

Language Arts 6-7-8th

Course Description

The needs of early adolescents are a fundamental concern to middle-level language arts teachers. Teachers attempt to meet the unique needs of these students by using curriculum concepts such as thematic organization, teaming among teachers, appropriate grouping, and interdisciplinary efforts. Standard English grammar is taught and integrated into the Language Arts curriculum as well as other content areas. The eighth-grade level requires intensive formal instruction in reading comprehension strategies as well as comprehensive instruction in writing process. The curriculum continues to support the development of listening and speaking skills in informal situations, and introduces limited formal speech. Well-trained language arts instructors clearly understand that none of these skills, either the receptive skills of reading, listening and viewing, or the expressive skills of writing, speaking, and presenting, are used in isolation from the other skills. They must be taught in an integrated, holistic curricular environment.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS:

Language arts teachers think of themselves as teachers of process more than dispensers of content. It is often helpful, and certainly reasonable, to take the content of the various papers and presentations that students will create in language arts classes, content from other classes in the core curriculum and elsewhere. Listed below are some curricular connections that can be made between language arts and other curricula. These connections are taken from the core documents of the other content areas specified, and would make useful assignments or choices for students involved in those other content areas.

Theology/Religion: **Identify and use religious and social justice themes in reading, writing, and speaking.**

Using a work of fiction or non-fiction as a springboard, discuss how life experiences, challenges, and the vicarious experiences we gain through reading a variety of books, help to shape character and values.

Math: **Describe the relationship between three or more objects or characters according to three or more attributes.**

Social Studies: **Read, listen, view, discuss, and then report on the impact the Native American cultures, Columbian Connection, European cultures, and African cultures had on each other, including foods, diseases, written documents, architecture, governance, customs, tools, and religions.**

Library Media: **Identify, evaluate, and select resources for an informational report.**

Responsible Healthy Lifestyles: **Read, view discuss, and then report, either orally or in writing, on the impact that responsible behavior during adolescence and youth has on health during middle and old age.**

Science: **Observe, read, discuss, and report on changes in physical and chemical processes.**

Visual Arts: **Read, view, discuss, and report, either orally or in writing, on the use of repetition and emphasis as it relates to an object of art and a piece of poetry.**

Music: **Analyze/evaluate, read, view, discuss, and report, either orally or in writing, on why certain musical experiences and activities may be preferred to others.**

Strand One - Reading

STANDARD 1 Students use comprehension strategies before reading.

Sixth - Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Establish a purpose prior to reading.

- Read to learn.
- Read for enjoyment.
- Read to gather information for decision making.
- Read to perform a task.

Preview the text.

- Identify the author's purpose.
- Skim the text for general understanding.
- Scan for specific information.
- Use title page information.
- Determine text format by noting key features, e.g., headlines, captions, bold print.
- Choose strategies to suit identified purpose, e.g., spiritual, functional, informational, literary.

Activate and build upon prior knowledge.

- Access and review prior knowledge of content.
- Build interest or understanding by relating prior knowledge.

Sixth – Seventh - Eighth Grades

STANDARD 2 Students use comprehension strategies during reading to actively construct the meaning of text

OBJECTIVES

Make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections.

Relate text to other relevant texts.

- Relate text to a faith perspective.
- Relate text to life situations and experiences.
- Relate text to an event or issue in the world.
- Use text connections to create mental images spontaneously and purposefully.

Simultaneously and strategically use the cueing systems to establish the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases.

- Use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (semantic cueing system).
- Use sentence structure to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (syntactic cueing system).
- Use letter sound correspondence to determine the pronunciation of unfamiliar words (graphophonic cueing system).

Build vocabulary by using a variety of strategies.

- Determine word meaning through studies of root, prefix, suffix, and inflectional endings.
- Associate terminology with concepts, e.g., the definition of “democracy” vs. the concept of “democracy”.
- Clarify word meaning using references, e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, glossary, index.

Use comprehension strategies to deepen and broaden understanding of text.

- Generate literal, interpretive, and applied questions during reading.
- Construct meaning in reading by consciously using the cueing systems, e.g., graphophonic, semantic, and syntactic.
- Make inferences by using prior knowledge of topic and by locating and putting together information from two or more places in text.
- Identify or construct the main idea or theme and distinguish it from detail in text.
- Summarize in own words.
- Form predictions and confirm, revise, or reject them while reading.
- Form mental pictures using text. (Visualization).
- Formulate conclusions based on the text, understanding and deducible reasoning (using previous strategies).

Monitor own comprehension.

- Think of examples.
- Use self-questioning to construct meaning.
- Create visual images.
- Check for comprehension periodically.
- Connect information.
- Identify the impact that the reading environment has on reading.
- Summarize in own words.
- Recognize when comprehension breaks down and use appropriate strategies.

Apply additional strategies when understanding breaks down.

- Skip the word or phrase and read on.
- Read ahead.
- Consult outside sources, e.g., people, reference materials, the internet.
- Re-read to clarify information.

STANDARD 3 Students use comprehension strategies after reading to reflect on, consolidate, and extend meaning

Sixth – Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES:

- Summarize and/or synthesize important information from text.
- Write a response.
- Create a graphic representation, e.g., web, diagram, picture, flowchart.
- Discuss or debate important information.
- Confirm, revise, or reject predictions.
- Share responses to text, e.g., small group and whole class discussion, book clubs, visual presentations, written response, multi-media
- Connect the text to a situation in life, and/or to an event or issue in the world.
- Locate in the text the words and passages pertinent to students' ideas, interpretation and comprehension.

STANDARD 4 Students demonstrate independence in reading

Sixth - Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Read increasingly demanding texts with fluency and understanding.

- Read widely and consistently, e.g., at least 1 hour per night from school assignments and student selected literature.
- Adjust reading rate to purpose and text difficulty.
- Create mental images spontaneously and purposefully.

Demonstrate competency in reading self-selected texts and literature.

- Determine when and where to use comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading.
- Read independently for a variety of purposes, e.g., to enjoy, gather information, answer questions, and accomplish a task.
- Establish criteria for self-selecting texts.
- Evaluate texts according to personal criteria.
- Share responses to text, e.g., small group and whole class discussion, book clubs, visual presentations, written response, multi-media.

STANDARD 5 Students read functional, informational, and literary texts from periods, cultures, and genres.

Sixth - Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Demonstrate competency in reading and interpreting SPIRITUAL text.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading spiritual texts, e.g. Old and New Testament, Mass readings, prayers, Church history, stories of saints.

- Preview the text by skimming and noting author, Testament, unfamiliar words/names, structure of writing (letter, psalm, Gospel headings).
- Scan for relevant information
- Make comparisons to and draw conclusions about the students' lives.

Demonstrate competency in reading and interpreting FUNCTIONAL text.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading a functional text, e.g., directions, instruction manuals, a course syllabus, test instructions.
- Preview the text by skimming and noting key features.
- Scan for relevant information.
- Confirm ongoing meaning by using print and other text features, e.g., graphs, captions, illustrations, models, diagrams, tables.

Demonstrate competency in reading INFORMATIONAL text.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading informational text, e.g., school textbooks, essays, reference materials, magazines, newspapers.
- Preview the text by skimming and noting key features, e.g., headings, sub headings, other visual information.
- Use the SQR (survey, question, read) method to preview the text.
- Identify and use the organization of a text to locate, recall, construct, and predict important information, e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, question/answer, problem/solution, description, chronology, process.
- Scan for relevant information.
- Determine the accuracy, validity, and reliability of information.
- Use information gained to create and share responses to text.
- Recognize combinations of mode and text organization in a single piece.

Demonstrate competency in reading LITERARY text.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading a literary text, e.g., myth, essay, poetry, young adult literature, classics.
- Recognize the features of each literary genre, e.g., poetry-line division, condensed language; novel-chapter divisions; play dialogue, stage directions.
- Use the SQR (survey, question, read) method to preview the text.
- Recognize and interpret elements of literature, e.g., plot, theme, character, setting, rhythm, rhyme.
- Compare and/or contrast the experiences of various cultures that might be reflected in the literature.
- Share responses to text, e.g., small group and whole class discussion, book clubs, visual presentations, written response, multi-media.

Strand Two – Listening

STANDARD 6 Students use comprehension strategies before, during, and after listening.

Sixth - Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Use comprehension strategies before listening.

- Establish a purpose for listening, e.g., acquiring information/ideas, seeking enjoyment, providing understanding.
- Activate prior knowledge, including knowledge of speaker and knowledge of subject matter.
- Focus attention, e.g., eliminate distractions, listen selectively, and postpone reactions.

Use comprehension strategies to actively construct meaning from auditory sources.

- Maintain focus, e.g., filter distractions, listen selectively, and postpone reactions.
- Listen actively, e.g., determine organization, ask questions, and attend to nonverbal cues.
- Use strategies to facilitate retention of information, e.g., repeat information, construct mnemonics, use chunking, take notes.
- Listen critically, e.g., separate facts from opinions. Evaluate inferences.

Evaluate and respond after listening to reflect on, consolidate, and extend meaning.

- Summarize key ideas.
- Synthesize information to answer questions, solve problems, and communicate ideas.
- Evaluate the usefulness, reliability, and accuracy of information.

STANDARD 7 Students listen in spiritual, functional, informational, and literary situations.

Sixth - Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Demonstrate competency in listening to and participating in SPIRITUAL contexts.

- Use comprehension strategies in reciting prayers.
- Recognize and confirm Catholic tradition and theology.
- Use listening strategies to enhance personal and community prayer life.

Demonstrate competency in listening to and interpreting FUNCTIONAL materials.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during, and after listening to functional information, e.g., following directions and test instructions, understanding PA announcements, and schedule changes.
- Listen for relevant information.

- Confirm ongoing meaning, e.g., ask questions, summarize, predict.

Demonstrate competency in listening to and interpreting INFORMATIONAL materials.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during, and after listening to information, e.g., school lectures, community forums, media messages.
- Identify the organization of information heard and use to recall, construct, and predict, e.g. comparison/contrast, cause/effect, question/answer, problem/solution, description, chronology, process.
- Determine the accuracy, validity, and reliability of information.
- Use the information gained to create and share responses to auditory materials. Recognize combinations of mode and organization in a single piece.

Demonstrate competency in listening to and interpreting LITERARY forms.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during, and after listening to a literary presentation, e.g., poetry reading, play, retold story.
- Recognize and interpret the auditory elements of literature, e.g., sentence fluency, rhythm, rhyme.
- Compare and/or contrast the experiences of various cultures that might be reflected in the literature.
- Share responses to auditory text, e.g., small and whole class discussion, book clubs, visual presentations, written response, multi-media.

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Strand Three – Viewing

STANDARD 8 Students use comprehension strategies before, during, and after viewing.

Sixth – Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Use comprehension strategies before viewing.

- Establish a purpose for viewing, e.g., acquiring information/ideas, seeking enjoyment, providing understanding.
- Activate prior knowledge, including knowledge of media, and knowledge of subject.
- Focus both visual and auditory attention.

Use comprehension strategies during viewing.

- Focus attention, e.g., eliminate distractions, listen/watch selectively, and postpone reactions.
- Use visual and auditory skills to determine organization, e.g., ask questions and evaluate intentions and methods of presenter/speaker/performer.
- Use strategies according to organizational pattern to help increase retention of information, e.g., repeat information, construct mnemonics, and take notes.
- Listen and view critically, e.g., separate fact from opinion.
- Evaluate inferences.
- Distinguish reality from the constructed representation of reality, e.g., television, internet, drama, movie.

Evaluate and respond after viewing.

- Summarize key ideas.
- Synthesize information to clarify thoughts, communicate ideas, and solve problems.
- Offer feedback.

Evaluate the usefulness, reliability, and accuracy of information.

STANDARD 9 Students view religious/spiritual, functional, informational, and literary materials from periods, cultures and genres.

Sixth – Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Demonstrate competence in viewing and interpreting religious and spiritual art, text and materials.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during, and after viewing to enhance meaning of spiritual and religious text and materials.

Demonstrate competency in viewing and interpreting FUNCTIONAL materials.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during, and after viewing functional materials, e.g., web sites, maps, schedules, directions.
- Preview by skimming and noting key features, e.g., legends, titles, subtitles.
- Confirm ongoing meaning by using auditory features, e.g., dialogue, discussion, description, volume, background.
- Confirm ongoing meaning by using print and other visual features, e.g., graphs, captions, illustrations, labels, models, diagrams, tables.

Demonstrate competency in viewing INFORMATION materials.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during and after viewing informational materials, e.g., documentaries, photo essays, commercials, multimedia presentations.
- Provide information presented visually by skimming and scanning promotional materials, e.g., trailers, video covers.
- Identify the organization of information presented visually and use it to recall, construct, and predict, e.g., compare/contrast, cause/effect, question/answer, problem/solution, description, chronology, process.
- Scan for relevant information.
Determine the accuracy, validity, and reliability of information viewed.
Use information gained visually and auditory to create and share responses.
- Recognize combinations of mode and organization in a single piece.

Demonstrate competency in viewing LITERARY materials.

- Use comprehension strategies before, during and after viewing a literary presentation, e.g., play, movie, poetry reading.
- Recognize the elements of each literary genre to increase understanding and appreciation of visual literature. e.g., myth, essay, poetry, young adult literature, classics.
- Recognize and interpret the visual elements of literature, e.g., setting, description.
- Compare/contrast the experiences of various cultures that might be reflected in visual literature.
- Share responses to text, e.g., small group and whole class discussions, book clubs, visual presentations, written response, multi-media.

Strand Four - Writing

STANDARD 10 Students use process strategies, particularly 6 + 1 writing trait standards, before, during and after composing.

Sixth - Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Use pre-writing strategies to prepare to write.

- Set a purpose for writing.
- Select and focus ideas.
- Identify the intended audience.
- Generate ideas for a topic.
- Select an appropriate voice.
- Select a format according to the topic and purpose e.g., poem, letter, essay, journal entry, brochure, computer, presentation, reports.
- Gather information from appropriate resources, e.g., interviews, journals, books, magazines, Internet, e-mail, CD ROM, films, audio-visual media, dictionaries, appendices, indices, glossaries, tables of content.
- Use resources ethically, e.g., observe copyright laws, use correct citations.
- Elicit feedback on the quality of initial ideas from peers, teachers, family members, and others.
- Begin writing process, using prewriting strategies, e.g., graphic organizers, outlining, free writing, quick writes.

Use composing strategies to construct a written draft.

- Use an organizational pattern to structure information e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, question/answer, problem/solution, description, chronology, process.
- Elaborate ideas through the use of detail, e.g., statistics, examples, illustrations, photos, charts, graphs, tables.
- Generate additional ideas as needed.
- Elicit feedback from peers, teachers, family members, and others according to an analytical assessment system, i.e., revise for ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions.

Use revision strategies to improve a written draft.

- Evaluate self and others writing from a faith-based perspective.
- Re-examine audience and purpose and adjust draft.
- Evaluate own and others writing according to an analytic assessment, i.e., the writer's ability to select, elaborate ideas, organize ideas, achieve sentence fluency, use appropriate and effective word choice, authentic voice, appropriate conventions.
- Use reference books for revision, e.g., thesaurus, different kinds of dictionaries, student handbook, atlas, almanac, Readers' guide, newspaper, encyclopedia.
- Elicit feedback on writing according to an analytic assessment, e.g., the writer's ability to select, organize ideas, elaborate ideas, achieve sentence fluency, use appropriate and effective word choice, authentic voice, appropriate conventions.

- Produce an improved piece of writing.

Edit text to conform to the conventions of standard English that include capitalization, punctuation, usage, and correct spelling.

- Identify and correct errors on usage, e.g., misplaced modifiers, unnecessary fragments, run-on sentences, incorrectly combined sentences, incorrect subject-verb agreement, incorrect adverb usage, incorrect use of the possessive case, incorrectly applied present and future tenses.
- Identify and correct errors on capitalization, e.g., sentence beginning, proper adjectives and nouns, titles, proper noun phrases.
- Identify and correct errors in punctuation, e.g., appropriate end punctuation, introductory commas, commas in a series, quotation marks with titles of chapters, use of unnecessary commas.
- Identify and correct misspellings of words in the context of sentences.
- Evaluate own and others writing according to standard language usage.
- Elicit feedback on standard language usage from peers, teachers, family members, and others.
- Evaluate desk-top publications, using information design standards.

Participate in post-writing strategies to make writing public.

- Prepare finished products for publication, e.g., for school assignments in language arts and other content courses, on electronic bulletin boards, for public display, in school and commercial publications.
- Share with peers, teachers, family members, and others.
- Publish outside the classroom, as allowed and appropriate.

STANDARD 11 Students write functional, informational, and literary texts for various purposes, audiences, and situations.

Sixth - Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Demonstrate competency in writing **SPIRITUAL** text.

- Use writing process strategies to write a spiritual text, e.g., prayer, personal reflection, analysis of social justice issue, etc.

Demonstrate competency in writing **FUNCTIONAL** text.

- Use writing process strategies to construct functional text, e.g., to give directions, instructions, results.
- Use features to indicate organization, e.g., headings, sub headings, other visual information.
- Confirm ongoing meaning by using visual text features, e.g., graphs, captions, illustrations, models, diagrams, tables.

Demonstrate competency in writing **INFORMATIONAL** text.

- Use writing process strategies to construct informational text, e.g., school reports, essays, magazine and newspaper articles.
- Use text features to indicate organization, e.g., headings, sub-headings, other visual information.
- Select organizational patterns(s) to indicate important information, e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, question/answer,

problem/solution, description, chronology, process.

- Use accurate, valid, and reliable information.
- Understand plagiarism and steps to avoid plagiarizing from books and the internet.
- Document information used according to accepted standards, e.g., MLA, APA, etc. Use various fonts for features of text organization as necessary. Use footnotes correctly as necessary.

Demonstrate competency in writing LITERARY text.

- Use writing process strategies to construct a literary text, e.g., myth, essay, poetry, memoir, narrative.
- Use the elements of each literary genre, e.g., character, plot, meter, setting, chronology.
- Use the elements of literature, e.g., theme, metaphor, symbolism, types of conflict, dialogue.

Demonstrate competency in writing.

- Write widely and consistently, e.g., self-selected pieces, assigned papers, letters, notes, e-mail.
- Document writing improvement, e.g., portfolios, analytic assessment records, writing journals.

Write for a variety of purposes, in various rhetorical modes and genres.

- Use narration to recount experiences.
- Use description to create sensory imagery.
- Use exposition to inform, explain, or clarify.
- Write genres for expressive aims, i.e., anecdotes, diary entries, friendly letters, monologues, journal entries, memoirs.
- Write genres for literary aims, e.g., character sketch, description of setting, poetry, fable, folktale, legend.
- Mix modes on a single piece.

Use writing to learn.

- Describe and use the steps in the writing process.
- Describe the relationship between reading and writing activities in content area classrooms.
- Use writing as a learning tool in the content areas, e.g., content journals, learning logs, free writing, paraphrasing, summarizing, research reports, lab reports, reader response journals, dialogue journals, character journals, social justice notebooks.

Strand Five-Speaking

STANDARD 12 Students use process strategies before, during and after speaking

Sixth – Seventh - Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Use strategies to prepare for a speech.

- Set a purpose that reflects the speaker's intentions. e.g., informational, persuasive, special occasion.
- Identify attributes of the intended audience.
- Activate audience's prior knowledge and provide additional background knowledge where necessary.
- Anticipate possible barriers of communication with audience, e.g., lack of prior knowledge, firmly held prior opinions.
- Generate or gather ideas in consideration of a topic, e.g., brainstorm, use note-taking skills, graphic organizers.
- Select and focus ideas.
- Generate speech text.
- Prepare and practice all aspects of delivery.

Use strategies to deliver an effective speech.

- Activate prior knowledge and provide additional background knowledge if necessary.
- Organize and convey the central ideas and supporting details of the speech clearly.
- Use voice and body language to support meaning.
- Vary tone, pitch, and pace of speech to aid communication.
- Adjust speech to accommodate audience response.
- Demonstrate ethical and appropriate use of resources to enhance speech, e.g., Internet, library resources, others' ideas.
- Use conventions of spoken language that are appropriate to the audience and that reflect standard usage.

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a speech.

- Elicit feedback on speech from peers, teachers, family members, and others.
- Use self-monitoring techniques.

STANDARD 13 Students speak in religious, functional, informational, and literary situations for various purposes and audiences.

Sixth – Seventh – Eighth Grades

OBJECTIVES

Demonstrate competency in speaking in RELIGIOUS situations.

- Use speaking process strategies to present a literary performance, e.g., dramatic reading, retold short story, poetry reading, proclaiming the

Word at Mass, readers theater, choral reading,

Demonstrate competency in speaking in FUNCTIONAL situations.

- Use speaking process strategies to speak in a functional situation, e.g., mock trial, debate, giving directions, instructions, answers to questions.
- Use oral features to indicate organization, e.g., labels and headings, transitional indicators.
- Confirm ongoing meaning by observing audience reaction.
- Apply additional strategies when understanding breaks down, e.g., repeat information, use different illustration.

Demonstrate speaking competency in INFORMATIONAL situations.

- Use speaking process strategies to address informational situations, e.g., oral school reports, essays, peer-teaching experiences, persuasive speech.
- Use oral features to indicate organization, e.g., labels and headings, transitional indicators.
- Select organizational patterns to indicate important information, e.g., compare/contrast, cause/ effect, question/answer, description, chronology, process.
- Use accurate, valid, and reliable information.
- Confirm ongoing meaning by observing audience reaction.
- Apply additional strategies when understanding breaks down, e.g., repeat information, use a different illustration.
- Use a mix of types of organization.

Demonstrate competency in speaking in LITERARY situations.

- Use voice variation to maintain audience interest.
- Use the textual indicators of written prose and poetry to aid in interpretation.
- Use gestures to elaborate text.

Use effective communication strategies in small and large group discussions.

- Use agreed-upon rules for effective discussions and debate.
- Initiate discussion by providing appropriate information or asking for information.
- Express reactions and opinions and challenge other's opinions in a constructive and considerate manner.
- Maintain focus, e.g., filter distractions, listen selectively, and postpone reactions.
- Extend the discussion through clarification, synthesis, and summary of information.
- Pose questions for other group members.
- Listen attentively to others' ideas and opinions.
- Encourage others to participate in the discussion.
- Monitor and evaluate the discussion.
- Apply additional communication strategies when communication breaks down.
- Synthesize and share main ideas outside the discussion group.

