



Language Arts Curriculum – Middle Level

May 2007

Introduction

Language Arts Curriculum

The Language Arts curriculum at Baker Demonstration School provides the scaffolding necessary to create a community of learners engaged in literary discourse. Most of all, it encourages each child to reach his/her individual potential in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The curriculum embraces the workshop approach whereby students read and write continuously, consult one another and the teacher, edit and revise their work, refine and hone their mechanical skills, and develop their creative and analytical writing skills. A significant aspect of the program, consistent with best practice in middle schools, is the students' engagement in active self-assessment and measurement of their progress over time. This works both to motivate the individual and to inspire the community to take responsibility for their personal development. Finally, the curriculum focuses on each child's movement from concrete thinking to abstract reasoning across the disciplines.

6th Grade

Concepts

Written
Communication

Skills and Processes

- Use appropriate prewriting strategies (brainstorm, notes, web, outline, story maps)
- Engage in writing process (write, edit and revise)
- Work independently through writing process
- Organize ideas into paragraphs
- Sequence events in writing
- Embellish writing with details and elaboration
- Identify extraneous information
- Compare and contrast information

Forms of Writing

- Write both fiction and non-fiction genres (journal, poetry, story, essay, report, and paragraphs with thesis sentences and supporting details)

Conventions

- Follow correct writing format (margins, indentation, double spacing, correct number of spaces between words and after sentences, font, title, and paper labeling)
- Edit work for punctuation, capitalization, grammar, spelling, and paragraphing

Spelling

- Demonstrate awareness and understanding of spelling rules

Handwriting

- Engage in handwriting practice and refinement

Oral

Accuracy/Fluency

- Read with expression (articulation, voice projection)
- Identify and evaluates appropriate listening and speaking strategies
- Use language cues to understand intention

Concepts

Comprehension

Skills and Processes

- Understand and restate the main idea of a reading selection
- Predict possible outcomes of a reading selection
- Identify speakers in a dialogue
- Recognize literary devices (foreshadowing, flashback and symbolism).
- Make connections
- Support assertions with evidence
- Recognize story elements (plot, setting and character)
- Speculate as to authors' hidden agendas

Reading Strategies

- Use contextual clues to determine word meaning
- Use the dictionary to locate words and word meanings

Reading Behaviors

- Read independently
- Identify themes across works
- Recognize and understand literary genres (poetry, fiction, non-fiction)
- Recognize quality young adult literature

Research

- Generate thoughtful research questions
- Use table of contents, index and glossary
- Seek and use classroom resources (teacher, peer, dictionary and resource texts)
- Accurately take notes (SPQ3R, pre-reading, skimming, summarizing and paraphrasing)
- Cite sources appropriately

7th Grade

Concepts

Written
Communication

Skills and Processes

- Use appropriate prewriting strategies (dialogue, brainstorm, notes, web, outline, story maps)
- Engage in writing process (write, edit, embellish, and revise)
- Work independently through writing process
- Produce a series of distinctly different drafts that result in a polished piece of writing or presentation
- Organize ideas into cohesive paragraphs (introduction and conclusion)
- Recognize purpose of oral and written messages
- Develop meaningful introductions and conclusions
- Use genre appropriate transition words
- Embellish writing with details, support and elaboration
- Identify extraneous or missing information
- Compare and contrast information orally and in writing

Forms of Writing

- Write both fiction and non-fiction genres (journal, poetry, story, one-paragraph essay, report, and paragraphs with thesis sentences and supporting details)

Concepts

Conventions

Skills and Processes

- Follow correct writing format (margins, indentation, double spacing, correct number of spaces between words and after sentences, font, title and paper labeling)
- Edit work for punctuation, capitalization, grammar, spelling and paragraphing
- Rearrange words, sentences and paragraphs to improve or clarify meaning

Spelling

- Demonstrate awareness and understanding of spelling rules

Handwriting

- Engage in handwriting practice and refinement

Oral

Accuracy/Fluency

- Listen actively (body language, eye contact)
- Demonstrate appropriate speaking behavior (articulation, voice projection, rate)
- Pose thoughtful questions
- Use language cues to understand intention
- Recognize purpose of oral messages: convey information, give directions, entertain
- Listen to and share writing with a variety of audiences

Comprehension

- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of a text
- Predict possible outcomes of a reading selection
- Consider solutions to problems
- Recognize and utilize literary devices (flashback, foreshadow, symbolism, imagery, metaphor, simile and alliteration).
- Make perceptive connections
- Support assertions with elaborated and convincing evidence
- Recall specific and significant details of written and oral passages
- Recognize story elements (plot, setting, character, point of view and theme)
- Speculate as to authors' intentions

Reading Strategies

- Use structural analysis and contextual clues to determine word meaning
- Use the dictionary to locate words and word meaning
- Develop note-taking strategies to identify and highlight new terminologies in a text
- Use the thesaurus to discover new words

Reading Behaviors

- Read to understand various literary genres and forms
- Read independently
- Recognize and analyzes good young adult literature
- Make age-appropriate reading selections
- Recognize inappropriate materials

Concepts

Research

Skills and Processes

- Generate thoughtful and thorough research questions
- Use table of contents, index and glossary
- Seek and use classroom resources (teacher, peer, dictionary, encyclopedia, resource texts)
- Use the library and expository reading selections for researching historical data
- Accurately take notes (SPQ3R, pre-reading, skimming, summarizing, and paraphrasing)
- Cite sources appropriately

8th Grade

Concepts

Written

Communication

Skills and Processes

- Use appropriate prewriting strategies (notes, web, outline)
- Engage in writing process (write, edit, and revise)
- Seek constructive criticism
- Work independently through writing process
- Produce a series of distinctly different drafts that result in a polished piece of writing or presentation
- Organize ideas into cohesive paragraphs (introduction, body and conclusion)
- Embellish writing with details, support and elaboration
- Identify extraneous or missing information
- Compare and contrast information orally and in writing

Forms of Writing

- Write both fiction and non-fiction genres (journal, poetry, story, one- and five-paragraph essay, report and paragraphs with thesis sentences and supporting details)

Conventions

- Follow correct writing format (margins, indentation, double spacing, correct number of spaces between words and after sentences, font, title, and paper labeling)
- Edit work for punctuation, capitalization, grammar, spelling and paragraphing
- Rearrange words, sentences and paragraphs to improve or clarify meaning

Spelling

- Demonstrate awareness and understanding of spelling rules

Handwriting

- Engage in handwriting practice and refinement

Oral

Accuracy/Fluency

- Listen actively (body language, eye contact)
- Demonstrate appropriate speaking behavior (articulation, voice projection, rate)
- Pose thoughtful questions
- Recognize purpose of oral messages: convey information, give directions, entertain
- Listen to and share writing with a variety of audiences

Concepts

Comprehension

Skills and Processes

- Analyze and discuss the main idea of a reading selection
- Consider solutions to problems
- Make inferences and identifies different points of view in written and oral messages
- Recognize and utilize literary devices (flashback, foreshadow, symbolism, imagery, pun, metaphor, simile, alliteration and hyperbole).
- Make perceptive connections
- Support assertions with elaborated and convincing evidence
- Recognize story elements (plot, setting, characterization, point of view and theme)
- Speculate as to authors' political intentions

Reading Strategies

- Use structural analysis and contextual clues to determine word meaning
- Use the dictionary to locate words and word meaning
- Develop note-taking strategies to identify and highlight new terminologies in a text
- Use the thesaurus to discover new words

Reading Behaviors

- Read to understand various literary genres and forms
- Read independently
- Recognize and analyzes good literature
- Make age-appropriate reading selections
- Recognize inappropriate materials

Research

- Generate thoughtful and thorough research questions
- Use table of contents, index, glossary
- Seek and use classroom resources (teacher, peer, dictionary, resource texts)
- Use the library and expository reading selections for researching historical data
- Accurately take notes (SPQ3R, pre-reading, skimming, summarizing and paraphrasing)
- Cite sources appropriately