

Curriculum Development
In the Fairfield Public Schools

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

JOURNALISM

Board of Education Approved 01/22/2008

JOURNALISM

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this course is to give students the opportunity to integrate their acquired language arts skills and use them in the genre of journalistic writing. The course will strengthen the students as critical thinkers and broaden their researching and writing experiences as they gather and communicate information and ideas clearly and succinctly. They will also employ critical thinking in reading and evaluating various news articles for content and style. Additionally, students broaden their researching, speaking and writing experiences as they gather and disseminate information clearly and succinctly.

Audience

Juniors and Seniors

Prerequisite

For Seniors, completion of Junior English course. For Juniors, an addition to full-year English course

Design and Description

Journalism is a semester English elective. This course enables the student to learn the important skills necessary to be a news reporter and journalistic writer. Students learn how to write a story in the newsroom. They also will "go out" on the beat and develop and pursue their own ideas for news, features, sports, editorials, and entertainment articles, as well as other specialty stories. Students see how concepts and principles work in real situations and explore the problems, philosophical questions, and issues that journalists face on the job. Students will consult professional guidelines to write clear and direct articles within the appropriate ethical boundaries. They will read and evaluate various examples of the news media and become familiar with the experiences of professional journalists. In class, students will learn the fundamentals of lead writing, news story development, news story organization, interviewing, gathering information, attributing sources, rewriting, editing, writing within a deadline as well as analyzing and evaluating qualities of good writing.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- define ethics as it relates to journalism.
- understand the law as it relates to journalism (libel, First Amendment, malice).
- understand responsibilities of journalistic writing, including the implications of stories and connotations of words.
- identify the elements of news (newsworthiness)
- apply the elements of news to determine a topic's newsworthiness
- differentiate between hard and soft news
- construct and deconstruct articles based on the inverted pyramid of news organization.
- understand the elements and importance of leads.

- write effective news leads.
- incorporate their knowledge of leads, newsworthiness, and organization to write an effective news article
- demonstrate an understanding of bias and balanced reporting
- effectively incorporate quality and relevant quotations into news articles
- identify appropriate and quality sources to interview.
- conduct a professional and proper journalistic interview.
- synthesize the information gained from an interview and incorporate it as they write a news story.
- correctly attribute and incorporate quotations gained from sources.
- evaluate the validity of information sources.
- discern relevant information from sources.
- rephrase information while still maintaining accurate facts.
- differentiate between a basic news story and an editorial.
- find a topic of significance about which they will write an editorial.
- demonstrate the importance of incorporating facts and opposing viewpoints.
- employ techniques of persuasion, including writing style and tone.
- recognize the role of satire in an opinion section of a newspaper (irony, editorial cartoon).
- demonstrate an awareness of audience.
- employ techniques of persuasive writing.
- deconstruct a professional sample of a feature article.
- differentiate hard news from soft news.
- identify topics that are appropriate for a feature article.
- outline essential elements for a feature article.
- identify the various types of sports stories.
- incorporate prior skills, including: conducting interviews, incorporating facts and figures, rephrasing, identifying appropriate topics for interviews, remaining fair and balanced.
- effectively incorporate statistics into sports stories, to enhance the story's meaning.
- accurately incorporate statistics, following the AP Style guidelines.
- make appropriate and interesting topic choices.
- employ the use of angles, as a means of enhancing the reader's interest.
- understand the purpose of a consumer review
- choose an appropriate topic for a consumer review
- employ elements of feature and editorial writing in an effective editorial critique
- show awareness of audience, through tone, choice of topic and writing style
- incorporate all skills learned in the semester to create a story suitable for publication in the school newspaper.
- revise story for publication.

* Note: The personal narrative essay, which may be used for college application, will be addressed with Journalism students who are seniors with no other first semester English course.

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- copy, edit; revise content, using editing symbols.
- demonstrate an understanding of active and passive voice and when to use them.
- effectively use active voice in lead writing.
- appropriately use attribution.
- demonstrate an understanding of AP Style.
- eliminate wordiness and redundancy in journalistic writing.
- demonstrate an understanding of pronoun use (eliminate unclear pronoun references; subject/object).
- demonstrate an understanding of plurals and possessives in the journalistic writing style.
- eliminate ambiguous sentences.
- effectively apply AP Style in written news article.
- avoid the use of first and second person narration in writing hard news stories.
- demonstrate an understanding of word choice: vague words, precision/connotation, objective/subjective word choices.
- discern relevant information from sources.
- accurately record and transcribe information from a source.
- rephrase information while still maintaining accurate facts.
- correctly cite sources in a news article.
- effectively use punctuation to enhance the meaning of a news article (commas, semi-colons, colons, dashes, hyphens).
- outline essential elements for a feature article.
- use transitions effectively (words and phrases).
- follow AP Style guidelines, specifically for numbers, statistics and figures.

State of Connecticut English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Responding - Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.

Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.

Students will distinguish between fact and opinion.

Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral and visual texts.

Students will persuade listeners about understandings and judgments of works read, written and viewed.

Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.

Students will identify the various conventions within a genre and apply this understanding to the evaluation of the text.

Students explore multiple responses to literature.

Students will develop a critical stance and cite evidence to support the stance.

Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.

Students will listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing in different modes.

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Students will evaluate the validity of primary and secondary sources of information to authenticate research.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.

Students will listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing in different modes.

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.

Students use knowledge of their language and culture to improve competency in English.

Students will recognize and understand variations between language patterns.

Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task.

Students will evaluate the impact of language as related to audience and purpose.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

Information and Technology Standards (to be added)

Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- What is the role of a journalist?
- How do ethics and law pertain to the job of a journalist?
- What is news?
- What are the elements of news stories?
- How do journalists organize news stories?
- What is an effective lead?
- What is AP Style and how does AP Style guide journalistic writing?
- How do journalists write basic news stories?
- How do journalists seek out sources for interviews?
- How do journalists properly conduct interviews?
- How do journalists use interviews to gain useful information?
- How do journalists synthesize and incorporate the information gained from interviews into an article?
- How is an editorial different from a basic hard news story?
- What is the importance of an editorial in the news community?
- What are the boundaries of editorial writing?
- What is a feature story?
- How is soft news different from hard news?
- What is the importance of a feature story?
- How is sports writing different from basic news writing?
- What are the different types of sports stories?

- How can sports stories be written as both hard and soft news?
- Why are consumer reviews important to the public?
- What are the journalist's responsibilities as a reviewer?
- How do journalists write a story from start to finish?

UNITS of STUDY

Unit 1: Ethics, Law, and the Role of a Journalist

English Language Arts Standards

Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.

Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task.

Students will evaluate the impact of language as related to audience and purpose.

Essential Question

- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- What is the role of a journalist?
- How do ethics and law pertain to the job of a journalist?

Core Topic

- Roles and Responsibilities of Journalists

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- define ethics as it relates to journalism.
- understand the law as it relates to journalism (libel, First Amendment, malice).
- understand responsibilities of journalistic writing, including the implications of stories and connotations of words.

Assessments

- Respond to examples of ethically questionable scenarios
- Assessment on the core understanding of law and ethics, as they pertain to the role of a journalist

Pacing

2 weeks

Unit 2: Hard and Soft News, the Elements of News, and Newsworthiness

English Language Arts Standards

Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.

Students will listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing in different modes.

Essential Question

- How do we write, speak and present effectively?

Focus Questions

- What is news?
- What are the elements of news stories?

Core Topic

- The News

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify the elements of news (newsworthiness)
- apply the elements of news to determine a topic's newsworthiness
- differentiate between hard and soft news

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- copy edit; revise content, using editing symbols
- demonstrate an understanding of active and passive voice and when to use them

Assessments

- Homework and quizzes, in which students use news elements to create new angles of news stories
- Identification and analysis of hard and soft news stories

Pacing

1 week

Unit 3: AP Style, Writing Leads, Organization of a News Article

English Language Arts Standards

Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.

Students will identify the various conventions within a genre and apply this understanding to the evaluation of the text.

Essential Question

- How does literature enrich our lives?

Focus Questions

- How do journalists organize news stories?
- What is an effective lead?
- What is AP Style and how does AP Style guide journalistic writing?

Core Topic

- News Articles

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- construct and deconstruct articles based on the inverted pyramid of news organization.
- understand the elements and importance of leads.
- write effective news leads.

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- effectively use active voice in lead writing.
- appropriately use attribution.
- demonstrate an understanding of AP Style
- eliminate wordiness and redundancy in journalistic writing

Assessments

- News article outline, applying knowledge of leads, news elements and newsworthiness
- Formal assessment(s) in which students identify and define different types of leads; identify the elements of newsworthy stories; justify the use of an inverted pyramid
- Formal assessment on general AP Style guidelines

Pacing

2 weeks

Unit 4: Writing Basic News Stories

English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Responding - Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.

Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.

Students will distinguish between fact and opinion.

Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.

Students will listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing in different modes.

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Question

- How do journalists write basic news stories?

Core Topic

- Writing the News

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- incorporate their knowledge of leads, newsworthiness, and organization to write an effective news article
- demonstrate an understanding of bias and balanced reporting
- effectively incorporate quality and relevant quotations into news articles

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of pronoun use (eliminate unclear pronoun references; subject/object)
- demonstrate an understanding of plurals and possessives in the journalistic writing style
- eliminate ambiguous sentences
- effectively apply AP Style in written news article
- avoid the use of first and second person narration in writing hard news stories

Assessments

- Peer editing
- News article, formal written piece which goes through all the steps of the writing process

Pacing

1-2 weeks

Unit 5: Getting and Writing Interviews

English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Responding - Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.

Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.

Students will distinguish between fact and opinion.

Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.

Students will listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing in different modes.

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- How do journalists seek out sources for interviews?
- How do journalists properly conduct interviews?
- How do journalists use interviews to gain useful information?

- How do journalists synthesize and incorporate the information gained from interviews into an article?

Core Topics

- Interviewing
- Integrating interviews into news stories

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify appropriate and quality sources to interview.
- conduct a professional and proper journalistic interview.
- synthesize the information gained from an interview and incorporate it as they write a news story.
- correctly attribute and incorporate quotations gained from sources.
- evaluate the validity of information sources.
- discern relevant information from sources.
- rephrase information while still maintaining accurate facts.

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of word choice: vague words, precision/connotation, objective/subjective word choices.
- accurately record and transcribe information from a source.
- correctly cite sources in a news article.

Assessments

- News article, incorporating information from interview
- Formal written assessment in which students respond to questions about the interview process

Pacing

2 weeks

Unit 6: Writing Editorials

English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Responding - Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.

Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.

Students will distinguish between fact and opinion.

Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.

Students use knowledge of their language and culture to improve competency in English.

Students will recognize and understand variations between language patterns.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- How is an editorial different from a basic hard news story?

- What is the importance of an editorial in the news community?
- What are the boundaries of editorial writing?

Core Topic

- Writing Editorials

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- differentiate between a basic news story and an editorial.
- find a topic of significance about which they will write an editorial.
- demonstrate the importance of incorporating facts and opposing viewpoints.
- employ techniques of persuasion, including writing style and tone.
- recognize the role of satire in an opinion section of a newspaper (irony, editorial cartoon).
- demonstrate an awareness of audience.
- employ techniques of persuasive writing.

Skill Objective

Students will:

- use dash and ellipsis.
- punctuate quotations within quotations, using single quotation marks.
- use adverbial connectives for emphasis and transition, punctuating them correctly with semi-colon and comma.
- revise for redundancy and wordiness.

Assessment

- Editorial which goes through the steps of the writing process

Pacing

2 weeks

Unit 7: Writing Feature Stories

English Language Arts Standards

Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.

Students will identify the various conventions within a genre and apply this understanding to the evaluation of the text.

Essential Question

- How does literature enrich our lives?

Focus Questions

- What is a feature story?
- How is soft news different from hard news?
- What is the importance of a feature story?

Core Topic

- Feature Stories

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- deconstruct a professional sample of a feature article.
- differentiate hard news from soft news.
- identify topics that are appropriate for a feature article.
- outline essential elements for a feature article.

Skill Objective

Students will:

- use transitions effectively (words and phrases).

Assessment

- Analytical essay which presents a critique of a feature article

Pacing

1 week

Unit 8: Writing Sports Stories

English Language Arts Standards

Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.

Students will identify the various conventions within a genre and apply this understanding to the evaluation of the text.

Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.

Students will listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing in different modes.

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

Essential Questions

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- How is sports writing different from basic news writing?
- What are the different types of sports stories?
- How can sports stories be written as both hard and soft news?

Core Topic

- Sports Stories

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify the various types of sports stories.
- incorporate prior skills, including: conducting interviews, incorporating facts and figures, rephrasing, identifying appropriate topics for interviews, remaining fair and balanced.
- effectively incorporate statistics into sports stories, to enhance the story's meaning.
- accurately incorporate statistics, following the AP Style guidelines.
- make appropriate and interesting topic choices.
- employ the use of angles, as a means of enhancing the reader's interest.
- demonstrate an awareness of audience.

Skill Objective

Students will:

- follow AP Style guidelines, specifically for numbers, statistics and figures.

Assessments

- Two different types of sports stories
- Formal assessment on the basic understanding of sports writing

Pacing

3 weeks

Unit 9: Writing Reviews

English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Responding - Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.

Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.

Students will distinguish between fact and opinion.

Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral and visual texts.

Students will persuade listeners about understandings and judgments of works read, written and viewed.

Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students explore multiple responses to literature.

Students will develop a critical stance and cite evidence to support the stance.

Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Students will evaluate the validity of primary and secondary sources of information to authenticate research.

Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?

Focus Questions

- Why are consumer reviews important to the public?
- What are the journalist's responsibilities as a reviewer?

Core Topic

- Consumer Reviews

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- understand the purpose of a consumer review
- choose an appropriate topic for a consumer review
- employ elements of feature and editorial writing in an effective editorial critique
- show awareness of audience, through tone, choice of topic and writing style

Assessment

- Written consumer review

Pacing

1 week

Unit 10: Final Project

English Language Arts Standards

Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Essential Question

- How do we write, speak, and present effectively?

Focus Question

- How do journalists write a story from start to finish?

Core Topic

- Proofreading for Publication

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- incorporate all skills learned in the semester to create a story suitable for publication in the school newspaper.
- revise story for publication.

Assessment

- News story

Pacing

1 week