

# Reading Public Schools

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



**English**

**CP & Honors 12 Elective: Journalism**

## Course Description

In this semester-long course, students will become familiar with various styles of journalistic writing. The course emphasizes the importance of differentiating fact from opinion and truth from propaganda. Students will develop an understanding of the First Amendment and use critical thinking skills as they survey a variety of radio, print, and broadcast journalism. Students will evaluate sources and recognize bias in reporting and in the media. Students will develop journalistic skills and demonstrate competence by conducting interviews, investigating stories, and publishing their own work. Students will be encouraged to submit original articles to *The Orbit*.

## Reading & Writing Skills

### READING

#### MA Curriculum Frameworks Standards RI.1, 3, 5, 9, 10

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence.
- Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in exposition or argument.
- Analyze pre-twentieth century documents of significance.
- Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary non-fiction.

### WRITING

#### MA Curriculum Frameworks Standards W.1, 2, 4, 6, 7

- Write arguments to support claims.
- Write informative, explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately.
- Produce clear and coherent writing.
- Develop and strengthen writing.
- Use technology to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products.
- Conduct short, as well as more sustained research projects.

## Language, Speaking, & Listening Skills

### SPEAKING & LISTENING

#### MA Curriculum Frameworks Standards SL.1, 3, 6

- Initiate and participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view.
- Adapt speech to a variety of concepts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English.

### LANGUAGE

#### MA Curriculum Frameworks Standards L.1, 3, 6

- Demonstrate command standard English grammar conventions and usage in writing.
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.
- Acquire and use accurately grade-level and domain-specific words and phrases.

<b>Units</b>	<b>Essential Questions</b>	<b>Key Activities</b> <b><u>MAY</u> include:</b>
<b>An Introduction to Journalism and The News</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the First Amendment and what makes it critical to life in a democracy?</li> <li>• What is a journalist?</li> <li>• What makes an event or person “newsworthy”?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze a prominent first-amendment legal ruling related to schools.</li> <li>• Read and summarize “The Journalist’s Creed” and the <i>AP Stylebook</i> mission statement.</li> <li>• Evaluate topics for newsworthiness.</li> </ul>
<b>Newswriting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the challenges to accurate news reporting?</li> <li>• What are the ways that news coverage can be biased?</li> <li>• What are the essential qualities of straight news writing?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write and publish straight news stories related to RMHS and local community.</li> <li>• Conduct interviews with sources relevant to a particular news story.</li> <li>• Write and publish an informed commentary.</li> </ul>
<b>Feature Journalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the essential qualities of feature story writing?</li> <li>• What qualities give a news story “human interest”?</li> <li>• How can the techniques of fiction writing be applied to non-fiction writing?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write and publish feature stories related to RMHS and the local community.</li> <li>• Conduct research and interviews appropriate for scope and purpose of feature article.</li> </ul>
<b>Literary Non-fiction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the techniques of fiction writing be applied to non-fiction?</li> <li>• How does a journalist immerse herself in a topic or world to which she is an outsider?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and comprehend works of literary non-fiction such as <i>In Cold Blood</i> and <i>A Civil Action</i>.</li> <li>• Participate in Socratic seminar exploring themes of literary non-fiction.</li> </ul>
<b>The New Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the strengths and weaknesses of the citizen journalist?</li> <li>• What are the challenges and opportunities presented by widespread access to media creation tools?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critique a podcast.</li> <li>• Produce a podcast.</li> <li>• Actively follow and report on a journalist or blog outside of the mainstream media.</li> </ul>

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## Curriculum Guide Overview

### Curriculum Guide

Curriculum guides are public documents aligned with the Massachusetts Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks. They focus on the set of standards that students will learn within certain disciplines at appropriate grade levels. Each area of the curriculum is divided into general strands (broad categories) under which the standards fall. When we discuss “standards-based education” we mean that students are measured against their proficiency and growth towards meeting these standards. Curriculum Guides are intended for teachers, parents, and the wider school community as an overview document of the course of study for the year.

### Curriculum Map

Curriculum maps are internal documents utilized as planning tools for teachers. Curriculum maps keep a focus on the end-of-year standards and chart a course for the teaching and learning over the year. They are typically organized in a grade-level overview organized by month or marking period. Curriculum maps typically include; standards and expectations for the grade/content, essential skills/concepts, methods of assessment, and major content resources. Maps are never “done” as ongoing work of educators include revisions, additions, and revisits to the maps. They provide an overview for the year while also allowing educators to see a vertical picture of how the content develops as students progress through each grade.

### Standards

The standards used as the foundation of our curriculum come directly from the Massachusetts Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks. State standards may be viewed here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>

### Essential Questions

Essential questions are questions that are not answerable with an easy answer or a simple instruction. The purpose of essential questions is to provide opportunities for inquiry into the learning and act as an umbrella to anchor the unit/lesson.

### Activities

Activities identified in Curriculum Guides are not intended to be exhaustive, nor are they intended to be prescriptive. The activities identified may function as formative and summative assessments. Other activities may be included. Complexity of activities varies by course level.

### Analysis

Analysis is examining the parts of visual or written text in order to understand the whole text and author’s purpose. Analytical writing requires defending an original argument (thesis) and supporting it with evidence and insight in order to make meaning and arrive at understanding.

### Socratic Seminar

A formal discussion, based on a text, in which students ask open-ended questions. Within the context of the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of others, thinking critically for themselves, and articulate their own thoughts and responses to others. Definition from NCTE ReadWriteThink, <http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/socratic-seminars-30600.html>