

Reading Public Schools

Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow



English Language Arts Curriculum Guide

Grade 6-8 Writing

“We want our students to live as writers. Writing creates an opportunity to understand life better and to navigate its challenges and opportunities. Writing is for life, not just for school.”

- Kelly Gallagher & Penny Kittle, *180 Days*

Mission Statement

Students enter middle school at a critical time in their development as both people and learners. As they form opinions about the world around them, teachers have a responsibility to harness that authentic engagement to help students discover the **power of language**. Our work is guided by the pursuit of developing thoughtful writers who express their **thinking with confidence** and view writing through the lens of a **growth mindset**. The 6-8 English Language Arts Writing program is built to **empower** writers who:

- Develop ideas through the use of evidence.
- Independently apply strategies.
- Present ideas in an organized manner.
- Demonstrate awareness of task and audience
- Are resilient.

Instructional Practices

To support writers, educators will...

- Model effective writing strategies through whole-class, small group, and 1:1 instruction.
- Provide and facilitate feedback of student writing.
- Give many opportunities for students to write for different tasks, purposes and audiences.
- Provide direct instruction and independent practice with each step of the writing process, helping students identify what works for them as individual writers.
- Expose students to a variety of engaging, complex texts that act as exemplars of writing rich with craft, structure, and idea development.
- Design authentic experiences for students to build

State Anchor Standards—Writing and Language

Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. When conducting research, gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research. Range of Writing
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge.

Grade 6

W 6.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- Introduce claim(s) and **organize the reasons and evidence** clearly in paragraphs and sections.
- Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

W 6.2 Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

- Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships** among ideas and concepts.

W 6.3. Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured sequences.

- Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an appropriate narrative sequence.
- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use a **variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts** from one time frame or setting to another.

W 6.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 6 standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed.

L 6.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- Use simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to communicate ideas clearly and to add variety to writing.

L 6.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.

Grade 7

W 7.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- Introduce claim(s), **acknowledge alternate or opposing claims**, and organize the reasons and evidence logically in paragraphs and sections.
- Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W 7.2 Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content

- Develop the topic with relevant facts**, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion** and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

W 7.3 Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured sequences.

- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- Use **precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and figurative and sensory language to establish a mood that evokes an emotion**, to capture action, and to convey experiences or events.

W 7.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 7 Standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed.

L 7.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- Use phrases and clauses to communicate ideas precisely, with attention to skillful use of verb tenses to add clarity.

L 7.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, biblical, mythological allusions) in context.

Grade 8

W 8.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- Introduce claim(s), acknowledge **and distinguish** the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically in paragraphs and sections.
- Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose.**
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W 8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

- Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; **use paragraphs and sections to organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories.**
- Develop the topic with relevant, **well-chosen** facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

W 8.3. Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured sequences.

- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and **reflection**, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use precise words and phrases and relevant descriptive details to **convey a tone (the writer's attitude toward the subject: e.g., humorous, serious, or ironic)** and to convey experiences or events.

W 8.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 6 standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed.

L 8.1 . Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; retain and further develop language skills learned in previous grades.

- Coordinate phrases and clauses in simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, with emphasis on agreement of pronouns and their antecedents.

L 8.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.

| The 6-8 English Language Arts program is built to empower writers who... | The typical 6th grade writer will be able to... | The typical 7th grade writer will be able to... | The typical 8th grade writer will be able to... |
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| Develop ideas through the use of evidence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identify and include evidence within their writing to support an idea or position. ◆ Begin to explain how the evidence supports their position | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Properly introduce and cite evidence. ◆ Connect/relate evidence to a thesis/claim | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Select and use evidence strategically. ◆ More naturally incorporate evidence and analysis. ◆ Develop language around transitions and introduction to evidence. |
| Independently apply strategies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Recognize the value of proofreading. ◆ Show improvement through multiple drafts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understand/explain the difference between editing and revising ◆ Use resources available to independently revise/edit (checklists, mentor texts, organizers) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Edit and revise before submitting final work. ◆ Edit and revise independently and proactively based off feedback. |
| Organize their ideas coherently and cohesively. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Write a 5-paragraph essay. ◆ Include transitions in their essay writing. ◆ Write a narrative with a logical sequence of events and includes purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understand and apply the various components of an essay (introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion, thesis) ◆ With appropriate support, effectively organize their thinking. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Independently plan and organize ideas and structure before writing ◆ Employ grammatical and structural standards to maintain clarity. ◆ Delineating between strong and weak arguments in essay writing. |
| Demonstrate awareness of task and audience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Show consideration of counter-arguments in persuasive writing ◆ Identify the audience for whom they are writing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Organize writing based on the specific task. ◆ Employ engaging language appropriate to the writing task and audience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Begin argument writing with a clear statement of intent ◆ Incorporate techniques in narrative writing that reflect a growing knowledge of voice, description, and other elements of fiction. |
| Are resilient. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understand that writing is a process and that revision is an important part of this process ◆ Use feedback to improve their writing ◆ Independently get started on writing tasks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understand feedback's role in the writing process ◆ To give, receive, and apply meaningful feedback from teachers and peers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Develop a voice that transcends formulaic response. ◆ Embrace a mindset of patience and openness in the writing and revision process. ◆ Seeing every new writing opportunity as an opportunity to grow and raise one's personal standard of excellence. |