

Curriculum Development  
In the Fairfield Public Schools

**FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

**GRADE 8 ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE ARTS EXTENDED  
WORKSHOP**

Board of Education Approved 01/22/2008

# **GRADE 8 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS EXTENDED WORKSHOP**

## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this course is to develop students as readers, writers, and thinkers. The focus of this course is to invite students to move from being concrete thinkers to being more philosophical abstract thinkers by considering themes or ideas in literary works and to effectively communicate their thinking about those themes or ideas as they write.

## **Course Description**

This course guides students to becoming more skilled and sophisticated writers and readers. The course emphasizes the interaction of reading and writing, with reading being a strategy for writing and writing being a strategy for becoming more reflective readers. As readers, students are challenged to understand what they read on an inferential and analytical level. They identify relationships between the literature and their own lives and between literature and the world around them as they consider the themes which they discover in the texts. They also use writing to explore those ideas. Frequent writing assignments, small-group and whole class discussions, and sharing their writing will help students to question, respond to one another's ideas, and stretch their own thinking and writing. Also, as writers, students will develop a bank of ideas from the literature they read and will improve their own writing by considering the choices that published writers make and incorporating those effective ways of expressing ideas into their own writing.

## **Course Goals**

Students will learn to:

- interpret literature by recognizing that theme is a statement or question about the human experience that the reader creates while interacting with a text.
- interpret and evaluate themes in a wide variety of literary texts.
- use the writing process as a tool for developing and expressing ideas in a variety of forms.
- read and respond to texts individually and with others to deepen their understanding of literature and their lives.
- support their responses to literature with textual evidence.
- participate in their independent reading and use that experience to further their interpretation skills.
- improve focus and clarity in their writing.
- explore ideas, using textual evidence, connections to the world and to other texts.
- expand their reading and writing repertoire by broadening their interest in a variety of genres.
- collaborate to appreciate multiple perspectives and use those perspectives to shape an individual interpretation.
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own literacy in order to keep challenging themselves.

## **Course Objectives**

Students will be able to:

### Reading

- identify how understanding plot and character lead to theme.
- distinguish between theme and plot.
- distinguish between theme and moral.
- focus their personal responses to literature on exploring larger ideas or themes
- provide textual evidence for themes.
- distinguish between author and narrator.
- distinguish between summarizing plot and developing insight.
- independently apply active reading strategies of questioning, visualizing, connecting, making predictions, and drawing inferences in order to develop insights, using a variety of texts.
- articulate their insights through class discussions.
- summarize and respond to the ideas of peers in class discussions.
- write in response to various texts in order to develop their insights.
- choose appropriate reading selections and reflect on their choices.
- contribute to a running list of common themes collected by the class based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- bring in texts that connect to themes being discussed in class (e.g. from The New York Times).
- develop language/vocabulary for analyzing literature, which can be used in literary discussions.
- recognize multiple themes in a piece as they engage in class discussions with other readers.
- analyze which part of the text they think is most important in terms of the theme and explain why
- make personal connections to enhance their understanding of themes.
- articulate how figurative language, word choice, imagery and symbolism create meaning.
- make purposeful choices regarding craft as they write their own poetry, short stories, and memoirs.
- evaluate what makes a text engaging and appealing to a reader and make reading selections accordingly.
- examine differences and similarities between personal taste and critically recognized standards of literary quality.
- sustain large and small group discussions by incorporating meaningful text support, asking multi-layered questions, and expanding their own thinking based on the ideas of others.
- contribute to a running list of common themes collected by the class based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- bring in texts that connect to themes being discussed in class (e.g. from The New York Times).
- understand and analyze non-fiction in contemporary journalistic essays.

- research to find examples of effective non-fiction writing in contemporary periodicals.
- recognize author’s purpose and delineate elements of effective non-fiction writing (organization, title, elaboration, tone).
- distinguish between topic and theme in non-fiction texts.
- create theme statements about non-fiction articles and/or documents
- choose personally challenging reading selections and reflect on those choices.
- reflect on literacy goals and provide evidence of progress.
- contribute to a running list of common themes collected by the class based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- bring in texts that connect to themes being discussed in class (e.g. from The New York Times).
- make connections independently to enhance their understanding of multiple themes in one text and common themes across texts.
- incorporate and cite relevant text evidence to support interpretations of themes across texts.
- choose personally challenging reading selections and reflect on those choices.
- apply knowledge of literary terms to independent reading to deepen their insight.
- deepen thinking about theme by writing an initial response, participating in class discussions, and then revising their thinking to write a finalized response.
- move beyond the texts to evaluate the idea behind the theme common to the texts (e.g. Theme might state or question idea about parent/ adolescent child conflicts and students might then evaluate the idea of independence).
- contribute to a running list of common themes collected by the class based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- bring in texts that connect to themes being discussed in class (e.g. from The New York Times).
- analyze independently a theme common to more than one text.
- provide textual evidence to support interpretations of themes in their independent reading.
- choose personally challenging independent reading selections and reflect upon these choices.
- create personal meaning from their independent reading.
- contribute to a running list of common themes collected by the class based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- bring in texts that connect to themes being discussed in class (e.g. from The New York Times).

#### Writing

- generate ideas as they collect, select, and explore topics for writing.
- organize their ideas into essays which avoid repetition of ideas and demonstrate effective sequencing of ideas, coherence, and good transitions from paragraph to paragraph.
- support their thinking with appropriate textual evidence.
- reflect upon their writing and create goals for writing and reading in order to foster metacognition.

- use figurative language, effective word choice, imagery, and symbolism in their own writing.
- use relevant textual evidence as they develop and support an interpretation in writing.
- demonstrate skills in writing memoirs.
  - focus on moment and effectively communicate the “so what” of the experience
  - create effective imagery and vibrant descriptions
  - use artful sentence structures
  - create powerful symbols
  - establish a strong personal voice
  - organize ideas for impact on audience
  - choose just the right word in appropriate places in the piece
  - conclude in an effective manner
- demonstrate skills in writing poetry.
  - create effective similes and/or metaphors and/or personification
  - create effective imagery and vibrant descriptions
  - create powerful symbols
  - choose just the right word to communicate meaning
  - maintain focus throughout the poem
  - use effective form (stanzas, line breaks, rhyme)
- demonstrate skills in writing short stories.
  - establish a consistent point of view
  - create a plot with a conflict and resolution of the conflict
  - use effective character development (what character thinks, says, and does; what other characters say about that main character; how the characters interact with one another)
  - use dialogue effectively
  - use effective imagery and vibrant descriptions
  - create effective similes, metaphors, and/or personification
  - create powerful symbols
  - choose just the right word to communicate meaning
- draw on background knowledge to explore/support a topic in persuasive writing.
- write provocative leads which acknowledge the situation which necessitates action and the persuasive argument.
- develop the skill for choosing the approach for a persuasive essay (examples, cause and effect, anecdote, answering a rhetorical question), based on the question or prompt.
- establish a position between the evidence and the position being advocated
- maintain focus in their writing.
- use a consistent, personal voice in their writing.
- avoid repetition of the points of their argument.
- acknowledge and discount an opposing argument to theirs.

- write with an awareness of audience by providing all of the details that the audience needs to know.
- apply writing skills developed through analysis of non-fiction mentor texts. (i.e.: leads, relevant evidence, variety of elaboration, transitions, organization, conclusions)
- write a conclusion which does not repeat and also brings advocacy to a new level.
- use three types of persuasive appeals (ethos, pathos and logos) in their own writing.
- research information from multiple sources to deepen understanding of topic.
- distinguish between writing opinions and persuading their audience
- determine what information is needed to persuade an audience.
- determine what information needs to be cited and make the citations.
- evaluate contents of literacy folder to determine portfolio entries.
- create a portfolio that demonstrates progress towards literacy goals and evidence of growth.
- articulate their evolution as writers and readers by sharing their portfolio with parent/guardian.

#### Human Mind

- reflect on literacy goals and provide evidence of progress.
- reflect on strategies to revise goals.
- continue to reflect on progress toward literacy goals.

#### Collaborating

- demonstrate active listening by responding to the ideas of others in discussions
- ask open-ended questions and respond to the open-ended questions of others in discussions.
- offer their personal responses and connections to small and large group discussions and discuss the responses and connections of others.
- respond to and recognize the validity of others' ideas through discussion.
- use relevant text references to support interpretations in discussions.
- sustain large and small group discussions by incorporating meaningful text support, asking multi-layered questions, and expanding their own thinking based on the ideas of others.
- evaluate their position on a topic as a result of large and small group collaboration.
- build on the connections between and among texts made by others in large and small group discussions in order to shape their own thinking.
- discuss the validity of others' interpretations when supported by textual evidence.

#### **Skill Objectives**

Students should come to 8<sup>th</sup> grade with an understanding of the parts of speech and the basic structure of a sentence, including the difference between a complete sentence, a sentence fragment, and a run-on sentence.

Students will:

- avoid email slang, such as 4/for, cuz/because, i/I, u/you.

- become familiar with the Grade 8 Revision List and identify individual and collective gaps in knowledge and practice.
- review gaps through mini-lessons or individual conferences.
- demonstrate proficiency on concepts addressed through mini-lessons and/or teacher conferences.
- become familiar with the structure of complex sentences by identifying clauses as having a subject, a verb, and an introductory word (relative pronoun or subordinate conjunction), doing the work of an adjective or adverb, and not being able to “stand alone”.
- use complex sentences in their own writing.
- correctly punctuate introductory phrases and clauses.
- distinguish between and correctly use in their own writing: who’s/whose, sight/cite/site, and though/thorough.
- increase sentence variety, using simple, compound, and complex sentences.
- revise convoluted sentence structure. increase sentence variety, using simple, compound, and complex sentences.
- revise convoluted sentence structure.
- avoid vague words or over-generalizations.
- trim the fat, eliminating superfluous language or “fluff”.
- write a self-reflective piece in which they analyze the ways in which they use language effectively, appropriately, and conventionally and the ways in which they have to grow in their effective, appropriate, and conventional use of language.

### **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 discuss and respond to texts by making text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections

Students will identify and discuss the underlying theme or main idea in texts,

Students will choose a variety of genres to read for personal enjoyment.

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

Students will respond to the ideas of others and recognize the validity of differing views.

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

**Students will recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.**

Students will identify and analyze the differences between the structures of fiction and nonfiction.

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

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

Students will write to delight in the imagination.

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

Students will apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral, or visual piece.

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

*Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of standard English in oral, written and visual 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.

**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 theme?
- How do key elements in literature develop theme?
- How do I choose reading material that interests me?
- How does active reading improve reading comprehension?
- What is the writing process and how can participating in it improve my writing/
- How do I improve the fluency and structure in my writing?
- How does my seventh grade portfolio suggest literacy goals for eighth grade?
- How can writing help me form new ideas?
- How will making connections help me interpret theme?
- What elements of writer's craft do I recognize as I read and utilize as I write?
- How do I support my interpretations of literature?
- How do I utilize effective reading strategies in order to understand and interpret what I read?
- How can discussion and questioning help me deepen my understanding of literature?
- How does my work this year reflect my growth as a reader and writer?

## UNITS of STUDY

### Unit 1: Introduction – Groundwork

#### 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 identify and discuss the underlying theme or main idea in texts,

Students will choose a variety of genres to read for personal enjoyment.

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

Students will respond to the ideas of others and recognize the validity of differing views.

*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 appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository, or poetic writing.

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

Students will apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral, or visual piece.

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

#### Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How do we write, speak, and present effectively?

#### Focus Questions

- What is theme?
- How do plot and character develop theme in literature?
- How does my seventh grade portfolio suggest literacy goals for eighth grade?

- How can writing help me form new ideas?
- How can I express myself effectively in writing by focusing my thinking and organizing my ideas?

### **Core Topics**

- Identifying themes
- Coherence and succinctness in writing
- Active listening
- Literacy goals

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- identify how understanding plot and character lead to theme.
- distinguish between theme and plot.
- distinguish between theme and moral.
- focus their personal responses to literature on exploring larger ideas or themes
- provide textual evidence for themes.
- distinguish between author and narrator.
- distinguish between summarizing plot and developing insight.
- independently apply active reading strategies of questioning, visualizing, connecting, making predictions, and drawing inferences in order to develop insights, using a variety of texts.
- articulate their insights through class discussions.
- summarize and respond to the ideas of peers in class discussions.
- write in response to various texts in order to develop their insights.
- choose appropriate reading selections and reflect on their choices.
- generate ideas as they collect, select, and explore topics for writing.
- organize their ideas into essays which avoid repetition of ideas and demonstrate effective sequencing of ideas, coherence, and good transitions from paragraph to paragraph.
- support their thinking with appropriate textual evidence.
- reflect upon their writing and create goals for writing and reading in order to foster metacognition.
- demonstrate active listening by responding to the ideas of others in discussions
- ask open-ended questions and respond to the open-ended questions of others in discussions.
- offer their personal responses and connections to small and large group discussions and discuss the responses and connections of others.
- contribute to a running list of common themes collected by the class based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- bring in texts that connect to themes being discussed in class (e.g. from The New York Times).
- develop language/vocabulary for analyzing literature, which can be used in literary discussions.

## **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- avoid email slang, such as 4/for, cuz/because, i/I, u/you.
- become familiar with the Grade 8 Revision List and identify individual and collective gaps in knowledge and practice.
- review gaps through mini-lessons or individual conferences.
- demonstrate proficiency on concepts addressed through mini-lessons and/or teacher conferences.

## **Assessments**

- Summer reading assignment
- District-wide assessment of response to literature
- \* Formal essay in which students support an idea with textual evidence and revise for avoiding unnecessary repetition, effective sequencing, maintaining focus and coherence, and using effective transitions which bring one idea into relationship with the following idea
- Student reflections (written and oral) on reading, writing and discussing that demonstrate active reading strategies and metacognition.
- A variety of informal writing-to-learn opportunities throughout the unit, such as entries to generate ideas/topics, post-its, quick-writes, response to literature, journal/notebook entries
- \*Formal genre piece- either poetry, memoir, or short story
- \* District- wide assessment of persuasive writing, revising for focused areas (avoiding repetition of ideas, effective sequencing of ideas, maintaining focus and coherence, and using effective transitions which bring one idea into relationship with the following idea)
- Revised reader-response

## **Pacing**

6-8 weeks

## **Unit 2: Responding to Literature and Examining Craft**

### **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 discuss and respond to texts by making text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world-connections.

Students will identify and discuss the underlying theme or main idea in texts,

Students will choose a variety of genres to read for personal enjoyment.

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

Students will respond to the ideas of others and recognize the validity of differing views.

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

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

Students will write to delight in the imagination.

**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, written and visual 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 will making connections help me interpret theme?
- What elements of writer’s craft do I recognize as I read and utilize as I write poetry, short stories, and memoirs?
- How do I support my interpretations of literature?
- How will discussions with others broaden my thinking?
- Are there difference between great literature and literature that I like? If so, what are those differences?

### **Core Topics**

- Continuing to identify and interpret theme
- Making personal connections related to themes
- Using relevant textual evidence in writing to support interpretations, including theme
- Identifying, understanding, and applying writer’s craft in three genres (poetry, short, story, and memoir).
- Reading and writing in a variety of genres (memoir, poetry, short story)
- Participating in discussions to broaden and deepen thinking

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- recognize multiple themes in a piece as they engage in class discussions with other readers.
- analyze which part of the text they think is most important in terms of the theme and explain why
- respond to and recognize the validity of others’ ideas through discussion.
- make personal connections to enhance their understanding of themes.
- articulate how figurative language, word choice, imagery and symbolism create meaning.
- use figurative language, effective word choice, imagery, and symbolism in their own writing.
- make purposeful choices regarding craft as they write their own poetry, short stories, and memoirs.
- evaluate what makes a text engaging and appealing to a reader and make reading selections accordingly.
- examine differences and similarities between personal taste and critically recognized standards of literary quality.

- use relevant text references to support interpretations in discussions.
- use relevant textual evidence as they develop and support an interpretation in writing.
- sustain large and small group discussions by incorporating meaningful text support, asking multi-layered questions, and expanding their own thinking based on the ideas of others.
- contribute to a running list of common themes collected by the class based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- bring in texts that connect to themes being discussed in class (e.g. from The New York Times).
- reflect on literacy goals and provide evidence of progress.
- demonstrate skills in writing memoirs.
  - focus on moment and effectively communicate the “so what” of the experience
  - create effective imagery and vibrant descriptions
  - use artful sentence structures
  - create powerful symbols
  - establish a strong personal voice
  - organize ideas for impact on audience
  - choose just the right word in appropriate places in the piece
  - conclude in an effective manner
- demonstrate skills in writing poetry.
  - create effective similes and/or metaphors and/or personification
  - create effective imagery and vibrant descriptions
  - create powerful symbols
  - choose just the right word to communicate meaning
  - maintain focus throughout the poem
  - use effective form (stanzas, line breaks, rhyme)
- demonstrate skills in writing short stories.
  - establish a consistent point of view
  - create a plot with a conflict and resolution of the conflict
  - use effective character development (what character thinks, says, and does; what other characters say about that main character; how the characters interact with one another)
  - use dialogue effectively
  - use effective imagery and vibrant descriptions
  - create effective similes, metaphors, and/or personification
  - create powerful symbols
  - choose just the right word to communicate meaning

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- become familiar with the structure of complex sentences by identifying clauses as having a subject, a verb, and an introductory word (relative pronoun or

subordinate conjunction), doing the work of an adjective or adverb, and not being able to “stand alone”.

- use complex sentences in their own writing.
- correctly punctuate introductory phrases and clauses.
- distinguish between and correctly use in their own writing: who’s/whose, sight/cite/site, and though/thorough.

### **Assessments**

- \* Thesis-based essay in which students identify a theme that is common to more than one text and provide textual evidence for support or identify more than one theme in a text and support one of the themes as the one of most importance..
- \*One student-chosen genre piece ( memoir, poetry or short story), which is revised for voice, word choice, showing rather than telling, figurative language, imagery, coherence, and lack of unnecessary repetition and vague language
- District persuasive prompt, which is revised for voice, word choice, showing rather than telling, figurative language, imagery, coherence and lack of unnecessary repetition and vague language
- Reading assessments (oral and written) that focus on using relevant text support
- Student written reflections on reading and writing that demonstrate thinking about their learning.

### **Pacing**

10 weeks



### **Unit 3: Reading Non-Fiction and Writing in the Persuasive Mode**

#### **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 identify and discuss the underlying theme or main idea in texts,

*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 and analyze the differences between the structures of fiction and nonfiction.

*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 appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository, or poetic writing.

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

Students will apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral, or visual piece.

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

*Applying English Language Conventions – Students apply the conventions of standard English in oral, written and visual communication.*

**Students will 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.

### **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**

- How do I adjust my reading strategies to understand what I read?
- How can I be a thoughtful reader of non-fiction?
- How do I write an effective persuasive essay?
- How do I transfer my reading and writing strategies to a testing situation?
- How do I choose and apply non-fiction reading strategies in a test-taking genre?

### **Core Topics**

- Reading non-fiction
- Writing persuasively
- Transferring non-fiction strategies to testing situations

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- understand and analyze non-fiction in contemporary journalistic essays.
- research to find examples of effective non-fiction writing in contemporary periodicals.
- recognize author's purpose and delineate elements of effective non-fiction writing (organization, title, elaboration, tone).
- distinguish between topic and theme in non-fiction texts.
- create theme statements about non-fiction articles and/or documents
- draw on background knowledge to explore/support a topic in persuasive writing.
- write provocative leads which acknowledge the situation which necessitates action and the persuasive argument.
- develop the skill for choosing the approach for a persuasive essay (examples, cause and effect, anecdote, answering a rhetorical question), based on the question or prompt.
- establish a position between the evidence and the position being advocated
- maintain focus in their writing.
- use a consistent, personal voice in their writing.
- avoid repetition of the points of their argument.
- acknowledge and discount an opposing argument to theirs.
- write with an awareness of audience by providing all of the details that the audience needs to know.

- apply writing skills developed through analysis of non-fiction mentor texts. (i.e.: leads, relevant evidence, variety of elaboration, transitions, organization, conclusions)
- write a conclusion which does not repeat and also brings advocacy to a new level.
- use three types of persuasive appeals (ethos, pathos and logos) in their own writing.
- evaluate their position on a topic as a result of large and small group collaboration.
- research information from multiple sources to deepen understanding of topic.
- distinguish between writing opinions and persuading their audience
- determine what information is needed to persuade an audience.
- determine what information needs to be cited and make the citations.
- reflect on strategies to revise goals.
- choose personally challenging reading selections and reflect on those choices.
- reflect on literacy goals and provide evidence of progress.
- contribute to a running list of common themes collected by the class based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- bring in texts that connect to themes being discussed in class (e.g. from The New York Times).

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- increase sentence variety, using simple, compound, and complex sentences.
- revise convoluted sentence structure. increase sentence variety, using simple, compound, and complex sentences.
- revise convoluted sentence structure.

### **Assessments**

- \*District persuasive prompt, which is revised for method of organization, maintaining a focus, personal voice, acknowledging a counter argument and discounting it, awareness of audience, transitions, and a conclusion which brings advocacy to a new level
- Written assessments focusing on theme in non-fiction
- \*One formal persuasive writing piece which is revised for method of organization, maintaining a focus, personal voice, acknowledging a counter argument and discounting it, awareness of audience, transitions, and a conclusion which brings advocacy to a new level, word choice (sentence variety, and lack of repetition)
- Mid-year reflection on literacy goals

### **Pacing**

8 weeks

## Unit 4: Making Thematic Connections Across Texts

### 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 discuss and respond to texts by making text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections.

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

Students will respond to others and recognize the validity of differing views.

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

**Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.**

Students will compare/contrast and evaluate ideas, themes, and/or issues across classical and contemporary texts.

### 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

- How can discussion and questioning help me deepen my understanding of themes in literature?
- How can I make thematic connections across texts?

### Core Topics

- Making thematic connections across texts
- Connecting themes with human experience

### Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- make connections independently to enhance their understanding of multiple themes in one text and common themes across texts.

- incorporate and cite relevant text evidence to support interpretations of themes across texts.
- choose personally challenging reading selections and reflect on those choices.
- apply knowledge of literary terms to independent reading to deepen their insight.
- build on the connections between and among texts made by others in large and small group discussions in order to shape their own thinking.
- deepen thinking about theme by writing an initial response, participating in class discussions, and then revising their thinking to write a finalized response.
- move beyond the texts to evaluate the idea behind the theme common to the texts (e.g. Theme might state or question idea about parent/ adolescent child conflicts and students might then evaluate the idea of independence).
- continue to reflect on progress toward literacy goals.
- discuss the validity of others' interpretations when supported by textual evidence.
- contribute to a running list of common themes collected by the class based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- bring in texts that connect to themes being discussed in class (e.g. from The New York Times).

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- avoid vague words or over-generalizations.
- trim the fat, eliminating superfluous language or “fluff”.

### **Assessments**

- \*Essay in which students give an opinion of a theme from a text or texts they have read based on their own experience
- \*Genre piece of either poetry, memoir, or short story
- Assessment of student's ability to revise their interpretations, based on discussions. Initial response revised after class discussion
- Student reflections about their interpretation of themes
- Student reflections on reading and writing

### **Pacing**

4-6 weeks

## Unit 5: Reflecting and Self Evaluating

### 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 discuss and respond to texts by making text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections

*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 appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository, or poetic writing.

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

Students will apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral, or visual piece.

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

*Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of standard English in oral, written and visual 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

- What do my reading and writing experiences this year tell me about literature's universal themes and the human experience?

- How does my work this year reflect my growth as a reader and writer?

### **Core Topics**

- Production of final literacy portfolio
- Organizing a literacy portfolio around a growth metaphor

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- evaluate contents of literacy folder to determine portfolio entries.
- create a portfolio that demonstrates progress towards literacy goals and evidence of growth.
- articulate their evolution as writers and readers by sharing their portfolio with parent/guardian.
- analyze independently a theme common to more than one text.
- provide textual evidence to support interpretations of themes in their independent reading.
- choose personally challenging independent reading selections and reflect upon these choices.
- create personal meaning from their independent reading.
- contribute to a running list of common themes collected by the class based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- bring in texts that connect to themes being discussed in class (e.g. from The New York Times).

### **Skill Objective**

Students will:

- write a self-reflective piece in which they analyze the ways in which they use language effectively, appropriately, and conventionally and the ways in which they have to grow in their effective, appropriate, and conventional use of language.

### **Assessments**

- District response to literature prompt
- Personal narrative about independent reading, based on frequent reflection and insight about themselves as readers and evaluation of big ideas in texts
- Final Literacy Portfolio – reflections and evaluation\*

\*See Portfolio Implementation Guide

### **Pacing**

4 weeks

**Suggested Texts (for Literature circles or whole class discussion)**

**Fiction/Novels**

*Kira-Kira*  
*Nightjohn*  
*Tunes for Bears*  
*Travel Team*  
*Johnny Tremain*  
*April Morning*  
*Body of Christopher Creed*  
*Outsiders*  
*Milkweed*  
*The Hobbit*  
*Watsons Go To Birmingham*  
*Daniel's Story*  
*Friedrich*  
*Speak*  
*Whirligig*  
*A Soldier's Heart*  
*Out of the Dust*  
*True Believer*  
*Night*  
*Fahrenheit 451*

**Plays**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
*The Wave*  
*My Heart in a Suitcase*

**Short Stories**

*Ashes*  
*Hunger*  
*Antaeus*  
*Sucker*  
*The Party*  
*The Moustache*  
*An Occurrence at Owl Creek*  
*What Do Fish Have to Do With Anything?*  
*Creak*  
*Selected Stories from Junior Great Books*  
*Selected from Read Magazine*  
*The New Kid*  
*On the Edge*  
*Stories from the Edge*  
*No Easy Answers*  
*To Build a Fire*



*The Griffin and The Minor Cannon*

**Memoir**

*Night*

*Red Scarf Girl*

*Diary of a Young Girl*

*Hitting Pay Dirt*

*Shame*

*Angela's Ashes (excerpts)*

*Between a Rock and a Hard Place*

*Summer Beyond Wish*

Selections from *Dream Me Home Safely*

*8 Quick Takes on the Personal*

*An October Surprise Worth Waiting For*

*Walk with Me*

*One Liar's Beginnings*

*Shame*

Excerpts from Stephen King's *On Writing*

**Non-fiction**

Student selected articles from magazines and newspapers (*New York Times, Sports Illustrated, Newsweek, Time, Vogue*) persuasive

*Into Thin Air*

*Heart of the Sea*

*Bring Down the House*

*The Boy's War*

Selections from *Voices from the Holocaust*

**Poetry**

Selected Poems (e.g. "The Secret", "Curiosity", "Valentine for Ernest Mann", "Marked", "The Little Boy", "The Forecast")

*Poetry 180*

*Sailing Around the World*

*Naming the World*

*Quickwrites*