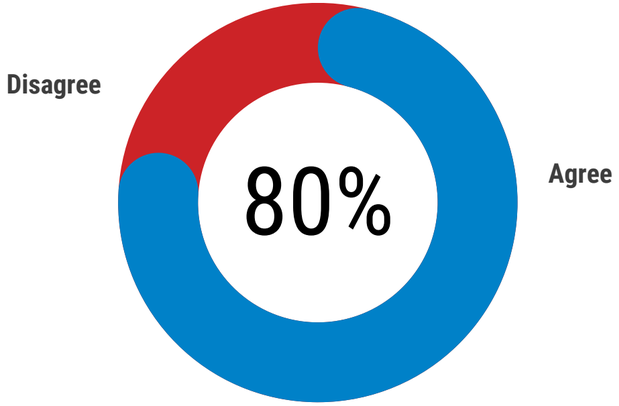
There are lots of things I want to read.



It is difficult to find interesting things to read.

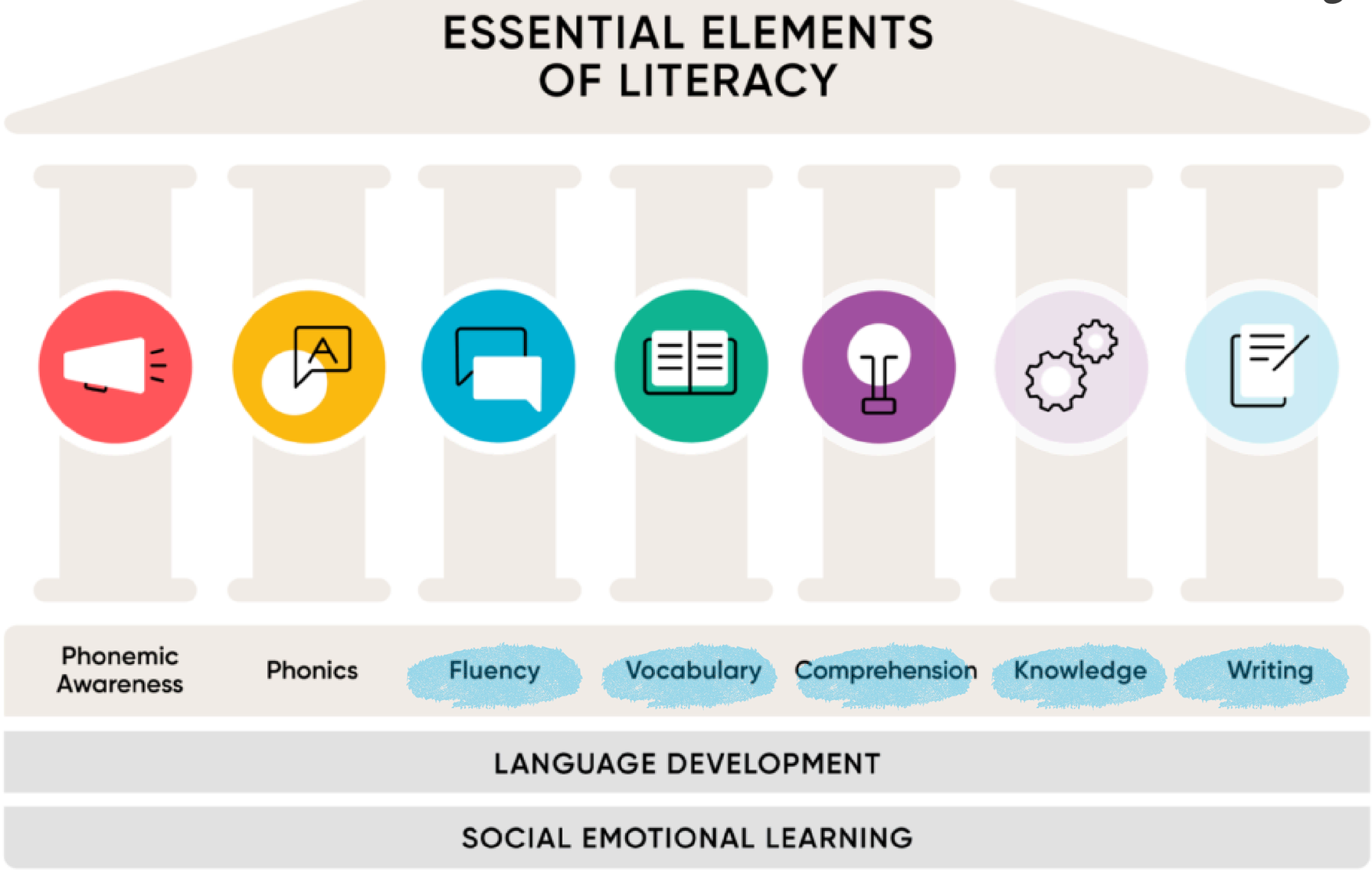


Writing is difficult.



I want to improve my writing skills.

Structured Literacy





Curricular Objectives

- Develop a comprehensive and aligned curriculum to English Language Arts, Structured Literacy requirements, Career Education and Work standards and reading and writing in the content standards.

- Inventory current curricular strengths and opportunities and evaluate current/alternative curricular resources to address gaps as identified through structured literacy components.

- Adopt a consistent 6-8 Tier 1 Resource, aligned to components of structured literacy.

- Provide on-going professional development for Structured Literacy, per Chapter 49 guidelines, and for acquired updated resources/implementation training.

Program Considerations

- Structured Literacy
- Evidence-based Practices
- Literacy Engagement & Enjoyment
- Explicit & Systematic Writing Instruction
- Explicit Reading & Metacognitive Instruction
- Authentic Literature Mentor Texts
- Instructional Technology
- Consistent Programatic Language
- Knowledge Building



Committee Work

2023 Fall

Structured Literacy Requirements

6-8 Structured Literacy Training

2024 Spring

Initial Program Resource Selection

Data Review

Implementation Planning

2024 Aug- Oct

ELA Department Meetings

Data Meetings

Tier 1 & Tier 2 Review

2024 Oct-Jan

5-12 ELA Meeting

ELA Rubric Creation

Data Review

Program Demonstrations

2024 Winter

Twice Monthly- Department Meetings

Program Demonstrations

Program Review- Deep Dives

2025 Spring

Pilot Programs

Reevaluation-

Next Best Step


HMH
+
Writable



Curricular Resources

Structured Literacy

Explicit Reading Instruction
Systematic Reading Instruction
Embedded Vocabulary

Evidence-based Practices

Hattie's High Impact Strategies
Multimedia Resources

Literacy Engagement & Enjoyment

Student Choice
Flexible Unit & Lesson Planning
Project-based Learning

Explicit & Systematic Writing Instruction

Response Logs
Cross Curricular Writing
Unit Writing Task

Explicit Reading & Metacognitive Instruction

Strategically Embedded Strategies
"Flexible Skill Options"
Text Sketch

Authentic Literature Mentor Texts

Strategically Embedded

Instructional Technology

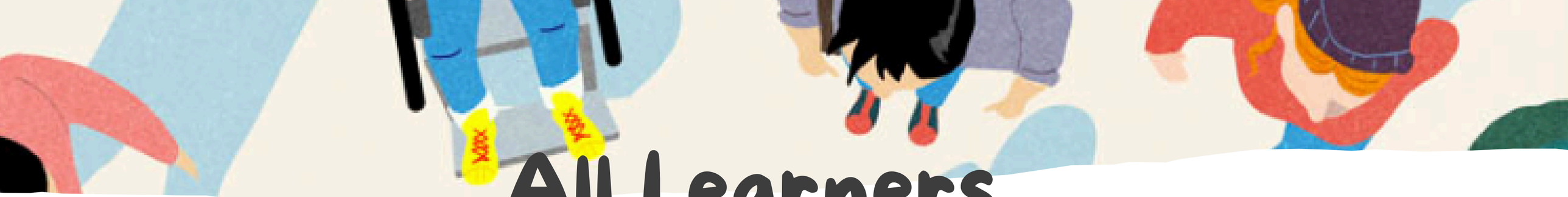
Data Insights
Writable

Consistent Programatic Language

Student Consumable

Knowledge Building

Informational Texts



All Learners

Students with IEP's

Modeled Skills & Strategies
Customizable Graphic Organizers
Customize Assessments
Writing & Discussion Stems
Flexible Reading Options
Guided Annotations
Additional Grammar & Vocabulary

Striving Readers

Differentiated Instruction
Modeled Discussion
Guided Annotations
Text Connected Vocabulary
Flexible Reading Options
Peer Coaching Videos
Text Audio
Knowledge Building
Grammar Practice

Core Learners

Text Complexity Measures
Flexible Reading Options
Guided Annotation
Flexible Grouping Options
Build to Extended Writing Task
Student Models
Multimedia Resources
Assessment Options
Growth Measures
Standards Reporting

High Achievers

Standards-based Reporting
Detailed writing assignments-
Cross-Curricular Projects
Higher Order Assessments
Project-based Learning
Flexible Units for Compression
Embedded Extension

Unit Reading



from **A Chance in the World**

Literary Nonfiction by **Steve Pemberton**

A young boy in foster care seeks food for body and soul.



Is Survival Selfish?

Argument by **Lane Wallace**

If forced to choose, whose life would you save: Your own, or someone else's?



The Leap

Short Story by **Louise Erdrich**

A mother saves her daughter's life three times.



The End and the Beginning

Poem by **Wisława Szymborska**

What are the harsh realities of life after war?



from **Night**

Memoir by **Elie Wiesel**

A young man waits to hear whether he and his father will be selected to live another day or be killed.



from **Maus**

Graphic Memoir by **Art Spiegelman**

Cats and mice represent Nazis and Jews in this graphic novel about the Holocaust.

NOTICE & NOTE

MEMORY MOMENT

When you notice the narrator has interrupted the forward progress of a story by bringing up something from the past, you've found a **Memory Moment** signpost.

Notice & Note: Mark the lines in paragraph 29 that tell about something that happened in the past.

Analyze: Why might this memory be important?

ANALYZE AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Annotate: Mark the sentence in paragraph 30 that describes Steve's key realization about himself.

Analyze: Hc help you unc in Steve's sta

ANALYZE LITERARY NONFICTION

Annotate: Mark the sentences in paragraph 36 where the author is reflecting on Mrs. Levin.

Interpret: What does Steve mean by the metaphor that books would "sow the seeds of my rebellion"?

Respond

Analyze the Text

Support your responses with evidence from the text.

1. **INTERPRET** Review the chart you completed on the Get Ready page. How would you describe the author's perspective on this period of his life?
2. **ANALYZE** Identify two or three "Robinson Rules." How do you know there are many such rules? How does this fact add to the author's portrayal of this period in his life?
3. **INFER** The author describes a wall "as if hewn from the side of a mountain." Find other examples of figurative language. Why did the author not confine himself to a literal recounting of events?
4. **EVALUATE** Deception, cunning, trickery, thieving: Steve boasts about his abilities to deceive and outwit the Robinsons. Who or what is Steve's model? How does he justify his own deceptions?
5. **ANALYZE** What **sensory language**—descriptions that appeal to the senses—does the author use? Cite two or three examples. What does this language tell you about the narrator's perceptions?
6. **SYNTHESIZE** Review the **Memory Moment** in paragraph 29. How do Mrs. Levin's actions provide Steve with the "chance" the babysitter and others were sure he didn't have?
7. **CONNECT** How does this memoir excerpt address the unit's Essential Question, What does it take to survive a crisis? Use the graphic organizer to record strategies Steve uses to survive, physically and emotionally, in the Robinson household.

Collaborate & Compare

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What does it take to survive a crisis?

Compare Accounts

You're about to read excerpts from two memoirs about the Holocaust. As you read, notice similarities and differences in the settings, characters, points of view, and author's purpose in these two texts.



Short Reads

Available on Ed

These texts are available in your ebook. Choose one to read and rate. Then defend your rating to the class.



Adventurers Change. Danger Does Not.

Article by **Alan Cowell**

Which is more important—to reach the summit of Mount Everest or to save the life of a fellow climber in trouble?

Rate It ☆☆☆☆☆



from **An Ordinary Man**

Memoir by **Paul Rusesabagina**

A Rwandan hotel owner of mixed Hutu and Tutsi descent saves more than a thousand refugees and survives the 1994 genocide.

Rate It ☆☆☆☆☆



Who Understands Me But Me

Poem by **Jimmy Santiago Baca**

When a young man is sentenced to prison, he loses a lot but gains even more.

Rate It ☆☆☆☆☆



Truth at All Costs

Speech by **Marie Colvin**

Is it worth the risk to report from a war zone? Do war correspondents make a difference?

Rate It ☆☆☆☆☆



from **Deep Survival**

Informational Text by **Laurence Gonzales**

Is a positive mental attitude really the key to survival? The author explores how disaster survivors manage to beat the odds.

Rate It ☆☆☆☆☆

Long Reads

Here are a few recommended books that connect to this unit topic. For additional options, ask your teacher, school librarian, or peers. Which titles spark your interest?



Night

Memoir by **Elie Wiesel**

Elie Wiesel recounts the horrors he faced as a teenager in the Nazi death camps. He reflects on his will to survive and man's capacity for inhumanity.



Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings

Memoir by **Margarita Engle**

Margarita is a girl from two worlds. With hostility brewing between Cuba and the United States, she wonders if she can still belong to both.



Bad Boy

Memoir by **Walter Dean Myers**

Walter has a quick temper and is always ready for a fight. He also love to read and write. How will the street of Harlem shape him, and who will h become?



Unit 1: from A Chance in the World Choices (Writing): Personal



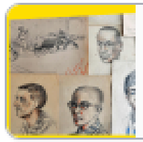
Unit 1: The End and the Beginning Choices (Writing): Dialogue



Write an Argument (SE)



Unit 1: Is Survival Selfish Choices (Writing): Argumentative Response



Unit 1: from Night Choice (Writing): Flyer



Reflect & Extend: Write ar Author Interview



Unit 1: The Leap Choices (Writing): Story Retelling



Unit 1: from Maus Choice (Writing): Argumentative Essay


OLD YELLER
THE GIVER
LOWRY
THE CROSSOVER
EDGAR ALLAN PO
ELL-TAL
THE
OUTSIDERS
50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
Contains never-before-seen photos, letters, and more!
Th
Call of the
Wild
GARY PAULSEN
HATCHET
Paul Rev
THE
ROAD
TAKEN
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood . . .
Dust
A Novel
A New York Times
brown girl dreaming

Explicit Writing

Write an Argument

Writing Prompt

Using ideas, information, and examples from multiple texts in this unit, write an argumentative essay for your school newspaper in which you support or oppose sending humans into space.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- review the texts in the unit;
- plan your essay;
- write your essay; and
- revise and edit your essay.

Be sure to

- clearly state the claim of your argument;
- address alternate or opposing claims;
- use and cite evidence from multiple sources; and
- avoid relying too much on one source.

Review the Mentor Texts

For two examples of well-written arguments you can use as mentor texts and as sources for your essay, review:

- "Humans Need to Explore Outer Space" (pages 276–280)
- "Let Robots Take to the Stars" (pages 286–290)

Review your notes and annotations about these texts. Think about how the authors make their arguments convincing.

Consider Your Sources

Review the list of texts in the unit and choose at least two that you may want to use as support for your argument.

As you review potential sources, consult the notes you made on your **Response Log** and make additional notes about ideas that might be useful as you write. Include titles and page numbers so that you can easily find information later.

UNIT 3 SOURCES

- ☐ Dark They Were, and Golden-Eyed
- ☐ Martian Metropolis
- ☐ Challenges for Space Exploration
- ☐ What If We Were Alone?
- ☐ Seven Minutes of Terror MEDIA
- ☐ Humans Need to Explore Outer Space
- ☐ Let Robots Take to the Stars

Revision Guide

- Introduction
- Point of View
- Narrative Techniques

Ask Yourself

Do I use narrative techniques to add interest and d
readers?

Prove It and Revise It

- **Highlight** next to dialogue. **Highlight** the sequence of events.
- **Add** or **rearrange** details to vary the pacing or to convey a more natural or logical sequence.

Reflect on the Essential Questio

Has your answer to the question changed after reading the te
the unit? Discuss your ideas.

You can use these sentences to help you reflect on your learning.

- *I think differently now because...*
- *Now that I've considered . . . , I realize . . .*
- *I still wonder about . . .*

Write a Personal Narrative

Writing Prompt

Using ideas, information, and examples from multiple te
unit, write a personal narrative about how differences be

4 **Edit Your Personal Narrative**

Edit your final draft to check for proper use of standard Engl
conventions and to correct any misspellings or grammatical

Help with Planning

Interactive Grammar Lessons: Colons

an Argume

Writing Prompt

Using ideas, information, and examples from more than one text in this unit, write an argument that would serve as a newspaper editorial opinion stating your position on the question "Does survival require selfishness?"

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- review the texts in the unit;

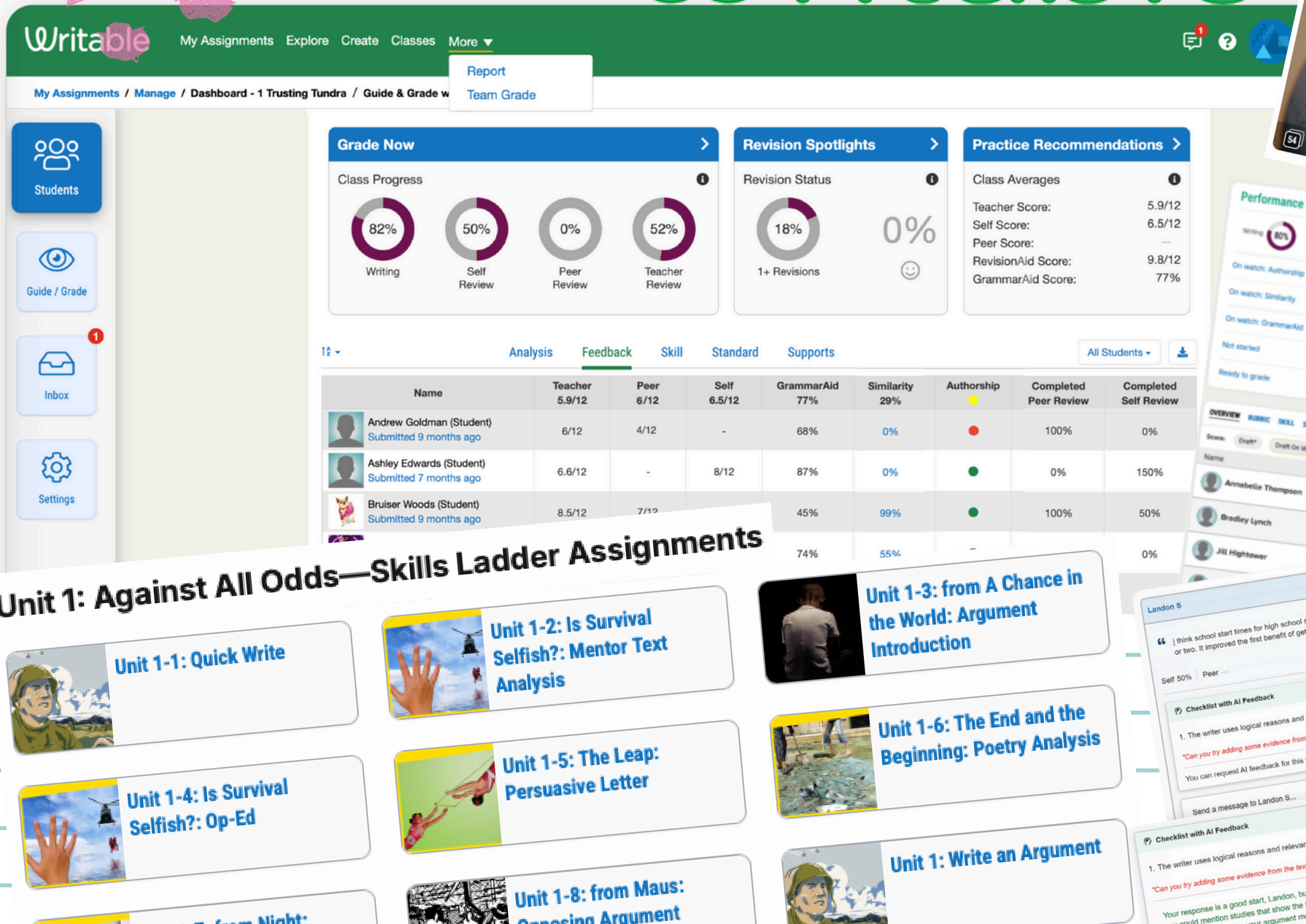
Review the Mentor Text

For an example of a well-written argument you can use as a mentor text and as a source for your essay, review:

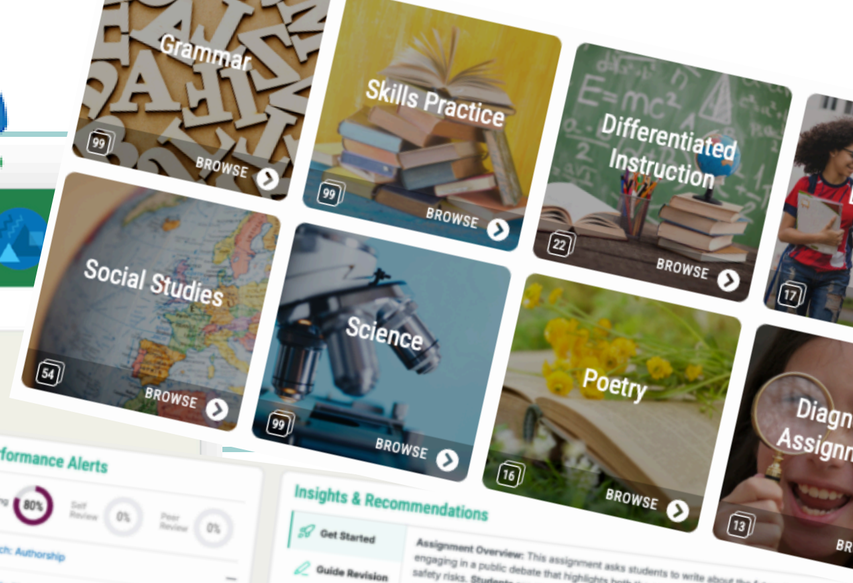
- **Is Survival Selfish?** (pages 23–27)

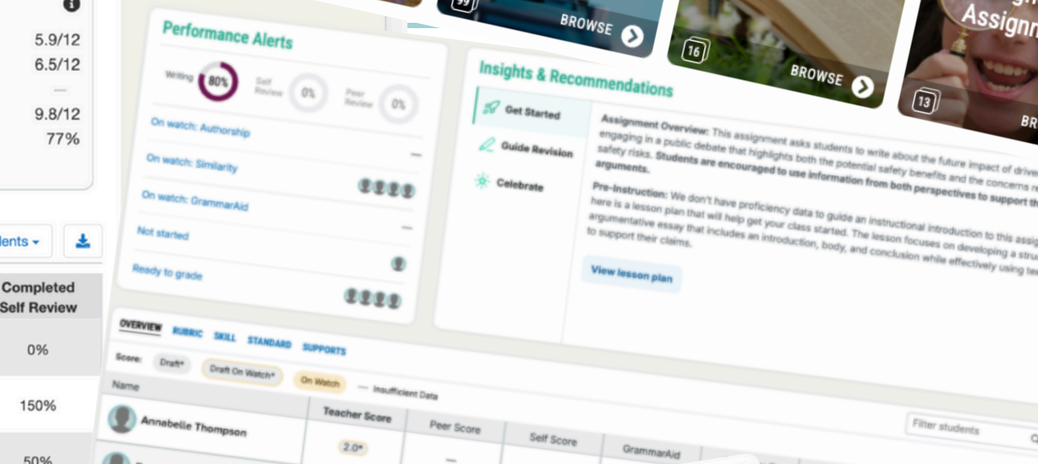
Make sure to carefully review your notes and annotations about this

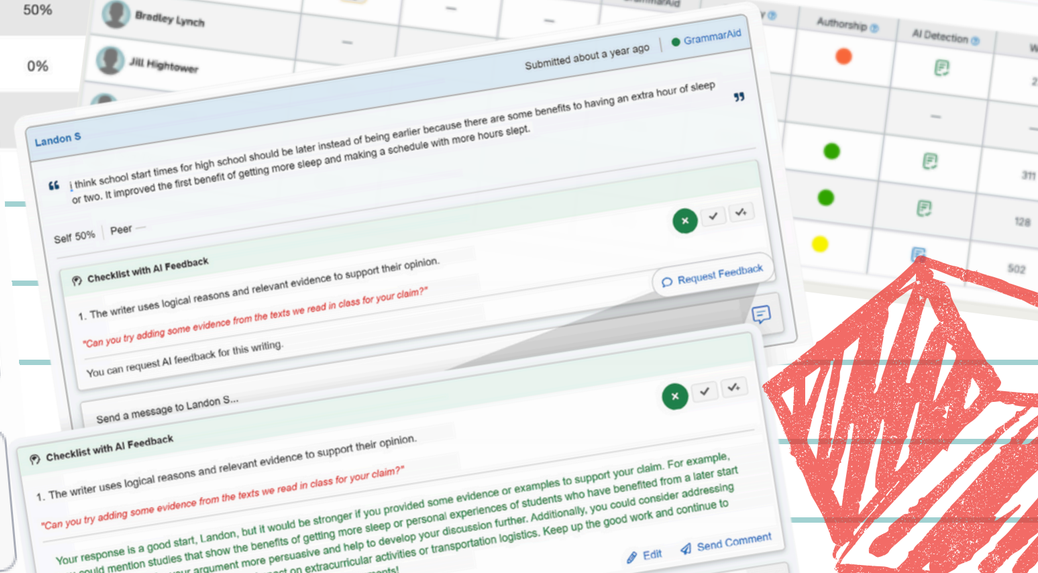
Writable


Writable
My Assignments
Explore
Create
Classes
More
Report
Team Grade
My Assignments / Manage / Dashboard - 1 Trusting Tundra / Guide & Grade w
Students
Guide / Grade
Inbox
Settings
Grade Now
Class Progress
82%
Writing
50%
Self Review
0%
Peer Review
52%
Teacher Review
Revision Spotlights
Revision Status
18%
1+ Revisions
0%
Practice Recommendations
Class Averages
Teacher Score: 5.9/12
Self Score: 6.5/12
Peer Score:
RevisionAid Score: 9.8/12
GrammarAid Score: 77%
Analysis
Feedback
Skill
Standard
Supports
All Students
Name
Teacher 5.9/12
Peer 6/12
Self 6.5/12
GrammarAid 77%
Similarity 29%
Authorship
Completed Peer Review
Completed Self Review
Andrew Goldman (Student)
Submitted 9 months ago
6/12
4/12
-
68%
0%
100%
0%
Ashley Edwards (Student)
Submitted 7 months ago
6.6/12
-
8/12
87%
0%
0%
150%
Bruiser Woods (Student)
Submitted 9 months ago
8.5/12
45%
99%
100%
50%
74%
55%
0%

Unit 1: Against All Odds—Skills Ladder Assignments
Unit 1-1: Quick Write
Unit 1-2: Is Survival Selfish?: Mentor Text Analysis
Unit 1-3: from A Chance in the World: Argument Introduction
Unit 1-4: Is Survival Selfish?: Op-Ed
Unit 1-5: The Leap: Persuasive Letter
Unit 1-6: The End and the Beginning: Poetry Analysis
Unit 1-8: from Maus:
Unit 1: Write an Argument


Grammar
Skills Practice
Differentiated Instruction
Social Studies
Science
Poetry
BROWSE

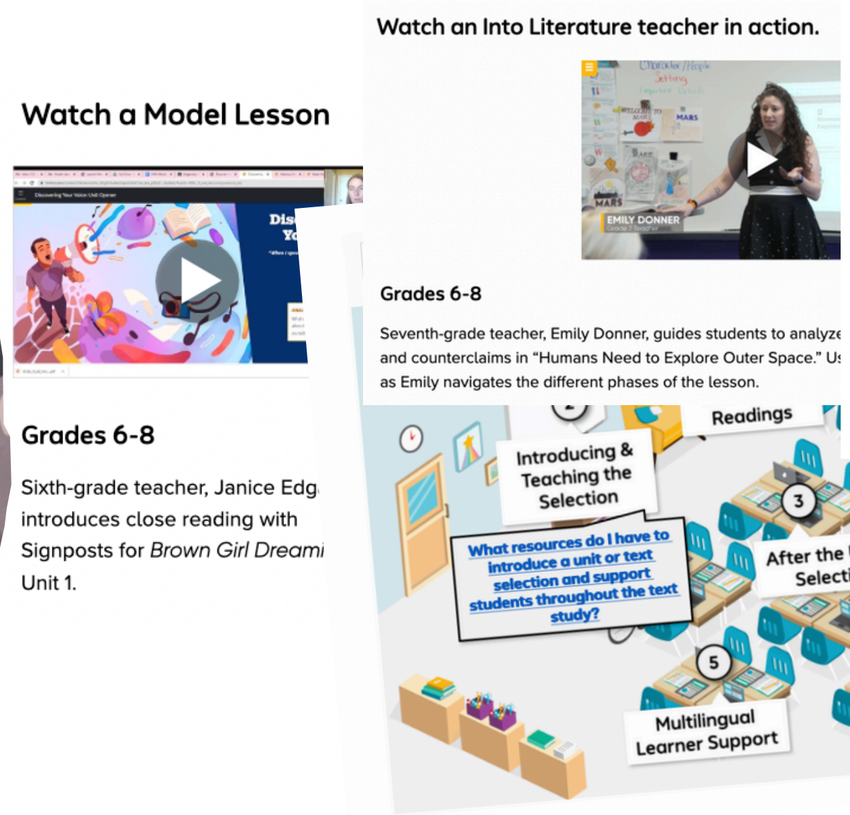

Performance Alerts
Insights & Recommendations
Get Started
Guide Revision
Celebrate
Assignment Overview:
Pre-Instruction:
View lesson plan

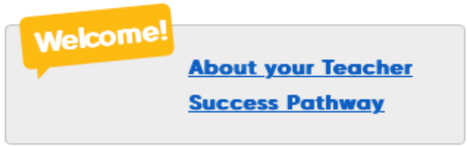

Landon S
Submitted about a year ago
GrammarAid
Checklist with AI Feedback
Request Feedback
Send a message to Landon S...
Edit
Send Comment

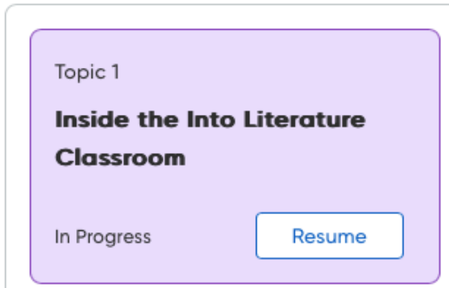
Professional Development

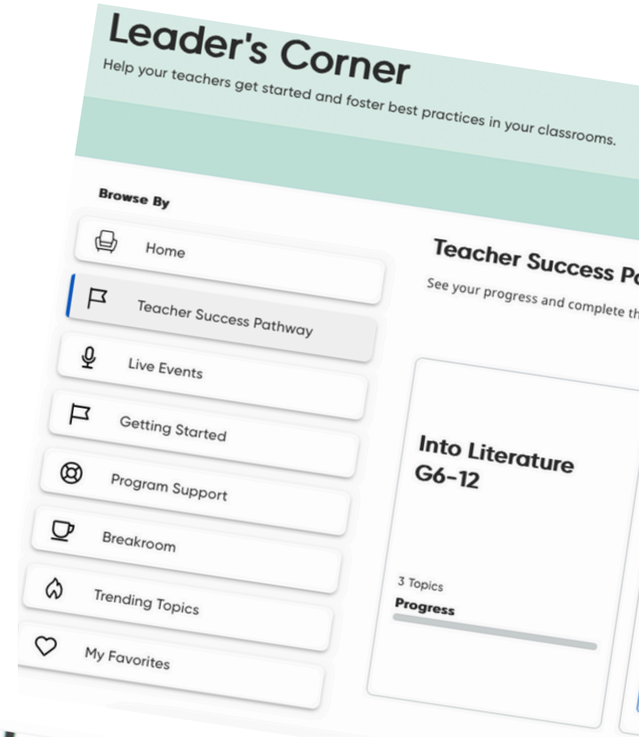


- 6 hours In-person, on-site Implementation Training
- On-going training and support
- Live Events
- Leader Success 1 hour virtual
- Flexible Grouping Options

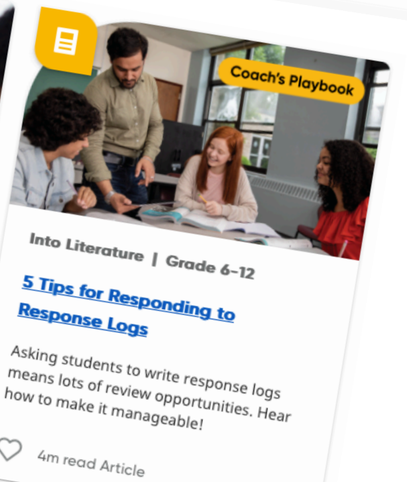












Program Costs

Professional Development	$4,600
Long Read Novels	$9,000
5 - Year Digital License	$59,286
5 - Year Print Materials	$63,031

5 Year Total: $135,917