

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS
GRADE 7**

EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2099 Pennington Road
Ewing, NJ 08618

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In accordance with The Ewing Public Schools' Policy 2230, Course Guides, this curriculum has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with all policies and all affirmative action criteria.

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Grade 6-8 Literacy Program Description

The students enrolled in the Ewing Township Public Schools participate in a balanced literacy program that is “grounded in scientifically based reading research which supports the essential elements and practices that enable all students to achieve literacy” (National Reading Panel, 2000). There are three goals of our literacy program: 1) to help students read and comprehend grade level texts independently, 2) to assist students with text-based thinking and writing and 3) to empower students with a love of reading.

Balanced literacy can be seen in a classroom with teachers reading aloud and with students participating in: 1) shared reading, 2) guided reading, 3) independent reading, 4) modeled and shared writing and 5) independent writing. Ongoing formative assessment within a balanced literacy classroom provides data that allow teachers to make sound educational decisions about each individual student in a classroom.

Middle School Students have two 41 minute English Language Arts Blocks for a full school-year.

Scope and Sequence for Units of Study in English Language Arts and Humanities* Classes:

	Marking Period 1	Marking Period 2	Marking Period 3	Marking Period 4
7th Grade <i>Overarching Theme: Humanity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching Reading and Writing Workshop • Genre Study • Literary Reading and Narrative Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational Writing • Narrative Nonfiction: A Thematic Study focused on <i>Culture, Time, Place and Identity Development</i> • Writing across Sources: RSTs and LATs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational Reading and the Nonfiction Signposts: A Thematic Study focused on <i>Jim Crow and Inequality</i> • Literary Analysis Task and the study of Historical Fiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socratic Seminar • Argument Writing • Return to Self-Selected Reading Workshop

*Humanities is a program for students with exceptional ability in reading and writing. The class is designed to meet the needs of learners who require instruction at a depth not achieved in the English Language Arts classroom. The curriculum for ELA and Humanities classes are the same, but the depth to which students analyze and discuss literature, the number of books read and the amount and depth of writing differs.

21st Century Life and Careers

In today's global economy, students need to be lifelong learners who have the knowledge and skills to adapt to an evolving workplace and world. To address these demands, Standard 9, 21st Century Life and Careers, which includes the 12 Career Ready Practices, establishes clear guidelines for what students need to know and be able to do in order to be successful in their future careers.

The 12 Career Ready Practices

These practices outline the skills that all individuals need to have to truly be adaptable, reflective, and proactive in life and careers. These are researched practices that are essential to career readiness.

CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.

In English Language Arts, it is essential for students to communicate clearly and effectively. This is demonstrated through writing with a clear purpose and an appropriate audience in mind. Students also need to clearly communicate verbally, which is practiced in the English Language Arts classroom. Effective communicators are also active listeners. These skills are essential in the academic setting and in the workplace.

CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.

Research strategies are infused throughout the English Language Arts curriculum. It is imperative for students to utilize effective research strategies in order to formulate an argument, to support a thesis, and to research across content areas. Students need to use multiple sources in order to write a comprehensive research paper. Finally, students need to discern whether sources are reliable in order to present strong pieces of information and argument essays. Research skills are essential in the academic setting and in the workplace.

CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

In order for students to be successful in school, in life, and in their career, they need to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. In English Language Arts classes, students learn to read and write critically. Through discussions and by actively engaging in speaking and listening, students will develop the necessary skills to be critical thinkers. In order to be productive citizens of the 21st century we need to ensure students can persevere in order to reach the solution of any problem.

Technology Integration

8.1 Educational Technology

All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and create and communicate knowledge.

8.2 Technology Education, Engineering, Design and Computational Thinking - Programming

All students will develop an understanding of the nature and impact of technology, engineering, technological design, computational thinking and the designed world as they relate to the individual, global society, and the environment.

Social Studies Integration - The social studies and English departments worked to integrate Research Simulation Tasks into both sets of curricula to provide ample opportunities to respond across content areas. The Research Simulation Task requires students to analyze an informational topic through several articles or multimedia stimuli. Students read and respond to a series of questions and synthesize information from multiple sources in order to write an analytic essay.

Companion Standards 11-12 - History, Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects

Section 1: Launching the Reading and Writing Workshop

Pacing: 22 days

Why Is This Unit Important?

Reading workshop is an instructional framework where a teacher provides a focused mini-lesson on a specific skill or strategy, allots time for students to apply that skill or strategy independently to a student-selected or teacher-assigned text, confers with students to identify areas of strength and need, provides individualized feedback to help each student develop in additional areas of need and closes the lesson with a review of the skill or strategy of focus and whole group debriefing. The framework for writing workshop is similar with students applying the mini-lesson's learning objective to their own personal writing. Much of the workshop model is student directed, so processes and procedures must be outlined and practiced to ensure that students work in a focused, productive and engaged way.

The Big Ideas embedded into this unit of study are:

- The structure of the reading and writing workshop is the same across grade levels (mini-lesson, independent practice and direct application, teacher and peer conferences, closure). Routines must be introduced and practiced to ensure student focus throughout the workshop.
- The goal of the daily mini-lesson during the launching units is to introduce and reinforce processes and practices and establish expectations. As this unit progresses, the goal of the mini-lesson will shift to teaching comprehension skills and strategies which students will apply to all units throughout the year.
- "To progress as readers, [students] must have ample time to read a lot and they must have texts they can read independently" (Reading and Writing Project). One purpose of the reading workshop is to embed this time for supported independent application into the class period.
- Writing workshop aims to "turn students into writers through an emphasis on a high volume of writing and daily protected writing time in which to engage in the writing process" (Reading and Writing Project).
- Time is provided daily for students to work independent and apply the mini-lesson to a self-selected book at their independent reading level; as the year progresses, texts may be assigned as teachers work with students to build comprehension skills when presented a text within their grade-band.
- Research indicates the positive impact that timely and targeted feedback has on student achievement (Marzano). As students work independently to apply the reading or writing skill of focus from the mini-lesson, teachers confer with individual students or with small groups (e.g., strategy groups) to provide such feedback and next steps for students.

Enduring Understandings:

- The purpose of the launching units is to establish routines and procedures within the workshop framework, positively reinforce those routines so they continue throughout the school year and empower students with an enjoyment of self-selected independent reading and writing.
- Within a workshop classroom, students must be actively engaged in reading and writing on a daily basis.
- Formative assessment occurs daily; student reading and writing strengths and needs are assessed through desk-side or small group conferences, targeted feedback and instruction are provided and next steps are established. Research indicates this as a best practice to improve individual student achievement.
- The goal for the mini-lessons presented during the reading and writing workshop launch is to establish routines and expectations. The only reading and writing 'skills' or 'strategies' introduced during the launching unit are those that will apply to most or all units of study throughout the school year.

Essential Questions:

- What are the benefits of the reading-writing workshop model?
- What should a student do when he/she is not sure what to do, especially if the teacher is already working with a student or student group?
- What is the expectation related to independent reading or writing time?
- What is 'fake reading'? How can a teacher tell if a student is fake reading?
- What is 'reading stamina' and how can one develop his/her reading stamina?
- What is the purpose of a reading log?
- What should a student do if he/she can't think of anything to write during independent writing time?
- What are the reoccurring literary terms or concepts that will apply to most of our units this year? Why is each term so important?

Acquired Knowledge:

- There are three parts to a workshop lesson: the mini-lesson, independent practice and closure/review.
- The purpose of independent practice is for each student to apply the day's mini-lesson, which connects to the day's learning objective, to his/her independent text. Student work produced during independent practice is used as formative assessment to ensure student learning and plan next steps.
- The purpose of the launching unit is to establish routines and procedures and to reinforce expectations within a workshop classroom that will allow students to work actively and productively without teacher direction. The only reading and writing skills and strategies to be taught during this unit of study are those applicable to all units throughout the year. Those skills and strategies are specified below:
 - Routines, Procedures and Expectations:
 - The structure of the workshop

- Self-selecting an independent book from the classroom library or FMS media center
 - Fake reading vs. real reading
 - Building independent reading stamina
 - Reading log expectations, accountability and grading
 - Reading response journals (text-based writing), expectations and grading
 - Active reading and thinking
- Related to Reading:
- Author's purpose (to entertain, express, inform, argue or persuade)
 - Point of view
 - Text-based writing and expectations for citing evidence at each grade level (e.g., annotating a text)
- Related to Writing:
- The writing process (emphasis on the revising and editing stages in Grades 7-8)
 - Genres of writing (narrative, informational, argumentative)
 - Genre focus for the launching unit: 6th and 7th grades-narrative; 8th grade-expository)

Acquired Skills:

- Participate in the reading and writing workshop, applying the knowledge of each part of the workshop (mini-lesson, independent practice, closure).
- Confer with the teacher, collaboratively identify areas of strength and areas of need in independent reading and writing and establish next steps to be taken by the student and monitored by the teacher
- Apply the rules of the reading and writing workshop as introduced and reinforced by the teacher
- Apply the day's mini-lesson, whether it be a procedural or instructional lesson, to independent reading or writing
- Maintain focus for thirty minutes during independent reading and independent writing; read actively and write productively the entire time
- Respond to text-based questions citing textual evidence in a reading log, reading response journal, or written response to an open-ended question
- Identify the author's purpose for a given text and explain how the author supports that as he/she writes
- Identify the point of view from which a story is told and explain the limitations in the story's narration given that point of view
- Engage in all stages of the writing process
- Identify the three main genres of academic writing and explore each genre in a writer's notebook
- Explain the difference between revising and editing and apply mini-lessons focused on each to a draft

Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed

Formative:

- Writer's notebook
- Reader's notebook, reading response journals and reading logs
- Teacher conferences, anecdotal notes and next steps

Instructional Materials:

Core:

- Whole class read-aloud and mentor texts, including but not limited to, *Out of my Mind* by Sharon Draper
- Launching the Reading Workshop (Schoolwide, Inc.)
- How Writers Work (Schoolwide, Inc.)

Supplemental:

- Various Mentor Texts to support teaching points

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Text-based writing is a focus not only in English classes, but also in science, social studies and the humanities. The skills of focus and vocabulary used during this launching unit will be shared with teachers in other disciplines to create a common academic vocabulary and shared expectation across classes.

Technology Connections:

- A login for supporting materials for the Schoolwide, Inc. units of study is provided for each teacher.
- Online resources to support the reading and writing workshop include the following:
 - Columbia University Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: <http://readingandwritingproject.org/>
 - Teachers College training videos available online: <https://vimeo.com/tcrwp>
 - Researcher and Educator Penny Kittle provides handouts, resources and materials to explain and support the workshop model: <http://pennykittle.net/index.php?page=workshop-handouts>
 - New York City Schools Unit of Study: Launching the Reader's and Writer's Workshop: What Do Readers and Writers Do? http://schools.nyc.gov/documents/d75/literacy/uos/middle/MS_Unit_1.pdf

Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:

- Differentiation for students who struggle and for those who need acceleration is built into the workshop model
- Independent reading books are selected at each student's reading level
- Writing topics are student-selected during the launching unit, thus capitalizing on student interests
- One purpose of this unit of study is for teachers to become familiar with each student's strengths and needs through desk-side conferences, small group meetings and anecdotal notes with next steps and follow-up plans.

List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Language Arts

Reading Standards for Literature
RL.7.1; RL.7.2; RL.7.6

Writing Standards
W.7.3a-e; W.7.4; W.7.5; W.7.9a; W.7.10

Standards for Speaking and Listening
SL.7.1a-d; SL.7.6

Language Standards
L.7.1; L.7.3

Section 2: Reading Literary Fiction
Literary Genre Study 20 days
Self-Selected Reading Workshop 23 days

Why Is This Unit Important?

Fiction is defined as “something invented by the imagination or feigned, specifically an invented story; fictitious literature such as novels or short stories” (Merriam-Webster). Literary works are those that fall within the overarching genre of fiction.

The Big Ideas included in this unit of study are:

- There are many genres of fiction, each with its own identifiable features.
- Fictional stories, short or long, include common literary elements.
- Short stories share common elements with chapter books, but they share differences as well; a reader must attend to these literary elements as well as a story’s structure when reading closely and analyzing a text for deeper meaning.
- A reader must consider the point of view from which a story is told to recognize possible biases or limitations in the storytelling itself.
- Authors use literary devices and figurative language thoughtfully to convey a particular message in a very specific way. It is important that readers pay careful attention to such wording.

Enduring Understandings:

- Works of literature can be categorized into genres and subgenres.
- All works of fiction include character, setting, conflict and resolution and these elements interact and influence one another, leading to the development of central idea or theme.
- While short stories and chapter books include common elements, a short story is more focused and may be read in only one sitting.
- Understanding the structure of fictional works enables a reader to comprehend 'the gist' of a story that may be above his or her independent reading level.
- A story told from first person point of view has built-in bias because only the subject’s perception is considered; a story from third person point of view lacks the emotional insight available through a first-person story.
- Literary device and figurative language are intentionally used by a writer to allow a reader to more clearly visualize or become emotionally attached to a story. A story or novel written using such language reads very differently than one without such writing.

Essential Questions:

- Why must fiction be approached differently than nonfiction reading? What makes each different?
- Must all fictional pieces follow the same exact format (i.e., the plot pyramid)?
- How can a writer manipulate information (i.e., the presence or absence of a literary element at any given time in a story) to create emotion or tension in a story?
- How does a shift in point of view change a story?
- How do literary devices and figurative language in storytelling change the way the story is read and received?

Acquired Knowledge:

- Historical fiction is a subgenre of fiction where historically accurate facts and fictional characters and events merge to create a story set in a historically-accurate time and place
- Novels and short stories follow a pyramid in theory, but in reality, the plot rises and falls before the climax (i.e., EKG-type plot graph).
- A story's resolution must be directly related to the conflict introduced in its exposition and the events that take a reader from exposition to resolution must progress toward a theme.
- As events progress, characters are revealed through their words, actions, thoughts and what others say about them. Changes in or observations related to characters lead a reader to the development of theme.
- 'Point of view' refers not only to the narration of the story (i.e., first or third person), but also to the various points of view (i.e., perspective of characters) within a story or work of drama.
- In addition to flashback and foreshadowing, an author can provide repeated words, phrases, symbols, or episodes in the chronology of the story that leads a reader to the story's theme.
- An author's use of precise language and specific wording influences the meaning and tone of a story.
- There are six signposts of fiction that, if attended to, will help a reader consider an author's intent and how it leads to theme: contrasts and contradictions, aha moment, tough questions, words of the wiser, again and again and memory moment.
- Highlighting a text or chunking and annotating it will help a reader to remain active when reading and comprehend a story, even one above his/her independent reading level. Identifying such key details allow a reader to record an objective summary.
- Text-based evidence (e.g., details, specific examples and quotes) must be used to support one's thoughts when responding to a question related to a reading.

Acquired Skills:

- Explain the differences between literary and informational texts, categorize works as either literary or informational and consider author's purpose when discussing the genre of a work.
- Extrapolate literary elements presented in a short story or novel including the most important key details in the plot as well as the story's climax or turning point, complete a plot pyramid or story map identifying each element and write an objective summary.
- Explain the connection between the conflict presented in the beginning of the story and the resolution at its end, in light of the 'rises and falls' of action in the story's middle. Connect these elements to the story's theme.
- Explain the internal and external changes that occur to characters in the novel as evidenced through the character's words, actions and thoughts as well as what others say about them and explain how those changes lead readers to theme.
- Examine works where the narrator's point of view or perspective changes as the plot progresses and explain how and why that change in POV occurs.
- In addition to flashback and foreshadowing, the learner will examine a writer's use of repeated words, phrases, symbols, or episodes in a story and explain how such repetition helps a reader to identify the central message or theme.
- Examine new words in context, using clues provided in the text to arrive at meaning, use word parts to arrive at meaning and use outside resources (i.e., reference materials) to discuss differences between denotative meaning (dictionary) and connotative meaning (ideas and feelings associated with the word).
- Examine a writer's use of language and explain how his/her use of precise or vivid language influences the meaning and tone of a story.
- Identify the six signposts in context and explain not only why the author may have chosen to include that signpost at that time in the story, but also how that understanding may lead to a deeper understanding of the text.
- Read a grade level text, identify the topic and general main idea or 'gist' of the story and identify key details that scaffold to that main idea (i.e., highlighting key details). Use these details to draft an objective summary and to respond to text-dependent questions.
- Use details, specific examples and quotes from the text to support one's thoughts when responding to a question related to a reading.
- Synthesize information from multiple texts when writing a coherent response to a text-dependent question.

Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed

Formative:

- Reading logs, reading response journals, graphic organizers for close reading and annotating, etc.
- Teacher observation, conference and anecdotal notes
- 'Check for Understanding Quizzes' to be administered periodically to make sure students are reading and are comprehending what they read.

Summative:

- Objective and Essay-based assessments on various short stories, A Long Walk to Water, and Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.
- Narrative Writing opportunities, such as writing chapter continuations in A Long Walk to Water.

Benchmark:

- Students write a Personal Narrative
- Short Story Assessment

Instructional Materials:

Core Texts for Close Reading:

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor

Supplemental Texts for Close Reading:

The Giver by Lois Lowery

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls

Tangerine by Edward Bloor

Hatchet by Gary Paulson

Core Textbooks:

Collections, Grade 7 (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015)

Language of Literature, Grade 7 (McDougal Littell, 2002)

- **Teachers may select from the following:**
- "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens
- "Thank You, Ma'am" by Langston Hughes
- "The White Umbrella" Gish Jen
- "An Hour with Abuelo" by Judith Ortiz Cofer
- "The Scholarship Jacket" by Marta Salinas

Professional Resources:

- District-provided and collaboratively created units of study
- Reading Fundamentals: Fiction (Schoolwide, Inc.)
- Writing Fundamentals: Fiction (Schoolwide, Inc.)
- Independent reading books
- Core novels for grade level close reading and text-based writing
- Mentor texts (e.g., picture books, excerpts from chapter books, etc.)
- *Notice and Note: Strategies for Close Reading* by Kyleene Beers and Robert E. Probst
- *When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do* by Kyleene Beers

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Many of the stories or novels connect to American history, civics, or physical survival against environmental or natural sources. For students to fully understand the characters, setting, events and themes of these novels, background knowledge must be provided. This is the perfect opportunity for cross-content instruction and co-teaching.
 - Books such as *Inside Out In the Middle of Nowhere* (6th grade), *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (7th grade), or *To Kill a Mockingbird* (8th grade) must be connected to American history.
 - *The Lightning Thief* and the entire Olympian Series (6th grade) connects to ancient mythology.
 - *Hatchet* (7th grade) and *Where the Red Fern Grows* (7th grade) can be connected to studies of nature and survival.
- Connecting these novels to history or science provides opportunities to incorporate additional nonfiction reading in and among your planned lessons in a unit of study focusing on fiction.

Technology Connections:

- Most of the novels in the FMS Book Rooms are available on CD in the FMS Professional Library or on YouTube.
- Video clips can be shown to support or supplement the fictional texts read. This would provide an opportunity for students to think and write across sources as required by College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard RL.7.
- All Language of Literature anthologies included a teacher resource kit, in which teachers received a Power Presentations CD-ROM and an assessment CD-ROM. Audio CDs are also available for purchase through McDougal Littell.
- Many of the novels and short stories listed as Instructional Materials have lesson plans, vocabulary lists and interactive activities available online. Simply entering the book title as a Google search would provide an endless supply of support for teachers and for students.
- Plot summaries, character analyses and discussion forums are available online at www.sparknotes.com. These resources are wonderful for teachers, but it is important to note that students have access to their resources as well. Using an assessment from this website is not recommended; a more authentic assessment is suggested.

Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:

- Audio recordings of the novels or short stories provide support for struggling readers or for auditory learners. It is important to note that an audio recording is not intended to replace reading the work, rather as an additional support for students.
- Videos or DVDs are available to help build background knowledge for students or to help them visualize information presented in a novel. Again, showing a video should never replace reading a novel, but should instead support the reading of a work of fiction.
- Reading due dates can be adjusted and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.
- Small meeting groups can meet to discuss key events or episodes from the book to provide support to students who read but who struggle with recall.
- Chunking a text into smaller parts and supporting students as they record notes for close reading and text-based writing is an accommodation for students who struggle with retention or recall. Graphic organizers for note-taking while reading are available online.
- Gifted readers can be provided with a list of additional texts that share common themes with the stories or books being read in class. They can be asked to synthesize information from multiple sources easily if the texts share a common theme.

List of Applicable 2016 New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Language Arts

Reading Standards for Literature
RL.7.1; RL.7.2; RL.7.3; RL.7.4; RL.7.6; RL.7.10

Section 3: Reading Informational Texts

Pacing: Informational Unit 1: 43 Days

Why Is This Unit Important?

- Informational texts include, but are not limited to: textbooks, history/science/economic works, essays, speeches, biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, journals, opinion pieces (i.e., editorials) that are written based in fact.
- The organizational structure of an informational text provides needed information and is helpful to a reader.
- The skills required to read a nonfiction text differ from those required to read fiction.
- Nonfiction texts or narrative nonfiction set in a specific historical time period or focusing on specific scientific content require additional reading and research of that time period or content so the reader fully understands the subject, events and themes of the text.

Enduring Understandings:

- Each genre of nonfiction is organized differently, serves a different purpose and is intended for a specific audience.
- Utilizing the organizational structure of an informational text will help a reader to more fully understand the text and will provide opportunities for the reader to navigate the text more easily.
- Reading an informational text or passage requires a different skill-set than reading a literary work. True comprehension of information requires a reader to understand the text beyond factual recall. "True understanding happens when readers merge their thinking with the text, ask questions, draw inferences, think about what's important and summarize and synthesize" (Harvey and Goudvis, *The Comprehension Toolkit*).
- It is often necessary to conduct research or read supplemental materials to fully understand an informational text or a work of narrative nonfiction. The more one reads about a subject, the more he/she will understand that subject. Informational materials include, but are not limited to, magazines, newspapers or feature articles, posters, picture books, poetry, nonfiction trade books, reference materials and reliable Internet sources.

Essential Questions:

- What skills are required to read an informational text? How do those skills differ from genre to genre?
- How do the skills required to read information differ from those required to read a literary work? Why are they different?
- How does the organizational structure of an informational text as well as an understanding of embedded text features help a reader to more thoroughly comprehend an informational text?

- How does an extensive knowledge of an historical time period or specific scientific content help a reader to more fully understand the events that take place in an informational text?

Acquired Knowledge:

- Informational book features (i.e., heading, subhead, bold words, visuals, glossary, index, table of contents, etc.) help a reader to understand a text.
- Text features that are embedded into a text are purposefully placed to support the information provided in the text.
- News articles follow a specific structure (i.e., inverted pyramid) and include factual, unbiased information. Opinion pieces (i.e., editorials, columns, letters to the editor) present a biased point of view but are also considered nonfiction.
- Biographies, autobiographies, memoirs and works of narrative nonfiction provide a personal or individual interpretation of historical events.
- Nonfiction essays and works of history/science/economics are structured and factual works that support research and investigation.
- Speeches provide a personal account or reflection of an historical or memorable event; speeches are intended to be read aloud.
- Readers need to recognize bias in nonfiction writing.
- Each subsection of a text serves a specific purpose and contributes to the understanding of the whole text itself.
- Evaluate the similarities and differences in information from different mediums focusing on the same topic.
- Information obtained through nonfiction reading helps the reader to evaluate the authenticity of another text (e.g., *the Lost Boys of the Sudan*; waterborne illnesses; *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park).
- There are five signposts of nonfiction that, if attended to, will help a reader consider an author's purpose and how it leads to main or central idea: contrasts and contradictions, extreme or absolute language, numbers and statistics, quoted words and word gaps.
- Highlighting a text and chunking and annotating it will help a reader to remain active when reading and comprehend an informational text, even one above his/her independent reading level. Identifying such key details allow a reader to record an objective summary.
- A reader must consider the information provided in an informational text and the information provided in embedded text features in cooperation; the facts are intended to support each other and lead to greater understanding for a reader.
- Text-based evidence (e.g., details, specific examples and quotes) must be used to support one's thoughts when responding to a question related to a reading.

Acquired Skills:

- Identify bias when reading a nonfiction text such as a newspaper, magazine or online article and will provide a possible explanation for such biases
- Explain why a writer chose to organize a text in such a fashion and respond to questions about the text using such organizational structures
- Highlight and annotate a text to promote active reading, utilize notes to analyze and evaluate the text and write an objective summary of the text including information from all subsections
- Compare and contrast different mediums (i.e., print, video, or multimedia) focusing on the same topic and evaluate similarities and differences in information provided and effectiveness of communication
- Utilize the information obtained when reading a nonfiction text to determine the accuracy of information presented in another work
- Identify nonfiction signposts as they are presented in informational texts and explain not only why the writer may have chosen to include that signpost, but also how that information supports the central idea of the informational work
- Read a variety of informational texts at 7th grade text-complexity, identify the topic and central idea or 'gist' of the text and identify key details from each subsection that scaffold to that main idea (i.e., highlighting key details). Use these details to draft an objective summary and to respond to text-dependent questions.
- Cite several details, specific examples and quotes from the text to support one's thoughts when responding to a question related to a reading.

Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed

Formative:

- Graphic organizers, highlights and margin notes
- Student notes during note-taking while reading
- Teacher conferences, small group meetings, large group discussions and anecdotal records

Summative:

- Objective summaries of texts
- Socratic Seminar-graded discussions

Benchmark:

- Research project related to various events in African countries
- District Benchmarks for writing in response to reading.

Instructional Materials:

Core:

Books:

A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park

Collections, Grade 7 (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015)

Language of Literature, Grade 7 (McDougal Little, 2002)

- **Teachers may select from the following:**

- "from The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt"

- "from The Autobiography of Malcolm X"

- "from Barrio Boy" by Ernesto Galarza

Supplemental:

Other nonfiction texts

"Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death"

"Gettysburg Address"

"Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave"

Science textbook

Social Studies textbook

Newspaper articles

Magazine articles

Professional Resources:

- *Reading Nonfiction: Notice & Note Stances, Signposts and Strategies* by Kyleene Beers and Robert E. Probst
- *When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do* by Kyleene Beers
- *I Read It, But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers* by Cris Tovani
- *Building Reading Comprehension Habits in Grades 6-12: A Toolkit of Classroom Activities* by Jeff Zwiers

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Reading teachers can co-teach with Science or Social Studies teachers to help students utilize text features to more effectively read a nonfiction text. Such co-planning and co-teaching is at the heart of a true team model.
- Incorporating nonfiction reading to build background knowledge preceding a fiction novel or before reading a nonfiction memoir or biography helps students to grasp the concepts and issues presented in the book in a more global view.

Technology Connections:

- Various newspapers available on-line (i.e., www.nj.com)
- NewsELA is an online website that provides unlimited access to hundreds of leveled news articles with Common Core aligned quizzes :
<https://newsela.com/>
- Teacher and researcher Kelly Gallagher provides an Article of the Week, which is selected for its relevance to the lives of today's young adults:
<http://www.kellygallagher.org/article-of-the-week/>
- District databases (passwords available from the Fisher Middle School Media Specialist)
- Videos can be used to support and supplement the reading of a nonfiction text; information presented visually helps to support visual learners and can provide background information for struggling readers
- Interviews or presentations are often available online (audio or video)
- Websites:
 - American Library Association Nonfiction Book Awards for Young Adults at <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/nonfiction-award>
 - Interactive Organizers by Read, Write Think at <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/>
 - Graphic Organizers by Teacher Files at http://www.teacherfiles.com/resources_organizers.htm

Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:

- Different texts on the same topic can be provided for students; they can be assigned by reading level to embed differentiation into the lesson
- Grade-level texts can be chunked and student annotations can be scaffolded to support their independence as they read a text within the appropriate grade band
- Audio or video support can be provided for students who learn best orally or visually
- Repeated readings of informational texts: read aloud, read along, listen to a tape, student tracks words with finger or pointer, student reads orally, student reads independently
- Allow students to self-select texts (topic and/or reading level), again, providing many different options in topic or reading level
- Students can be provided graphic organizers to take notes while they read a nonfiction text. Doing so will help them to identify main ideas and key details and will help them to recall information. To differentiate for student strengths and needs, graphic organizers can be differentiated.

List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:

Reading Standards for Informational Texts
RI.7.1; RI.7.5; RI.7.7; RI.7.8; RI.7.9

Section 4: Narrative Writing

Pacing: 23 Days

Why Is This Unit Important?

This unit will focus on the creation of stories, either real or imagined. The Big Ideas imbedded throughout this unit are:

- The goal of narrative writing is to teach students to retell a sequence of events with precise detail and to write in such a way that a reader can easily follow events, even when the events are not presented in a linear fashion.
- It is essential that a student writes in great detail, including sensory images, with a voice and tone that is appropriate to purpose, task and audience, regardless of whether or not he or she actually experienced the events in the story.
- Dialogue is a powerful element to narrative writing when it is used to establish or resolve the conflict or to move a story forward.
- Narratives should be focused stories or, what Lucy Calkins calls, "small moments...very focused vignettes."

Enduring Understandings:

- Narrative stories contain common literary elements: character, setting, conflict, resolution and theme.
- Chronology or sequencing is essential when storytelling; it is important for a reader to attend to the chronology of a story, even when an author chooses to experiment with time (e.g., flashback, flash-forward).
- One goal of powerful writing is to include such vivid detail that the writer can visualize the events as they occur. This can occur when one writes from experience or from his/her background knowledge (i.e., writes a work inspired by a familiar fictional story).
- Dialogue should be included in a story only when it is used carefully and moves the story forward; dialogue should not be written as a conversation, without narration, within a story.
- When writing a work of fiction, a writer must also focus on a small moment and must ensure that each event in the plot leads the characters from a conflict to a resolution; the events must be focused.
- Focusing one's story writing onto a small moment enables a writer to focus the story's emotion and to build tension in a narrative, a tension that is relieved through the resolution of the conflict.

Essential Questions:

- How does narrative writing differ from expository or argumentative writing?
- What is the author's purpose within narrative writing?
- What is the benefit of writing from one's knowledge or experience rather than from one's imagination? What is limited when writing only from experience?
- What is sensory detail? What does it add to a story?
- Does a conflict always have to be resolved?
- Can too much dialogue hurt a story's narration?
- Why is sequencing important? What can an author do when he/she does not want to write in a chronologically linear fashion? What does he/she have to provide so the reader easily follows shifts in time and place?

Acquired Knowledge:

- A story must engage a reader and must orient him or her by establishing a clear context and point of view at the outset of the story.
- Narratives include complex characters, setting, conflict, a plot that unfolds naturally, resolution and theme, all of which are described and explained using specific sensory details.
- The conflict introduced in the exposition must flow from the ideas presented in the story and must be satisfactorily resolved in the story's resolution or must strategically end without a resolution (e.g., intentional cliffhanger). The conflict and resolution must lead the reader to theme.
- In addition to transition words, a writer can use a variety of techniques to convey sequence, shift from one time frame to another (i.e., flashback), shift from one setting to another and show relationships among events or experiences.
- Word choice is an essential element of story writing, not only to convey a powerful story and message, but also to create mood within a story.
- The conflict may be resolved or the writer may choose to leave the reader thinking; either way, the conclusion of a story must be satisfying.
- A theme may be specifically stated or it can be implied; it is clearly conveyed as events unfold.
- After reading a fictional work, one can continue narrating the story, applying the information learned in this unit of study and writing the next chapter or retelling the story from a different perspective.

Acquired Skills:

- Establish a clear context and point of view in the exposition of a story by including narrative elements in the introduction and applying lead strategies for narrative writing.
- Create narrative pieces that include key literary elements (character, setting, conflict, plot, resolution and theme), where conflict and resolution are connected and where the progression of the plot leads a reader to a clearly stated or implied theme.
- Include sensory detail and vivid imagery when describing characters, setting, or events in a narrative work.
- Apply the concepts of external and/or internal conflict when drafting a narrative work and include a satisfactory resolution to such conflicts by the end of the piece.
- Use transition words to assist the reader with changes in time, place, or event and apply his/her understanding of additional techniques to help a reader shift time/place/event (i.e., flashback, flash-forward, etc.).
- Use powerful words, including those learned through vocabulary instruction, to create powerful images, emotion and mood in the story.
- Organize the story around a central message or theme, which can be specifically stated or implied and reveals itself as the story's events unfold.
- Utilize information provided in a narrative text and draft another chapter or retell the story from a different character's point of view.

NOTE: Grammar skills are highlighted in the 6th-8th grade Grammar Scope and Sequence included in the curriculum.

Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed

Formative:

- Teacher conference, observations and anecdotal records
- Writer's notebook
- Self-editing, peer-editing, or teacher-editing checklists

Summative:

- Development of several pieces of narrative writing throughout the unit

Benchmark:

- Submission of one narrative taken through the entire writing process and scored using the Six Traits of Writing for Narrative Writing Rubric

Instructional Materials:

Core:

- *Collections, Grade 7* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015)
- Language Network and Teacher Resource Kit (McDougall Littell, 2001)

Supplemental:

- Graphic organizers and revising/editing checklists
- Writers notebook materials provided through district professional development; additional copies available through the Language Arts Supervisor

Professional Resources:

- *Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide for Middle School* by Ruth Culham
- *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage and Style into Writer's Workshop* by Jeff Anderson
- *Lessons That Change Writers* by Nancie Atwell
- *Notebook Know-How: Strategies for the Writer's Notebook* by Aimee Buckner
- *What a Writer Needs* by Ralph Fletcher
- *Teaching Adolescent Writers* by Kelley Gallagher

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Students can be encouraged to write narrative pieces that connect to topics of interest from their studies in other classes
- Students can be encouraged to write historical fiction or science fiction stories and embed factual information into their narrative piece
- Multicultural picture books can be used as mentor texts and to help inspire students to write about their own cultures and traditions. The International Digital Children's Library (<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>) provides 5,000 different books, including both text and illustrations, representing hundreds of different cultures in hundreds of different languages.

Technology Connections:

- Professional websites such as Edutopia (<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/common-core-in-action-narrative-writing-heather-wolpert-gawron>) and Read Write Think (www.readwritethink.org) provide a plethora of lesson plan ideas focusing on narrative writing in the middle grades. A simple Google search will generate thousands of hits as well.
- Released narrative prompts and student responses from the PARCC assessment online at <https://prc.parcconline.org/assessments/parcc-released-items>
- Middle school students can draft, revise, edit and publish within Google Drive

Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:

- In the writing workshop, mini-lessons provide guidance for students to improve their writing. Such mini-lessons are planned based upon the needs of the students, thus incorporating differentiation into planning and instruction.
- Individual conferences are held, at which time teachers model good writing and provide individual instruction and/or feedback to students to meet each child's individual needs. Such a format supports the struggling writer while challenging the gifted writer.
- Models and mentor texts must be provided so that students struggling with a concept or struggling writers have exemplars surrounding them; individual or small group conferences provide time for a teacher to help students make connections between a mentor text or texts and his/her own writing.
- Gifted writers can always be challenged to add more detail or elaboration (i.e., sensory imagery, show...don't tell, expand) and to incorporate compositional risks into their writing.

List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:

Writing
W.7.3a; W.7.3b; W.7.3c; W.7.3d; W.7.3e

Section 5: Argumentative Essay Writing

Pacing: 23 Days

Why Is This Unit Important?

This unit will focus on the craft of argumentative essay writing and will help students to develop the skills needed to effectively support an argument in an attempt to persuade an audience. The Big Ideas embedded through this unit are:

- The purpose of argument writing is for a writer to draw upon factual information (i.e., history, current events, information presented in literature) in order to support his/her argument.
- The ideas presented in the essay must support a clearly worded thesis (purpose).
- Support must be factual, can take the form of specific examples and must be obtained from a reliable source (i.e., historical or scientific documents or research, current events, research from reliable sources, factual information related to literature, etc.).
- Strong essays must meet certain criteria (i.e., the opening and closing are evident, main idea is clearly expressed and is supported with specific details, word choice is powerful, voice is clear and powerful, sentences are complete and Standard English is used effectively) to be considered proficient.
- Writers continually revise and edit their work to improve their writing, specifically focusing on organization, development, voice, word choice, sentence structure and the conventions of writing.

Enduring Understandings:

- A thesis statement is the main claim that a writer is making (i.e., a position or argument) and is supporting throughout the essay.
- Support can take the form of definitions, details, or quotations, must be factual and must be retrieved from a reliable source.
- A writer's selection of words is one of the most important factors he/she must consider when writing; knowledge of one's audience and precision of language are essential.
- A writer's voice must be passionate and powerful so his/her message is clearly conveyed.
- Writing is never 'done' and can always be improved. It is a recursive process, so writers can move from stage to stage, either forward or backward.

Essential Questions:

- What is the purpose of argumentative essay writing?
- Why is it important to consider audience and purpose when organizing one's writing?
- What does the literary term *voice* mean? How does one include *voice* in his or her writing?
- Why is vivid and precise use of language so important?
- What makes one source more reliable than another? How can one evaluate a source for reliability?
- How does a writer support his or her thoughts without repeating himself or herself?
- What is *Standard English* and why is it important to use *Standard English* in academic writing?

Acquired Knowledge:

- An effective argument not only makes a claim about an issue, but also acknowledges alternate or opposing claims or points of view.
- To demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the topic, one must support a claim with logical reasoning and detailed, relevant evidence.
- Ideas must all interconnect and flow naturally.
- Argumentative writing sustains an objective style and tone based solely on fact.
- Argumentative writing sustains an objective style and tone based solely on fact.
- The voice a writer projects in an argumentative piece must be passionate and convincing; the voice must match the purpose.
- A concluding paragraph or section must flow from the argument and end powerfully (i.e., call to action, symbolic ending, reconnection to the beginning, etc.).
- While organization and idea development are important, equally as important are sentence structure and conventions of language.

Acquired Skills:

- Provide multiple reasons supported by factual examples to support a position and acknowledge the opposing position or point of view when writing an argumentative piece
- Support a position by fully explaining the relevance of the factual evidence and by presenting a logical, detailed explanation of his/her reasoning
- Utilize transitions to create a natural flow and interconnection among ideas
- Maintain an objective style and tone appropriate for the purpose and audience of the piece

- Create arguments based solely on fact
- Write with a passionate, authentic and convincing voice that is appropriate to the purpose and audience of the piece
- Draft a conclusion paragraph or section that flows naturally from the argument and ends powerfully (i.e., call to action, symbolic ending, circular ending, etc.)
- Apply the rules of Standard English presented through mini-lessons as well as those offered during teacher conferences when drafting and when editing a draft

NOTE: Grammar skills are highlighted in the 6th – 8th grade Grammar Scope and Sequence included in the curriculum.

Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed

Formative:

- Graphic organizer such as a Roman Numeral outline or PMI Chart
- Teacher conference, observations and anecdotal records
- Writer’s notebook
- Self-editing, peer-editing, or teacher-editing checklists

Summative:

- Development of several pieces of argumentative writing throughout the unit

Benchmark:

- Submission of one argumentative piece of writing taken through the entire writing process and scored using the Six Traits of Writing for Argumentative Writing Rubric

Instructional Materials:

Core:

- *Collections, Grade 7* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015)
- Language Network and Teacher Resource Kit (McDougall Littell, 2001)
- Informational texts related to controversial issues to help build background knowledge on a topic or issue to be debated
- District databases including Facts on File: Issues and Controversies

Supplemental:

- Graphic organizers
- Writers notebook materials provided through district professional development; additional copies available through the Language Arts Supervisor
- Self, peer and teacher revising and editing checklists

Professional Resources:

- *Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide for Middle School* by Ruth Culham
- *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage and Style into Writer's Workshop* by Jeff Anderson
- *Lessons That Change Writers* by Nancie Atwell
- *Revising the Essay: How to Teach Structure without Formula* by Gretchen Bernabei
- *Notebook Know-How: Strategies for the Writer's Notebook* by Aimee Buckner
- *What a Writer Needs* by Ralph Fletcher
- *Teaching Adolescent Writers* by Kelly Gallagher

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Argumentative essay prompts can connect to topics that are presented in other content areas.
- Environmental issues such as pollution and recycling can be addressed.
- Controversial issues connect to the first amendment and freedom of speech can be discussed in history class.
- Seatbelt laws or drug testing in schools easily connect to content discussed in health classes.
- Teachers can co-plan and co-teach, especially when in a team teaching situation.

Technology Connections:

- District databases such as Facts on File: Issues and Controversies provide pro-con articles for topics relevant to middle school learners.
- Professional websites such as Web English Teacher (<https://www.varsitytutors.com/englishteacher/argument>) and Read Write Think (www.readwritethink.org) provide a plethora of lesson plan ideas focusing on argumentative writing in the middle grades. A simple Google search will generate thousands of hits as well.
- In Common: Effective Writing for All Students, Collection of All Argument/Opinion Samples K-12 from Achieve the Core (http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/ArgumentOpinion_K-12WS.pdf)
- Released argumentative prompts and student responses from the PARCC assessment online at <https://prc.parcconline.org/assessments/parcc-released-items>
- Students can draft, revise and edit, peer review and publish within Google Drive

Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:

- Writing prompts can be differentiated based upon student interest, difficulty of content, etc. Students can also be asked to self-select the topic of their argumentative essay, especially when initially introducing form and structure; providing choice has been shown to motivate reluctant writers.
- In the writing workshop, mini-lessons provide guidance for students to improve their writing. Such mini-lessons are planned based upon the needs of the students, thus incorporating differentiation into planning and instruction.
- Individual conferences are held, at which time teachers model good writing and provide individual instruction and/or feedback to students to meet each child's individual needs. Such a format supports the struggling writer while challenging the gifted writer.
- Models and mentor texts must be provided so that students struggling with a concept or who are reluctant writers have exemplars surrounding them; individual or small group conferences provide time for a teacher to help students make connections between a mentor text(s) and their own writing.
- Gifted writers and thinkers can be challenged to write about content-based persuasive or argumentative essays. This could potentially require gifted readers and writers to conduct research, read nonfiction texts, synthesize information, evaluate research for bias, form his/her own opinion and then write a response in a structured way.

List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:

Writing

W.7.1a; W.7.1b; W.7.1c; W.7.1d; W.7.1e; W.7.4

Section 6: Informational/Explanatory Essay Writing

Pacing: 23 Days

Why Is This Unit Important?

This unit will focus on the craft of informational or explanatory essay writing and will help students to develop the skills needed to effectively communicate with an audience. The Big Ideas embedded through this unit are:

- The purpose of informational or explanatory essay writing is for the writer to synthesize information from primary and secondary sources and craft an essay that serves one of three purposes: 1) to increase a reader's knowledge of a subject, 2) to help a reader better understand a procedure or process, or 3) to provide a reader with an enhanced comprehension of a concept.
- The essay must focus on a clear topic and thoughts must be organized logically and coherently.
- A writer's selection of words is one of the most important factors he/she must consider when writing; precision of language is essential.
- Strong essays must meet certain criteria (i.e., the opening and closing are evident, main idea is clearly expressed and is supported with specific details, word choice is powerful and language is skillfully used, voice is clear and powerful, sentence structure is used correctly, a consistent verb tense is maintained throughout a piece and Standard English is used effectively) to be considered proficient.
- Writers continually revise and edit their work to improve their writing, specifically focusing on organization, development, voice, word choice, sentence structure and the conventions of writing.

Enduring Understandings:

- A topic must be supported using relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- When drafting an informational explanatory piece, a writer must attend to task, purpose and audience.
- A writer's voice and word choice must be passionate and powerful so his/her message is clearly conveyed.
- Writing is never 'done' and can always be improved. It is a recursive process, so writers can move from stage to stage, either forward or backward.

Essential Questions:

- What is the purpose of informational/explanatory writing?
- What differentiates essay writing from other forms of writing (i.e., narrative, nonfiction or research writing, etc.)?
- How does a writer support his or her thoughts without repeating himself or herself? How does one use support to strengthen a work?
- What makes a source more 'reliable' than another?

- Why is it important to consider audience and purpose when organizing one's writing?
- What does the literary term *voice* mean? How does one include *voice* in his or her writing?
- Why is vivid and precise use of language so important?
- What is *Standard English* and why is it important to use *Standard English* in academic writing?

Acquired Knowledge:

- The topic must be supported with relevant and accurate facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- Key ideas must be connected to the topic and must flow with transitions from one point to the next, creating cohesion and clarifying ideas.
- Precise language must be straightforward in order to sustain an objective style that is appropriate for a reader seeking information.
- The voice a writer projects in an explanatory piece must be passionate and convincing; the voice must match the audience and writer's purpose.
- A concluding paragraph or section must flow logically from the information or explanation presented.

Acquired Skills:

- Support a topic with multiple relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- Organize information into paragraphs and connect all key ideas to the topic utilizing transitions, thus creating fluency and cohesion
- Utilize precise, straightforward language that creates an objective style appropriate for a written work intended to provide information to an audience
- Include compositional risks (i.e., personal anecdote, development of mood, etc.) that create a voice appropriate to the audience and purpose
- Draft a conclusion paragraph or section that flows logically from the information or explanation presented in the essay and effectively concludes thoughts presented in the work without unnecessarily repeating content
- Include content-specific, domain-specific, or technical terms (when appropriate) to explain ideas presented in the essay
- Apply the rules of Standard English presented through mini-lessons as well as those offered during teacher conferences when drafting and when editing his/her draft

NOTE: Grammar skills are highlighted in the 6-8 Grammar Scope and Sequence included in the curriculum.

Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed

Formative:

- Graphic organizers such as Cornell Notes, Roman Numeral outlines, etc.
- Teacher conference, observations and anecdotal records
- Writer's notebook
- Self-editing, peer-editing, or teacher-editing checklists

Summative:

- Development of several pieces of informational writing throughout the unit

Benchmark:

- Submission of one informational piece of writing taken through the entire writing process and scored using the Six Traits of Writing for Informative Writing Rubric

Instructional Materials:

Core:

- *Collections, Grade 7* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015)
- Language Network and Teacher Resource Kit (McDougall Littell, 2001)
- Informational texts to help build background knowledge on a topic or issue
- District databases for informational research

Supplemental:

- Graphic organizers
- Writers notebook materials provided through district professional development; additional copies available through the Language Arts Supervisor

Professional Resources:

- *Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide for Middle School* by Ruth Culham
- *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage and Style into Writer's Workshop* by Jeff Anderson
- *Lessons That Change Writers* by Nancie Atwell
- *Notebook Know-How: Strategies for the Writer's Notebook* by Aimee Buckner
- *What a Writer Needs* by Ralph Fletcher
- *Teaching Adolescent Writers* by Kelley Gallagher

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- One method a writer can use to support his/her argument is to use evidence from history. Thus, including the history teacher in the discussion of informational essay writing is key. Co-planning and co-teaching lessons on how to support one's argument using evidence from history would provide a wonderful co-teaching opportunity, especially in a team teaching environment.
- In addition to supporting one's position with history, a writer can also use works of literature to support his/her claim. Thus, using a text that connects to a time in history would again provide another opportunity for interdisciplinary work. For example, a passage about overcoming obstacles can be supporting using the Civil Rights Movement and the memoir *Warriors Don't Cry* (Beals) as evidence. This kind of cross-content reading is supported by the reading curriculum as well.

Technology Connections:

- District databases found on the District Discovery Page (<http://www.ewing.k12.nj.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=71>) can be used by students to conduct research and record notes
- Released informational prompts and student responses from the PARCC assessment online at <https://prc.parcconline.org/assessments/parcc-released-items>
- Students can draft, revise and edit, peer review and publish within Google Drive

Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:

- Topics can be assigned based upon student interest or topic complexity.
- Texts provided for note-taking can be differentiated by reading level, even if students are conducting research about the same topic.
- In the writing workshop, mini-lessons provide guidance for students to improve their writing. Such mini-lessons are planned based upon the needs of the students, thus incorporating differentiation into planning and instruction.
- Individual conferences are held, at which time teachers model good writing and provide individual instruction and/or feedback to students to meet each child's individual needs. Such a format supports the struggling writer while challenging the gifted writer.
- Models and mentor texts must be provided so that students struggling with a concept or who are reluctant writers have exemplars surrounding them; individual or small group conferences provide time for a teacher to help students make connections between a mentor text(s) and their own writing.
- Gifted writers and thinkers can be challenged to think beyond the literal by providing them with insightful, powerful, somewhat challenging quotes as the focus of explanatory essays. Students can also be given time to conduct research on the history, interpretation and use of selected quotes.

List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:

Writing Standards

W.7.2a; W.7.2b; W.7.2c; W.7.2d; W.7.2e; W.7.2f

Language Standards

LS.7.6

Section 7: Research Simulation Tasks, Literary Analysis Tasks and Writing across Multiple Sources Pacing: 23 Days

Why Is This Unit Important?

Synthesizing information from a variety of different sources and supporting a thesis with details written in one's own words or cited from its original source is an essential skill across all content areas. The Big Ideas included in this unit of study are:

- A clearly written thesis statement will convey the main idea of an essay or research paper.
- Details extrapolated from different sources and from different kinds of sources (i.e., books, newspapers, videos, radio addresses, speeches, internet resources, etc.) must be used to support a thesis statement; synthesis of information from a variety of sources is key.
- Citing quotes or newly acquired information obtained through research is necessary to avoid the accusation of *plagiarism*.
- Writing a narrative, argumentative, or informational essay including information synthesized from multiple sources is a skill that will carry a student through high school and into college.

Enduring Understandings:

- A research simulation task (RST) requires that students synthesize information across informational sources and respond to a text-based question using evidence from multiple sources. A literary analysis task (LAT) requires the same cross-source writing, but it involves works of fiction rather than works of information.
- The main idea of an RST or LAT must be summarized in one sentence; this is called the thesis statement. The remainder of the RST or LAT must provide support for this statement.
- Primary sources (i.e., speech, interview) differ from secondary sources (i.e., biography, book, informational video) in that primary sources were created during the time under study while secondary sources interpret or analyze primary sources. Each has value, but each must be considered and used differently.
- Plagiarism, also known as literary theft, is defined by Merriam-Webster in the following way: to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; to use (another's production) without crediting the source.
- In-text citations or parenthetical citations are used to credit an original writer for his or her words or thoughts.

Essential Questions:

- How does one summarize the thoughts presented in an entire research or literary essay in only one sentence?
- What is the benefit of a primary source over a secondary source or vice versa?
- How is plagiarism of literary works similar to copyright infringement related to music lyrics?
- How can a writer synthesize information from myriad sources rather than write about each source in isolation?

Acquired Knowledge:

- The key ideas presented in a research simulation task (RST) or literary analysis task (LAT) must clearly connect to and support the thesis statement.
- The thesis statement must be supported with accurate facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- The thesis statement must be supported with accurate facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- Beyond simply gathering evidence, it is important to utilize multiple print and digital sources to gather data, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others.
- Note cards and source cards help a reader and writer to organize notes and sources in order to organize the paper and avoid plagiarism.
- Precise language sustains an objective style appropriate for a reader seeking information.
- To avoid plagiarism, one must give credit to an original source by providing in-text or parenthetical citations.
- The conclusion of the RST or LAT must flow logically from the information presented or explanation provided.

Acquired Skills:

- Create a thesis statement that explains the main idea of the paper and is supported by key ideas presented in the paper
- Utilize accurate facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations and other examples to support the thesis statement
- Assess the reliability of sources and gather information from multiple sources, including both print and digital sources
- Quote or paraphrase data and conclusions obtained through research and provide explanations in one's own wording
- Utilize a graphic organizer or note cards when conducting research and taking notes and create source cards that include bibliographic information of all sources used

- Use precise language that sustains an objective style appropriate for a reader seeking information
- Include in-text or parenthetical citations to reference a source when quoting or paraphrasing newly acquired information
- Draft a conclusion paragraph or section that flows logically from the information and explanations presented in the RST/LAT
- Apply the rules of Standard English presented through mini-lessons as well as those offered during teacher conferences when drafting and when editing his/her draft

NOTE: Grammar skills are highlighted in the 6-8 Grammar Scope and Sequence included in the curriculum.

Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed

Formative:

- Graphic organizer such as Cornell Notes or Roman Numeral outline
- Teacher conference, observations and anecdotal records
- Self-editing, peer-editing, or teacher-editing checklists

Summative:

- Assorted Simulation Task and Literary Analysis Tasks completed throughout the unit

Benchmark:

- Simulation Task and Literary Analysis Task using the PARCC Scoring Rubric for Prose Constructed Response Items: Research

Instructional Materials:

Core:

- *Collections, Grade 7* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015)
- Language Network, Teacher Resource Kit and Research Report Resource Book (McDougall Littell, 2001)

Supplemental:

- Graphic organizers such as Cornell Notes or an outline to prewrite and organize ideas
- Index cards for notes and envelopes or rings to keep note cards organized
- MLA reference books and citation examples
- Self, peer and teacher revising and editing checklists

- Research materials including online resources, district databases, books and videos
 - NOTE: It is recommended that Language Arts teachers involve the Media Specialist during the research process.

Professional Resources:

- McDougal Littell’s Research Report Resource Book
- *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage and Style into Writer’s Workshop* by Jeff Anderson
- *Lessons That Change Writers* by Nancie Atwell
- *Notebook Know-How: Strategies for the Writer’s Notebook* by Aimee Buckner
- *What a Writer Needs* by Ralph Fletcher
- *Teaching Adolescent Writers* by Kelley Gallagher

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- The expectations specified for completion of Research Simulation Tasks (RSTs) in English class mirror those specified for completion of Document Based Questions (DBQs) in history or social studies. Teachers are expected to title any RST-DBQ using both initials to help students make connections to the skills required in both classes.
- RST training has been provided for teachers of the humanities, so short texts can be provided in visual and performing arts classes and cross-source writing can be expected.
- Students should be encouraged to read informational texts and consider the information presented in multiple texts on the same topic across content areas. These skills and expectations apply to all classes at the middle level.

Technology Connections:

- Online resources and district databases to conduct research
- Videos to add research opportunities for visual learners
- Released RST and LAT prompts and proficient student responses from the PARCC assessment online at <https://prc.parcconline.org/assessments/parcc-released-items>
- Students can draft, revise and edit, peer review and publish within Google Drive

Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:

- Differentiating research topics is a great way to meet the needs of struggling readers and writers as well as gifted learners.
- Vetting websites for accuracy and reading level is a great way for teachers to provide appropriate resources for all students in a class. Teachers can create a list of links that they have already vetted and they can guide students to websites they feel best meet their needs.

- In the writing workshop, mini-lessons provide guidance for students to improve their writing. Such mini-lessons are planned based upon the needs of the students, thus incorporating differentiation into planning and instruction.
- Individual conferences are held, at which time teachers model good writing and provide individual instruction and/or feedback to students to meet each child's individual needs. Such a format supports the struggling writer while challenging the gifted writer.
- Models and mentor texts must be provided so that students struggling with a concept or who are reluctant writers have exemplars surrounding them; individual or small group conferences provide time for a teacher to help students make connections between a mentor text(s) and their own writing.

List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

Writing Standards

W.7.2a; W.7.2b; W.7.2d; W.7.2e; W.7.2f; W.7.6; W.7.7; W.7.8; W.7.9

Section 8: Vocabulary Development

Pacing: Vocabulary is taught, as necessary, throughout the entire school year. It is connected to the other units in various ways.

Why Is This Unit Important?

Vocabulary development will occur in and among other lessons throughout the school year and will focus on the skills needed for students to correctly decode unknown words, utilize 'clues' to define unknown terms in context and use newly acquired vocabulary in one's original writing. Vocabulary instruction will occur in both reading and writing classes/blocks and when possible, Science and Social Studies. The Big Ideas embedded throughout this unit, which are supported by *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*, are:

- Vocabulary refers to the words used to communicate effectively and can be described as either oral vocabulary or reading vocabulary.
- "If readers can understand the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading" (*Put Reading First*, 2003).
- Words often consist of word parts which, themselves, have meaning. Knowing the meanings of word parts often helps one to define new vocabulary terms.
- Pronunciation of newly learned vocabulary terms requires a strong phonemic awareness.
- Writers intentionally provide clues within the context of a sentence to help readers understand new key terms, thus helping readers to fully comprehend a text.
- Research supports the fact that providing opportunities for students to participate in 'word play' (i.e., creating pictures, symbols, puns, original definitions, etc.) is the single most powerful factor in language acquisition (Allen, Marzano).
- Using dictionaries, glossaries and thesauri will help to broaden and deepen students' knowledge of words.
- True understanding of a word is evident when that word is incorporated into one's written or spoken vocabulary.

Enduring Understandings:

- Oral vocabulary or Spoken English and reading vocabulary or Standard Written English, are often very different, each with its own set of rules.
- Readers must know what most of the words in a text mean before they can understand what they are reading.
- Knowing some common prefixes and suffixes (affixes), base words and root words can help students learn the meanings of many new words.
- There are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds; understanding those relationships helps to develop one's phonemic awareness, thus strengthening his/her ability to decode unknown words.

- Providing time for students to explore and experiment with words (i.e., word work) promotes language acquisition.
- Because students learn many word meanings indirectly, or from context, it is important that they learn to use context clues effectively.
- It is not possible for teachers to provide specific instruction for all the words their students need to know. Thus, students need to develop effective word-learning strategies, such as how to use a dictionary or other reference material.
- Including vocabulary words into one's writing is a powerful tool to develop the craft of writing.

Essential Questions:

- Why is it considered 'unacceptable' or 'inappropriate' to write as one speaks?
- Where did base words, word parts or affixes originate and how can they help a reader to decode and/or define new words?
- How important is it for a student to pronounce correctly a new vocabulary term or correctly read the pronunciation key in a dictionary?
- How can a writer artfully include context clues in his/her writing?
- What can one do in order to become familiar with a new vocabulary word and make it part of his or her permanent language, either oral or written?
- Is there a difference between the skills used to 'look up' a word in a paper dictionary versus an online dictionary?

Acquired Knowledge:

- Standard Written English and Spoken English follow a different set of rules; each is acceptable in the appropriate situation.
- Having a strong understanding of vocabulary increases one's reading comprehension.
- Clues are often provided to help a reader understand an unknown word; it is essential that students are taught how to find and utilize these clues.
- Semantic or context clues (i.e., a definition, synonym, example, comparison or contrast)
- Syntactic clues (the words position or function in a sentence)
- A word's sounds, spellings and meaningful parts
- Consulting reference materials (i.e., dictionary, thesaurus, online reference material)
- Knowing the origin of a word (i.e., root) and the meanings of word parts (i.e., affixes) will help one to decode and understand an unknown term.
- Words can have connotative or denotative meanings (i.e., figures of speech) which affect the reader's interpretation of the sentence (i.e., 6th grade – personification; 7th grade – allegory; 8th grade – verbal irony).

Acquired Skills:

- Use Standard Written English in his/her formal writing assignments and experiment with Spoken English when appropriate (i.e., within dialogue in a narrative piece).
- Add to his/her list of high frequency words by continually reading and improving his/her oral reading fluency and reading rate.
- Apply information obtained in class regarding using context clues to define key terms and infer word meanings by utilizing the context clues provided in a text.
- Apply knowledge of Greek and Latin roots through class activities and when encountering unknown words in a text.
- Experiment with affixes and explain how adding a prefix or suffix changes the meaning of a word.
- Correctly use new vocabulary terms in original writing.
- Use reference materials to clarify meaning, pronunciation, or etymology of a new word.
- When possible, apply a new word to a cross-content or interdisciplinary activity.

Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed

Formative:

- Visual images or symbols to represent a new term
- Word work activities (i.e., think aloud to infer meaning from a context clue)
- Incorporation of vocabulary into original writing

Summative:

- Various vocabulary tests and quizzes

Instructional Materials:

Core:

- *Collections, Grade 7* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015)
- Dolch Word List
- *100 Words to Make You Sound Smart* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006)
- *100 Words Almost Everyone Confuses and Misuses* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2004)
- *100 Words to Make you Sound Great* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008)
- *100 Words Every High School Freshman Should Know* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2004)
- *100 Words Almost Everyone Mispronounces* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008)
- *Vocabulary Workshop* (William H. Sadlier, 2008), Levels A – C

Professional Resources:

- *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy* by Janet Allen
- *More Tools for Teaching Content Literacy* by Janet Allen
- *Inside Words: Tools for Teaching Academic Vocabulary Grades 4-12* by Janet Allen
- *Words, Words, Words: Teaching Vocabulary in Grades 4-12* by Janet Allen
- *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling Instruction* by Donald R. Bear, Marcia Invernizzi, Shane Templeton and Francine Johnston
- *Instructional Strategies for Teaching Content Vocabulary Grades 4-12* by Janis M. Harmon, Karen D. Wood and Wanda B. Hendrick
- *Building Academic Vocabulary* by Robert Marzano

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Cross-content vocabulary instruction helps students to build bridges across content areas and apply the skills learned related to word play and word study beyond the Language Arts classroom. Word parts can be studied in other classes, as can using context clues to define an unknown term (i.e., textbooks). Language Arts – Reading and Writing teachers should work with all teachers on their academic team in order to help students apply word work skills across content areas.
- Robert Marzano’s *Building Academic Vocabulary* provides cross-content vocabulary lists by levels, all of which were generated based upon meta-analyses of state standardized assessments. Reading and writing teachers can work with all other teachers on the team to see if and when the words offered in Marzano’s book could be included in a lesson on word study.

Technology Connections:

- The following websites support the William H. Sadlier Vocabulary Workshop series:
 - www.vocabtest.com
 - Provides online practice exercises such as Synonym Practice and Reverse Definitions
 - http://www.sadlier-oxford.com/vocabulary/levels_a2h.cfm?sp=student
 - Provides activities such as iWords Audio, Games and Puzzles for vocabulary books A – H
- Websites such as Learn That (www.learnthat.org/roots.html) and Education.com (www.education.com/reference/article/list-affixes/) provide lists of roots and affixes that can be used in class.
- The website Vocabulary Can Be Fun (www.vocabulary.co.il/) has an abundance of vocabulary building games for students in middle and high school. The games are divided into two sections, New Vocabulary Games and Classic Vocabulary Games.
- SuperKids (www.superkids.com/aweb/tools/words/junior) provides a SuperKids Vocabulary Builder Word of the Day specifically for students in 6th – 9th grades.

- A simple Google search with key words such as Greek and Latin Roots, affixes, vocabulary games for middle school, or word work in middle school will result in thousands of matches.

Accommodations or Modifications for Special Education, ESL or Gifted Learners:

- Word lists can be differentiated to meet the varying needs of students within a classroom; each student can have a vocabulary list specifically designed to meet his/her needs. Doing so provides support for the struggling reader and writer while challenging the gifted reader/writer.
- Students should be encouraged to generate their own vocabulary lists based upon what they are reading. Some students may choose words from the novel they are reading, while other students may feel they need additional support with Science terms for the week.
- Selecting a Word of the Day or asking a student to select a Word of the Day provides the opportunity for differentiation.
- Differentiated assessments can be provided. One student can receive a graphic organizer to analyze a word or a list of words and a second student can be asked to write an original work including several new words. Such differentiation requires little preparation on the part of the teacher but does meet the specific needs of students in a heterogeneously grouped class.

List of Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:

Language Standards

LS.7.1; LS.7.3; LS.7.4a; LS.7.4b; LS.7.4c; LS.7.4d; LS.7.5a; LS.7.5b; LS.7.5c; LS.7.6

Grade 7 Language Skills List
Please note: <i>Conventions in italics and marked with an asterisk (*) denote skills and understandings that are progressive and require continued attention at higher grade levels as the sophistication of student writing and speaking increases.</i>
Observe conventions of grammar and usage:
Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their functions in specific sentences.
Choose among simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas.
<i>*Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, avoiding misplaced and dangling modifiers.</i>
Observe conventions of capitalization, punctuation and spelling:
Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.
Spell correctly.
Make effective language choices:
<i>*Choose words and phrases that express ideas concisely, eliminating wordiness and redundancy. This is also known as precision of language.</i>
<i>*Choose words and phrases to add emotion and/or voice to one's writing.</i>
Determine word meanings (based on grade 7 reading):
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words through the use of one or more strategies, such as using semantic clues (e.g. definitions, examples, or restatements in text); using syntactic clues (e.g. the word's position or function in the sentence); analyzing the word's sounds, spelling and meaningful parts; and consulting reference materials, both print and digital.
Use a known root as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word (e.g. <i>belligerent, bellicose, rebel</i>).
Verify the preliminary determination of a word's meaning (e.g. by checking the inferred meaning in context or looking up the word in a dictionary).
Interpret various figures of speech (e.g. allegory) relevant to a particular text.
Understand word relationships:
Trace the network of uses and meanings that different words have and the interrelationships among those meanings and uses.
Distinguish a word from other words with similar denotations but different connotations.
Use words that are common in conversational vocabulary as well as grade-appropriate academic vocabulary and domain-specific words (in English language arts, history/social studies and science), either taught directly or acquired through reading and responding to texts.

Glossary of Key Terms

Argument Writing – The purpose is for a writer to change the reader’s point of view, to bring about some action on the reader’s part, or to ask the reader to accept the writer’s explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue, or problem; claims or opinions are offered and arguments are based upon facts, definition, quotations or details (Common Core State Standard, Appendix A).

Close Reading – (Analytic reading) stresses engaging with a text of sufficient complexity and examining meaning thoroughly and methodically, encouraging students to read and reread deliberately; requires that students understand the central ideas and key supporting details in a text (PARCC, 2011).

Expository Nonfiction – The purpose is for a writer to inform a reader about a specific topic, one in which the writer may or may not have had prior knowledge; there is an overarching topic communicated in a thesis and factual information about subtopics organized into paragraphs.

Informational/Explanatory Writing – The purpose is to increase a reader’s knowledge of a subject, to help readers better understand a procedure or process, or to provide readers with an enhanced comprehension of a concept; this type of writing conveys information accurately (New Jersey Student Learning Standards, Appendix A).

Informational Text – Nonfiction texts, including but not limited to, biographies, autobiographies and memoirs; nonfiction books including picture books, textbooks and informational books; magazines, newspapers and other periodicals; online resources including information provided on .org, .edu and .gov websites.

Literary Text – Refers to fictional works including short stories of fiction, chapter books, poems and other narratives.

Narrative Writing – The purpose is to inform, instruct, persuade, or entertain; the writer conveys experience, either real or imaginary and uses time as its deep structure (New Jersey Student Learning Standards, Appendix A).

Reading and Writing Workshop – An instructional philosophy and class structure where students participate in a focused mini-lesson and apply that skill to a text at each student’s independent reading or writing level or in an instructional group with guidance and support; instruction and application occur daily and differentiation based upon reading level or writing need is embedded in the framework.

Text-Based Writing – Writing that requires a student to provide evidence from a specific text as support for his/her response.

Sample Standards Integration

Grade 7

21st Century Skills & Career Readiness Practices

CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.

In grade seven, the language arts curriculum is designed to develop a variety of communication skills. Students are provided with numerous opportunities to practice their written communication skills through formal and informal writing activities. There is a focus on informational and argumentative writing, which will be used in academic settings, as well as in many different careers. We emphasize the importance of written communication, as it is not only an academic skill, but an important life skill.

Students also learn the importance of clear verbal communication skills. These skills are refined through collaborative groups and Socratic seminars. Socratic seminars teach students how to be critical readers and critical thinkers. Students learn valuable questioning and reasoning skills through discussion.

Technology Integration:

8.18.A.1: Demonstrate knowledge of a real world problem using digital tools.

In grade 7, students conduct research in several different units. In section 2, while reading *A Long Walk to Water*, students conduct research on water-borne illnesses. Additionally, they complete extensive research on countries on the continent of Africa and share current events with one another.

Real world problems, such as the Kurdish Refugee crisis and water shortages are issues that affect the people of Africa. Students research these issues using digital tools and use a variety of digital applications to share their findings with classmates.

Interdisciplinary Connection: Social Studies

6.1 U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.

6.2 World History/Global Studies: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically and systematically about how past interactions of people, cultures, and the environment affect issues across time and cultures. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions as socially and ethically responsible world citizens in the 21st century.

In grade seven, students complete genre studies on historical fiction. Additionally, students read a variety of informational texts. Through reading, discussions, Socratic seminars, students will think analytically about past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment. As a result, students can act as globally responsible citizens in this ever-changing and interconnected world. Through literature and informational texts, students will learn about our American heritage, and the events that shape our values and traditions as Americans. Specific examples include: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, A Long Walk to Water, "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death, The Gettysburg Address,"* and "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave."

