Curriculum & Instruction

SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Content Area: Language Arts
Course: English Language Arts 6
Grade: 6

Course Overview

Sixth Grade Language Arts provides students with the literacy skills to access meaning in written texts and synthesize it to create personal meaning. Students develop their critical and interpretive reading skills through close reading of both fiction and nonfiction texts. While reading, students make connections to themselves, the world around them and across texts. Students read middle-grade texts where they can see themselves in a diverse range of characters, as well as gain insight to the struggles and lives of those in unfamiliar scenarios. Students engage in meaningful discourse to help promote their interpretation of texts. Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences in the form of literary analysis, research-based argumentative essays, narratives, and poetry. Students hone their writing skills through a comprehensive writing process including thorough planning, drafting, self-editing, peer-editing, and conferencing. Through this process, students become thoughtful, well-versed writers. Throughout the course students engage with multimedia as both a resource and a product of their understanding. Students employ reading, writing, and speaking skills across other disciplines as they engage in cross-curricular projects.

New Jersey State Learning Standards

Summit Public Schools curriculum aligns with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards,

Content Area Standards:

Language Domain

L.SS.6.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.

A. Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).
B. Use intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).
C. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.
D. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).
E. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive and parenthetical elements.
F. Recognize spelling conventions.

L.KL.6.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
B. Gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
C. Vary sentence patterns for meaning (syntax), reader/listener interest, and style/voice.
D. Maintain consistency in style and tone.

L.VL.6.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
B. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
C. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., audience, auditory, audible).
D. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
E. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.VI.6.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
B. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.
C. Analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
D. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., stingy, scrimping, economical, unwasteful, thrifty).

Reading Domain

RL.CR.6.1. Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.CR.6.1. Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what an informational text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.CI.6.2. Determine the theme of a literary text (e.g., stories, plays or poetry) and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.CI.6.2. Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RL.IT.6.3. Describe how a particular text's structure unfolds in a series of episodes and use textual evidence to describe how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

RI.IT.6.3. Analyze how a particular text's (e.g., article, brochure, technical manual, procedural text) structure unfolds by using textual evidence to describe how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.

RL.TS.6.4. Analyze how a particular piece (e.g., sentence, chapter, scene, stanza, or section) fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas, theme, setting, or plot.

RI.TS.6.4. Use text structures (e.g., cause-effect, problem-solution), search tools, and genre features (e.g., graphics, captions, indexes) to locate and integrate information.

RL.PP.6.5. Determine how an author conveys or develops perspective in a text (through the narrator or speaker when appropriate).

RI.PP.6.5. Identify author's purpose, perspective or potential bias in a text and explain the impact on the reader's interpretation.

RL.MF.6.6. Compare and contrast information or texts to develop a coherent understanding of a theme, topic, or issue when reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text.
RI.MF.6.6. Integrate information when presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
RI.AA.6.7. Trace the development of and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
RL.CT.6.8. Compare and contrast literary texts in different forms, by different authors, or from different genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and primary source documents, scientific journals and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
RI.CT.6.8. Compare and contrast informational texts in different forms, by different authors, or from different genres (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person, historical novels and primary source documents, infographics and scientific journals) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

Writing Domain
W.AW.6.1. Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, math, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

A. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence, that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons and evidence.
D. Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

W.IW.6.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

A. Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension.
B. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
C. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
E. Acknowledge and attempt a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
F. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

W.NW.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
C. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
D. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
E. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

W.WP.6.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning; flexibly making editing and revision choices; sustaining effort to fit composition needs and purposes; and attempting to address purpose and audience.

W.WR.6.5. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
W.SE.6.6. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.
W.RW.6.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self- correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening Domain
SL.PE.6.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

A. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
B. Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
C. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
D. Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

SL.II.6.2. Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
SL.ES.6.3. Deconstruct a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
SL.PI.6.4. Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate speaking behaviors (e.g., eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation).
SL.UM.6.5. Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.
SL.AS.6.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Interdisciplinary Standards:

Social Studies Standards:
6.1.8.CivicsDP.3.a Use primary and secondary sources to assess whether or not the ideals found in the Declaration of Independence were fulfilled for women, African Americans, and Native Americans during this time period.
6.1.8.CivicsHR.4.a Examine sources from a variety of perspectives to describe efforts to reform education, women's rights, slavery, and other issues during the Antebellum period.
6.1.8.HistoryUP.3.b Examine the roles and perspectives of various socioeconomic groups, African Americans, Native Americans, and women during the American Revolution, and determine how these groups were impacted by the war.
6.1.8.HistorySE.3.b Analyze a variety of sources to make evidence-based inferences about how prominent individuals and other nations contributed to the causes, execution, and outcomes of the American Revolution.
6.1.8.HistoryCC.4.d Analyze the push-pull factors that led to increase in immigration and explain why ethnic and cultural conflicts resulted.
6.2.8.GeoHE.2.a Determine the extent to which geography influenced settlement, the development of trade networks, technological innovations, and the sustainability of early river valley civilizations.

6.2.8.HistoryUP.3.b Compare the status of groups in the Ancient World to those of people today and evaluate how individuals perceived the principles of liberty and equality then and now.
6.3.8.CivicsPD.2 Propose and defend a position regarding a public policy issue at the appropriate local, state, or national level.
6.3.8.CivicsPD.3 Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues.
6.3.8.CivicsPR.4 Use evidence and quantitative data to propose or defend a public policy related to climate change.
6.3.8.CivicsHR.1 Construct an argument as to the source of human rights and how they are best protected.

Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills Standards:

Career Ready Practices
CRP 1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP 2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP 3. Attend to personal health and financial well-being.
CRP 4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP 5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP 6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP 7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
CRP 8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
CRP 9. Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
CRP 10. Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
CRP 11. Use technology to enhance productivity.
CRP 12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

Computer Science and Design Thinking Standards:

New Jersey Curriculum Mandates:

This curriculum integrates lessons that address the following interdisciplinary New Jersey Curriculum Mandates:

- Diversity and Inclusion (Grades K - 12)
- Holocaust & Genocide Education (Grades K - 12)
- Amistad Act (Grades K - 12)
- Climate Change Education (Grades K - 12)
- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Grades K - 12)
- History and Contributions of Individuals with Disabilities and LGBTQ persons (Grades 6 - 12 Only)

Learning Objectives

Through a variety of experiences with language, students:

- Learn and apply grade-level vocabulary using tools including but not limited to: Quizlet exercises, Frayer cards, discussion exercises, application activities.
- Learn, identify, and apply figures of speech including: simile, metaphor, alliteration, allusion, imagery, pun, hyperbole, idiom, personification and onomatopoeia.
- Learn to distinguish and interpret definitions, inferences, examples, antonyms, synonyms and their various uses.

- Apply appropriate conventions for grammar, mechanics and language use including, run-on sentences, sentence fragments, parts of speech, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and formatting.

Through a variety of reading experiences, students:

- Identify elements of a plot (Freytag's Triangle) and how they function to unfold a narrative.
- Analyze character roles—protagonist, antagonist, supporting characters—within a narrative.
- Analyze characters' actions, thoughts, speech, motivations, conflicts, and changes throughout a narrative.
- Determining themes in a work of literature and how the author conveys those ideas.
- Conduct close reading exercises with prose, poetry, song lyrics, nonfiction articles, and other texts.
- Identify figures of speech, interpret them and analyze how the author uses them to enrich characters, conflict or theme.
- Identify textual evidence and excerpts that capture the theme.
- Identify the main idea, author's purpose, and point of view in a text.
- Identify poetic elements (stanzas, lines, rhyme scheme) and structure.
- Identify various figures of speech (hyperbole, simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia, imagery, idiom) and interpret their meaning and purpose in a poem.
- Identify the speaker, tone and theme of a poem.
- Participate in book clubs with peers by setting expectations and engaging in productive conversations.

Through a range of writing experiences, students:

- Compose open-ended responses using the RACES (Restate, Answer, Cite Evidence, Explain) method.
- Generate ideas for narratives by using personal experience.
- Organize narrative writing using a "plot mountain."
- Develop a narrative exposition that orients the reader with characters, setting and hints at conflict.
- Apply approaches to characterization using action, description, and conventions of dialogue.
- Use transitional phrases to mark change in time and place.
- Provide tension or suspense to a story by building to the climax.
- Craft a conclusion that provides a resolution and theme to a narrative.
- Revise writing by identifying and correcting sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and other conventions of grammar, mechanics, and usage.
- Create an outline to organize writing.
- Develop a thesis statement.
- Develop body paragraphs by giving context and unpacking quotations.
- Craft a clear and concise introduction and conclusion.
- Provide descriptive details including concrete nouns, pronouns, appositive phrases, and sensory imagery.
- Write a letter in a formal tone and apply standard conventions for correspondence.
- Analyze various writing prompts to understand a task and criteria.
- Cite evidence for various types of sources using standard MLA conventions and formatting.
- Compose poems using elements of poetry (lines, stanzas, free verse vs. rhyme scheme), figurative language, and effective diction.

Through a variety of speaking and listening experiences, students:

- Discuss and practice collegial speaking skills in small groups for pre-reading, while they are reading a work, and post-reading using both teacher-generated and student-generated questions and prompts.
- Participate in interdisciplinary discussions such as a Hexagonal Thinking Exercise with

Social Studies terms (i.e. movement, economy, culture, bias, language, etc.).
- Prepare for and participate in student-led, Socratic Seminar-style discussions of a text.
- Participate in classroom debates around issues and topics in the text.
- Read aloud to build fluency in speaking and improve listening skills

Units of Study

Units of study are organized collections of lessons and learning experiences focused on a specific topic and set of skills within a course. Each unit is guided by a set of essential questions.

Unit 1: Understanding the Parts of a Story & Narrative Writing (~25 to 30 days)
- What are the essential elements that all stories have?
- How and why do we write about our personal experiences?
- How can authors use literary techniques to enrich and enliven their narratives?
- How can I communicate the importance of the experience/story?
- One often experiences points of conflict to help them grow and change.

Unit 2: Character Study and Literary Analysis (~25 to 30 days)
- What should readers notice about characters to help them better understand the character and the story?
- How can a claim be made and supported with textual evidence from multiple texts in a literary analysis?
- How can being aware of parts of speech lead to the use of precise and strong vocabulary in one's writing?

Unit 3: Themes in Pop Culture: Making Cross Text Connections with Book Clubs (~25 to 30 days)
- How do the obstacles we encounter in life shape us as individuals?
- How can the messages from pieces of literature help us learn and grow?
- What role does conflict play in a piece of literature?
- How are conflict and theme related?
- How can readers find the author's messages or theme within a piece of literature?

Unit 4: Studying Author's Craft (~25 to 30 days)
- How do authors use literary techniques to enrich and enliven their narratives?
- How do our preconceived notions affect how we see people?
- How can one person's actions bring a community together?
- How do readers look at the author's use of characterization to help understand characters?
- How will readers make inferences to increase comprehension of text?
- How do writers effectively use text to support their arguments?

Unit 5: Research / The Importance and Influence of Nonfiction Texts (~25 to 30 days)
- How do writers use narrative techniques to convey different characters' perspectives?
- How do authors draw upon real historical events in fictional writing?
- How do individuals survive in challenging environments?
- How do culture, time, and place influence the development of an identity?

Unit 6: Poetry (~25 to 30 days)
- How have poets used their voices to create change?
- How does the use of voice empower an individual?

- How do we approach a poem to find the meaning behind it?
- How do poetic devices create meaning and emotion?

Instructional Resources and Materials

Instructional resources are the information sources teachers utilize to guide their teaching and assessing. Instructional materials are the texts students read or review. The instructional resources and materials may vary in order to meet the learning needs of students. During independent reading activities, students may utilize books from the school library and ones brought from home. Teachers will utilize a wide variety of print, audio and visual texts throughout the year. Below is a list of frequently used materials:

Whole-Class / Book Circle Texts (Fiction/Drama/Poetry):
New Kid by Jerry Craft
The Julian Chapter by RJ Palacios
Ghost by Jason Reynolds
When Friendship Followed Me Home by Paul Giffin
Restart by Gordon Kormon
The Thing About Jellyfish by Ali Benjamin
Because of Mr. Terupt by Rob Buyea
Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt
Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman
"The Hill we Climb" by Amanda Gorman
"I Look at the World" by Langston Hughes
"I am Diversity" by Charles Bennafield
"Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now" by Matthew Olzmann
"(bullying) Speak Up!" by Kim Bradley

Whole-Class / Book Circle Texts (Non-Fiction):
A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park

Alternative Selections & Supplemental Texts:
"All Summer in a Day" by Ray Bradbury
"Two Million Americans Still Don't Have Running Water" - NewsELA
"Water ATMs erode worries, hardship for residents of Kenyan slum"- NewsELA
"Clean Water, Health Lives: PATH & Starbucks In Tanzania"
Clean Water Infographic - Cargo Collective
"P is for Poverty: How Improving Literacy Impacts The Economy"- The Borgen Project
"What Makes a Great Education"- Global Partnership for Education
"Why Education Matters to Health: Exploring the Causes"- VCU Center on Society and Health
"Teen Daughter of Refugees Finds Inspiration in Scientific Research"- NewsELA

Assessment Strategies

Assessment measures a student's mastery of a course standard and learning objective. Assessment can be used for both instructional purposes and for evaluative purposes. Teachers may choose one or more of the following ideas to assess learners. They may also modify these ideas to make the assessment more responsive to students' interests and needs.

Formative:

- Journal Responses
- Participation in and written reflections related to discussion exercises
- Annotation Checks
- Poem Response Guides
- Digital Notebook

Summative:

- Literary Terms Quiz
- Conventions of Dialogue Quiz
- Full sentences, Run-ons, Fragments Quiz
- Narrative Writing Project
- Vocabulary Quiz
- Nouns Quiz
- Literary Analysis Essay
- Conventions of Text Citations and Using Titles Quiz
- Verbs Quiz
- Expository Essay addressing a theme
- Commas Quiz
- In-Class Timed Writing
- Letter Writing Assignment
- One-Pager Reader Response
- Research Simulation Task (RST)
- Adverbs Quiz
- Poetry Writing Assignment

Alternative:

- Presentation
- Speech
- Performance
- Visual or Digital Media Project

Suggested Strategies for Modification & Differentiation

Modifications Chart