

Curriculum Development  
In the Fairfield Public Schools

**FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

**GRADE 8 ENGLISH**  
**LANGUAGE ARTS WORKSHOP**

Board of Education Approved 05/27/2007

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 80**

### **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.

The course is divided into four units, which provide a developmental sequence for learning strategies and for growing and developing as readers, writers, and thinkers. At the beginning of the year, students set their own literacy goals. They reflect honestly on these goals throughout each unit to provide evidence of their growth towards those goals. In June, students create final literacy portfolios to showcase their growth as readers and writers. The self-selected work samples and reflections in these portfolios serve as a key evaluative tool for teacher, student, and parent.

### **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 literature.
- 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.
- make choices in their reading and writing which help them to become more independent and purposeful learners.
- enjoy their independent reading and use that experience to further their interpretation skills.
- recognize the impact reading and writing have on each another.

- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own literacy and present this understanding to others.

### **Course Objectives**

Students will be able to:

#### Reading

- identify how point of view communicates theme.
- identify how figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification) communicate theme.
- identify how understanding plot and character lead to theme.
- identify how imagery in the story communicate theme.
- distinguish between theme and plot.
- identify textual evidence for themes.
- explain which characters in the story they would like to know and why.
- explain how someone that they know, read about, or viewed on film or in a TV show had the same kind of experience as a character in the story.
- distinguish between author and narrator.
- distinguish between summarizing plot and developing insight.
- practice active reading strategies of questioning, visualizing, connecting, making predictions, and drawing inferences in order to develop insights, using shared texts.
- apply, independently, active reading strategies of questioning, visualizing, connecting, making predictions, and drawing inferences in order to develop insights, using a variety of texts.
- discuss what the story says about people in general.
- 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.
- make personal connections to enhance their understanding of themes.
- discuss what they find engaging and appealing in a text.
- determine the main idea in contemporary journalistic essays.
- make personal connections to non-fiction articles.
- research and find examples of effective non-fiction writing in contemporary periodicals.
- analyze non-fiction articles in order to ascertain author's purpose and to delineate elements of effective writing (organization, title, elaboration, tone).
- create theme statements about non-fiction articles and/or documents.
- analyze craft of non-fiction texts. (i.e.: leads, relevant evidence, variety of elaboration, transitions, organization, conclusions)
- recognize three types of persuasive appeals: ethos, pathos and logos.
- research information from multiple sources to deepen understanding of topic.
- make connections to enhance their understanding of multiple themes in one text and a common theme across multiple texts/genres.
- incorporate and cite relevant text evidence to support interpretations of themes.
- analyze a theme common to more than one text.
- continue to provide textual evidence to support interpretation of themes.

- create personal meaning from their independent reading.

### Writing

- state a theme in an introduction that is a strong lead.
- generate ideas as they collect, select, and explore topics for writing.
- organize their ideas, using well-developed paragraphs.
- use relevant textual references and quotes to support a theme.
- conclude an essay by bringing the ideas to a new level.
- 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

OR

- 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)

OR

- 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
- apply the elements of that specific genre in their own writing.
- use relevant textual evidence in order to develop and support an interpretation in writing.
- present a strong and consistent voice in their writing.
- choose sophisticated and appropriate words in their writing.
- practice showing rather than telling in their writing.
- use similes and metaphors in their writing.
- create strong images in their writing.
- draw on background knowledge to support/explore a topic in persuasive writing.
- use test taking strategies for writing in the persuasive mode.

- distinguish between writing opinions and persuading your audience.
- determine what information needs to be cited and make the citations.
- determine what information is needed to support their opinion.
- acknowledge the situation which necessitates an action when persuading an audience.
- choose a method of organization which is best suited for particular questions and prompts.
- maintain focus in their writing.
- avoid repetition of ideas in their writing.
- use a consistent and personal voice in their writing.
- write with an awareness of audience by providing all of the details that the audience needs to know.
- establish a connection between the evidence and the position that is being advocated.
- use transitions to link ideas and to connect one idea to the next.
- organize ideas into an effective essay which includes an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- anticipate the counterargument of the audience and address that counterargument.
- write conclusion which does not repeat and also brings the advocacy to a new level.
- evaluate contents of literacy folder to determine portfolio entries.
- create a portfolio that demonstrates progress towards literacy goals and evidence of growth.
- articulate their growth as readers and writers by sharing their portfolio with parents/guardians.

#### Habits of Mind

- reflect upon their writing and create goals for writing and reading.
- reflect on literacy goals and provide evidence of progress.
- continue to reflect on progress toward literacy goals.

#### Collaborating

- articulate their insights through class discussions.
- demonstrate active listening by responding to the ideas of others in discussions.
- recognize multiple themes in a piece through class discussions.
- respond to and recognize the validity of others' ideas through discussion.
- use relevant text references to support interpretations in discussions.
- evaluate their position on a topic as a result of large and small group collaboration.
- build on the connections made by others in large and small group discussions in order to reshape their own thinking.

#### **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.
- test for grammar usage in Editing and Revising format.
- 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.

### **English 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 use appropriate strategies before, during and after reading in order to construct meaning.**

Students will monitor comprehension and apply the appropriate strategies when understanding breaks down

**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 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 use appropriate strategies before, during and after reading in order to construct meaning.**

Students will monitor comprehension and apply the appropriate strategies when understanding breaks down

**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 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 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?

### **Core Topics**

- Identifying Themes
- Active Reading Strategies
- Writing Process Skills
- Literacy Goals

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- identify how point of view communicates theme.
- identify how figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification) communicate theme.
- identify how understanding plot and character lead to theme.
- identify how imagery in the story communicate theme.
- distinguish between theme and plot.
- identify textual evidence for themes.
- explain which characters in the story they would like to know and why.
- explain how someone that they know, read about, or viewed on film or in a TV show had the same kind of experience as a character in the story.
- distinguish between author and narrator.
- distinguish between summarizing plot and developing insight.
- practice active reading strategies of questioning, visualizing, connecting, making predictions, and drawing inferences in order to develop insights, using shared texts.
- apply, independently, active reading strategies of questioning, visualizing, connecting, making predictions, and drawing inferences in order to develop insights, using a variety of texts.
- discuss what the story says about people in general.
- articulate their insights through class discussions.
- write in response to various texts in order to develop their insights.
- choose appropriate reading selections and reflect on their choices.
- state a theme in an introduction that is a strong lead.
- generate ideas as they collect, select, and explore topics for writing.
- organize their ideas, using well-developed paragraphs.
- use relevant textual references and quotes to support a theme.
- reflect upon their writing and create goals for writing and reading.
- demonstrate active listening by responding to the ideas of others in discussions.
- contribute to a running list of common themes, collected by the class, based on texts read in class and texts read independently.

- conclude an essay by bringing the ideas to a new level.
- 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

OR

- 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)

OR

- 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:

- 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 response to literature prompt to assess insight into literature
- \* Essay in which students state a theme and support it with textual evidence.
- Student reflections (written and oral) on reading, writing and discussing that demonstrate their use of active reading strategies

- A variety of informal writing opportunities throughout the unit, such as entries to generate ideas/topics, post-its, quick-writes, response to literature, journal/notebook entries
- \* District persuasive writing assessment with revision for focused areas (state a main idea and support with evidence)

\* Writing will go through the steps of the writing process so that writing improvement can be evident through revision

**Pacing**

8 weeks

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

### **English 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?
- How do I support my interpretations of literature?
- How do I utilize effective reading strategies to understand what I read?

### **Core Topics**

- Continuing to identify and interpret theme
- Making thematic connections
- Using relevant textual evidence in writing to support interpretations, including theme
- Identifying, understanding and applying writer’s craft
- Reading and writing in a variety of genres (memoir, poetry, short story)

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- recognize multiple themes in a piece through class discussions.
- respond to and recognize the validity of others’ ideas through discussion.
- make personal connections to enhance their understanding of themes.
- apply the elements of that specific genre in their own writing.
- discuss what they find engaging and appealing in a text.
- use relevant text references to support interpretations in discussions.
- use relevant textual evidence in order to develop and support an interpretation in writing.
- choose appropriate reading selections and reflect on their choices.
- reflect on literacy goals and provide evidence of progress.
- present a strong and consistent voice in their writing.
- choose sophisticated and appropriate words in their writing.
- practice showing rather than telling in their writing.
- use similes and metaphors in their writing.
- create strong images in their writing.
- contribute to a running list of common themes, collected by the class, based on texts read in class and texts read independently.

### **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**

- \* Reader response piece
- \* Genre piece ( memoir, poetry, or short story) with an emphasis voice, word choice, showing rather than telling, figurative language, imagery
- Reading assessments (oral and written) that focus on using relevant text support.
- Student reflections on reading and writing
- Participation in discussion
- \*Timed persuasive writing with revisions for focused areas (voice, word choice, showing rather than telling, figurative language, imagery)

\* Writing will go through the steps of the writing process so that writing improvement can be evident through revision

### **Pacing**

10 weeks

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

#### **English 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.

*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 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 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:

- determine the main idea in contemporary journalistic essays.
- make personal connections to non-fiction articles.
- research and find examples of effective non-fiction writing in contemporary periodicals.
- analyze non-fiction articles in order to ascertain author's purpose and to delineate elements of effective writing (organization, title, elaboration, tone).
- create theme statements about non-fiction articles and/or documents.
- draw on background knowledge to support/explore a topic in persuasive writing.
- analyze craft of non-fiction texts. (i.e.: leads, relevant evidence, variety of elaboration, transitions, organization, conclusions)
- recognize three types of persuasive appeals: ethos, pathos and logos.
- use test taking strategies for writing in the persuasive mode.
- 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 your audience.
- determine what information needs to be cited and make the citations.
- determine what information is needed to support their opinion.
- choose appropriate reading selections and reflect on their choices.
- acknowledge the situation which necessitates an action when persuading an audience.

- choose a method of organization which is best suited for particular questions and prompts.
- maintain focus in their writing.
- avoid repetition of ideas in their writing.
- use a consistent and personal voice in their writing.
- write with an awareness of audience by providing all of the details that the audience needs to know.
- establish a connection between the evidence and the position that is being advocated.
- use transitions to link ideas and to connect one idea to the next.
- organize ideas into an effective essay which includes an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- anticipate the counterargument of the audience and address that counterargument.
- write conclusion which does not repeat and also brings the advocacy to a new level.
- contribute to a running list of common themes, collected by the class, based on texts read in class and texts read independently.
- reflect on literacy goals and provide evidence of progress.

### **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.
- test for grammar usage in Editing and Revising format.

### **Assessments**

- \* District-wide timed persuasive prompt revised for focus areas (acknowledging the situation which necessitates the action, choosing method of organization which is most appropriate, applying an effective elaboration techniques, establishing a connection between the evidence and the position being advocated, creating effective transitions, and writing a conclusion which bring the advocacy to a new level)
- Written assessment focusing on theme in non-fiction, following group discussion
- \*One formal persuasive writing essay which is revised for word choice, sentence variety, focus, and lack of repetition
- Mid-year reflection on literacy goals

\* Writing will go through the steps of the writing process so that writing improvement can be evident through revision

### **Pacing**

8 weeks

## Unit 4: Making Thematic Connections Across Texts

### English Standards

*Reading and Responding-Students read, comprehend, and respond in individual, literal, critical, and evaluative ways to literary, informational, ad 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 to enhance their understanding of multiple themes in one text and a common theme across multiple texts/genres.

- incorporate and cite relevant text evidence to support interpretations of themes.
- choose appropriate reading selections and reflect on their choices.
- build on the connections made by others in large and small group discussions in order to reshape their own thinking.
- continue to reflect on progress toward literacy goals.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

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

### **Assessments**

- \* Essay analyzing multiple themes in one text or a common theme across more than one text
- Discussion-based assessment of student’s ability to recognize multiple themes and/or common theme across texts
- Student reflections about their interpretation of theme(s)
- Student reflections on reading and writing

\* Writing will go through the steps of the writing process so that writing improvement can be evident through revision

### **Pacing**

4 weeks

## Unit 5: Reflecting and Self Evaluating

### English 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.

*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
- Using literacy portfolios to communicate a theme: goals lead to growth

### **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 growth as readers and writers by sharing their portfolio with parents/guardians.
- analyze a theme common to more than one text.
- continue to provide textual evidence to support interpretation of themes.
- choose appropriate reading selections and reflect on their 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.

### **Skill Objectives**

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
- Independent reading assessment 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*  
*The 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*