Atlantic Canada
English Language Arts Curriculum

New Brunswick
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New Nouveau Brunswick

CURRICULUM

English Language Arts

Middle Level

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New Brunswick
Pauline Allen
Barbara Fullerton
Susan MacDonald
Kathy Prosser
Zoë Watson
Dawn Weatherbie Morehouse
Darlene Whitehouse-Sheehan

Nova Scotia
Ann Blackwood
Linda Cook
Barry Fox
Judith Mossip
Peter Smith
Doreen Valverde

Newfoundland and Labrador
Eldred Barnes
Linda Coles
Edward Jones
Betty King
Florence Samson

Prince Edward Island
Mary Crane
Debbie Dunn
Percy MacGougan
Lloyd Mallard
Cathy Parsons
Jeanette Scott

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Introduction

Background

The curriculum described in *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum, 1996* and in this document, has been planned and developed collaboratively by regional committees for the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation. The Atlantic Canada English language arts curriculum has been developed with the intent of

- responding to continually evolving education needs of students and society
- providing greater opportunities for all students to become literate
- preparing students for the literacy challenges they will face throughout their lives
- bringing greater coherence to teaching and learning in English language arts across the Atlantic provinces

Pervasive, ongoing changes in society—for example, rapidly expanding use of technologies—require a corresponding shift in learning opportunities in order for students to develop relevant knowledge, skills, strategies, processes, and attitudes that will enable them to function well as individuals, citizens, workers, and learners. To function productively and participate fully in our increasingly sophisticated, technological, information-based society, citizens will need broad literacy abilities, and they will need to use these abilities flexibly.

The Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum

The Atlantic Canada English language arts curriculum is shaped by the vision of enabling and encouraging students to become reflective, articulate, literate individuals who use language successfully for learning and communication in personal and public contexts. This curriculum is based on the premise that learning experiences in English language arts should

- help students develop language fluency not only in the school setting, but also in their lives and in the wider world
- contribute toward students' achievement of the essential graduation learnings (See *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum*, pages 5-9, and following in this document.)

Purpose of the ELA Middle Level Curriculum Guide

Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum provides a comprehensive framework for developing an integrated language arts program for school entry to grade 12. *ELA Middle Level* has been developed to support teachers in the implementation of the English language arts curriculum. It focusses on the language arts curriculum by providing suggestions for teaching and learning, suggestions for assessment, and notes and vignettes. These two documents

- reflect current research, theory, and classroom practice
- provide a coherent, integrated view of the learning and teaching of English language arts
- place emphasis on the student as a learner
- provide flexibility for teachers in planning instruction to meet the needs of their students

The Nature of English Language Arts

English language arts encompasses the experience, study, and appreciation of language, literature, media, and communication. It involves language processes: speaking, listening, reading, viewing, writing and other ways of representing.

Language is the principal means through which we formulate thought and the medium through which we communicate thought with others. Thus, language in use underlies the processes of thinking involved in listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing and other ways of representing. The application of these interrelated language processes is fundamental to the development of language abilities, cultural understanding, and creative and critical thinking.

Language is learned most easily when the various processes are integrated and when skills and strategies are kept within meaningful language contexts. The curriculum guide specifies that English language arts be taught in an integrated manner so that the interrelationship between and among the language processes will be understood and applied by the students. This integrated approach should be based on students' prior experiences with language and on meaningful activities involving speaking, listening, reading, viewing, writing and other ways of representing.

The English language arts curriculum engages students in a range of experiences and interactions with a variety of texts designed to help them develop increasing control over language processes, use and respond to language effectively and purposefully, and understand why language and literacy are so central to their lives.

Principles Underlying the English Language Arts Curriculum

- Language is a primary instrument of thought and the most powerful tool students have for developing ideas and insights, for giving significance to their experiences, and for making sense of both their world and their possibilities within it.
- Language learning is an active process of constructing meaning, drawing on all sources and ways of knowing.
- Language learning is personal and intimately connected to individuality.
- Language expresses cultural identity.
- Language learning develops out of students' home language and their social and cultural experiences.
- Language learning is developmental. Students develop flexibility and fluency in their language use over time.
- Language is best learned when it is integrated. All the language processes are interrelated and interdependent.
- Language is learned holistically. Students best understand language concepts in context rather than in isolation.
- Students learn language through purposeful and challenging experiences designed around stimulating ideas, concepts, issues, and themes that are meaningful to them.
- Students learn best when they are aware of the strategies and processes they use to construct meaning and to solve information-related problems.
- Students need frequent opportunities to assess and evaluate their own learning and performance.
- In the process of learning, students need various forms of feedback from peers, teachers and others—at school, at home, and in the community.
- Language learning is continual and multidimensional; it can best be assessed by the use of multiple types of evidence that reflect authentic language use over time.
- Students must have opportunities to communicate in various modes what they know and are able to do.
- Assessment must be an integral and ongoing part of the learning process itself, not limited to final products.

Meeting the Needs of All Students

This curriculum is inclusive and is designed to help all learners reach their potential through a wide variety of learning experiences. The aim of the curriculum is to provide all students with equal entitlement to learning opportunities, including students who require individual education plans.

The development of students' literacy is shaped by many factors, including gender, social and cultural backgrounds, and the extent to which individual needs are met. In designing learning experiences for students, teachers should consider the learning needs, experiences, interests, and values of all students.

In recognizing and valuing the diversity of students, teachers might consider ways to

- provide a climate and design learning experiences to affirm the dignity and worth of all learners in the classroom community
- redress educational disadvantage—for example, as it relates to students living in poverty
- model the use of inclusive language, attitudes, and actions supportive of all learners
- adapt classroom organization, teaching strategies, assessment strategies, time, and learning resources to address learners' needs and build on their strengths
- provide opportunities for learners to work in a variety of learning contexts, including mixed-ability groupings
- identify and respond to diversity in students' learning styles
- build on students' individual levels of knowledge, skills, and attitudes
- design learning and assessment tasks that draw on learners' strengths
- ensure that learners use strengths as a means of tackling areas of difficulty
- use students' strengths and abilities to motivate and support learning
- offer multiple and varied avenues to learning
- celebrate the accomplishment of learning tasks that learners believed were too challenging for them

A Gender-Inclusive Curriculum

In a supportive learning environment, male and female students receive equitable access to resources, including the teacher's time and attention, technology, learning assistance, and a range of roles in group activities. It is important that the curriculum reflect the experiences and values of both male and female students and that texts and other learning resources include and reflect the interests, achievements, and perspectives of males and females.

Both male and female students are disadvantaged when oral, written, and visual language creates, reflects, and reinforces gender stereotyping. Through critical examination of the language of a range of texts, students can discover what the texts reveal about attitudes toward gender roles and how these attitudes are constructed and reinforced.

Teachers promote gender equity in their classrooms when they

- respect themselves and their students
- promote critical thinking
- address the power of language to define who we are
- confront their own stereotyping and gender biases
- become sensitive to their own verbal and non-verbal language

- model gender-fair language and respectful listening in all interactions with students
- refuse to tolerate harassment of students by self, colleagues, or classmates
- recognize knowledge as socially constructed
- recognize and appreciate subjective as well as rational knowledge
- use a variety of teaching strategies, recognizing that there are diverse ways of knowing
- include the experiences and perceptions of girls and women, boys and men, in all aspects of education
- recognize the contributions of women in all disciplines and throughout history
- ensure that the female experience is heard
- value the voice of women, their knowledge, and the significance of their experiences
- review curriculum materials for gender bias in roles (family, historical, work related), personality traits, activities, illustrations, and language
- articulate equally high expectations for male and female students

Valuing Social and Cultural Diversity

Social and cultural diversity is a resource for expanding and enriching the learning experiences of all students. Students can learn much from the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of their classmates in a community of learners where participants discuss and explore their own and others' customs, histories, traditions, values, beliefs, and ways of seeing and making sense of the world. In reading, viewing, and discussing a variety of texts, students from different social and cultural backgrounds can come to understand each other's perspectives, to realize that their ways of seeing and knowing are not the only ones possible, and to probe the complexity of the ideas and issues they are examining.

All students need to see their lives and experiences reflected in literature. To grow as readers and writers, students need opportunities to read and discuss the literature of their own and other cultures—to explore, for example, the differing conventions for storytelling and imaginative writing. Learning resources should include a range of texts that allows students to hear diverse social and cultural voices, to broaden their understanding of social and cultural diversity, and to examine the ways language and literature preserve and enrich culture.

English as Second Language (ESL) Students

Students from language backgrounds other than English add valuable language resources and experiences to the classroom. The first language, prior knowledge, and culture of ESL students should be valued, respected, and, whenever possible, incorporated in the curriculum. The different linguistic knowledge and experience of ESL students can be used to extend the understanding of linguistic diversity of all students in the class.

While ESL students should work toward achievement of the same curriculum outcomes as other students, they may approach the outcomes differently and may at times be working with different learning resources at different levels and in a different time frame from other students.

The learning environment and classroom organization should affirm cultural values to support ESL students and provide opportunities for individual and group learning. It is especially important for these students to have access to a range of learning experiences, including opportunities to use language for both formal and informal purposes.

Teachers may need to make explicit the ways in which different forms, styles, and registers of English are used for many different purposes. It is particularly important that ESL students make connections between their learning in English language arts and other curricular areas, and use learning contexts in other subjects to practise, reinforce, and extend their language skills.

Students with Language and Communication Difficulties

Some students may need specialized equipment such as braillers, magnification aids, word processors with spell checkers, and other computer programs with peripherals such as voice synthesizers or large print to help achieve outcomes. Speaking and listening outcomes can be understood to include all forms of verbal and non-verbal communication, including sign language and communicators.

Teachers should adapt learning contexts to provide support and challenge for all students, using the continuum of curriculum outcomes statements in a flexible way to plan learning experiences appropriate to students' learning needs. When specific outcomes are not attainable or appropriate for individual students, teachers can use statements of general curriculum outcomes, key-stage curriculum outcomes, and specific curriculum outcomes for previous and subsequent grade levels as reference points in setting learning goals for those students.

Diverse learning experiences, teaching and learning strategies, motivation, resources, and environments provide expanded opportunities for all learners to experience success as they work toward the achievement of outcomes. Many of the suggestions for teaching and learning in this guide provide access to a wide range of learners, simultaneously emphasizing both group support and individual activity. Similarly, the suggestions for using a variety of assessment practices provide diverse and multiple ways for students to demonstrate their achievements. Teachers may also find it helpful to refer to

guides for other grade levels for additional teaching, learning, and assessment suggestions to serve and support students with special needs.

The curriculum's flexibility with regard to the choice of texts offers opportunities to support students who have language difficulties. Students at the lower end of the achievement continuum in a class need appropriate opportunities to show what they *can* do. For example, in working toward a particular outcome, students who cannot operate very successfully with particular texts, should be given opportunities to demonstrate whether they can operate successfully with alternative activities or alternative texts—ones that are linguistically less complex or with which they might be more familiar in terms of the context and content.

Students with special needs benefit from a variety of grouping arrangements that allow optimum opportunities for meaningful teacher-student and student-student interaction. Diverse groupings include the following:

- large-group or whole-class instruction
- teacher-directed small-group instruction
- small-group learning
- co-operative learning groups
- one-to-one teacher-student instruction
- independent work
- partner learning
- peer or cross-age tutors

Gifted and Talented Students

The curriculum outcomes described in this guide provide goals and challenges for all students, including gifted and talented learners. Teachers should adapt learning contexts to stimulate and extend the learning of these students, using the continuum of curriculum outcomes statements to plan challenging learning experiences. For example, students who have already achieved the specific curriculum outcomes designated for their specific grade levels can work toward achievement of outcomes designated for the next.

In designing learning tasks for advanced learners, teachers should consider ways that students can extend their knowledge base, thinking processes, learning strategies, self-awareness, and insights. These learners also need significant opportunities to use the general curriculum outcomes framework to design their own learning experiences, which they may undertake individually or with learning partners.

Many of the suggestions for teaching and learning provide contexts for acceleration and enrichment—for example, the emphasis on experiment, inquiry, and critical perspectives. The curriculum's flexibility with regard to the choice of texts also offers opportunity for challenge and extension to students with special language abilities.

Gifted and talented students need opportunities to work in a variety of grouping arrangements, including both mixed-ability and similar-ability co-operative learning groups, interest groups, and partner learning.

Learning Preferences

Students have many ways of learning, knowing, understanding, and creating meaning. Research into the links between learning styles and preferences and the physiology and function of the brain has provided educators with useful concepts on the nature of learning. Howard Gardner, for example, identifies seven broad frames of mind or intelligences: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, body/kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Gardner believes that each learner has a unique combination of strengths and weaknesses in these seven areas, but that all of them can be more fully developed through diverse learning experiences. Other researchers and education psychologists use different descriptors to categorize learning preferences.

How students receive and process information and the ways in which they interact with peers and their environment are indicated by and contribute to their preferred learning styles. Most learners have a preferred learning style, depending on the situation and the type of information the student is dealing with, just as most teachers have a preferred teaching style. By reflecting on their own styles and preferences as learners and as teachers in various contexts, teachers can

- build on their own teaching-style strengths
- develop awareness and expertise in different learning and teaching styles
- recognize differences in student preferences
- vary teaching strategies to accommodate the different ways students learn

Learning experiences and resources that engage students' multiple ways of understanding allow them to focus on their learning processes and preferences. To enhance their opportunities for learning success, students need

- a variety of learning experiences to accommodate their diverse learning styles and preferences
- opportunities to reflect on their preferences and understand how they learn best

- opportunities to explore, experiment with, and use learning styles other than those they prefer
- opportunities to reflect on other factors that affect their learning—environmental, emotional, sociological, physical
- a flexible time line within which to complete their work

Engaging All Students

One of the greatest challenges to teachers is engaging students who feel alienated from learning in English language arts and from learning in general—students who lack confidence in themselves as learners, who have a potential that has not yet been realized. Among them are students who seem unable to concentrate, who lack everyday motivation for academic tasks, who rarely do homework, who fail to pass in assignments, who choose to remain on the periphery of small-group work, who cover up their writing attempts, fearing the judgments of peers, who are mortified if asked to read aloud, and who keep their opinions to themselves.

These students are significantly delayed when it comes to reading, writing, and relating. Some, though not all, exhibit behaviours in the classroom that further distance them from learning. Others are frequently absent from classes. Cumulatively, these are the disengaged learners.

These students need essentially the same experiences as their peers in the area of English language arts—experiences that

- engage students in authentic and worthwhile communication situations
- allow them to construct meaning and connect, collaborate, and communicate with each other
- form essential links between the world of the text and their own world
- give them a sense of ownership of learning and assessment tasks

They need additional experiences as well—experiences designed to engage them personally and meaningfully, to make their learning pursuits relevant. They need substantial support in reading and writing. They need positive and motivational feedback. They need all of these experiences within purposeful and interactive learning contexts. Ultimately, the English language arts curriculum for these students should prepare them for the world they will go into after high school completion.

Preparing students means engaging them with texts and with people from whom they can learn more about themselves and their world. Many of these students feel insecure about their own general knowledge and are reluctant to take part in class discussions, deferring to their peers, who seem more competent. Through the English language arts curriculum the students described above must find their *own* voice. The learning environment must be structured in such a way that these students, alongside their peers, develop

confidence and gain access to information and to community, and develop competence with using language for real purposes.

The greatest challenge in engaging these learners is finding an appropriate balance between supporting their needs by structuring opportunities for them to experience learning success and challenging them to grow as learners. Teachers need to have high expectations for all students and to articulate clearly these expectations.

Establishing Community

A supportive environment is crucial for students who lack confidence in themselves as learners. If a true community of learners is to be created, teachers need to demonstrate a valuing of all learners, emphasizing that diversity enhances everyone's experience of learning. It is crucial that this happen very early in the school year and that it be continually reinforced. This kind of early intervention is vital for the students who tend not to readily engage in the lesson.

If a climate sensitive and responsive to the needs of all students is to be created, the students must come to know one another. This builds the base for peer partnerships, for tutoring, sharing, and various other collaborative efforts. Through mini-lessons, workshops, and small-group dynamic exercises during initial classes, knowledge is shared about individual learning styles, interpersonal skills, and team building.

It is necessary that the teacher's role as facilitator be a very active one. The teacher circulates around the room, tuning in to the vocal and the silent members of each group, modelling ways of drawing everyone into the dialogue as well as ways of respecting and valuing each person's contribution, making mental notes about students to conference with on an individual basis.

Whenever there is within a class a level of comfort and trust built on teacher-student and student-peer relationships, the probability of the learner's engagement is multiplied. Having established community within the classroom, the teacher and the students together make decisions as to appropriate groupings for various activities. Flexibility is important for all students. It is especially important for students who need extra support. Whether students are working as a whole class, in small groups, pairs, triads, or individually, teachers should consider the following in terms of supporting the potentially disengaged:

- ask for students' opinions on relatively safe topics (at first) during whole-class discussion, demonstrating that the teacher is confident the student has something worthwhile to say on the topic
- guide peers to field questions evenly around the group
- encourage questioning, never assuming prior knowledge on a given topic

- select partners for students and encourage students to select different partners for different reasons—for example, when students are revising their written work, select students who will not only identify areas for revision, but who will also explain their reasons for revision suggestions
- help students to establish a comfort zone, a small group in which they will be willing to speak and take some learning risks
- observe students within a group, get to know their strengths, and conference with them about the roles for which they feel most suited
- assist students to move beyond their comfort zone and out of one role into another
- allow students to work alone if they choose, so long as they still benefit from some group experience
- conference with students to provide mini-lessons or strategy instruction on a one-on-one basis or with other students who have similar learning needs

The Middle Level Learning Environment

Learning environments for middle level English language arts are

- participatory, interactive, and collaborative
- inclusive
- caring, safe, challenging
- engaging and relevant
- inquiry based, issues oriented
- places where resource-based learning includes and encourages the multiple uses of technology, the media, and other visual texts as pathways to learning and as avenues for representing knowledge

An important responsibility of the teacher is to create language-rich environments in which learning takes place. The teacher structures the learning situation and organizes necessary resources. Assessing the nature of the learning task, the teacher may find that the situation calls for teacher-directed activities with the whole class, small groups of students, or individual students. Such activities include direct instruction in concepts and strategies and brief mini-lessons to create and maintain a focus for learning.

When students have developed a focus for their learning, the teacher moves to the perimeter to monitor learning experiences and to encourage flexibility and risk taking in the ways students approach learning tasks. The teacher intervenes, when appropriate, to provide support. In such environments, students will feel central in the learning experience.

As the students accept more and more responsibility for learning, the teacher's role changes. The teacher can be a coach, a facilitator, an editor, a resource person, or a fellow learner (for more detail about the teacher's role, see *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum*, pages 44–45).

Learning environments for middle level English language arts are places where teachers

- integrate new ways of teaching and learning with established effective practices
- have an extensive repertoire of strategies from which to select the one most appropriate for the specific learning task
- value the place of dialogue in the learning process
- recognize students as being intelligent in a number of different ways, and encourage them to explore other ways of knowing
- value the inclusive classroom and engage all learners in meaningful activities
- acknowledge the ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, and culture shape particular ways of viewing and knowing the world
- structure repeated opportunities for reflection so that reflection becomes an integral part of the learning process

Curriculum Outcomes

Introduction

This section provides

- information on the curriculum outcomes framework
- essential graduation learnings
- general curriculum outcomes statements
- key-stage curriculum outcomes statements
- an overview of the connection between essential graduation learnings and key-stage curriculum outcomes
- specific curriculum outcomes statements for speaking and listening, reading and viewing, writing and other ways of representing
- suggestions for teaching approaches, learning tasks and experiences, and assessment strategies and activities

Curriculum Outcomes Framework

Essential Graduation Learnings

Essential graduation learnings are statements describing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected of all students who graduate from high school, which are

- cross-curricular
- the foundation for all curriculum development
- found on pages 6–9 of the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum* and following in this section

General Curriculum Outcomes ELA

General curriculum outcomes are statements identifying what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion of study in English language arts, which

- contribute to the attainment of the essential graduation learnings
- are connected to key-stage curriculum outcomes
- are found on page 14 of the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum* and following in this section

Key-Stage Curriculum Outcomes ELA

Key-stage curriculum outcomes are statements identifying what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of grades 8 and 12 as a result of cumulative learning experiences in English language arts, which

- contribute to the achievement of the general curriculum outcomes
- can be found on pages 15–35 of the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum* and following in this section
- connect to essential graduation learnings as shown through examples found in this guide

Specific Curriculum Outcomes ELA

Specific curriculum outcomes are statements identifying what students are expected to know and be able to do at a particular grade level, which

- contribute to the achievement of the key-stage curriculum outcomes
- are found in this section of the curriculum guide

Essential Graduation Learnings

Graduates from the public schools of Atlantic Canada will be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the following essential graduation learnings:

Aesthetic Expression

Graduates will be able to respond with critical awareness to various forms of the arts and be able to express themselves through the arts.

Citizenship

Graduates will be able to assess social, cultural, economic, and environmental interdependence in a local and global context.

Communication	Graduates will be able to use the listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing modes of language(s) as well as mathematical and scientific concepts and symbols to think, learn, and communicate effectively.
Personal Development	Graduates will be able to continue to learn and to pursue an active, healthy lifestyle.
Problem Solving	Graduates will be able to use the strategies and processes needed to solve a wide variety of problems, including those requiring language, mathematical, and scientific concepts.
Technological Competence	Graduates will be able to use a variety of technologies, demonstrate an understanding of technological applications, and apply appropriate technologies for solving problems.

ELA General Curriculum Outcomes

Although the statements of learning outcomes are organized under the headings Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing and Other Ways of Representing, it is important to recognize that all these language processes are interrelated and can be developed most effectively as interdependent processes.

Refer to Appendix 1 for Clarification of English Language Arts Outcomes which might assist in communication with parents, students, and other teachers.

Speaking and Listening

1 Students will be expected to speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences

2 Students will be expected to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically

3 Students will be expected to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose

Reading and Viewing

4 Students will be expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts

5 Students will be expected to interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies

6 Students will be expected to respond personally to a range of texts

7 Students will be expected to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre

Writing and Representing

8 Students will be expected to use writing and other forms of representation to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imaginations

9 Students will be expected to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes

10 Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing, and to enhance clarity, precision, and effectiveness

ELA Key-Stage Curriculum Outcomes

Key-stage curriculum outcomes for the end of grades 8 and 12 reflect a continuum of learning. While there may appear to be similarities in outcomes across the key stages, teachers will recognize the increase in expectations for students according to

- the nature of learning language processes
- students' maturity of thinking and interests
- students' increasing independence as learners
- the complexity and sophistication of ideas, texts, and tasks
- the level or depth of students' engagement with ideas, texts, and tasks
- the range of language experiences and the repertoire of strategies and skills students apply to those experiences

The following key-stage curriculum outcomes describe what students will be expected to know and be able to do in English language arts by the end of grade 8. It should be noted that students work toward achieving these outcomes in grades 6 and 7, as well as in grade 8.

Speaking and Listening

By the end of grade 8, students will be expected to

- consider and reflect upon the contribution of others' ideas during discussions
- ask questions that probe for accuracy, relevancy and validity; respond thoughtfully and appropriately to such questions
- state a point of view in a convincing manner, offering relevant information to support that viewpoint
- listen carefully to identify key points in oral presentations, and evaluate the relevancy of supporting details
- contribute to small-group conversation and whole-group discussion, choosing appropriate strategies that contribute to effective talk
- understand the importance of adapting communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech, and tone to meet the needs of different purposes and audiences; select suitable communication choices in various speaking contexts
- give instructions and respond appropriately to instructions, directions, and questions
- evaluate the effectiveness of their own and others' talk in a variety of contexts; employ and consider the effects of verbal and non-verbal language
- demonstrate active speaking and listening skills
- demonstrate respect for others by developing effective ways to express personal opinions such that they reflect sensitivity to others, including those whose culture and language are different
- recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate
- recognize that different situations require different speaking and listening conventions appropriate to the situation

Reading and Viewing

By the end of grade 8, students will be expected to

- select texts that address their learning needs and range of special interests
- read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries
- explain with some regularity how authors use pictorial, typographical, and other organizational devices such as tables and graphs to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and rely on those devices to construct meaning and enhance understanding
- read with greater fluency, confidence, and comprehension by furthering personal understanding and recognition; and use cueing systems and strategies to read and view increasingly complex texts
- regularly identify the processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning; develop an understanding of the personal processes and strategies applied when reading and viewing; reflect on personal growth as readers and viewers of texts and use this awareness of personal development to push reading and viewing ability even further
- access appropriate print and non-print sources with increasing independence and select information to meet specific needs with increasing speed, accuracy, and confidence
- experiment with and rely upon a range of print and non-print (e-mail, CD-ROMs) sources for accessing and selecting information
- employ various relevant research strategies such as generating questions, drafting an outline, or interviewing peers to determine what questions they would like answered by their research
- elaborate personal reactions to what is read and viewed by providing some extended explanations, examples, and supporting arguments
- state personal points of view about what is read and viewed and justify views with increasing regularity
- with increasing confidence and flexibility, find evidence in texts to support personal claims and viewpoints about issues, themes, and situations
- recognize that texts need to be assessed for bias and broaden their understanding and awareness of the ways in which print and media texts can be biased; begin to question and think critically about the relevance and reliability of information when answering questions and inquiries
- identify the various features and elements writers use when writing for specific readers for specific purposes; describe how texts are organized to accommodate particular readers' needs and to contribute to meaning and effect
- expand on earlier abilities to respond critically to a range of texts in various ways
  - understand how personal knowledge, ideas, values, perceptions, and points of view influence how writers create texts
  - recognize how and when personal background influences meaning construction, understanding, and textual response
  - describe how cultures and reality are portrayed in media texts

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

By the end of grade 8, students will be expected to

- demonstrate competence in the frequent use of writing and representing strategies to extend learning; to explore their own thoughts and consider others' ideas; to reflect on their feelings, values, and attitudes; and to identify problems and describe logical solutions
- identify and reflect upon strategies that are effective in helping them to learn; describe their personal growth as language learners and language users
- begin to use various forms of note making appropriate to various purposes and situations
- demonstrate an awareness of how and when to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing; include thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose, and, when appropriate, select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing
- continue to develop writing forms previously introduced and expand this range to produce, for example, autobiographies, drama, surveys, graphs, literary responses, biographies, illustrations, and reviews
- consider and choose writing forms that match both the writing purpose (to define, report, persuade, compare) and the reader for whom the text is intended (understand why language choice, organization, and voice used in an essay differ from that used in a media advertisement)
- understand that ideas can be represented in more than one way and used with other forms of representing (speeches, demonstrations, plays)
- keep the reader and purpose for writing in mind when choosing content, writing style, tone of voice, language choice, and text organization
- know how and when to ask for reader feedback while writing and incorporate appropriate suggestions when revising subsequent drafts; assess self-generated drafts from a reader's/viewer's/listener's perspective
- build and rely upon a broad knowledge base of how words are spelled and formed; use such knowledge to spell unfamiliar words and expand vocabulary; regularly use resource texts to verify spelling; use punctuation and grammatical structures capably and accurately; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary choices, and paragraphing with flexibility and creativity to engage readers
- choose, with increasing regularity, the prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies to aid in producing various texts
- attempt to use various technologies for communicating to a variety of audiences for a range of purposes
- demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations
- gather information from a variety of sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and integrate ideas in communication

Connections of Essential Graduation Learnings to ELA

The following English language arts key-stage curriculum outcomes for the end of grade 8 are examples of outcomes that enable students to achieve the essential graduation learnings.

ELA Key-stage Curriculum Outcomes

Aesthetic Expression

Graduates will be able to respond with critical awareness to various forms of the arts and be able to express themselves through the arts.

Students will be expected to

- use a range of strategies in writing and other ways of representing to extend ideas and experience
- make informed choices of language to create a range of interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing
- respond critically to texts

Citizenship

Graduates will be able to assess social, cultural, economic, and environmental interdependence in a local and global context.

Students will be expected to

- demonstrate active listening and respect for the needs, rights, and feelings of others
- read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries
- explore and reflect on culture and reality as portrayed in media texts

Communication

Graduates will be able to use the listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing modes of language(s) as well as mathematical and scientific concepts and symbols to think, learn, and communicate effectively.

Students will be expected to

- ask questions that probe for accuracy, relevancy and validity, and respond thoughtfully to such questions
- use cueing systems and a variety of strategies to construct meaning in reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts
- make appropriate choices of form, style, and content for specific audiences and purposes

Personal Development

Graduates will be able to continue to learn and to pursue an active, healthy lifestyle.

Students will be expected to

- select texts that address their learning needs and range of special interests
- access and select specific information to meet personal and learning needs
- analyse and assess responses to their writing and media productions

Problem Solving

Graduates will be able to use the strategies and processes needed to solve a wide variety of problems, including those requiring language, mathematical, and scientific concepts.

Students will be expected to

- ask questions that probe for accuracy, relevancy and validity, and respond thoughtfully to such questions
- develop approaches and strategies to conduct their research
- integrate information from several sources to construct and communicate meaning

Technological Competence

Graduates will be able to use a variety of technologies, demonstrate an understanding of technological applications, and apply appropriate technologies for solving problems.

Students will be expected to

- use the electronic network
- experiment with and rely upon a range of print and non-print (email, CD-ROMs) sources to access and select information
- attempt to use various technologies for communicating to a wide variety of audiences for a range of purposes

ELA Specific Curriculum Outcomes

Specific curriculum outcomes are statements that identify what students should know and be able to do at a particular grade level. Once again, it is important to note that these outcomes represent a continuum of learning.

Although the specific curriculum level outcomes that follow are grouped according to language processes, it is recognized that classroom experiences develop these processes in an integrated manner.

This section provides

- an overview of specific curriculum outcomes
- specific grade level curriculum outcomes with suggestions for teaching and learning, suggestions for assessment, and notes/vignettes.

Speaking and Listening Overview

1. Students will be expected to speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
contribute thoughts, ideas, and questions to discussion and compare their own ideas with those of peers and others	recognize that contributions from many participants are needed to generate and sustain discussions	consider and reflect upon the contribution of others' ideas during discussions
ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts	know how and when to ask questions that call for elaboration and clarification; give appropriate responses when asked for the same information	ask questions that probe for accuracy, relevancy, and validity; respond thoughtfully and appropriately to such questions
defend and/or support their opinions with evidence	express clearly and with conviction a personal point of view, and be able to support that position	state a point of view in a convincing manner, offering relevant information to support that viewpoint
listen critically to others' ideas or opinions and points of view	listen attentively to grasp the essential elements of a message, and recognize and consider supporting details	listen carefully to identify key points in oral presentations, and evaluate the relevancy of supporting details

Speaking and Listening Overview (continued)

2. Students will be expected to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
contribute to and respond constructively in conversation, small-group and whole-group discussion	participate in small-group conversation and whole-class discussion, recognizing that there is a range of strategies that contribute to effective talk	contribute to small-group conversation and whole-group discussion, choosing appropriate strategies that contribute to effective talk
use word choice and emphasis, making a conscious attempt to produce a desired effect	recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech, and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking contexts	understand the importance of adapting communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech, and tone to meet the needs of different purposes and audiences; select suitable communication choices in various speaking contexts
give and follow instructions and respond to a variety of questions and instructions	follow instructions and respond to questions and directions	give instructions and respond appropriately to instructions, directions, and questions
engage in, respond to and evaluate a variety of oral presentations and other texts	evaluate speakers and the effectiveness of their talk in particular contexts; identify the verbal and non-verbal language cues used by speakers (e.g. repetition, volume, and eye contact)	evaluate the effectiveness of their own and others' talk in a variety of contexts; employ and consider the effects of verbal and non-verbal language (e.g. summaries, examples, and body gestures)

Speaking and Listening Overview (continued)

3. Students will be expected to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
listen attentively and demonstrate awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others	demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made	demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made
detect examples of prejudice, stereotyping, or bias in oral language; recognize their negative effect on individuals and cultures; and attempt to use bias-free language	demonstrate a respect for others by developing effective ways to express personal opinions so that they reflect sensitivity to others, including those whose culture and language are different	demonstrate a respect for others by developing effective ways to express personal opinions so that they reflect sensitivity to others, including those whose culture and language are different
make a conscious attempt to consider the needs and expectations of their audience	recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes such as bias, beliefs, and prejudice; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate	recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes such as bias, beliefs, and prejudice; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate
	recognize that different situations (interviews, speeches, debates, conversation) require different speaking and listening conventions (questioning techniques, persuasive talk, formal language) appropriate to the situations	recognize that different situations (interviews, speeches, debates, conversation) require different speaking and listening conventions (questioning techniques, persuasive talk, formal language) appropriate to the situations

Reading and Viewing Overview

4. Students will be expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
select, independently, texts appropriate to their range of interests and learning needs	select texts that address their learning needs and range of special interests	select texts that address their learning needs and range of special interests
read widely and experience a variety of children's literature with an emphasis on genre and authors	read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries	read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries
use a wider range of pictorial, typographical, and organizational features of written texts to obtain, verify, and reinforce their understanding of information	demonstrate an awareness of how authors use pictorial, typographical, and organizational devices such as photos, titles, headings, and bold print to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and use those devices more regularly to construct meaning and enhance understanding	explain with some regularity how authors use pictorial, typographical, and other organizational devices such as tables and graphs to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and rely on those devices to construct meaning and enhance understanding
use and integrate the various cueing systems and a variety of strategies with increasing independence to construct meaning	develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems (graphophonic, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts	read with greater fluency, confidence, and comprehension by furthering personal understanding and recognition; and use cueing systems and strategies to read and view increasingly complex texts
reflect on and discuss their own processes and strategies in reading and viewing	talk and write about the various processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning from various texts; recognize and articulate personal processes and strategies used when reading or viewing various texts	regularly identify the processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning; develop an understanding of the personal processes and strategies applied when reading and viewing; reflect on personal growth as readers and viewers of texts and use this awareness of personal development to push reading and viewing ability even further

Reading and Viewing Overview (continued)

5. Students will be expected to interpret, select, and combine information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
answer, with increasing independence, their own questions and those of others by selecting relevant information from a variety of texts	identify and articulate personal needs and personal learning needs with growing clarity and some independence	access appropriate print and non-print sources with increasing independence and select information to meet specific needs with increasing speed, accuracy, and confidence
demonstrate understanding of the purpose of classification systems and basic reference materials	become increasingly aware of and use periodically the many print and non-print avenues and sources (Internet, documentaries, interviews) through which information can be accessed and selected	experiment with and rely upon a range of print and non-print (e-mail, CD-ROMs) sources for accessing and selecting information
use a range of reference texts and a database or an electronic search to facilitate the selection process	use research strategies such as issue mapping and webbing to guide research	employ various relevant research strategies such as generating questions, drafting an outline, or interviewing peers to determine what questions they would like answered by their research

Reading and Viewing Overview (continued)

6. Students will be expected to respond personally to a range of texts.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
explain why a particular text matters to them and demonstrate an increasing ability to make connections among texts	extend personal responses, either orally or in writing, to print and non-print texts by explaining in some detail initial or basic reactions to those texts	elaborate personal reactions to what is read and viewed by providing some extended explanations, examples, and supporting arguments
reflect on and give reasons for their interpretations of an increasing variety of texts	make evaluations or judgments about texts and learn to express personal points of view	state personal points of view about what is read and viewed and justify views with increasing regularity
	while learning to express personal points of view, develop the ability to find evidence and examples in texts to support personal views about themes, issues, and situations	with increasing confidence and flexibility, find evidence in texts to support personal claims and viewpoints about issues, themes, and situations

Reading and Viewing Overview (continued)

7. Students will be expected to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
recognize that facts can be presented to suit an author's purpose and point of view -consider information from alternative perspectives	recognize that print and media texts can be biased and become aware of some of the ways that information is organized and structured to suit a particular point of view	recognize that texts need to be assessed for bias and broaden their understanding and awareness of the ways in which print and media texts can be biased; begin to question and think critically about the relevance and reliability of information when answering questions and inquiries
identify the conventions and structure of a variety of print and media texts and genres make connections with the purpose of each text or genre	recognize that print and media texts are constructed for particular readers and purposes; begin to identify the textual elements used by authors	identify the various features and elements writers use when writing for specific readers for specific purposes; describe how texts are organized to accommodate particular readers' needs and to contribute to meaning and effect
respond critically to texts by applying a growing range of strategies to analyse and evaluate a text - demonstrating growing awareness that all texts reflect purpose and perspective - recognizing when language is being used to manipulate, persuade, or control them - detecting prejudice, stereotyping, and bias	develop an ability to respond critically to various texts in a variety of ways such as identifying, describing, and discussing the form, structure, and content of texts and how they might contribute to meaning construction and understanding - recognize that personal knowledge, ideas, values, perceptions, and points of view influence how writers create texts - become aware of how and when personal background influences meaning construction, understanding, and textual response - recognize that there are values inherent in a text, and begin to identify those values - explore how various cultures and realities are portrayed in media texts	expand on earlier abilities to respond critically to a range of texts in various ways - understand how personal knowledge, ideas, values, perceptions, and points of view influence how writers create texts - recognize how and when personal background influences meaning construction, understanding, and textual response - describe how cultures and reality are portrayed in media texts

Writing and Other Ways of Representing Overview

8. Students will be expected to use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imagination.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
use a range of strategies in writing and other ways of representing to - frame questions and design investigations to answer their questions - find topics of personal importance - record, develop, and reflect on ideas - compare their own thoughts and beliefs to those of others - describe feelings, reactions, values, and attitudes - record and reflect on experiences and their responses to them - formulate goals for learning - practise and apply strategies for monitoring learning	experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, free writing) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their own and others' ideas, and to identify problems and consider solutions	demonstrate competence in the frequent use of writing and representing strategies to extend learning; to explore their own thoughts and consider others' ideas; to reflect on their feelings, values, and attitudes; and to identify problems and describe logical solutions
select appropriate note-making strategies from a growing repertoire	become aware of and describe the writing strategies that help them learn; express an understanding of their personal growth as language learners and language users	identify and reflect upon strategies that are effective in helping them to learn; describe their personal growth as language learners and language users
make language choices to enhance meaning and achieve interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing	understand that note making is purposeful, and has many purposes (e.g. personal use, gathering information for an assignment, recording what has happened and what others have said) and many forms, (e.g. lists, summaries, observations, and descriptions) demonstrate an ability to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other forms of representation, for example, thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose; and select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing	begin to use various forms of note making appropriate to various purposes and situations demonstrate an awareness of how and when to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing; include thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose, and, when appropriate, select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing

Writing and Other Ways of Representing Overview (continued)

9. Students will be expected to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
create written and media texts, using an increasing variety of forms - demonstrate understanding that particular forms require the use of specific features, structures, and patterns	produce a range of writing forms, for example, stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements	continue to develop writing forms previously introduced and expand this range to produce, for example, autobiographies, drama, surveys, graphs, literary responses, biographies, illustrations, and reviews
address the demands of an increasing variety of purposes and audiences - make informed choices of form, style, and content for specific audiences and purposes	recognize that a writer's choice of form is influenced by both the writing purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe) and the reader for whom the text is intended (e.g. understand how and why a note to a friend differs from a letter requesting information)	consider and choose writing forms that match both the writing purpose (to define, report, persuade, compare) and the reader for whom the text is intended (understand why language choice, organization, and voice used in an essay differ from that used in a media advertisement)
	begin to understand that ideas can be represented in more than one way and experiment with using other forms such as dialogue, posters, and advertisements	understand that ideas can be represented in more than one way and used with other forms of representing (speeches, demonstrations, plays)
invite responses to early drafts of their writing/media productions - use audience reaction to help shape subsequent drafts - reflect on their final drafts from a reader's/viewer's/ listener's point of view	develop the awareness that content, writing style, tone of voice, language choice, and text organization need to fit the reader and suit the reason for writing	keep the reader and purpose for writing in mind when choosing content, writing style, tone of voice, language choice, and text organization
	ask for reader feedback while writing and use this feedback when shaping subsequent drafts; consider self-generated drafts from a reader's/viewer's/listener's point of view	know how and when to ask for reader feedback while writing and incorporate appropriate suggestions when revising subsequent drafts; assess self-generated drafts from a reader's/ viewer's/listener's perspective

Writing and Other Ways of Representing Overview (continued)

10. Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing, and to enhance clarity, precision, and effectiveness.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
select from a range of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies to develop effective pieces of writing and other representations	understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraph structures to aid effective written communication	build and rely upon a broad knowledge base of how words are spelled and formed; use such knowledge to spell unfamiliar words and expand vocabulary; regularly use resource texts to verify spelling; use punctuation and grammatical structures capably and accurately; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary choices, and paragraphing with flexibility and creativity to engage readers
use the conventions of written language in final products	learn to recognize and begin to use more often the specific prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies that most effectively help to produce various texts	choose, with increasing regularity, the prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies to aid in producing various texts
use technology with increasing proficiency to create, revise, edit, and publish texts	acquire some exposure to the various technologies used for communicating to a variety of audiences for a range of purposes (videos, e-mail, word processing, audio tapes)	attempt to use various technologies for communicating to a variety of audiences for a range of purposes
demonstrate commitment to shaping pieces of writing and other representations	demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations	demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations
select, organize, and combine relevant information, from three to five sources	collect information from several sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and combine ideas in communication	gather information from a variety of sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and integrate ideas in communication

ELA Specific Curriculum Outcomes Grouped By Grade

The following suggestions for teaching, learning, and assessment are exactly that — *suggestions*. Instructional and assessment practices can and should be designed to provide multiple routes to achievement of the outcomes, and multiple ways of demonstrating achievement.

The curriculum activities chosen should be balanced to provide wide-ranging experiences in each outcome. Students need active participation in all aspects of the language processes.

1. Students will be expected to speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 6 • contribute thoughts, ideas, and questions to discussion and compare their own ideas with those of peers and others • ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts • defend and/or support their opinions with evidence • listen critically to others' ideas or opinions and points of view	Use brainstorming as a frequent means of gathering students' ideas and as a way of collectively seeking suggested solutions to problems. Encourage conversations between pairs and among larger groups as a way of sharing and comparing experiences and ideas about texts read, viewed, and produced. Focus on using different text formats to suit audience and purpose. Use both small-group and whole-class discussion as a means of understanding information, relating personal experiences, and making meaning of poems, stories, dramatizations, films, and other media. Have students undertake interviews and surveys to find answers or gather opinions on topics that matter to them. Provide opportunities for students to give illustrated media talks, using graphics, charts, and other visuals to enhance their talks. Have students give oral reports on a range of topics across various subject areas. Model an important strategy for promoting critical listening skills—for example, good notetaking while listening to a presentation. Have students give persuasive talks in which they attempt to convince their classmates to read or buy a book, purchase a specific product, or undertake a specific activity. Invite guest speakers to address the class on various topics, making certain that students play an active role in preparing to hear the speaker and in following up on the presentation.

Suggestions for Assessment

Design and use assessment instruments for

- speaking and listening
- self-evaluation
- group evaluation

Students can assist with the design and refinement of such instruments.

Maintain anecdotal records

Examples:

While Sarah was reading her story in a small group, John was talking to Matthew. He did not refer to his writing guide and did not contribute any feedback to Sarah's story.

Matthew was using his writing guide effectively. He wrote jot notes while Sarah was reading and referred to his jot notes when he commented on her writing.

Notes/Vignettes

listening critically ...

During author share time, Megan read a piece of her own writing to the class. Her classmates listened critically for organization of ideas, appropriate details, communication of ideas, etc. Her classmates then provided feedback for Megan to consider as she revised her writing in preparation for submission to the school newspaper.

comparing own ideas with peers and others ...

Teams competed by challenging each other to tell a tale. The teams picked themes for a pourquoi tale, for example, why rose bushes have thorns. Each team had two minutes to work out a story and select one spokesperson to tell it. Members of other teams listened for a beginning, middle, and end in each story. Only if a story had all three elements did the team score a point. After students created their pourquoi stories, a panel was formed with one representative from each group. The panel debated the credibility of the stories and the class voted to select the most convincing one.

During booktalks, students tried to convince peers to read or not read a book by giving specific reasons for recommending or not recommending it.

Several students read the same novel during uninterrupted sustained silent reading time, and a group discussion ensued on positive and negative aspects of the novel.

Students designed an advertisement to sell a particular product. They then experimented with several methods for convincing people to buy and use their product.

2. Students will be expected to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 6 • contribute to and respond constructively in conversation, small-group and whole-group discussion • use word choice and emphasis, making a conscious attempt to produce a desired effect • give and follow instructions and respond to a variety of questions and instructions • engage in, respond to, and evaluate a variety of oral presentations and other texts	Design both small-group and whole-group discussion to ensure that each student has opportunities to contribute information and share experiences and ideas. Work with individuals and small groups on developing appropriate speaking and listening etiquette in a variety of contexts. Provide demonstrations of non-verbal features such as facial expressions, gestures, and body movements that enhance or detract from oral presentations. Have students give/follow instructions by • recording on tape instructions for a game • creating a *how-to* video for a craft • choosing an area of *expertise* to share with the class For example, present each student in the class with a cookie and ask him/her to give directions in writing on how to eat the cookie. After the directions are written, have each student orally present his/her directions to a peer, who will attempt to follow the directions in eating the cookie. As a response to longer texts (e.g. novels, biographies), have students interview classmates who are role-playing characters from the texts. This will promote interviewing and questioning skills while enhancing students' understanding of the writing texts. Provide models for • storytelling • dramatizing stories • booktalks • oral reading (emphasis on intonation) • choral reading • Readers Theatre • making speeches or announcements

Suggestions for Assessment

Take jot notes of students' class presentations. Share with students an outline of aspects of the verbal and non-verbal presentations that are important in such presentations. Make students aware of the criteria used to assess their performance.

Design and use a rating sheet to diagnose difficulties and evaluate individual accomplishments within a group situation.

In collaboration with the students, design a rating sheet to assess students' verbal and non-verbal skills and strategies. Use the rating sheet to assess students' individual performances. Have students use the sheet to periodically assess their peers and provide constructive feedback.

Audiotape and/or videotape student presentations for peer assessment and self-assessment.

Notes/Vignettes

In doing a health activity relating to steps in decision making, students worked in co-operative groups to consider a specific problem. Each member of the group was expected to contribute one possible solution. The pros and cons were considered for each proposed solution, and the group had to choose the solution that would most effectively solve the problem.

Students in Ms. Jarry's class undertook a project to design a form for providing constructive feedback to each other. In small groups they developed the following preliminary notes:

- feedback can be verbal or non-verbal, oral or written; a nod of the head, a facial expression, a pause, or a simple yes are all forms of feedback
- feedback is better if it is descriptive and does not make judgments that cause the person getting the feedback to react defensively
- feedback should focus on behaviour that the receiver can do something about

A role-play situation was set up by the teacher in which students had to take on the roles of citizens and react positively or negatively to the following directive from the government: "Due to the collapse of the fishery and the inability of the resource to support the community, residents must relocate to seek employment." The future of the community was in jeopardy. Residents had invited a government official to hear their concerns. A chairperson had been selected by the group, and she attempted to maintain order as the group debated the pros and cons of the directive. The role-play was videotaped to evaluate how gestures/tone of voice, facial expressions influenced the persuasive effect on the meeting.

Students used the *envoy* technique—the teacher introduced a topic which the students discussed in small groups. After a set time, an envoy from each group was sent to the other groups for the purpose of sharing or collecting further information. When the envoy returned to the home group, the information was reported and discussed. This promoted good discussion skills, developed knowledge of content, and summarized points of view on the topic.

3. Students will be expected to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 6 • listen attentively and demonstrate an awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others • detect examples of prejudice, stereotyping, or bias in oral language; recognize their negative effect on individuals and cultures; and attempt to use bias-free language • make a conscious attempt to consider the needs and expectations of their audience	Listening courtesies need to be discussed and practised. Discussion of the following is useful: • in what ways do both the speaker and the audience need to be courteous • discuss some of the distractions that sometimes make listening difficult in the classroom • what do you consider basic habits for good listening • what connection, if any, do you see between listening ability and leadership Role-play appropriate and inappropriate audience behaviour and discuss how each behaviour affects both the speaker and the overall presentation. Have students listen to tapes, readings, and guest speakers with a focus on detecting evidence of bias or prejudice in presentation. Examine with students models of language appropriate to different situations and audiences. For example, have students note how the language appropriate for a sales talk differs from that appropriate for a thank-you to a guest speaker. Have students introduce and thank special guest speakers and other visitors to the classroom or the school. Have students examine certain television talk shows and note the extent to which both hosts and participants show sensitivity and respect for each other and their audience.

Suggestions for Assessment	Notes/Vignettes
Students need to become aware of their oral communication behaviour. Provide opportunities for all students to receive constructive feedback on the strengths of their speaking and listening. Use the next-step concept. The teacher and other students can provide feedback and recommend the one thing (the next step) that the student most needs to improve. The next-step concept works well for all students. The most reticent student sees that all students in the class are on an identical footing. They are all working on their next steps. Use checklists and narrative anecdotes to record student performance. Provide opportunities for students to listen to themselves on tape so that they learn from their own performance. Offer videotape opportunities as time permits. Have students use the tapes to formulate personal goals for improving their speaking and listening.	Students presented a play to the school on some aspect of their cultural background. The performance was videotaped, and the students evaluated themselves to identify the positive aspects of their own performances and to note any improvements they should make next time. In doing a unit on advertising, students had to invent a product and design an advertisement for that product. As part of the process, they were asked to orally present a description of their target audience before creating an audiotape for a radio commercial. A class was divided into groups to plan an interview. Opportunities were provided for the students to play different roles—to ask questions, to answer questions, and to be observers.

4. Students will be expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 6 • select, independently, texts appropriate to their range of interests and learning needs • read widely and experience a variety of children's literature with an emphasis on genre and authors • use a wider range of pictorial, typographical, and organizational features of written texts to obtain, verify, and reinforce their understanding of information • use and integrate the various cueing systems and a variety of strategies with increasing independence to construct meaning • reflect on and discuss their own processes and strategies in reading and viewing	Provide frequent opportunities for students to select their own reading/viewing materials (e.g. sustained silent reading sessions, home reading and independent reading). Have students read and study literary texts in a variety of genres, including poetry, short stories, novels, plays, and essays. Provide opportunities for students to view live drama and other visual media. Use poetry and rhyme as a means of developing students' appreciation of the musical, rhythmic qualities of language. Model for children how to use such features as table of contents and subtitles to determine content, locate topics, and obtain information. Provide opportunities for students to practise using these features. Model reading text aloud for clarification. Model how to find the meaning of words by using contextual clues (the cueing systems). Focus on the strategies of sampling, predicting, and confirming/self-correcting in the context of reading and viewing When engaging students in a specific reading/viewing activity, take time to activate the knowledge students have of the type of text and the subject matter. Present opportunities for the students to place new vocabulary in context. Use student journals, learning logs, small-group discussions, and questionnaires that engage students in reflecting on the processes and strategies they use as they read and view.

Suggestions for Assessment

Use students' reading logs to assess the variety of texts read and viewed and their appropriateness in terms of abilities and interests.

Record observations of students' use of various strategies (e.g. use of text structures to make meaning).

Use students' response journals to monitor their reading/viewing comprehension.

Use students' writing and other products (e.g. drawings, dramatizations) to assess their abilities to read and view with understanding.

Have students develop their own personal reading/viewing goals at the beginning of the year and review them periodically throughout the year. These personal goals can be placed in the students' portfolios.

Notes/Vignettes

USSR (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading)—Select a genre and have students respond to it in their journals. Encourage students to communicate their thoughts and feelings on the specific genre read (e.g. poetry, novel, essay).

Booktalk—Students can share their thoughts and feelings with the class on the genre read during USSR.

Reading Buddies—Grade 6 students can be paired with lower grade level students and can read a story appropriate to the level of the buddy chosen.

on the importance of reading aloud ...

A Real Bauble

The first book of Lloyd Alexander's Prydain Chronicles, *The Book of Three*, was on my reading aloud agenda for my sixth grade class. While shopping the summer before that school year, I came across a ping pong ball rigged with an inner circuit that would light up "magically" when placed in the palm of one's hand. I purchased one with this book in mind. To set the stage for reading the dungeon scene where Elowiny loses her golden bauble, I turned off the main lights and had my "bauble" ready in a bag on the desk. As I read the part where the bauble lights up as it is placed in Elowiny's hands, my hand emerged from the bag with the "magically" lit ball. The students' eyes were fixed on me, and their interests and imaginations were then and there fixed to the book.

a middle level teacher

5. Students will be expected to interpret, select, and combine information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 6 • answer, with increasing independence, their own questions and those of others by selecting relevant information from a variety of texts • demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of classification systems and basic reference materials • use a range of reference texts and a database or an electronic search to facilitate the selection process	Within the context of meaningful language activities, provide students with direct instruction in electronic resources. Student inquiry, problem solving, and research are taking on a new character with the use of new technologies to gain access to data bases, bibliographies, and other data resources to make use of information, ideas, and images. Teachers can become co-learners with their students, many of whom are familiar with computer language, the Internet, search inquiries, and available resources. Guide and actively engage students in all aspects of research: • investigating the unit or subject • selecting a topic for individual or group work • listing what they already know about the topic • locating and evaluating the resources • collecting, recording, and interacting with the information • organizing and transcribing the information • presenting information • reflecting on both the process and the product Language itself is a valuable research tool. Use students' abilities to use language to seek out and refine interesting questions, and to plan, predict, investigate, analyse, and speculate. This will give students a way to frame and address the issues that they encounter in academic subjects as well as in everyday life. The application of spoken language to problem solving is especially pervasive and effective. Provide appropriate instruction and modelling in the use of reference resources: dictionaries, thesauri, encyclopedias, Internet, etc.

Suggestions for Assessment	Notes/Vignettes
Examine students' note making. Assess writing samples that demonstrate the process of selecting and combining information, narrowing a topic, and identifying a variety of resources (print and non-print). Examine the quality and depth of students' reflective journal entries that focus on their investigations. Examine students' abilities to share *new* information with the intended audience.	*Notetaking*—Students viewed a video appropriate to the topic being dealt with in class. They used a matrix to organize relevant information for research. Before Mr. Best conducted research on a topic, he had students brainstorm to find out what they know and what they wanted to know by investigating the topic. He discussed what resources would be most appropriate to use to find the information (e.g. CD-ROMs, encyclopedias, Internet, videos, books, magazines, newspapers, etc.). After information was collected, students had to organize and combine the information. The research project could then be presented to the class for discussion and reaction. Daniel was confused as to why all the information on natural disasters did not include cyclones. He was interested in hurricanes, but wanted to learn more about cyclones. The term was not found in the encyclopedia. Daniel tried *Encarta* (CD-ROM). While there was nothing written for *cyclone,* the term was cross-referenced to *hurricanes*. As Daniel read through hurricanes, he realized a cyclone was the same as a typhoon, depending on where in the world the disaster occurs. *Brainstorming*—Students prepared to conduct research on a specific topic by constructing a two-column outline of their responses under the headings • what I know • what I want to know

6. Students will be expected to respond personally to a range of texts.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 6 • explain why particular texts matter to them and demonstrate an increasing ability to make connections among texts • reflect on and give reasons for their interpretations of an increasing variety of texts	Ask each student to exchange his/her journal with a classmate and have the classmate write a response to the reaction noted in the journal. In student-teacher conferences and in response journals, have students respond to such questions as the following: • do you have questions about what happened • are the characters believable • is there something about the story that makes you feel a certain way—happy, sad, anxious, embarrassed • how do you feel about a character's actions • what predictions do you have • what questions would you ask the character or author about this Present students with visuals (paintings, photographs, sculptures) and have them describe their feelings and thoughts orally or in writing. Have students prepare an enactment of a particular scene or event in a text. Provide opportunities for students to attend live performances and to create personal responses to the performances, describing their thoughts and reactions.

Suggestions for Assessment

Teachers need to encourage students to respond personally to a text in a variety of ways including formal and informal responses such as

- an in-role set of letters between two characters that explains their predicaments and tells about their lives
- a mural of the most striking scene in a text
- a book jacket or advertisement encouraging others to read the text
- a web that documents two of the most interesting characters from the same or different short stories

Work with students to develop criteria for evaluating these types of response.

The response journal is a constant way of monitoring students' personal responses to text.

In responding to visual text, teachers should look for a student's ability to explain how such aspects as colour and shape contribute to his/her response.

To assess individual commitment to texts, have students compile a personal list of texts that appeal to them for particular reasons. A collage can be created that makes a statement about each text included in the collection, and a preface can be written that outlines the selection process.

Notes/Vignettes

As part of a short unit on family albums, students were asked to respond personally to the question, What do you think it would be like to give up a child? and write their thoughts in their journals.

During a medieval theme, Ms. Croke's class was reading aloud the novel *The Door in the Wall* by Marguerite de Angeli. She had her students pretend to be the character Robin, who was a little boy. Like Robin, students were asked to write a diary each day describing how they felt about the experiences on the journey. To make the diary authentic, Ms. Croke used wet tea bags to make parchment for the diaries.

Ms. White's class was reading *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt, and the students were asked to keep a log of their personal responses to each chapter read. They had to pose questions they felt were unanswered and to predict what would happen in the next chapter.

Throughout the year, individual students acted as newspaper or magazine critics and wrote reviews of texts, focussing on their personal views.

Students were asked to keep reading journals as written conversations with the teacher as well as with themselves. They were asked to record such information as

- questions they ask of the text
- predictions about the text
- questions they would like to ask the author
- points on which they would like to have the opinion of others

Students recorded their recommendations about books they had read by writing on slips of paper their ratings of A to E, with descriptive comments and their signatures, and attached them to the back of the appropriate books.

7. Students will be expected to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 6 • recognize that facts can be presented to suit an author's purpose and point of view - consider information from alternative perspectives • identify the conventions and structure of a variety of print and media texts and genres - make connections with the purpose of each text or genre • respond critically to texts by - applying a growing range of strategies to analyse and evaluate texts - demonstrating a growing awareness that all texts reflect purpose and perspective - recognizing when language is being used to manipulate, persuade, or control them - detecting prejudice, stereotyping, and bias	Have students compare vocabulary and tone found in different types of texts (e.g. newspaper, novel, social studies text, a film, a documentary). Have students determine the purpose and intended audience for a variety of texts. Set up literature circles as a means of extending students' understandings and interpretations of texts. Groups of three to five, with clearly defined roles, could build a deeper understanding of texts, particularly longer texts. Draw students' attention to publication dates, places of publication, and authors as indicators of the accuracy of information. Encourage students to seek out more than one source and type of information on a particular topic or issue. Have students examine texts for instances of specific words, images, etc., that may manipulate or persuade the reader/viewer in a certain direction. Engage students in the production of texts—oral and written, print and non-print—that aim to persuade or control the target audience (e.g. a magazine for the *almost-a-teenager*). As a means of moving students from a personal to a more reflective, critical response to texts, have them use a double-entry journal to record both their initial reactions and thoughts and their reflections over time. The first column of their journals can be labeled *First Impressions* and the second column labeled *Reflections*. Both columns would be completed appropriately.

Suggestions for Assessment

Through such means as literature circles, response journals, and other written products, assess students' understandings of aspects of language, form, and genre.

Use story diagrams, plot lines, or story maps to assess students' understandings of story structure.

Use either student- or teacher- designed charts to assess students' understandings of common features of various genres (e.g. poetry, stories, information texts such as newspaper articles and textbooks they encounter in science and social studies).

Assess students' understanding of a text or the similarities and differences between texts, using a variety of response formats.

Assess students' written responses to aspects of a particular text (i.e. work samples found in their portfolios).

Notes/Vignettes

Students in Mr. Adams' grade 6 class were asked to submit a piece of writing or some other form of representation centring on the theme/ issue of hunger. In preparation, Mr. Adams and his students collected and examined several poems, short stories, photographs, and other texts related to hunger. Students were asked to consider the power of the form and genre to communicate a message about hunger. After examining the variety of samples, each student was asked to decide on the form that best suited him or her and to submit a product that would be added to the class portfolio on aspects of hunger.

Students were provided opportunities to work with the genres of writing as a way of showing and reinforcing control of the genres and their conventions. They were engaged in writing activities such as

- rewriting a chapter of an instructional text on science for young readers
- rewriting a fable as a play script, or a short story as a radio play
- developing a board game for younger students, using the characters and events from a novel

During a science class on environmental issues, Mr. Black asked his students to pick an environmental issue that would be of particular concern to their community. They then had to decide what they could do to help alleviate the problem (e.g. write politicians, write newspaper articles, and make videos to make people aware of the issue).

8. Students will be expected to use writing and other forms of representation to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imaginations.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 6 • use a range of strategies in writing and other ways of representing to - frame questions and design investigations to answer their questions - find topics of personal importance - record, develop, and reflect on ideas - compare their own thoughts and beliefs with those of others - describe feelings, reactions, values, and attitudes - record and reflect on experiences and their responses to them - formulate goals for learning - practise and apply strategies for monitoring learning • select appropriate note-making strategies from a growing repertoire • make language choices to enhance meaning and achieve interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing	Have students discuss prior experiences so as to heighten their understanding of the topic being addressed. Brainstorm for ideas and for what they want to know. Have students • use lists, charts, and webs to generate, develop, and organize ideas • use surveys and questionnaires • use personal journals to explore and express their ideas and opinions • use the reporter's questions: who? what? when? where? why? how? • compare ideas with others in small groups, ask questions, seek feedback • use learning/response logs to explain what they have learned and to reflect on their learning • translate ideas from one medium to another • role-play, pantomime, dramatize to help generate ideas • illustrate, draw, and use graphics Use a developmental model for learning (demonstration, participation, practise, and sharing) and carefully go through the process in various contexts and genres for taking notes from texts, interviews, news articles, oral presentations, films, and videos. Use strategies such as highlighting signal words and phrases, using abbreviations, summarizing, outlining, story mapping, and Venn diagrams for comparisons. Engage students in meaningful writing tasks with a genuine need, audience and purpose. Have students experiment with figurative language (e.g. metaphor, simile, personification) as a means of creating vivid images for their readers.

Suggestions for Assessment

Observe and record students' work in progress through jot notes, checklists, etc.

Examine students'

- dated samples of writing
- response logs/learning logs
- whole-class projects/tests

Undertake student-teacher conferences as a means of gathering evidence of students' abilities to reflect on their products and the strategies they employed to produce them.

Have students design and use peer evaluation and self-evaluation.

Notes/Vignettes

As a follow-up to a class discussion on aging, a grade 6 health class collectively decided to investigate the distribution of the population by age categories. As part of the social studies program, the class, working with the E-Stat from Statistics Canada, created a population pyramid for their home province and compared it with the pyramid for Canada. This led other students to explore other classifications of a population, including gender and income levels. Students were then asked to present their findings to the whole class and include their results in the school newspaper.

(Katie's Response Journal Entries) December 1
I think *Tuck Everlasting* is a good book so far. I like the part where they were canoeing on the lake. I think that in six years Winnie will marry Jesse but before she can drink the water someone will stop her.

Katie, December 5
I think this story is very interesting. I like the part where he gives her water from the spring to drink in six years. I also like the part where Jesse is trying to get Mae out of jail. I think that Winnie is not going to drink the water in the end.

Katie, December 6
I really enjoyed this book and I like the ending because she did not drink the water but she was a wife and a mother. If I were she, I wouldn't drink the water because I'd say I'm ready to move on.

(Student's Response Journal, May 12/94)

I am so excited about my mom having a new baby. It doesn't seem like it's been nine months already. She's Supposed to have the baby tomorrow.

I really cant imagine carrying a baby in my stomach for nine months. It must be so tiresome.

I already have a five year old brother name Colton. In our house we only have three rooms. One for my brother, one for my parents and one for me, so if mom has a girl I get a room in the basement. Is she has a boy he'll sleep in mon and dad's room until he was old enough for a bed. Then my brother and he will have to share bunk beds.

The baby's crib is set up in Mom and Dad's room and the swing-a-matic is all ready set up for the baby when he/she is about five to nine months old.

I really hope that if Mom has a girl she doesn't name her Jasmine. She love that name, and I hate it. But, if she has a boy she is going to name him Tanner and, I like that.

I am really hoping for a girl but really all I should care is that the baby is HEALTHY.

COMMENTS: The writer captures the excitement and apprehension of having a new baby in the family. There is evidence of an understanding of paragraphing and the tone of excitement is maintained throughout the pieces.

9. Students will be expected to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a wide variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 6 • create written and media texts, using an increasing variety of forms - demonstrate understanding that particular forms require the use of specific features, structures, and patterns • address the demands of an increasing variety of purposes and audiences - make informed choices of form, style, and content for specific audiences and purposes • invite responses to early drafts of their writing/media productions - use audience reaction to help shape subsequent drafts - reflect on their final drafts from a reader's/viewer's/ listener's point of view	Have students write, using a variety of formats to satisfy expressive, transactional, and poetic modes of writing. (See chart on writing in the elementary grades, Appendix Q.) Introduce students to various forms of written and media texts through reading aloud, shared reading, and independent reading, and through discussing the purposes and audiences. Model and demonstrate the various forms of written and media texts through shared writing. For expository writing, use writing frames as a scaffolding activity leading to independent writing. (See Appendix S.) Model and encourage the use of a combination of writing and other media such as book jackets; self-published books; brochures to advertise products and services or to inform about issues and events; cartoons to entertain and to give information; collages to illustrate a theme; drawings, paintings; and computer graphics. Through questions and comments in writing conferences, create increased awareness about the intended audience and purpose. Have students write on the same topic for several different audiences, noting differences in vocabulary, sentence structure, context/facts, levels of formality, neatness, etc. Have students reflect on their final drafts from a reader's/viewer's/ listener's point of view. Use mini-lessons to teach students about the kinds of questions, comments, and feedback that are helpful to other students, and how to use the ideas of others to improve their own drafts. Invite audience reaction to dramatic presentations such as puppet plays, tableaux, pantomime scenes, in-class stage plays, and other forms of representing meaning.

Suggestions for Assessment

Use observations and anecdotal records.

Use student-teacher conferences:

- questionnaires (questioning students about audience and purpose)

Use learning logs to demonstrate growth in use of responses in subsequent drafts

Use peer response/self-evaluation to

- account for the degree of engagement in/contribution to collaborative writing
- assess individual engagement

Examine student products—dated samples found in their portfolios.

(See a sample writing record in Appendix R.)

Notes/Vignettes

Mr. Butler's grade 6 class collaborated in the writing of Big Books on natural disasters. The class was divided into eight groups of three each. One group selected the natural disaster *volcanoes*. They searched a CD-ROM database and the World Wide Web for information and e-mailed a scientist at the local university. Each student read several texts on the topic and then met to share, clarify, and expand on their information. Collaboratively, they wrote an outline on the topics they felt needed to be addressed in their Big Books. They then wrote the text keeping their audience in mind (a grade 2 class).

(Student Writing) My Secret Garden

My garden means a great deal to me. It has flowers, trees, and fountains. One of the best parts of it that I like is all the animals. The birds make nests, and the squirrels make homes in the trees. My garden is a great place to sit down, relax, and think for hours. MY SECRET GARDEN makes me feel good about myself and it helps me let all my feelings out. I love everything in it. I think it protects me and the garden thinks I protect it. The walkway makes me feel rich like I was on the yellow brick road as it leads to my pond.

My garden is colorful and stands out with pride in its heart. I feel proud inside my garden, it is one of my friends.

My garden has flowers patches, trees, bushes, a pond, a bench, bird baths, an arbor and rocks surround the whole place. Vines are all over the walls, clutching the stones. It is a big responsibility to take care of, but it's worth it.

COMMENTS: The writer attempts to use figurative language. **Tone**—reader can feel the writer's love for the garden. Introductory statement needs to be stronger but the mechanics are strong. Follow-up could focus on substantiating certain statements, talking about narrowing the focus, and using specific details as well as checking to ensure student understands use of *it's* and *its*.

10. Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing, and to enhance clarity, precision, and effectiveness.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 6 • select from a range of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies to develop effective pieces of writing and other representations • use the conventions of written language in final products • use technology with increasing proficiency to create, revise, edit, and publish texts • demonstrate commitment to shaping pieces of writing and other representations • select, organize, and combine relevant information from three to five sources	Provide ongoing mini-lessons and demonstrate various prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and presenting strategies and give opportunities for students to write and use the strategies in meaningful writing situations. Focus repeatedly on the practical skills and problems encountered at each stage. Reinforce writing processes for students by using and having students understand and use terms such as *first draft*, *revision*, *editing*, and *final draft* when talking about writing in school and at home. (See Appendix U, for a sample writing process observation guide.) Provide students with resources that are easy to locate in the classroom, such as word lists, dictionaries, checklists, and samples of writing. Provide students with time to think about their writing experiences and to reflect on what they learned as they write in various formats. Through questions and comments in writing conferences, reinforce for students what the focus of each stage should be. Use computers for the writing process by having students compose on screen; revise text; insert and delete items; rearrange the order of words, sentences, and paragraphs; correct errors; check spelling; and alter the format. Use groups of students to edit the text co-operatively, make tentative revisions and detailed explorations. Involve students in strategies for working in all phases of the research process and other projects: semantic mapping-webbing, outlining for content, note making, interviewing, formulating questions, publishing, preparing visual support, oral presentation skills. Invite local authors to share their knowledge and ideas about writing, as well as their commitment to writing.

Suggestions for Assessment

Use observations and anecdotal records, observing and noting the strategies and processes students are using and the areas where they need help.

Use student-teacher conferences, questioning/discussing strategies and processes the student is using.

Use learning logs/journals to note reflections on student learning.

Use samples in writing folder, noting varieties of sentence structures and conventions of written language.

Use teacher-made tests and assigned projects.

Use whole-class conferences and peer conferences.

Help students design and use their own questions to guide them as they revise, edit, and proofread their writing.

Use a carefully designed rubric for assessing the texts students produce. Give consideration to

- ideas and content
- organization
- voice and awareness of audience
- sentence fluency
- language conventions

Notes/Vignettes

John, a grade 6 student, presented his completed story to his teacher. The student used a word processor to compose and edit the finished product and was pleased with his efforts. In a peer editing session, however, a number of errors were detected (e.g. hair (here), there (their), etc.). This enabled the teacher to encourage all students to use other resources (dictionaries, thesauri, classmates, handbooks) in the editing process of their writing.

(Student Writing) SAILING

Sailing is one of my favorite sports. I've been sailing ever since I was 7 years old. In 1989 I started sailing around the Shediac Bay with my dad. The next year I started sailing school and four years later I'm still in sailing school passing levels. This summer I past level 4 and I'm now in level 5.

I've won four trophies at the school. My second year there I won Top Junior sailor because I was the best sailor in level 1 - 4 (I was in level 2). The next year I won two trophies, both for racing. One was for Mirror racing and the other was for Laser racing. I raced with Michael Jackman (a friend of mine at the school) in both of them (I was in level 3). This summer (while I was in level 4) I won the same trophy that I won for laser racing last year only with someone else. I raced with Michael Winkle, a boy from Germany.

This summer I got my own laser. It's a little fourteen foot boat and it was made in 1982. My boat was perfect except for one problem, it leaked. Everyday at sailing school I would have to drain my boat for about ten to fifteen minutes everyday. Yesterday my dad brought my boat home and during the fall we plan to fix it and paint it again.

Sailing is a hobby of mine just like sports and collecting sport cards. If I get a good education have a good job and have a bit of spending money the first thing I would buy would be a Tanzer 26 (a big boat).

I like sailing because you get out in the fresh air. I like the salty wind breathing on your back and the sun steaming down on your face. Even though your hands are numb and your lips are blue you want to keep on going. When you almost have hypothermia and the air is thin you've got to push yourself to go further. Finally, when you don't feel good and the day is over and you have to go in. That ends another beautiful day.

I think sailing is a good sport. If I were you I would try sailing. Then you would know why I like sailing.

COMMENTS: The knowledge of the topic lends authority to the piece, and the spelling, mechanics, and usage, are generally strong. Follow-up discussion could focus on differentiating between *past* and *passed*, the overuse of parentheses, and the use of *you* in next-to-last paragraph.

1. Students will be expected to speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 7 • recognize that contributions from many participants are needed to generate and sustain discussions • know how and when to ask questions that call for elaboration and clarification; give appropriate responses when asked for the same information • express clearly and with conviction a personal point of view, and be able to support that position • listen attentively to grasp the essential elements of a message, and recognize and consider supporting details	Involve students in informal small-group discussion (such as peer conferencing in writing, sharing responses to texts, planning projects) that facilitate extending and clarifying their ideas, feelings, and thoughts. Encourage whole-class and/or small-group discussion, sometimes referred to as booktalks or literature circles, where students share with peers a very brief response to a book they have read. Encourage student presentations (e.g. poetry reading, skits, role-playing. Discuss effective speaking and listening strategies and have the class create a poster listing the strategies they have generated. Have students listen to a carefully selected song and in groups discuss topics such as stereotypes, message(s), theme(s), word choice, and literary and musical techniques. Provide for classroom discussion on multimedia or other school assembly presentations in which student opinions are shared and questions emerge for further consideration. Encourage all students to participate in speaking and listening activities.

Suggestions for Assessment

Informal

Through observation notes or checklists, record the extent to which students ask for and offer elaboration, express personal points of view, support opinions, offer ideas, and/or recognize when further clarification is necessary.

Formal

Develop with students predetermined criteria for a specific event. Students and teachers reflect upon the application of this criteria following the speaking/listening event.

Suggested Activities

- with students, create a marking rubric according to the listening/speaking activity being assessed (See Appendices L, M, and N.)
- following a listening activity, have students generate questions about the topic with which to test one another
- observe students during a presentation and note listening behaviours. Share observations with students
- tape a radio newscast (or short program) and have students listen and then write down the gist of the program; compare what they have written to what their peers have written

Notes/Vignettes

Ideas for In-Class Presentations

I try to find all sorts of interesting ways for students to become involved in oral presentations. Two ideas that are popular with my grade seven students are *Artifact Day* and *Mystery Day*. On *Artifact Day* students bring to school any articles more than fifty years old to share with classmates. The artifacts might be an old diary, a photo, a collection of letters, a cooking implement... They also enjoy *Mystery Day* when they bring in an article and, working in groups, they discuss and come to a consensus on the article's function. After the groups share their ideas, the *real* function is revealed by the person who brought in the article.

middle level teacher

2. Students will be expected to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 7 • participate in small-group conversation and whole-class discussion, recognizing that there are a range of strategies that contribute to effective talk • recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech, and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking contexts • follow instructions and respond to questions and directions • evaluate speakers and the effectiveness of their talk in particular contexts; identify the verbal and non-verbal language cues used by speakers (e.g. repetition, volume, and eye contact)	Have students introduce and thank classroom guests. As a whole class, have students consider school and/or community issues (e.g. dress code, skateboarding restrictions) that concern them personally. In groups, have them develop a response to the issue and present it to the whole class. Through class discussion, create a rubric for effective speaking and listening. Using student generated rubrics for speaking, have students evaluate taped documentaries, etc. Following oral instructions from an expert, have students construct origami, do a science experiment, cover a book, etc.

Suggestions for Assessment

Have students conduct peer assessments, using student-generated marking rubrics to match the speaking/listening activity.

Audiotape or videotape student presentations for self-assessment.

Have students use portfolios to keep a record of their own and teacher's assessments of their oral presentations.

Conference with students to assess growth in listening/speaking skills according to collected assessments, and set speaking/listening goals.

Arrange students in small groups and have each group produce, perform, and videotape an oral presentation. Tapes are viewed and evaluated by the small groups or by the class as a whole.

Create a continuum of speaking/listening skills (e.g. *Beginner*, *Needs Work*, *Almost There*, and *Expert*) that students can use to self-assess their progress along the continuum.

Notes/Vignettes

One variation on oral presentations that has been very successful with students (especially those who are shy) is to have them read to a small group of listeners whom they have chosen. As a class we generate the criteria for assessing an oral reading, and the listeners assess the reading based on the criteria. The reader hands in an audiotape of the *reading* along with the assessments done by their listeners. After listening to the reading, the reader and listeners meet with me to discuss their assessments of the oral presentation.

middle level teacher

3. Students will be expected to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 7 • demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made • demonstrate a respect for others by developing effective ways to express personal opinions such that reflect sensitivity to others, including those whose culture and language are different • recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes such as bias, beliefs, and prejudice; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate • recognize that different situations (interviews, speeches, debates, conversation) require different speaking and listening conventions (questioning techniques, persuasive talk, formal language) appropriate to the situations	Discuss effective listening/speaking strategies and create a class poster listing them. Have students role-play appropriate and inappropriate audience behaviour and discuss how each behaviour affects the speaker. Have the class develop a speaking and listening Code of Etiquette and display it in the classroom. Have students introduce and thank guest speakers. Involve students in conflict-resolution activities where they have to resolve an issue which they have agreed to discuss. Have students listen to television interviews with a focus on detecting evidence of bias or prejudice.

Suggestions for Assessment

Observe students during a presentation and note listening behaviours.

Provide opportunities for all students to receive constructive feedback on the strengths of their speaking and listening.

Have students develop a personal goal for improving their listening/speaking skills; have students write this goal in several places (in their journals, on a classroom display, in a note on the fridge at home, in their lockers, etc.) to remind them of the goals they have chosen; at the end of the month, each student assesses whether he/she has reached this individual goal and either sets a new one or continues working on the same one.

With students, create a profile of a *good group member*; then, after group work, have students evaluate themselves and their peers, using the profile.

In order for students to become aware of their oral communication skills, provide opportunities for students to listen to themselves on tape; then have them assess their own strengths and weaknesses in listening/speaking.

Notes/Vignettes

Classroom Activity

During a novel study, students applied this speaking and listening outcome to characters in the novel at different times and for different events: e.g. 'Shane (in Marilyn Halvorson's *Cowboys Don't Cry*) interacted with sensitivity and respect when…'

middle level teacher

4. Students will be expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 7 • select texts that address their learning needs and range of special interests • read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries • demonstrate an awareness of how authors use pictorial, typographical, and organizational devices such as photos, titles, headings, and bold print to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and begin to use those devices more regularly to construct meaning and enhance understanding • develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems (graphophonic, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts • talk and write about the various processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning from various texts; recognize and articulate personal processes and strategies used when reading or viewing various texts	Establish a rich reading/viewing environment by displaying and encouraging the use of a variety of texts (picture books, newspapers, cartoons, novels). Have students develop a reading community where they regularly respond to and interpret text in discussions. Have students share their understanding of a text through personal responses (prediction, memories, quotes, questions, etc.). Have students set attainable reading goals that include a rich selection of reading material. Model and discuss strategies for reading and interpreting different texts (social studies, science, math, novels, etc.). Model reading texts aloud for clarification. Use class discussions to develop an understanding of text and to explore possible interpretations of a text. Have students examine advertising techniques and assess for themselves the validity of these advertisements. Model how to find the meaning of words, using cueing systems such as contextual, syntactic, and graphophonic.

Suggestions for Assessment

Use students' reading logs/charts to assess the variety of texts read and viewed.

Record classroom observations, noting when students

- express preferences
- articulate reasons for choice of text
- talk about texts, going beyond a simple retelling
- explain why particular texts matter to them
- demonstrate an awareness of the different approaches to reading or viewing a text
- use a variety of reading strategies and skills
- demonstrate an awareness of the different features of texts

Use students' response journals and classroom discussions to monitor their reading and viewing comprehension.

Use students' writing and other products to assess their understanding of a text.

Have students set personal reading goals each month (see the adjacent Notes/ Vignettes section); be sure they understand that a goal should be challenging, but attainable. At the end of each month, have students assess whether or not they have achieved their goals and, if the individual goals were not achieved, have them offer a rationale as to why.

Notes/Vignettes

Classroom Activity

I have developed a chart that students keep at the front of their response journals.

Type of text/ Genre	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fiction Mystery Poetry Etc.							

Students check off what they read. Once they have 2–3 checkmarks (this can be different for each individual and decided in a teacher/student conference) they must go on to another type of text.

middle level teacher

5. Students will be expected to interpret, select, and combine information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 7 • identify and articulate personal needs and personal learning needs with growing clarity and some independence • become increasingly aware of and use periodically the many print and non-print avenues and sources (Internet, documentaries, interviews) through which information can be accessed and selected • use research strategies such as issue mapping and webbing to guide research	Have each student write down what they already know about a chosen topic. As student information is read, categorize it on the board; this will show where gaps are and where research is needed. Have students examine how writers use graphic aids such as headings, boldface print, and graphics to indicate key points. Have students use the strategy of categorizing, using maps and diagrams to help organize and combine information. (See Appendix A.) Model the use of resources for the students: dictionaries, thesauri, encyclopedias, non-fiction, Internet, and multimedia. Review with students, with the help of the teacher-librarian, how to search, locate, and select information from a variety of resources (databases, print and electronic encyclopedias, Internet, interviews, surveys, etc.). (See the Research Process.) Assess students' abilities to skim, scan, view, and listen to information to determine what is relevant to their topics; work with those students who need to develop these research skills. Have students make preliminary outlines, using questions to be answered by research.

Suggestions for Assessment

Have teacher-student conferences and interviews.

Use journals and logs in which students reflect and examine their research skills—what they learned about gathering information.

Organize class or group discussions to assess the process skills and strategies used in researching.

Assess students' research skills through classroom observation and evaluation of final products.

Examine students' note-making skills. (See Appendix C.)

Notes/Vignettes

Classroom Activity

The opening of the causeway gates was a topic of discussion in our area. In conjunction with the science teacher, a project was developed. Two speakers, one on each side of the issue, presented their reasons for opening or closing the river gates.

With notes from the presentations and information from the media, students prepared a report in which they presented their opinions on this issue. Each student had to present and justify his/her point of view in a persuasive piece of writing.

middle level teacher

6. Students will be expected to respond personally to a range of texts.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 7 • extend personal responses, either orally or in writing, to print and non-print texts by explaining in some detail initial or basic reactions to those texts • make evaluations or judgments about texts and learn to express personal points of view • while learning to express personal points of view, develop the ability to find evidence and examples in texts to support personal views about themes, issues, and situations	Have students illustrate their favourite part of a story by designing a story poster that will be used to advertise the selection. A variety of mediums and tools can be used. Have students decide on a specific theme or issue, then have them prepare a list of questions they might use in an interview with the main character or the author; next, have them write a response to the information obtained in the interview. Pair students with a child from a younger grade classroom and have them share a book; have them create responses to their experiences. Have students, while they read, keep reading logs of words, thoughts, phrases, styles, etc. that they find interesting; students can refer to their logs when they write. Have students prepare and perform short skits to show their favourite parts of a story. Present students with a photograph, painting, sculpture, etc., and have them write a response telling how it makes them feel. Have students watch their favourite TV programs and create responses to them, evaluating the type of viewers they might attract. As students practise speeches, have others respond to the speaker orally or in writing, giving critical feedback, framed positively, to help improve the speech. Given the opportunity to attend a theatrical performance, students can create personal responses which describe what they thought of it.

Suggestions for Assessment

Make informal classroom observations, noting when students share personal responses to a text; express a point of view about a text, and offer support for that view, using information from the text; question things in the text that are confusing; make personal connections to the text; and/or make connections with themes and ideas in other texts.

If you wish to assign a value to personal responses, work with students to develop the criteria for evaluating responses; some suggestions follow:

- Is the content detailed?
- Are the students personally involved in their responses?
- Are their thoughts and ideas focussed so a reader easily understands the point of view being presented?
- Did the student take risks in presenting his/her ideas?
- Are opinions supported with reference to the actual text?
- Were the references to the text appropriate?

These criteria can be posted and students may choose to add/change the criteria as the school year progresses.

Notes/Vignettes

Vignette

I have my students write personal responses to the music they are currently enjoying. I have them bring in the words to a song, which we read and discuss before listening to the song. They write responses as we listen to the song a second or third time, and then share these responses with a peer.

middle level teacher

7. Students will be expected to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 7 • recognize that print and media texts can be biased and become aware of some of the ways that information is organized and structured to suit a particular point of view • recognize that print and media texts are constructed for particular readers and purposes; begin to identify the textual elements used by authors • develop an ability to respond critically to various texts in a variety of ways such as identifying, describing, and discussing the form, structure, and content of texts and how they might contribute to meaning construction and understanding - recognize that personal knowledge, ideas, values, perceptions, and points of view influence how writers create texts - become aware of how and when personal background influences meaning construction, understanding, and textual response - recognize that there are values inherent in a text, and begin to identify those values - explore how various cultures and realities are portrayed in media texts	Encourage students to examine and compare choice of vocabulary and tone in different texts (e.g. newspapers, science textbooks). Have students examine the stereotyping found in many traditional children's stories. Have students examine advertisements (both print and non-print) for specific words, images, etc. that may influence the reader/viewer. Engage students in the production of texts that aim to persuade or control. Have students examine and compare how different magazines/newspapers try to attract their target audiences (teenage girls/boys, business executives, sports enthusiasts, mothers, etc.). Have students examine the choices a director makes when filming a movie.

Suggestions for Assessment

Observe students during discussions, reading conferences, and literature circles and assess student work (e.g. response journals, learning logs), noting which students

- return to the text time and time again in order to reference specifically the basis for various reactions
- identify specific items in the text—words, phrases, images that contribute to personal reactions and impressions
- make connections among other things that they read, see, and hear by comparing literary experiences with life and the world around them

Notes/Vignettes

Vignette

I encourage students to *read like a writer,* asking questions such as "How does the author lead into the story? Is it effective? Why has the author decided to develop certain scenes and not others? Are the characters real? Is the ending satisfactory?"

middle level teacher

8. Students will be expected to use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imaginations.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 7 • experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their own and others' ideas, and to identify problems and consider solutions • become aware of and describe the writing strategies that help them learn; express an understanding of their personal growth as language learners and language users • understand that note making is purposeful, has many purposes (e.g. personal use, gathering information for an assignment, recording what has happened and what others have said), and many forms (e.g. lists, summaries, observations, and descriptions) • demonstrate an ability to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other forms of representation, for example, thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose; and select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing	Have students keep learning logs in science, math and/or social studies. In response journals, have students experiment with freewriting as a means of extending and reflecting on their own and others' ideas. Have students use role-play, pantomime, and drama to extend and explore their understanding of texts, characters, themes, etc. Model using writing and/or representing strategies to identify and solve problems. Involve students in whole-class brainstorming activities to discover what the class already knows about a topic. Have students develop planning sheets, using the reporter's questions: who? what? where? when? why?. These planning sheets can then be used to gather and organize information. Have students keep observation notes and descriptions of learning experiences and activities. Have students experiment, using descriptive language in ways that can help readers see pictures in their minds. Have a display area in the class and encourage students to write down any descriptive passages they encounter in their reading. Involve students in vocabulary activities that extend their word knowledge to include descriptive words that they can use to elaborate and add detail to their writing. Have students experiment with the use of various devices such as metaphor and simile to create interesting effects in writing.

Suggestions for Assessment

The language students use to capture thoughts, feelings, and experiences; explore beliefs and values; and clarify and reflect on reactions and responses is informal and essentially personal in nature. The first audience is the self, so the standards of convention, precision, and accuracy of language and form should not be the focus for assessment. The primary focus of assessment should therefore be on

- the process—how students go about making and using notes, not the product
- the extent to which students can and do use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning
- the students' effective use of writing and other ways of representing to serve the purposes identified

Suggested Assessment Strategies

Keep classroom observations and anecdotal records, noting the different ways in which students use writing and other forms of representing to extend their learning. Students can also keep records, noting new strategies and techniques attempted. Share these records during student-teacher conferencing.

Have student-teacher conferences focus on a discussion of how students use writing (notes, journals, stories, etc.) and other forms of representing (drama, music, graphics, e-mail, etc.) to reflect, explore, clarify, and learn.

Have students submit dated samples of log/journal entries, freewrites, or other kinds of expressive writing/representing.

Notes/Vignettes

Classroom Activity

Students make note making personal by representing information in quick sketches. The quick sketch strategy involves active note making, which can encourage students to examine information critically and represent it visually. The process has six steps:

1. Focussing
2. Highlighting
3. Visualizing
4. Personalizing
5. Planning
6. Representing

9. Students will be expected to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 7 • produce a range of writing forms, for example, stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements • recognize that a writer's choice of form is influenced by both the writing purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe) and the reader for whom the text is intended (e.g. understand how and why a note to a friend differs from a letter requesting information) • begin to understand that ideas can be represented in more than one way and experiment with using other forms such as dialogue, posters, and advertisements • develop the awareness that content, writing style, tone of voice, language choice, and text organization need to fit the reader and suit the reason for writing • ask for reader feedback while writing and use this feedback when shaping subsequent drafts; consider self-generated drafts from a reader's/viewer's/ listener's point of view	Surround students with a variety of writing forms by creating bulletin board displays representative of the different genres. Have students examine a collection of advertisements in order to identify the various techniques involved in writing ads. Collect and display a selection of several letter forms; have students list the ways a friendly letter differs from a business letter. By examining a written text (short story, poem, novel), have students represent some aspect of the text, whether it be character, plot, or theme, by means of another form, such as a poster, collage, dialogue, or monologue. Use mini-lessons to teach students peer conferencing. Students can prepare bulletin board displays on such topics as questions writers can ask readers about the texts they have written, positive comments readers can make that help the writer know what works in his/her text, helpful feedback to help revise a text, etc. These displays can be used throughout the year when students are conferencing with each other. After reading a novel, allow students the opportunity to do a series of sketches to depict the main events of the text; then have the students present their pictorial novel summaries to the class.

Suggestions for Assessment

Teachers should provide a range of possibilities for students to demonstrate their abilities to create different kinds of texts. It is important that teachers collaborate with students to generate criteria for assessing the texts students create.

The foci of assessment can be

- ideas and content
- organization
- effective expression
- voice and awareness of audience
- technical competence

Appropriate assessment strategies and activities include

- having students keep portfolios containing different writing forms they have worked on for different audiences
- having students keep a running record of the different types of projects they have worked on (For each project, they write a brief review of the purpose and audience they had in mind for that project.)

Notes/Vignettes

Progressive Writing is an activity that is both fun and purposeful for students. Each student is asked to begin a piece of writing. It can be narrative or expository. At a designated time, each student passes his/her paper to the student sitting on his/her right. That person in turn reads what his/her neighbour wrote, and continues the piece of writing. They are encouraged to model the previous writer's style, paying attention to tone and purpose. This process continues until the piece returns to the originator, at which time he/she assesses the continuity of style.

Variations

- Establish an e-mail partnership with another class, and use the same basic procedure.
- Provide students with excerpts from a professional writer's text and ask them to model the author's style.
- Adapt to any situation in which style is important (e.g. art, music, public speaking).

10. Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing, and to enhance clarity, precision, and effectiveness.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 7 • understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraph structures to aid effective written communication • learn to recognize and begin to use more often the specific prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies that most effectively help to produce various texts • acquire some exposure to the various technologies used for communicating to a variety of audiences for a range of purposes (videos, e-mail, word processing, audio tapes) • demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations • collect information from several sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and combine ideas in communication	Have students examine a variety of sentence patterns and paragraph structures in selected samples to create an awareness of the versatility and importance of such details. Provide opportunities for students to become part of a writing community in which the discussion of writing styles and purposes is a common occurrence. Establish a writers' environment by displaying and encouraging the use of various resources (dictionaries, thesauri, writing handbooks, editing checklists, spell checkers, etc.). Invite students who are familiar with various technologies (e-mail, word processing, video recording, etc.) to peer coach those less familiar with such technologies. Utilize student expertise. Invite local authors to share their commitment to their writing. Have students publish their work (school newspaper, Internet, in-school book launching). Have students hold poetry and prose readings in which their own works are presented. Provide students with a rubric and writing samples that can be used as guidelines.

Suggestions for Assessment

Have students keep a journal where they monitor their own writing progress to become more aware of themselves as writers—their writing rituals, the strategies they prefer to use, their writing history, their writing strengths and weaknesses, and so on.

Have students keep a process log where they document their progress through one writing assignment. (See sample in the Notes/Vignettes section.)

Observe and keep note of which students are using a variety of sources to obtain information (reference books, library, CD-ROMs, etc.).

Assign projects/papers requiring students to integrate and reference information from other sources.

Conduct student-teacher conferences, discussing the strategies and processes students are using.

Observe students' effective use of spell checker, thesauri, grammar check, format.

Collect samples of students' work in portfolios.

Notes/Vignettes

Student-Produced Documentaries

One grade 7 teacher encouraged her students to produce thematic documentaries that helped them connect personally to a unit on World War I.

Here's how she did it.

1. The class brainstormed for possible themes, and trench warfare was chosen.
2. The class watched several WW I documentaries that covered trench warfare.
3. After each documentary, the class produced lists of relevant information, which were displayed on chart paper.
4. The teacher read from her grandfather's WW I war diary – students pulled information from it.
5. Students kept their own war diaries and role-played.
6. The teacher and students brought in artifacts (letters, photographs, medals, etc.) and shared them.
7. Photocopies of war photos were made and students were given instruction from the art teacher on colouring them with pastels and watercolours.
8. Students researched wartime ditties and then produced their own, which were used as background music for their documentaries.
9. Students, working in groups, produced a script, using the information gleaned from the various sources mentioned above. They used their coloured photocopies to help tell their story.

(It was clear that some students modelled their work after professionally produced documentaries they had seen. Some students, for example, listed the credits at the end of their films.)

1. Students will be expected to speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 8 • consider and reflect upon the contribution of others' ideas during discussions • ask questions that probe for accuracy, relevancy, and validity; respond thoughtfully and appropriately to such questions • state a point of view in a convincing manner, offering relevant information to support that viewpoint • listen carefully to identify key points in oral presentations, and evaluate the relevancy of supporting details	Develop a speaking and listening *Code of Etiquette* and display it in the classroom. Have students interview visitors to the school (performers, authors, seniors, etc.). Have students interview community members (e.g. seniors, veterans) and use the gathered information to compile a community history. Encourage students to participate in oratorical competitions. Check with your school/district administration about provincial oratorical competitions. Have students research a current affairs topic over the course of a week to prepare for an in-class debate during which they present different viewpoints on the subject. Facilitate peer conferencing in writing. Teachers can model for students when to ask questions, what questions to ask, and how to give appropriate responses.

Suggestions for Assessment

Informal

Through observation notes or checklists, record the extent to which students ask for and offer elaboration, express personal points of view, support opinions, offer ideas, and/or recognize when further clarification is necessary.

Formal

Develop with students predetermined criteria for a specific event. Students and teachers reflect upon the application of these criteria following the speaking/listening event.

Suggested Activities

- with students, create a marking rubric, according to the listening/speaking activity (See Appendices L, M and N.)
- following a listening activity, students generate questions to test the listening skills of peers
- have students answer teacher-generated questions following oral presentations
- tape a radio newscast (or short program) and ask students to write down the main points or the gist of the program

Notes/Vignettes

Classroom Activity

I have students, after listening to a formal class presentation, independently retell in writing the main ideas of the presentation. Then, in small groups of four or five, they discuss these ideas and formulate a group retelling in writing which they share with the whole class. The validity of these group presentations is judged by peers with reference to the original presentation.

middle level teacher

2. Students will be expected to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 8 • contribute to small-group conversation and whole-group discussion, choosing appropriate strategies that contribute to effective talk • understand the importance of adapting communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech, and tone to meet the needs of different purposes and audiences; select suitable communication choices in various speaking contexts • give instructions and respond appropriately to instructions, directions, and questions • evaluate the effectiveness of their own and others' talk in a variety of contexts; employ and consider the effects of verbal and non-verbal language features (e.g. summaries, examples, and body gestures)	Have students explain the key ideas of a news story they have recently read or reviewed. Have students relate an incident they witnessed at noon. One student would role-play telling a friend, another role-play telling the principal, and a third role-play telling parents about their involvement in the incident. Have the class observe the role-playing and take note of the differences in tone, emphasis, word choice, and body language in the three role-plays. Involve the students in a variety of speaking/listening activities (oral reading, dramatizing stories, making introductions, etc.). Provide frequent opportunities for students to be involved in conversations. Have one student verbally give the instructions on how to make something while another student follows the instructions. Have students view debates in the legislature and identify and comment on vocabulary choice, sentence structure, tone, delivery. Have students compare findings with presentations in another genre (e.g. sermon, documentary).

Suggestions for Assessment

Have students conduct peer assessments, using student-generated marking rubrics.

Audiotape or videotape student presentations for self-assessment.

Conduct teacher observations.

Encourage students to talk about successful presentations and brainstorm reasons why they were successful.

With the students, develop a rating sheet to assess students' verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Have students use the sheets for both self-assessment and assessment of peers.

Notes/Vignettes

Classroom Activity

I have students work in small groups to make *how to* videos on such things as *Building a Paper Airplane*, *Good Pitching*, and *Covering Your Textbook*. Other students use the video and critique its effectiveness.

middle level teacher

3. Students will be expected to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 8 • demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made • demonstrate a respect for others by developing effective ways to express personal opinions that reflect sensitivity to others, including those whose culture and language are different • recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes such as bias, beliefs, and prejudice; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate • recognize that different situations (interviews, speeches, debates, conversation) require different speaking and listening conventions (questioning techniques, persuasive talk, formal language) appropriate to the situations	Encourage students to reflect upon and undertake self-assessment after formal listening/speaking encounters (visiting speakers, recitals, performances, etc.), asking: How did I respond well in this situation? How could I have handled the situation better? Model the following: feedback that is supportive, words of encouragement, enthusiasm and interest in what students say, attentive listening, questions that encourage students to clarify and elaborate, sensitivity to what others say. View with students videos of advertisements and detect examples of gender and cultural bias. (See section on Critical Literacy.) Involve students in activities where they can role-play how to resolve a conflict. Examine with students models of language appropriate to different situations and audiences. For example, have students talk about the difference between telling a friend what happened at lunch and giving a report of the same incident to the principal.

Suggestions for Assessment

Observe students during a presentation and note listening behaviours.

Provide opportunities for all students to receive constructive feedback on the strengths of their speaking and listening skills.

Have students develop a personal goal for improving their listening and speaking skills. Have them write this goal in several places (in their journals, on a classroom display, posted on a note on the fridge at home, in their lockers, etc.) to remind them of their chosen goals. At the end of the month, each student assesses whether he/she has reached this individual goal and either sets a new one or continues working on the same one.

With students, create a profile of a good group member; then, after group work, have students evaluate themselves and their peers, using the profile.

In order for students to become aware of their oral communication skills, provide opportunities for students to listen to themselves on tape. Then have them assess their own strengths and weaknesses in listening/speaking.

Notes/Vignettes

Classroom Activity

My students set personal goals for themselves in speaking/listening which are very specific, e.g. I will wait five seconds before responding to a speaker; I will keep eye contact with a speaker; I will show interest in a speaker by nodding and smiling; or if I start to talk at the same time as someone else, I will stop. After a set period of time, students assess their achievement of the goal on a 1-5 scale. If they achieve a '4' or a '5,' they set a new goal; if a '1–3,' they stay with that goal.

middle level teacher

4. Students will be expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 8 • select texts that address their learning needs and range of special interests • read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries • explain, with some regularity, how authors use pictorial, typographical, and other organizational devices such as tables and graphs to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and rely on those devices to construct meaning and enhance understanding • read with greater fluency, confidence, and comprehension by furthering personal understanding and recognition; and use cueing systems and strategies to read and view increasingly complex texts • regularly identify the processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning; develop an understanding of the personal processes and strategies applied when reading and viewing; reflect on personal growth as readers and viewers of texts and use this awareness of personal development to push reading and viewing ability even further	Establish a rich reading/viewing environment by displaying and encouraging the use of a variety of texts (magazines, newspapers, cartoons, novels, editorials). During booktalk discussions, encourage students to talk about the techniques and strategies authors use to enhance their texts (figures of speech, dialogue, pictures, graphs, special effects, music). Have students compare two text formats to determine how different media present the same material (e.g. books and movies or television and magazine advertisements). Read aloud to model and to provide a better understanding of more complex material. Use class discussion for the understanding of text, while allowing for a variety of student interpretations. Provide students with a number of texts (video, audio, newspapers, etc.) that deal with a similar topic or issue. Have students examine advertising techniques and assess for themselves the validity of these advertisements. Have students develop a time line for a novel. Model the use of context clues to find meaning in a text.

Suggestions for Assessment

Use students' reading logs/charts to assess the variety of texts read and viewed.

Record classroom observations, noting when students

- express preferences
- articulate reasons for choice of texts
- talk about texts, going beyond a simple retelling
- explain why a particular text matters to them
- demonstrate an awareness of different approaches to reading or viewing texts
- use a variety of reading strategies and skills
- demonstrate an awareness of the different features of texts

Use students' response journals and classroom discussions to monitor their reading and viewing comprehension.

Use students' writing and other products to assess their understanding of a text.

Have students set personal reading goals each month. Be sure they understand that a goal should be challenging, but attainable. At the end of each month, have students assess whether or not they have achieved their goals and, if goals were not achieved, offer a rationale as to why.

Notes/Vignettes

Booktalk/Literature Circles

Teacher-student informal booktalks are good ways to determine student strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes. Booktalks encourage sharing of ideas and thoughts and foster a sense of responsibility in the learner.

Resources

It is important that

- some of the selections of literature, information, media, and visual texts studied in class correspond with the range of forms students are creating and with the purposes for which they are creating those texts
- some of the texts studied in class provide exemplary models of literature, information, media, and visual texts
- students have easy access to a variety of print texts, including novels, short stories, plays, poems, mythology, and non-fiction
- the range of texts in the classroom and school library allows students flexibility in selection

5. Students will be expected to interpret, select, and combine information, using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 8 • access appropriate print and non-print sources with increasing independence and select information to meet specific needs with increasing speed, accuracy, and confidence • experiment with and rely upon a range of print and non-print (e-mail, CD-ROMs) sources for accessing and selecting information • employ various relevant research strategies such as generating questions, drafting an outline, or interviewing peers to determine what questions they would like answered by their research	Provide students with a variety of resource materials. Provide the opportunity in class for students to become familiar and comfortable with materials. Involve students in interesting classroom activities to enhance their abilities to use resources. Involve students in guided reading/thinking activities. Have students brainstorm for information already known about a topic. Have students categorize known information to find out where extra information is needed. List questions for students to answer by research. Review how to select information from print and electronic sources. Encourage students to use cause and effect diagrams, concept mapping, sequencing, comparison/contrast circles to help organize and combine information. Model using note-making strategies to organize and remember information from a text.

Suggestions for Assessment

Have teacher-student conferences and interviews.

Use journals and logs in which students reflect and examine their research skills—what they learned about gathering information.

Organize class or group discussions to assess the process skills and strategies used in researching.

Assess students' research skills through classroom observation and evaluation of final products.

Examine students' note-making skills.

Notes/Vignettes

DRTA (Directed Reading/ Thinking Activity)

Students chart their answers to a series of questions about a topic:

- What do you already know about the concepts covered in the text passage? (Supplement prior knowledge accordingly.)
- What do you think you will learn?
- After reading the assigned text, students answer a final question: What did you learn?

6. Students will be expected to respond personally to a range of texts.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 8 • elaborate personal reactions to what is read and viewed by providing some extended explanations, examples, and supporting arguments • state personal points of view about what is read and viewed and justify views with increasing regularity • with increasing confidence and flexibility, find evidence in texts to support personal claims and viewpoints about issues, themes, and situations	*Use a variety of ways to engage students in personal responses:* Have students write a letter to the author, explaining how the story compares to their own lives. Have students design book jackets for favourite novels, based on one important event that occurred in the texts. Have them give reasons why they chose the diagrams or ways of representing. Have students write epilogues for texts (novels, short stories, poems) to predict what they think will happen to the characters in the future. Have students, after choosing a theme or topic, prepare questions they would ask if they interviewed the author. Have students then use these questions to present their own interviews. Have students sketch a response for an important scene in a novel. Read the scene orally and have students listen and sketch their responses. Have students discuss their art work with the class. Have students role-play specific important scenes from the text. Have students respond to photographs, paintings, or artifacts (sculpture) by writing poems or stories. Have students view a theatrical performance and prepare a review. Have students write responses that compare the book to the video (movie). (Which one did you enjoy the most, the book or the movie?) Have students create/construct models or posters of a scene from the text.

Suggestions for Assessment

Make informal classroom observations, noting when students share personal responses to a text; express a point of view about a text, and offer support for that view, using information from the text; question things in the text that are confusing; make personal connections to the text; and/or make connections with themes and ideas in other texts.

If you wish to assign a value to personal responses, collaborate with students to develop the criteria for evaluating responses. Some suggestions follow:

- Is the content detailed?
- Are the students personally involved in their responses?
- Are their thoughts and ideas focussed so a reader easily understands the point of view being presented?
- Did the student take risks in presenting his/her ideas?
- Are opinions supported with reference to the actual text?
- Are the references to the text appropriate? Criteria can be posted, and students may choose to add/change the criteria as the school year progresses.

Have students, following the writing of their personal responses, assess themselves. Conference with the students to discuss their assessment of their personal responses to texts.

Notes/Vignettes

Classroom Activity

My students enjoy drawing or sketching what comes to mind while I read parts of a novel to them. They begin with a blank sheet of paper and are free to use pictures, words, symbols, colours, etc. When they share afterward, students realize how colours and designs express their thoughts, feelings, and mood while listening to a selection. Students also realize that readers respond differently, which makes for very interesting discussions!

middle level teacher

This is what Cynthia, aged 13, sketched as I read a chapter from *The Sky is Falling.*

7. Students will be expected to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 8 • recognize that texts need to be assessed for bias and broaden their understanding and awareness of the ways in which print and media texts can be biased; begin to question and think critically about the relevance and reliability of information for answering questions and inquiries • identify the various features and elements writers use when writing for specific readers for specific purposes; describe how texts are organized to accommodate particular readers' needs and to contribute to meaning and effect • expand on earlier abilities to respond critically to a range of texts in various ways - understand how personal knowledge, ideas, values, perceptions, and points of view influence how writers create texts - recognize how and when personal background influences meaning construction, understanding, and textual response - describe how cultures and realities are portrayed in media texts	Involve students in whole-class and small-group discussion on the effect that visual images and sound have on the viewer. Have students decide which scenes from a novel must be in any film that is based on this novel. Have students determine the purpose and intended audience for a variety of texts. Encourage students to examine the ways different texts (movie, novel, documentary, political cartoon, etc.) deal with the same issue or topic. Engage students in whole-class or small-group discussion on the influence a particular form or genre has on the language choices of the author. Have students compare the language choices (tone, diction, visual images, syntax, etc.) found in a newspaper and a tabloid. Involve students in literature circles where the discussion focusses on the language, style, tones, and literary and media devices of a text. Involve students in presenting brief spots for the entertainment section of a newscast which reviews movies/books/television shows.

Suggestions for Assessment

Observe students during discussions, reading conferences, and literature circles and assess student work (e.g. response journals, learning logs), noting which students

- return to the text time and time again in order to reference specifically the basis for various reactions
- identify specific items in the text—words, phrases, images that contribute to personal reactions and impressions
- make connections among other things that they read, see, and hear by comparing and contrasting various literary experiences, and comparing literary experiences with life and the world around them.

Notes/Vignettes

Classroom Activity

Students can make up a grid of art forms and examples of each, and use it to begin to compare the treatment of one theme in each genre.

e.g., **Theme: Adolescent Love**

Genre	Title	1	2	3	4	5	6
Novel							
Song/ Music							
Movie							
Poem							
Sculpture/ Art							
Dance							
TV							

The grid can form the basis for student presentations of the various genres.

1. One sentence summary of theme
2. Intended audience
3. Setting (location)
4. Setting (time)
5. Main character(s)
6. My favourite character, etc.

middle level teacher

8. Students will be expected to use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imaginations.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 8 • demonstrate competence in the frequent use of writing and representing strategies to extend learning; to explore their own thoughts and consider others' ideas; to reflect on their feelings, values, and attitudes; and to identify problems and describe logical solutions • identify and reflect upon strategies that are effective in helping them to learn; to describe their personal growth as language learners and language users • begin to use various forms of note making appropriate to various purposes and situations • demonstrate an awareness of how and when to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing; include thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose, and, when appropriate, select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing	Model, using clustering, webbing, and idea trees as a means to extend thinking on a particular topic. Personal journals can be used to help students explore and express their own ideas and opinions on a variety of topics. Suggest thought-provoking springboards or have students develop their own writing prompts. Have students use improvisation and storytelling to explore and clarify their thoughts and experiences. Have students look through their writing folders and identify the times when they used writing/other ways of representing to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Have them share one example with a peer, articulating how writing/other ways of representing helped to develop an idea. Have students keep logs, diaries, or journals to jot down new ideas and experiences. Model, using outlining and highlighting when taking notes. Have students experiment with video and audio techniques to gather information. Prepare a class scrapbook where students can add words, phrases, and/or sentences that catch their attention in some way.

Suggestions for Assessment

The language students use to capture thoughts, feelings, and experiences; explore beliefs and values; and clarify and reflect on reactions and responses is informal and essentially personal in nature. The first audience is the self, so the standards of convention, precision and accuracy of language and form should not be the focus for assessment. The primary focus of assessment should therefore be on

- the process—how students go about making and using notes, not the product
- the extent to which students can and do use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning
- the students' effective use of writing and other ways of representing to serve the purposes identified

Suggested Assessment Strategies

Have student-teacher conferences focus on a discussion of how students use writing (notes, journals, stories, etc.) and other forms of representing (drama, music, graphics, e-mail, etc.) to reflect, explore, clarify, and learn.

Have students submit dated samples of log/journal entries, freewrites, or other kinds of expressive writing/representation.

Work with students to develop assessment criteria for imaginative writing. Teachers can help students get a better understanding of the purpose of imaginative writing/other ways of representing, and the techniques that contribute to its effectiveness (e.g. vocabulary choice, form, detail).

Notes/Vignettes

In an effort to help my students become more aware of their personal writing strategies and strengths, I ask them to respond to a Writer's Survey at both the beginning and end of the year. This allows them to evaluate their growth as writers.

Writer's Survey
Respond to the following statements by rating yourself on a scale of 1 to 5. (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree)

1. I enjoy writing for personal use (letters, diaries, etc.).
2. I write often for personal use.
3. I enjoy writing assignments for school.
4. I prefer to choose my own topic.
5. I like to share my writing with others.
6. I am creative in my writing.
7. I always write at least one draft before my final copy.
8. I use a dictionary/thesaurus when I write.
9. I learn from the comments my teacher and peers make about my writing.
10. I am a good speller.
11. I know how to construct proper sentences and paragraphs.
12. I seldom make grammatical mistakes.
13. My writing has improved over the past year.
14. I want to continue improving my writing.

After completing the survey, students discuss with the teacher and other students their growth as writers.

*Variations: Reader's Survey
Listener's Survey

9. Students will be expected to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 8 • continue to develop writing forms previously introduced and expand this range to produce, for example, autobiographies, drama, surveys, graphs, literary responses, biographies, illustrations, and reviews • consider and choose writing forms that match both the writing purpose (to define, report, persuade, compare) and the reader for whom the text is intended (understand why language choice, organization, and voice used in an essay differ from that used in a media advertisement) • understand that ideas can be represented in more than one way and used with other forms of representing (speeches, demonstrations, plays) • keep the reader and purpose for writing in mind when choosing content, writing style, tone of voice, language choice, and text organization • know how and when to ask for reader feedback while writing and incorporate appropriate suggestions when revising subsequent drafts; assess self-generated drafts from reader's/viewer's/listener's perspective	Display a variety of forms of writing and representing (autobiographies, dramas, surveys, graphs, literary responses, illustrations, reviews, letters, journals, short stories, personal essays, etc.) to be used as models. Have students bring in forms of writing and representation (lyrics, comics, novels, artwork, etc.) that appeal to them and can be used as models. Discuss how purpose and audience influence the choice of form, language, tone, and type of text. Have students choose a children's story and rewrite it to appeal to their peers. Have students generate themes from works of art (e.g. themes of human importance such as racial discrimination, co-operation, pollution) and then develop those themes in writing. Have students represent their ideas visually (paintings, sculptures) and then write about their work for an in-school exhibit. Allow students, after reading a novel, the opportunity to do a series of sketches to depict the main events of the text. Then have the students present their pictorial novel summaries to the class. Use mini-lessons to teach students about peer conferencing. Include questions to ask, comments to make, any additional helpful feedback, and show how this can be applied to their own writing.

Suggestions for Assessment

Teachers should provide a range of possibilities for students to demonstrate their abilities to create different kinds of texts. It is important that teachers collaborate with students to generate criteria for assessing the texts students create.

The foci of assessment can be

- ideas and content
- organization
- effective expression
- voice and awareness of audience
- technical competence

Appropriate assessment strategies and activities include

- having students keep portfolios containing different writing forms they have worked on for different audiences
- having students keep a running record of the different types of projects they have worked on (For each project, they write a brief review of the purpose and audience they had in mind for that project.)
- observing peer conferencing, noting the questions developed and the responses given when seeking and using feedback

Notes/Vignettes

Classroom Activity

Early in the school year time is spent setting up writing folders. Students are encouraged to use artwork to make their writing folders inviting (a fun place to be). On the front flap they must creatively display their name and class in large, clear lettering.

Handouts are distributed for enclosure in the inside flaps. The handouts help students generate writing ideas, discuss the purpose and audience, provide information on writing drafts or offer suggestions about what they might do with their final copy work (e.g. to give their writing as gifts). Additional handouts for the writing folder include an editing checklist, information on imagery and literary devices, and suggestions for positive writing and reading conferences.

At the end of first term, students develop a personal list of their own common writing errors through examination of their writing. Brainstorming with the class provides much humour as the students suggest possible titles for this page in their writing folders. (e.g. One student called this page *My Writing Boo-Boos,* and drawings of band-aids and such surrounded the list of her common errors.)

middle level teacher

10. Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing and to enhance clarity, precision, and effectiveness.

Outcomes	Suggestions for Teaching and Learning
Grade 8 • build and rely upon a broad knowledge base of how words are spelled and formed; use such knowledge to spell unfamiliar words and expand vocabulary; regularly use resource texts to verify spelling; use punctuation and grammatical structures capably and accurately; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary choices, and paragraphing with flexibility and creativity to engage readers • choose, with increasing regularity, the prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies to aid in producing various texts • attempt to use various technologies for communicating to a variety of audiences for a range of purposes • demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations • gather information from a variety of sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and integrate ideas in communication	Have students investigate word origins and produce a prefix/suffix list. Have students create their own personal dictionary, focussing on root words, meanings and derivatives. Have students create an illustrated homonym dictionary. Help students develop effective computer *spell-check* strategies. Ensure students have easy access to writing samples, dictionaries, thesauri, word lists (most common misspelled words). Encourage the use of a *process writing* model in *all* areas of the curriculum. Have students choose favourite journals/logs/diary entries to develop and edit, from *draft* to *final* copy. Have students develop thesis statements that reflect their viewpoints on current issues. Have students develop theme-based documentaries using camcorders. Have students write for reasons they care about (letters, persuasive essays, commentaries). Establish a writers' environment by displaying their own work and the work of their favourite authors.

Suggestions for Assessment

Have students keep a journal where they monitor their own writing progress to become more aware of themselves as writers—their writing rituals, the strategies they prefer to use, their writing history, their writing strengths and weaknesses, and so on.

Have students keep a process log where they document their progress through one writing assignment.

Observe and keep note of which students are using a variety of sources to obtain information (reference books, library, CD-ROMs, etc.).

Assign projects/papers requiring students to integrate and reference information from other sources.

Conduct student-teacher conferences, discussing the strategies and processes students are using.

Observe students' effective use of spell checkers, thesauri, grammar check, format.

Collect samples of students' work in portfolios.

Notes/Vignettes

Peer Conferencing

I use peer conferencing while my students are working on any process writing assignment. This provides them with immediate and personal feedback on their work-in-progress.

I give the students the opportunity to choose their reviewers. They read specific sections of their work to the reviewers, who listen and assist them in improving their compositions. The reviewer has a sheet of instructions to use as a guide. Some suggestions are

- respect the other student's work
- make positive comments about the piece of work you have reviewed
- comment on one sentence or phrase that you especially liked
- point out good action or descriptive words
- identify one part of the work that may have been unclear to you (never tell the writer what to change)
- suggest improvements in the form of a question
- add any other constructive comments that you think would help the writer

Suggested guidelines for the writer might include

- listening to what the other person has to say
- discussing differences of opinion respectfully
- avoiding offensive responses
- showing appreciation for the suggestions

middle level teacher

Program Design and Components

Introduction

This section includes

- organizational approaches
- an overview of content
- the role of media literacy
- the role of drama
- the role of literature
- the role of critical literacy
- the role of visual literacy
- the role of information literacy
- the research process
- integration of technology with English language arts
- the speaking and listening component
- the reading and viewing component
- the writing and other ways of representing component

Program Design

The middle level English language arts curriculum is designed to engage students in a range of experiences and interactions across the curriculum. It is built on the understanding that language processes are interrelated and can be developed most effectively as interdependent rather than discrete processes.

The program includes choice and flexibility in classroom organization, teaching practices, resources, and assessment. Teachers can organize and structure teaching and learning in a variety of ways to meet student needs in many different contexts.

In planning learning experiences, teachers and students may select and combine a number of organizational approaches based on the needs, interests and skills of the adolescent learner.

Organizational Approaches

Organizing Student Learning

No one organizational approach will meet the needs of all teachers and students. Students need to experience a variety of learning experiences and classes can be organized for small-group, independent, or whole-class instruction.

Small-Group Learning

Small-group experiences help students learn how to interact effectively and productively as members of a group or team. As groups take on various learning tasks, students develop and consolidate the skills, abilities, and attitudes involved in group processes. Through a variety of paired and small-group activities, students have time to practise and develop their language skills.

Small-group processes require students to participate, collaborate, and negotiate; consider different ways of going about a task; build on and share their own ideas and the ideas of others; identify and solve problems; manage tasks and make decisions; and recognize the responsibilities of working in groups and assessing their own contributions.

Such group work will also decrease students' dependence on the teacher and increase positive interdependence. As students become more aware of their individual strengths as learners, they will become better equipped to deal with the demands placed on them by independent learning tasks. (For additional information on organizing small-group learning, refer to Appendix E.)

Independent Learning

Independent learning is one of many organizational strategies teachers can use to allow for differences in students' backgrounds, interests, and abilities. Within the confines of the study of English language arts, students are offered flexibility in selecting topics, issues, resources, and curriculum areas to explore which suit their personal tastes and specific needs.

Reading and writing workshops are one way of organizing independent reading and writing. This approach requires setting aside frequent blocks of time where students can work by themselves and/or with their peers on reading and writing. It requires establishing space where students can work individually or in small groups, and establishing resources that allow for choices.

Conferencing is an essential element in a workshop approach. As teachers interact with students in small-group or one-to-one conferencing, they observe and record students' strengths and weaknesses and provide the feedback or response students need. Classroom time for small-group, peer, and student-teacher conferences provides an opportunity to exchange points of view and to develop language awareness.

Conferencing sessions, to be effective, need to be more than moments of encouragement. The context is ideal for meaningful instruction/ learning to occur. At times conferencing is the perfect opportunity for direct teaching.

Whole-Class Learning

Whole-class instruction is teacher-centred and is commonly used to present strategies, to provide information, or to communicate directions. It is often used to introduce and support other methods of instruction. For example, instructions and explanations can be given to the whole class before students begin to work in smaller groups.

Whole-class instruction includes

- lectures
- questioning
- demonstrations
- modelling
- mini-lessons
- overviews and outlines
- direct instruction

This approach to organizing students for learning is explicit teaching. It involves direct telling, making statements, giving information and directions and explaining procedures. It is largely teacher-centred and the information and directions presented in a whole-class setting provide students with support as they progress towards becoming self-directed learners.

Although the content of lectures is sometimes rapidly forgotten, whole-class instruction, when given for short periods of time, can challenge the imagination, stimulate reflection, and develop a sense of inquiry. It can provide a forum for critical thinking and challenge students to explore and extend their knowledge base as they encounter the ideas of others. Reading aloud to the whole class allows students to see and hear others use language powerfully and eloquently. Modelling writing or demonstrating a procedure provides opportunities for students to see and understand the process of learning.

Approaches to Organizing Learning Experiences

The English language arts curriculum in middle school offers a number of approaches to organizing that teachers and students can select and combine in planning learning experiences for whole-class, small-group, and independent learning. It is important that essential graduation learnings and general outcomes be used as reference points for planning learning experiences. It is also important that, wherever possible, learning in English language arts be connected and applied to learning in other subject areas.

Approaches to Organizing Learning Experiences

Focus	Description	Teacher Roles
Issues	This approach involves active inquiry focussing on diverse perspectives, experiences, and values.	• provide a framework for inquiry and discussion • coach students in gathering/assessing information • coach students through group processes • encourage variety and diversity of opinions
Theme	This approach involves creation of and response to a range of texts focussed on a central idea.	• identify a variety of themes arising from available resources • help students choose a theme to match interests and concerns • suggest strategies for inquiry and discussion • negotiate a culminating activity and give feedback on its development
Project	This approach focusses on finding information and building knowledge through investigative techniques and processes.	• negotiate topics and tasks • suggest resources and research strategies • give feedback and coach students on strategies for selection and integration of information • coach students on decision making about content and form
Workshop	In this approach, the environment is organized as a working studio or workshop, e.g. drama, readers', viewers', or writing workshops.	• negotiate a group focus and the planning of activities • monitor and coach students on group process • give feedback on group and individual progress • negotiate a focus and task as well as evaluation criteria
Concept	In this approach, experiences and investigations focus on a language arts concept or topic, e.g. voice, imagery, satire, symbols, archetypes, or place.	• negotiate a focus and a task as well as evaluation criteria • suggest resources • suggest questions and directions for inquiry • coach students in decision making and reformulation • give feedback to shape the culminating activity
Major Texts	This approach encourages close exploration of diverse aspects of a major work (novel, play, or film) with options to extend experiences with and responses to the text.	• negotiate a focus and a task as well as evaluation criteria • suggest resources and issues to explore • coach students in evaluating and selecting information • encourage students to reformulate and redirect inquiry • give feedback on progress and suggest directions for development • ask questions about form and format decisions
Author Study	Explorations and investigations of specific authors may include historical and historical background information, texts, and cultural contexts in which the works were created or set.	• identify a range of authors for which resources are available • negotiate focus, strategies, and task • coach students on strategies for selection and integration of information • coach students on decision making about content and form • encourage students to reformulate and redirect inquiry in response to information and emerging ideas
Integrated Learning	Integrated learning occurs when the regular curriculum provides a natural overlap between subject areas and when students can see the relevance and the interrelatedness of curricula.	• develop learning activities that involve skills and content from several academic areas • negotiate themes or issues • collaborate with colleagues to form partnerships

Note: Additional information on integrated teaching/learning can be found in Appendix F.

Content Elements

To challenge all students to develop their language abilities and knowledge base, a broad range of content is essential. The following elements are integral to the development of students' competencies in English language arts and to their achievement of curriculum outcomes.

Knowledge of and experience with a broad range of texts, spoken and visual as well as written

Although it is important that students study some texts in detail, it is essential that students have opportunities to understand and enjoy texts and to explore diverse works independently. Students also need opportunities to compare the ways in which ideas and information are presented in different media.

Knowledge about language strategies

Students need to build the repertoire of strategies they use in speaking, listening, reading, viewing, writing and other ways of representing. Activities and experiences in *ELA Middle Level* focus on helping students to develop, select, and apply appropriate strategies in interpreting and creating various types of texts. Rather than learning a single way of approaching a language task, students need to acquire a range of strategies and to know how to choose, apply, and reflect on those that best fit the language task or situation at hand.

As students build their repertoire of strategies, they will gain confidence and facility in responding to recognizable contexts, situations, or demands. This repertoire includes

- speaking strategies such as tailoring information or tone of voice to a listener's reaction
- listening strategies such as screening out irrelevant information
- reading strategies such as scanning information texts for selected topics, looking for keys and symbols when reading a diagram
- viewing strategies such as making predictions about a plot in a film or a TV program based on setting
- strategies such as note taking, webbing, and outlining to explore, record, and organize ideas and information
- writing strategies such as deleting or adding words to clarify meaning, and rearranging sections of text to improve the organization of ideas
- strategies for spelling unknown words, such as using knowledge of word parts and derivations
- strategies to assist small-group discussion, such as inviting other group members to contribute, asking questions to help clarify others' viewpoints, and volunteering relevant ideas and information
- research strategies, such as using subject/key word/author/title searches to identify and locate resources

Knowledge about the features and purposes of various types of text

It is essential that students have opportunities to examine and critique the properties and purposes of different texts and their social and cultural contexts and traditions. Students also need to know how to use this information as they engage in various language endeavours. Areas of inquiry will include

- purposes: to plan, inform, explain, entertain, express attitude/emotion, compare and contrast, persuade, describe, experience imaginatively, and formulate hypotheses
- genres: novels, novellas, poetry, plays, short stories, myths, essays, biographies, fables, legends, comics, documentaries, and films
- forms: encyclopedia entries, instruction manuals, news reporting, advertising copy, feature articles, appeals, campaign brochures, memos, résumés, tributes, eulogies, obituaries, political speeches, and debates
- structures: approaches to organizing text, particular structural patterns, and how specific genres and forms are shaped and crafted, what characteristics and conventions they share, and wherein lies their uniqueness

Knowledge about the underlying systems and structures of texts

Aspects of study will include

- vocabulary
- grammar and usage
- spelling and punctuation
- rhetorical techniques
- stylistic devices

The Role of Media Literacy

Media literacy deals with the culture and lifestyle of students. They enjoy thinking and talking about what is going on in the media. For teachers, it is an opportunity to have students examine how they are influencing and being influenced by popular culture.

Students today get much of their information as fast as possible in as short a form as possible, usually from mass media sources such as magazines, television, and the Internet. It is important that they learn how to analyse and evaluate what they view, just as they do what they read. For teachers, media literacy is an opportunity to examine the reliability, accuracy, and motives of these sources.

Most mass media is produced somewhere else for general consumption. It rarely reflects the culture of smaller groups and issues on a local level. It is necessary for young people to see themselves and hear their own voices in order to validate their culture and place in the world. For teachers, media literacy is an opportunity to encourage students to discover a voice through the production of their own media. Mass media can then become a pathway from the local level and a means of personal influence in the wider world.

How teachers choose to integrate media literacy into the English language arts program will be determined by what the students are reading and writing. On some occasions students might be involved in *comparing* (the print version of a story to the film version; ad images to the product being sold), *examining* (the use of images in music videos and newspapers, sexism in advertising), *writing* (an article to a magazine, a letter to the editor); *producing* (a pamphlet on an issue, a radio ad) and/or *creating* (a video, a school radio show, announcements for the school PA).

Media literacy is a form of critical thinking that is cross-curricular. It is more about good questions than correct answers.

What is the message?

Who is sending the message?

Why is it being sent?

How is the message being sent?

Who is the intended audience?

Who benefits from this message?

Who or what is left out?

Can I respond to this message?

Does my opinion matter?

Do I need this information?

The goal of a well-balanced English language arts program is to help students acquire strategies for analysing and evaluating what they view, read, and hear, and a vocabulary for talking about what they view, read, and hear.

The Role of Drama

Drama is a powerful medium for language and personal growth and is an integral part of an interactive English language arts program. Dramatic activities are often the best medium for integrating listening and speaking into the curriculum. Drama in the middle level classroom can be an invitation for students to continue developing and believing in imagination. It is an art which allows students to create and entertain, and it is a learning process which permits students to work together to share ideas, solve problems, and create meaning.

Drama activities should be chosen with young adolescents in mind and should enable them to develop their social skills, improve and extend communication skills, and discover new ways of seeing the world and expressing how it affects them. Activities such as improvisation, role-play, storytelling, mime, Readers Theatre, scripts, interviews, dance, and theatre games are only a few of the myriad ways drama can be integrated into the English language arts program.

Role-Play

Role-play, the practice or experience of *being someone else*, can be a process of discovery and an opportunity for personal growth as students engage in a range of dramatic forms to clarify feelings, attitudes, and understandings. It offers many opportunities for student participation. Situations can be created to help students consider motivation, point of view, emotional reaction, logical thinking, and ethics.

Role-playing gives students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of human conflict. Often a poem, short story, or excerpt from a novel, film, or play can be used as the basis for role- playing. Young adolescents, who are often preoccupied with defining their roles in relationships, can be canvassed to suggest situations they would like to explore via this dramatic technique.

Immediately following such a role-playing session, it is important that teachers hold short discussions so that students can share their responses and articulate their thoughts and feelings. This time for debriefing is important, in part because participating students have taken on characteristics and points of view that may be different from their own.

Readers Theatre

Students' oral and dramatic presentation of a text before an actual audience—whether that audience be fellow classmates, other students in the school or other schools, or parents and teachers—is known as Readers Theatre.

Although it is a form of reading aloud, Readers Theatre is not synonymous with choral reading. Because the teacher does not occupy the central position of co-ordinator and conductor of the oral performance, as in choral reading, Readers Theatre is more performer-driven and spontaneous than choral reading.

While Readers Theatre, like drama, presents students with the opportunity to explore aspects of non-verbal communication such as body language and tone of voice, it is unencumbered by the typical conventions of the stage: sets, props, and choreography. Readers Theatre is also more flexible than conventional drama in that a more diverse range of texts (such as poems, folk tales, short stories or excerpts from novels) can be drawn upon for performance. Readers Theatre is also flexible—in allowing a single individual to read the parts of multiple characters or narrators, or groups of virtually any size to divide up the text into sections and allocate the performance of certain characters or sections to individuals or groups of individuals within the group.

Students and teachers unaccustomed to Readers Theatre might find short chants or poems with a strong rhythm a useful introduction to this type of performance. Once students have become acquainted with the potential of the human voice to express meaning through more than words, they can introduce themselves to more challenging and ambitious texts.

To adapt a text for performance in Readers Theatre, for example, a passage from a novel, the following steps may prove helpful to teachers and students:

- If the text is too long to permit its full performance, choose the important sections. Decide what characters are needed.
- Decide whether a narrator is necessary to introduce the work, to set the scene and the mood, and/or to give details to move the action.
- Have students assign roles to themselves.
- Provide students with adequate opportunity to experiment with pitch, tone, volume, rate of speaking, and pausing for effect.
- Encourage students to discuss the subtleties of meaning conveyed by the non-verbal aspects of their voices and by their facial expressions.

Readers Theatre provides students with the opportunities to practise and improve their enunciation and fluency, to use language to create imaginative work, and to gain confidence in speaking.

The Role of Literature

Rationale

Literature plays a vital role in the English language arts curriculum. Literature shapes our conceptions of the world and is an unlimited resource for insights into what it is to be human.

> The primary value of reading literature is the aesthetic experience itself—the satisfaction of the lived-through experience, the sense of pleasure in the medium of language, the complex interaction of emotion and intellect as the reader responds to the images, ideas, and interpretations evoked by the text.
>
> Literature provides a unique means of exploring the spectrum of human experience. It offers students the opportunity to experience vicariously times, places, cultures, situations, and values vastly different from their own. The reader takes on other roles and discovers other voices.
>
> In literature students can see reflections of themselves: their times, their country, their age, their concerns. Literature helps students to give shape to their own lives and to tell their own stories as they participate in the stories of literature and in conversations about those stories. Such conversations help students to discover, for example, how their own ideas—of friendship, love, hate, honesty, dishonesty, hope, despair—are similar to or different from those of others. Identifying and assessing the ideas and values inherent in contemporary, adolescent, and world literature helps students to explore, clarify, and defend their own ideas and values.
>
> Wide reading of literature provides exemplary models for students' writing as they internalize the structures and conventions of particular genres, get ideas for themes and topics, and notice interesting techniques they can try out in their own writing. Reading literature helps students to develop a sense of the importance of craft and awareness of audience in their own writing.

Selecting Literature

This curriculum offers students many and varied opportunities to experience and respond to a wide range of literature, enabling them to

- construct and elaborate upon their own interpretations
- increase their awareness of form and technique
- appreciate the range and power of language
- develop as critical readers, writers, and thinkers
- develop a lifelong habit of reading as a rewarding leisure-time pursuit

The ways students are asked to respond to literature in school influence their development as readers, writers, and thinkers as well as their enjoyment of reading. In their response to literature, students can develop their abilities to think imaginatively, analytically, and critically. The response approach to literature invites students to explore

- themselves
- the content of the work
- the culture of the writer
- the ways in which the writer has shaped and refined language in order to make the reader respond

English middle level 6-8 requires both personal and critical response to literature and offers students choice in both modes of response and selection of texts.

Personal responses, including spoken, written, and dramatic interpretations, are an important component of literature study. Personal responses focus on the students' perspectives on the text and on the reading experience. (For additional information see Personal Response.)

Critical response is the other half of the reader-text transaction, developing students' understanding of what the author brings to the reading experience. Critical response requires students to think about how texts are constructed and how texts position them, to question the validity of the texts from the perspective of their own realities and experiences, and to explore issues underlying text. (For additional information see Critical Response.)

The Role of Critical Literacy

Critical literacy is the awareness of language as an integral part of social relations. It is a way of thinking that involves questioning assumptions; investigating how forms of language construct and are constructed by particular social, historical, cultural, political, and economic contexts; and examining power relations embedded in language and communication. It can be a tool for addressing issues of social justice and equity, for critiquing society and attempting to effect positive change.

To develop as critical readers and viewers, students need to become aware of the ways texts work to construct their lives and realities. A critical reading of a text challenges the taken-for-granted assumptions found in the linguistic choices. Students need to become aware that texts can be adopted (they may agree with the text), resisted (they may actively disagree with the text and provide alternative readings), or adapted (they may accept parts of the text but modify the way it positions them as readers and viewers). Learning experiences should offer learners opportunities to

- question and analyse the text
- read resistantly

- rewrite texts in ways that are socially just
- write oppositional texts or texts representing the views of disadvantaged groups
- identify the point of view in a text and consider what views are missing
- examine the processes and contexts of text production and text interpretation

As readers and viewers reflect critically on texts, they need to ask questions such as the following:

Who constructed this text? (age/gender/race/nationality?)

What are the writer's/producer's views/beliefs?

For whom is the text constructed? To whom is it addressed?

Where did it appear?

For what purpose could the text be used?

What does the text tell us that we already know?

What does the text tell us that we don't already know?

What is the topic?

How is the topic presented? (What themes and discourses are being used?)

In what other ways could this topic be presented?

What has been included and what has been omitted?

Whose voices and positions are being expressed?

Whose voices and positions are not being expressed?

What is the text trying to do to the reader/listener/viewer? How does it do it?

What other ways are there to convey this message?

Should the message be contested or resisted?

The Role of Visual Literacy

Visual literacy is the ability to respond to a visual image based on aesthetic, emotive, and affective qualities. Since response is a personal expression, it will vary from student to student. A climate of trust and respect for the opinions of all students must be established to ensure that everyone feels free to express his/her personal point of view. The unique perspectives of many different student voices will enhance the understanding of all and will help students to appreciate the importance of non-verbal communication.

If the viewing of a visual image is to be a meaningful experience, it should consist of more than merely eliciting a quick reaction. Teachers can help students by guiding them through the viewing experience. In a visual response activity, students can engage in dialogue about elements of design and colour, for example, and discuss how the artist/illustrator uses these effectively to convey a message. They can also discuss the feelings that a visual image evokes in them, or associations that come to mind when viewing a visual image.

Visual literacy also encompasses the ability to respond visually to a text. Students can be asked, for example, to create their own interpretation of a poem through doing a visual arts activity (drawing a picture, making a collage, creating their own multimedia productions).

The intent in focussing on visual literacy in the English language arts program is threefold:

- to assist students in analysing visual images to understand the creator's technique and intent
- to enable students to achieve a considered response to a visual image
- to enable students to achieve a considered response to a text through creating a visual image

The Role of Information Literacy

Information literacy *is the ability to access, interpret, evaluate, organize, select, produce, and communicate information in and through a variety of media technologies and contexts to meet diverse learning needs and purposes.*

The world of information has changed dramatically over the past decade. Today, students and teachers have access to an abundance of new information sources: on-line databases, the Internet, electronic bulletin boards, multimedia learning programs, and CD-ROMs. These new resources are not replacing books, but they are changing the way information is found, manipulated, communicated, and stored. Faced with such a wealth of information, students need to become information literate.

In order to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to be information literate, teachers are moving toward a resource-based learning approach to teaching and learning. Resource-based learning relies less on lectures and textbooks and more on active learning experiences that emphasize independent inquiry and problem solving. It involves students and teachers using many kinds of resources—print, non-print, and

human—for example, audiovisual and computerized resources; on-line databases; interlibrary loan; telephone and facsimile technology, community information agencies; and interviews, surveys, and letters of inquiry.

To become effective information users, students need to know how to define a question and how to locate and access information from a variety of sources. Once they have located resources, they must be able to evaluate information, that is, to detect bias, to differentiate between fact and opinion, to weigh conflicting opinions, and to evaluate the worth of sources. Students then need to use and communicate this information.

The Research Process

In the process of figuring things out, people conduct research. They observe, formulate questions and collect data, investigate and reflect, invent and build as they make sense of their world. Research is an essential part of the school curriculum and of lifelong learning. A systematic approach is needed for students to experience success in defining questions, investigating information, and developing solutions to problems. The skills and strategies required to process information effectively should be developed within a systematic framework or process that can be transferred to any new information-related learning situation. This means the research process places emphasis on the many interrelated processes, skills, and strategies that students use to solve information-related problems and to construct meaning, including

- creative, critical, cognitive, problem-solving, and decision-making processes
- communication processes such as reading, viewing, writing, representing, speaking, and listening
- technological competencies

A wide array of learning resources must be provided within and beyond the classroom to support the development of information literacy outcomes through research. Teachers and library professionals work collaboratively to improve students' access to these important learning resources by

- sharing and efficiently managing a wide range of materials
- selecting materials that are intellectually accessible to all students (can be read and understood, matching learning styles and needs)
- providing appropriate resources from or for use in a variety of settings (classroom, school library, computer labs, local or global community)

This collaborative approach to sharing learning resources may result in a variety of ways for making optimal use of limited or expensive materials. These may include using or setting up the following:

- *information/resource centre* (or station) where preselected resources are collected in one location where they are accessed and borrowed by teachers or students.
- *learning centre* where preselected resources are collected in one location where they are accessed and used in structured learning activities (specific directions about information skills and products are usually contained in booklets or on task cards)
- *learning station(s)* where several resource-based learning activities are organized, consisting of a variety of appropriate resources and directions that focus on the information skill(s) to be practised. (Students usually work in groups and rotate through the stations ***or*** the activities may be differentiated to meet students' needs. Not all students complete all stations or all parts of each activity. Multimedia stations include technology such as interactive computer software.)

Access to learning resources is only the first step. In addition to adequate and appropriate resources, students need access to instruction to learn and practise the skills and strategies required for information literacy to develop. These skills and strategies match curriculum and information literacy outcomes for each grade level and can be intentionally integrated into the curriculum at each grade level. Learning activities may be collaboratively developed, implemented, and evaluated by teams of teachers and library professionals.

Stages within the Research Process

Like the writing process, the *research process* involves many different skills and strategies, grouped within phases or stages. Each part of the process builds on a previous part, laying the groundwork for the next stage. The phases or stages are commonly identified as follows:

1. Planning (or Pre-Research)
2. Gathering Information (or Information Retrieval)
3. Interacting with Information
4. Organizing Information
5. Creating New Information
6. Sharing and Presenting Information
7. Evaluation and Assessment

Planning

During this introductory stage of the research process, students are usually involved in a classroom theme, unit of study, or a personal interest.

Topics are identified for further inquiry. These often arise from the discussion that surrounds purposeful activity. Students and teachers decide on a general topic or problem that requires information to be further explored, or possibly even answered. The topic or problem is then clarified or narrowed to make it more manageable and personal for students.

Questions are developed and students use their individual or group questions to guide information processing. As they begin to ask questions, students also develop a growing sense of ownership for the problem or topic.

Sources of information that can be used by students are considered.

Methods for recording information, data, or notes, and strategies for keeping track of the materials they used are considered.

It is also important for students to know, at this planning stage, whether a product is required and, if so, what type of product they will create, and who their audience will be for sharing their new discoveries and creations.

Gathering Information

At this stage, students access appropriate learning resources (print, non-print, information technology, human, community). The actual resource is located, and the information is found *within* the resource. Students will need to learn and practise several important skills:

- *search* a card catalogue or electronic catalogue to find titles and call numbers for resources
- *locate* resources (e.g. non-fiction books) by call number and title and select a particular resource
- *select* an appropriate resource from a display centre or stack
- *use* organizational tools and features within the resource (e.g. table of contents, index, glossary, captions, menu prompts, knowledge tree for searching electronically)
- *skim, scan, view, and listen to* information to determine whether the content is relevant to the topic questions

Interacting with Information

Students continue to evaluate the information they find to determine if it will be useful in answering their questions. Students will practise specific reading/viewing/listening skills:

- question, skim, read (QSR)
- use text features such as key words, bold headings, captions
- read, interpret charts, graphs, maps, pictures
- listen for relevant information
- compare and evaluate content from several sources

Students will also record the information they need to explore their topics, attempting to answer their guiding questions. Notes should be written or information recorded in an appropriate format, such as idea web, matrix sheet, chart, and computer database or spreadsheet.

Students should keep track of the resources they use by making use of a bibliographic format for titles and authors. Names of resource persons, and dates of interviews should also be included.

Organizing Information

Students use a variety of strategies to organize the information they have collected while exploring their topics and answering their guiding questions:

- numbering
- sequencing
- colouring, highlighting notes according to questions or subtopics/ categories

Students will also review their information with regard to their guiding questions and the stated requirements of the activity, to determine whether they need more facts or further clarification before they proceed with creating their products.

Some activities or projects do not require a product beyond this point in the processes, just as some writing does not proceed to publishing. Students become aware of this and begin to realize the difference. Spontaneous information problem-solving activities often result in students simply sharing what they have processed and organized up to this point.

Creating New Information

As students become more independent they will sometimes want to determine their own products. Product creation, especially written reports, requires students to develop sentences and paragraphs from their recorded and organized notes or data. With practice and assistance, they will be able to synthesize this into new information with newly constructed meaning and discovery.

Students will need assistance to decide how best to convey their understanding as a result of the research process for a particular audience. Is the idea they wish to communicate visual? Would sound assist the audience to understand their message? When would a written report be appropriate? Would a storyboard, interactive Web page, brochure, flyer, poster, video, audio cassette be appropriate and why?

Sharing and Presenting Information

Students need many opportunities to share what they have learned, discovered, and created with a variety of audiences, and to examine carefully the responses of those audiences to their work.

Evaluation and Assessment

Students should reflect on the process skills and strategies they have used throughout the activity and begin to assess their own learning processes by contributing to class or group discussion and reflecting in learning logs.

They can also evaluate their own products and those of peers by using

- evaluation charts or rubrics, which include checklists or descriptions of whatever should be included in a good product
- discussion in small groups or with the whole class about students' products

Helping Students with Assessment and Evaluation

Provide time and encouragement for reflection and metacognition to occur (e.g. What did we/you learn about gathering information?).

Create a climate of trust for self-assessment and peer assessment of process and products. Students tend to be realistic, and have high expectations for their own work.

Ask questions, make observations, and guide discussions throughout the process:

- conferencing
- tracking (e.g. checkpoints for completed skills at key stages)
- anecdotal comments (e.g. demonstrated ability to organize notes)

Involve students in creating portfolios which contain samples of students' use of skills, strategies, as well as their products, as evidence of developing information literacy.

Integrating Technology with English Language Arts

Computers and related technologies have become a part of daily life. They have changed the way people access information and the way they communicate. In fact, they have changed the way people look at the world. Because of the growing importance of technology in students' lives, this curriculum entails an expanded view of literacy to include basic media such as audio and video recordings, broadcasts, staged events, still images and projections, computer-based media, data and information systems, interactive telecommunications systems, curriculum software, and, of course, print publications.

Because the technology of the Information Age is constantly and rapidly evolving, it is important to make careful decisions about its application, and always in relation to the extent to which it helps students achieve the outcomes of the English language arts curriculum.

Inquiry

Technology can support learning in English language arts for the following purposes:

Data Access

Students can access information through Internet library access, digital libraries, and databases on the World Wide Web, or on commercial CD-ROMs. They can access documents integrating print text, images, graphs, video, and sound, using hypertext and hypermedia software, commercial CD-ROMs, and World Wide Web sites.

Data Collection

Students can create, collect, and organize information, images, and ideas, using video and sound recording and editing technology, databases, scanners, and Web searchers.

Data Analysis

Students can organize, analyse, transform, and synthesize information, using spreadsheets, software for the creation of graphs and tables, and image processing technology and software.

Communication

Students can create, edit, and publish texts, using word processing and graphics software.

Text Preparation

Word processing software is a well-accepted modern tool for communication. Its use in the classroom encourages growing skills both with facility in using the technology and with writing.

Examples of ways word processing may be used in the middle level classroom:

- writing journals, literature responses, or learning logs
- composing stories, poems, letters, signs
- revising, editing, and publishing work
- creating a class newsletter
- creating reports
- creating group compositions

Interaction/Collaboration

Students can share information, ideas, and interest with others through the Internet.

The Internet is an extensive network of interlinked yet independent computer networks. It is becoming an increasingly more important tool for education.

Some ways in which students can communicate through the Internet include the following:

Key Pals. This is the electronic equivalent of pen pals. A class in Prince Edward Island, for example, might correspond through e-mail with a class in another school in the province, or with a school in another province. The correspondence might be group to group or student to student.

Exchange of Information. E-mail can also be used to exchange information. A grade 3 class, studying Canadian communities in social studies, might, for example, exchange information about their community with students in other Canadian communities.

Electronic Publishing. The Internet offers an excellent opportunity for students to share their work with real audiences, such as students in other schools in their own province and beyond. *Kidpub WWW publishing for early to middle grade students and teachers* is an example of a site where students can publish their work. *(http://www.kidpub.org/kidpub/)* Another option is to publish student work on the school's home page. A class, for example, can collaborate to compose their own variation of a book they have read. Individual students can use a drawing program to create illustrations for the various pages of the text, which can then be placed on the school's home page to be shared with other classes in the province.

Teaching and Learning

Students can acquire, refine, and communicate ideas, information, and skills, using computer and other communication tutoring systems, as well as instructional simulations.

Expression through Various Ways of Representing

Students can shape the creative expression of their ideas, feelings, insights, and understandings by using music making/composing/editing technology, video and audio recorders, and drawing/painting software.

Graphics and drawing programs or environments allow the user to manipulate a variety of drawing/shape-creating tools, colours, text and layout features to create pictures, images, and designs. These images can be used alone or imported into text documents.

Examples of ways students can make use of graphics programs follow:

- creating posters and signs
- illustrating stories, poems, and reports
- creating wordless books

As students engage in using drawing programs, they are learning to problem solve (e.g. deciding what to draw, how to begin, what drawing tool to select, what colours to use, how large to make the drawing, in what order to place objects on the screen when layering objects). When they use such software in pairs, they are also learning co-operative problem-solving strategies.

Speaking and Listening

Introduction

Oral language is probably the most valuable vehicle for individual human development. It is through *talk* that children initially learn the habits, norms, values, and traditions of their culture. It is through talk that people discover who they are and share themselves with others.

Speaking and listening serve both a social and communicative purpose.

Intermediate or middle level students are at an age where they are deeply concerned about their identities, their talents, their future, and, above all, their personal relations. The English language arts classroom is an ideal environment for students to practise using language for social and personal development. As they experience the power of language in real and model situations, students gain insight into the importance of developing and improving their speaking and listening skills, becoming more aware of and sensitive to the feelings of others and more considerately attentive to their opinions and beliefs.

Exploratory talk is integral to learning.

Speaking and listening are essential to the learning process: speaking and listening stimulate inner speech and refine and extend thought. Through conversation, students can collect data, construct arguments, defend ideas, and convey feelings.

Verbalizing information triggers the retrieval of more information. Speaking and listening help students to reshape experiences to make a bridge between new knowledge and what is already known. Students can achieve greater understanding if they have the opportunity to rehearse aloud the task they are dealing with, to put into words what they are doing, and to articulate to sympathetic listeners what they have discovered. Thus oral language is a medium for reshaping and building knowledge. This ability to reinterpret knowledge through speaking and listening is crucial to learning.

Small-group discussion and dialogue provide an ideal forum for verbalizing ideas, asking questions, and exchanging information. From such talk students learn. The freedom to participate in exploratory, natural, free-flowing talk where doubts and confusion can be expressed and where questions are formed as dialogue is essential in the English language arts classroom.

Speaking and listening are avenues to the development of language essential to reading and writing.

While speaking and listening are important in their own right as a means for students to make sense of the world around them, they are equally important as a route to the development of reading and writing skills. A speaker/listener who engages in a variety of activities related to written texts becomes aware of forms, structures, styles, and conventions used in writing and develops the language skills necessary to extend knowledge in these areas.

Speaking and listening skills develop through both exploratory and focussed language arts activities.

Participation in the English language arts classroom in oral activities related to other forms of representation such as improvisational situational drama and media production provide varied experiences designed to develop the students' critical faculties, confidence, creativity, language fluency, and verbal agility. Each of these abilities develops and enhances reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

Many opportunities for oral communication will present themselves in the English language arts classroom. At times, however, oral communication needs to be promoted as an end in itself. As well as opportunities for students to use talk to explore, there should be opportunities for students to participate in oral activities designed for specific situations and purposes.

Developing classroom environments that support speaking and listening takes time, but it is time well spent. In an atmosphere where talk is encouraged, where students feel relaxed, safe, and comfortable, the informal process of speaking and listening can develop into more focussed oral activities designed for specific situations and purposes.

The following pages provide explanations and elaborations for daily exploratory (informal) and focussed (formal) oral activities that encourage students to articulate their feelings, to expound, explain, or persuade intelligibly and engagingly as the situation and audience require.

Informal/Exploratory Talk

Informal/exploratory talk happens as students brainstorm, respond to text, and work co-operatively in small and large groups. Though the aim of informal talk is student growth and learning through the exploration of thoughts and feelings, neither the students nor the teacher should regard this talk as an end in itself. Informal talk is low pressure, spontaneous dialogue; nevertheless, it is most effective when it is task-focussed and goal-directed.

Teachers find that informal discussion is more productive when they supply clear, simple instructions as to learning objectives. Clearly establishing the task—whether the purpose is to clarify information presented, examine the content from a different point of view, or generate a vast array of ideas for further discussion—helps students to understand expectations and stay focussed. This is true even of basic strategies that are commonly used to initiate informal/exploratory classroom discussion.

Discussions/Conversations

Discussions, whether whole group or small group, provide students with an important opportunity to learn vocabulary, information, and social skills required for competence in speaking and listening. There are many different ways to set up group discussions. For instance, the teacher may decide to engage the whole class in a discussion on a topic, or on aspects of that topic. Alternatively, the teacher may decide to divide the class into smaller units. These smaller groups may be directed to discuss the same topic, or each small group may be assigned a different aspect of the topic.

Depending on the learning objectives, whole-class discussion can either precede or follow small- group discussion. Students sometimes demonstrate different competencies in each context. Using variety in the teaching approach will help students to develop confidence and to improve their skills and abilities in all formats.

Though often taken for granted, *conversation* provides a wide range of learning opportunities for students and is central to the entire spoken language program. Conversation provides an arena for students to build self-esteem, to make contact with others, to seek and convey information, and to assess their feelings. It is through conversation that students structure their world and compare their own experiences with the experiences of others. As conversation—the discussion of problems, projects, books, television programs, music, film, people, and issues—becomes acknowledged as important, it will become the foundation for the entire spoken language program. Conversations allow students to clarify their own opinions and to conceptualize their new knowledge and learnings.

Students profit from classroom instruction that fosters informal talk, for it is in the give-and-take of conversation and discussion that students begin to understand concepts and develop confidence in their ability to communicate. Since students learn both from example and from practice, besides discussing and modelling appropriate social behaviours related to group functioning, teachers may want to engage students in role-play conversations that show good manners, turn-taking, attentive listening, and other aspects of accomplished conversation.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a way for a group of students to generate ideas for future discussion and problem solving through spontaneous contributions. A major benefit of brainstorming is that all members of the group get to be both speakers and listeners as they state and record their suggestions. The procedures are relatively straightforward:

Define the topic.

Choose someone to be the recorder.

Any ideas are acceptable. Quantity is more important than quality.

Expand on the ideas of others.

Avoid making comments about any of the suggestions.

Despite the seeming simplicity of this activity, it is very easy to get off track and to begin evaluating and categorizing contributions before the exercise is complete. When this happens the process is cut short and the initial purpose of the strategy—the generation of a vast array of ideas for future discussion—is defeated.

When this happens, some students will not get an opportunity to share their thoughts, while others may feel that their ideas have been judged. Categorizing should follow brainstorming. The advantages and disadvantages of each idea could be noted, and the best idea or solution chosen, after the brainstorming exercise is complete.

Group Sharing Time

Group sharing time involves listening to and speaking with other group members to exchange ideas about a specific topic. This time may also be used for problem solving, collecting information and responding to texts (such as literature, music, or art). During group sharing time, it is important that the teacher and the students develop models of procedure for group process that encourage respectful and constructive interaction. Preliminary work towards outlining and promoting the behaviours and attitudes necessary for successful group dynamics and effective group discussions will be well worth the effort in the end. Some helpful tips follow:

- Assign a manageable task (not too easy, not too difficult).
- Establish time frames at the beginning.
- Explain the assignment carefully with precise instructions.
- Help the students understand why the assignment is important.
- Choose a group format appropriate for the task (small/large).
- Monitor group member selection with attention to group dynamics.
- Have all materials organized and available to groups.
- Review this process at the beginning of each new shared time period.

Two methods often used to promote collaborative group work are *jigsaws* and the *envoy* or *messenger* technique. *Jigsaws* are an innovative way to help students develop their listening and speaking skills during group sharing time. To set up this group activity, the teacher introduces a topic chosen for class consideration. Ideally, the students are invited to choose a curriculum-related topic that has personal meaning for them or that deals with a problem that they would like to solve. Pollution and its environmental impact might present such a problem. The problem is broken down into its constituent parts. In the case of pollution, the parts might be causes, effects, solutions, and long-term implications. The class is then divided into small groups, and each student within the small groups is assigned or assumes an expertise for one of the four specified components of the problem. The expert members leave their original groups to collaborate with expert members from other groups. Their task is to find out all they can about the constituent part assigned to them. The final stage involves each of the experts reporting back findings to his/her original group. Jigsaws as a group activity can foster integrated learning and exploratory studies.

The *envoy* or *messenger* technique is another speaking/listening activity that appeals to middle level learners. For this activity the class is divided into small groups and given a topic for discussion. The topic could relate to a text discussed in class or it may be a subject of interest identified by the students and the teacher together. After a set time, a designated member of each group moves on to the next group in the capacity of a messenger and is responsible for sharing and collecting information. This process is continued until each messenger makes it home to his or her original group. When each group is once again intact, information is reported and discussed. The constant movement and engagement involved in this activity helps to sustain student interest. While this technique helps students learn content knowledge, it also contributes to skills development as students are required to listen to others, distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, and summarize different points of view.

Booktalk or Literature Circles

Many teachers find that group sharing time provides an excellent opportunity for *booktalk* or *literature circles*. To set up a literature circle, the class may be divided into small groups or left as a whole. Whatever format is chosen, it is important that the atmosphere of sharing is emphasized through the physical configuration of the group. Students will be sharing thoughts, feelings, and learnings rather than making a formal presentation about the book. For the actual activity, students choose a book that they have read recently and enjoyed. They identify the characters and general theme of the book, but are careful not to reveal too much information in the event that other students may, by virtue of the sharing, want to read the same book. Part of this activity involves each student reading aloud a favoured excerpt from his/her selected book. A major benefit of this activity is that students are modelling enthusiasm for reading to other students while also practising their speaking and listening skills through sharing opinions and making recommendations. The students may choose to make, via computer or other artistic means, posters, bookmarks, advertisements, or book jackets to display after the literature circle.

Role-Play

(See The Role of Drama.)

Formal/Focussed Talk

Formal speech generally requires students to use more sophisticated diction and a more decorous tone of voice than they would in informal speech situations. Where informal speech tends to be exploratory in nature, formal speech is oriented towards the achievement of specific outcomes such as the pursuit or provision of certain information, the promotion of an idea, or the persuasion of an audience. Finally, formal speech can be distinguished from informal speech in that it has a performance aspect that is not typical of informal speech. It is this performance aspect that tends to make some students anxious about formal speech learning activities.

Interviews

Interviewing requires students to formulate and ask questions of another person or group of persons for the purpose of gathering information. Interviews can be formal or informal depending on the purpose.

Through interviewing, students have the opportunity to develop their communication skills, not only in the asking of questions, but also in listening and appropriately responding verbally and non-verbally to another person's remarks. Besides being a technique that has much potential for developing students' communication skills, interviewing can help students learn other valuable skills such as collecting and using data, analysing information, and working co-operatively with others.

Once students have elected, or have been assigned the task of conducting an interview, the teacher can help students prepare by reminding them of or assisting them with the following:

- Contacting the interviewee to make an appointment (Urge students to accurately record the time, date, and location of the interview.)
- Asking for the interviewee's prior consent if students wish to videotape or audiotape the interview
- Obtaining background information about the person being interviewed
- Deciding upon the exact purpose of the interview
- Preparing a list of questions (This may involve brainstorming during the exploratory phase.)
- Thanking the interviewee at the conclusion of the interview (Teachers may consider having students send a more formal note of thanks to the interviewee following the interview.)

When students have had little or no prior experience interviewing, the teacher may wish to consider devoting some class time to role-playing the interview. Each student, having prepared a list of tentative questions, can pair up with another student and then conduct their respective interviews. In this way, each student has the opportunity to practise asking and answering questions, thinking of follow-up questions, listening and providing appropriate feedback, seeking clarification, and conversational turn-taking. Role-playing the interview also provides students with the opportunity to practise note taking and assessing the gathered information for its relevance to research purposes.

Choral Speaking

Choral speaking engages students, in large or small groups, in saying or singing rhymes, chants, and poems. This technique provides students with the opportunity to develop a range of physical oral communication skills including enunciation, pronunciation, diction, intonation, and breath control. Choral reading permits students to develop a sense of how meaning can be conveyed by non-verbal aspects of speech such as tone, volume, stress, and rate and rhythm of speech. The auditory nature of choral speaking can help students appreciate the sound of poetry and other text in a way that silent, private reading, by its very nature, cannot. Choral reading also provides students with the opportunity to experiment and have fun with the rhythm and sound of language.

Because choral speaking is an arrangement or orchestration of voices, the choral performance of a text will likely require advance planning. By discussing with students such features as the poem's punctuation, whether certain words or phrases need to be spoken softly or loudly, slowly or quickly, whether particular words or phrases need to be stressed or preceded by a pause, the teacher can help students determine how the text can be said or sung. Since choral speaking is an orchestration of voices, the teacher and the students will likely have to consider whether the entire text will be said or sung by the entire class in unison, or whether segments of the text or certain roles should be said or sung by certain individuals or small groups.

Once the orchestration of the text is planned, students will need to practise it so that their performance becomes polished.

Readers Theatre

(See The Role of Drama.)

Oral Reports

The oral report requires individual students or small groups of students to organize information and orally communicate that information to an audience, usually their fellow classmates. Because the oral report has a performance component that the written report does not, this activity has the potential to heighten students' awareness of their audience, or more specifically, how to frame a message to make it interesting, meaningful, and memorable for an audience.

The same basic guidelines that apply to the students' selection of information for written reports also govern the gathering and organizing of the information that will later comprise the oral report. The teacher can assist students with their data gathering by helping them select and narrow topics, by asking students to consider what they already know about their topics, and by encouraging them to conduct research that extends or fills gaps in their knowledge. To help students organize their collected information, the teacher might ask students to remember the original purpose of their oral reports and urge them to focus on information that serves that purpose. Once students have decided upon the information they intend to include in their oral reports, they may require the teacher's assistance in constructing presentation outlines. In short, an organized, effective presentation outline features an interesting beginning, an organized middle, and a strong conclusion.

Because capturing and holding an audience's attention is key to a successful speech, students who have never delivered or who have had little experience delivering oral reports will likely require guidance regarding presentation style. One way to help students enhance performance is to encourage them to include in their presentations any diagrams, pictures, props, and/or video or audio material that bear upon the purpose of their presentations. This type of multisensory approach helps the audience to better understand and remember the information being presented. Encouraging presenters to use brief notes or prepared cue cards to guide their remarks instead of reading a paper or reciting from memory often makes their oral reports more lively and interesting. Finally, by having students deliver their reports from a position in the room where they can be seen by all members of the audience, and by encouraging those students who speak softly to use more volume, the teacher assists students to secure audience attention.

Persuasive Talk

Through persuasive talk, the student attempts to promote a thing, an idea, or an opinion and persuade others of its necessity, effectiveness, or superiority. Rhetorical oration, sometimes referred to as persuasive talk, places special demands on the speaker that less polemical forms of prepared speech do not. Since the purpose of rhetorical oration is to influence the thinking or behaviour of the audience, speakers tend to be more effective when they speak pleasantly and charismatically, when they

are thoroughly familiar with the thing or idea they are promoting, and when they are willing and prepared to answer questions in a confident, informed manner.

To heighten students' awareness of the special demands of rhetorical oration, the teacher can facilitate a discussion as to what makes a message persuasive. A short newspaper editorial or an infomercial could be examined in class to initiate such a discussion. Upon reading the editorial or viewing the infomercial with the class, the teacher can ask students whether the message presented influenced their thinking or has the potential to influence their future behaviour. To encourage students to consider those aspects of the message that make or fail to make the message persuasive, the teacher can ask students about

- the perceived expertness of the speaker
- the speaker's physical or ideological attractiveness
- the speaker's diction and tone of voice
- the sleekness of the video or text presentation
- whether the speaker's claims were supported with evidence
- whether the speaker presented and refuted potential counter arguments

By the close of the discussion, students should have the sense that a persuasive message relies not only upon strong argumentation, but also upon an appealing presentation format.

Impromptu Speaking

Impromptu speaking requires that the student give a talk that is spontaneous. Because of its unpremeditated nature, impromptu speaking has the potential to help students develop the abilities to quickly organize information into a message and to speak in a poised, confident manner without the benefit of much advance preparation.

Since students cannot speak on topics that are entirely unknown to them, the teacher may wish to consider permitting students to select their own topics for impromptu speaking. Alternatively, the teacher may wish to assign to students topics with which they are known to be familiar.

Students' first impromptu speeches can be limited to one or two minutes, and the teacher may allow students to use brief notes to guide their remarks. As students become more familiar with the experience of impromptu speaking, they can be expected to speak for five minutes without the benefit of notes.

The Debate

Students frequently engage in spontaneous, impromptu argumentation as they present claims and respond to others' comments. Although such discussion cannot be called a formal debate, this informal, impromptu type of talk does provide the teacher with the opportunity to help students refine their listening, speaking, and argumentation skills.

Argumentation, or class discussion, is not governed by a set of strict rules and conventions that determine the process of formal debate, but students can be encouraged to support their claims, listen attentively while others' speak, and keep remarks brief and on the topic. This type of guidance supports the development of the organizational, social, and critical skills required for effective, coherent discussion and prepares students to participate in a formal debate.

Formal debate, unlike argumentation, is governed by a relatively strict set of rules and procedures. The teacher may wish to supply students with this information, or capitalize on the opportunity for research and have students themselves seek out information regarding the process of formal debate.

Once students have selected or have been assigned topics for debates, they will need to gather evidence in support of their arguments. To assist students with evidence collection, the teacher can emphasize that a strong, persuasive argument relies on established fact, sound logic, and recent and relevant research. Because successful argumentation relies in part upon refuting an opponent's counter arguments, students unfamiliar with the experience of debating may be directed not only to anticipate counter arguments, but also to gather evidence and frame assertions that weaken possible counter arguments. With classes of students who have little or no experience debating, the teacher may have students discuss the effectiveness of their argumentation following their first debates. For subsequent debates, a panel chosen from the class, the school, the faculty and/or community resource persons can evaluate the argumentation and provide a judgment.

Panel Discussions

Students involved in a panel discussion present viewpoints and information that support a solution to a problem. Because students participating in a panel discussion are exposed to the perspectives and gathered evidence of other panel members, they have an opportunity to develop open-mindedness and flexible thinking.

A panel discussion typically requires much advance preparation. Students may need to do some preliminary reading or research to become acquainted with the various perspectives of the problem under consideration. Once a variety of perspectives has been identified, students may select or be assigned to represent a particular perspective. Students will then have to gather facts, figures, and sources that support their viewpoints, and frame that information into a proposed solution.

The role of chairing a panel discussion is a particularly demanding position. The panel chair must keep participants on topic, must ask pertinent questions, and should keep accurate notes of the proceedings since he/she is responsible for making a summary statement at the end of the proceedings. The teacher may wish to discuss with students who should chair the panel discussion: the teacher, a community resource person who is familiar with the problem under the panel's consideration, or a student.

At the panel discussion, each panel member is asked by the chair to present his/her case. The chair can ask clarifying questions as members present and can invite comments from the floor either at the close of each member's case or at the conclusion of the panel presentations. The chair may elect to adjourn the panel until he/she reaches a decision, and reconvene it to render a judgment.

The actual panel discussion will require a significant slot of time. The teacher may wish to consider scheduling it for a lengthy class period. If the panel's representation is drawn from the entire student body of the school, or if the problem under the panel's consideration is of interest to many students, the panel discussion could be scheduled at a school assembly.

Listening

Since speaking and listening inform and depend upon each other, these activities share a close, symbiotic relationship. Communication, that is the exchange of information, ideas, or feelings between two parties, is effective only when the message the speaker intends to communicate closely resembles the message constructed by the listener. Communication is compromised when speakers do not frame their messages in a tone or diction that is understandable and appropriate to the message's recipient, or when listeners ignore or misinterpret another person's remarks. The teacher must emphasize with students that effective communication relies just as heavily upon courteous listening as it does upon careful speaking. Since listening is not an inborn tendency, but rather a skill that must be

cultivated, nurtured, and taught, the teacher needs to provide students with explicit instruction in listening, just as he/she would in any other skill.

The most important and natural way to help students become skilled listeners is to have them actually practise listening. By frequently asking students to respond to the teacher's, or classmates' remarks, and by engaging the class in regular discussions, the teacher not only provides students with opportunities to practise listening, but he/she also fosters an attitude that learning depends upon listening. Other ways the teacher can help students become more skilled in their listening include encouraging students to be open to viewpoints that differ from their own, and urging students to be aware of and overcome personal prejudices that might interfere with effective listening.

Generally, there are three types of listening, each serving a different purpose. The listening and comprehension of speech that aims to provide the listener with information is referred to as *discriminative listening*. This type of listening is quite common in the classroom: it occurs as students listen to the teacher's instruction, other students' comments, and announcements on the school's public address system.

Listening to persuasive messages for the purpose of evaluating the speaker's argument and evidence is known as *critical listening*. Critical listening is a sophisticated skill that many students are more cognitively prepared to develop when they are in high school. Still, some middle level students, particularly those in higher grades, are capable of these skills. Students engage in critical listening as they assess whether the teacher's and other students' comments are rooted in fact and logic, as they determine whether bias, prejudice, or favouritism colour their own and others' remarks.

Finally, listening that has aesthetic enjoyment as its central purpose is known as *appreciative listening*. By reading aloud to students, by encouraging them to read aloud and participate in choral reading, drama, or glee club, the teacher can help students develop the sense that meaning is conveyed by such non-verbal aspects of speech as tone, volume, and pitch. Moreover, by engaging students in activities that foster appreciative listening, reading aloud, and drama, for example, the teacher provides students with the opportunity to enjoy language simply for its sound or its music.

Reading and Viewing

Note: In this document, the term text is used to describe any language event, whether oral, written, or visual. In this sense, a conversation, a poem, a novel, a poster, a music video, a television program, and a multimedia production, are all considered texts. The term is an economical way of suggesting the similarity among the many skills involved in reading a film, interpreting a speech, or responding to an advertisement or piece of journalism. This expanded concept of text takes into account the diverse range of texts with which people interact and from which they construct meaning.

Introduction

The central importance of reading texts in the middle level curriculum derives from the belief that the ability to read is a main foundation of lifelong independence and enjoyment.

Reading and viewing involve both personal meaning-making activities and social and interactive engagement.

Readers of both print and non-print texts read for two main reasons: for the pleasure that reading and viewing bring and for the information that print and non-print media offer. Some texts, ranging from poetry to comic books and animated films, are identified with reading for pleasure, while other texts such as fact-based non-fiction books and documentary videos and films are considered informative.

In the English language arts classroom, the two main purposes for reading and viewing are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Texts such as novels, plays, poems, newspaper articles, magazines, photographs, and film, both documentary and fiction, can be read and viewed both for pleasure and for information, and to motivate discussion and writing.

The ability to read texts serves two main purposes: for personal enjoyment and for information.

Reading and viewing are highly personal and individual activities. Each reader/viewer brings to the reading/viewing experience personal and linguistic experiences, personal knowledge about life, and individual social, familial, and reading/viewing backgrounds. It follows that the meanings individuals derive from a text may vary; however, the more a group of readers/viewers share culture, background knowledge, and linguistic awareness, the more likely a shared interpretation will emerge from reading the same text.

In the English language arts classroom, diversity of interpretation and opinion can lead to lively discussion and debate and motivate research and investigation, thereby fulfilling one important function and reward of reading and viewing: the expansion and modification of previous experiences and perceptions.

While it is true that reading/viewing is a personal and individual experience, it can also be a highly social and collaborative one when students share their experiences. Through sharing and talk, students not only acquire new meanings and interpretations from their peers, but also refine and enhance their own initial impressions of texts. Articulating personal responses can clarify implicit understandings.

Active participation in developing meaning allows students to be responsible for their own learning, an important step toward gaining lifelong independence and enjoyment of reading and viewing.

A successful reading and viewing program implies the availability of a wide variety of texts, including non-print texts.

Since the English language arts classroom must accommodate the varied interests and abilities of all students, a wide range of texts should be available, from simple, generously illustrated texts for less capable readers, to adult fiction and non-fiction texts that can engage and challenge more sophisticated readers.

A wide variety of texts such as poetry, novels, short stories, newspapers, magazines, manuals, video and film reviews, documentaries, film animation, and live performances will provide students with the range of reading and viewing experiences needed for the development and maturation of their reading and viewing skills.

The more students can find to read that is purposeful, contains relevant information, and provides reading pleasure, the greater the chances of their becoming lifelong readers/viewers.

Successful readers and viewers are aware how genre, form, structure, and techniques/devices affect meaning.

Students need help in recognizing strategies required for successful reading of a variety of texts. While knowledge of form and structure for its own sake is inappropriate at this stage, such knowledge may be relevant insofar as it illuminates meaning. Many students have little experience in reading various types of text—myths, science fiction, poetry, newspaper articles, advertisements, documentary films, for example. Exposure to a variety of texts can add to their growing bank of reading experiences.

Students also need help in understanding the many strategies and conventions that writers, journalists, and screenwriters, for example, employ in developing various types of text. The reading/viewing experience is greatly enriched when readers understand how metaphor and other literary and rhetorical devices contribute to the richness of a writer's or filmmaker's craft and textual development. Interpretations are enhanced when readers recognize how narrative viewpoint, perspective, and time frame influence or reveal facts and information about a print or film story.

Reading and viewing are not isolated skills.

Reading and viewing cannot be considered in isolation from other language processes: speaking, listening, writing, and other ways of representing. A student's growth in one area influences, contributes to, and depends on development in all the others. Reading and viewing extend comprehension and foster the complex thinking processes necessary to analyse, compare, and evaluate texts and synthesize information, and are conducive to the development, refinement, and maturation of skills in speaking, listening, writing, and other ways of representing.

Reading and viewing literacy requires interaction between the reader and a range of representations

Reading and viewing are active processes involving constant interaction between the mind of the reader or viewer and the text. It is a process in which meaning is constructed from a range of representations, including print, film, television, electronic, and other texts.

In a world that is as much electronic and visual as it is print, students must learn to respond personally and critically to visual imagery and be able to select, assimilate, synthesize, and evaluate information obtained through technology and the media.

Current notions of literacy have thus been expanded to include

- *information literacy*—the ability to access, interpret, evaluate, organize, select, produce, and communicate information in and through a variety of media technologies and contexts to meet diverse learning needs and purposes
- *media literacy*—the ability to understand how mass media such as television, film, radio, and magazines work—how they produce meanings, how they are organized, and how to use them
- *visual literacy*—the ability to understand, interpret, and use the representation and symbolism of a static or moving visual image
- *critical literacy*—the ability to examine how the meanings of visual images or symbols are organized and constructed to make meaning and why they have a particular impact on the viewer

Varying the Reading/Viewing Experience

Students need exposure to a range of reading and viewing experiences in order for them to be comfortable with a variety of texts. Students need experiences with

- poetry, short stories, plays (both student and teacher selected)
- young adult fiction—students and teachers together can build a bibliography or library of quality books that appeal to a range of reading abilities and reading interests; teachers may want to consult the young adult literature reviewed in each *English Journal* publication for reading suggestions
- children's fiction and non-fiction books, particularly useful for middle level learners who are not quite ready to tackle more challenging texts
- student writing produced by peers, along with pieces found in various anthologies
- paperbacks on personal development topics
- manuals and trade books related to careers
- hobby magazines
- comics, jokes, and other light-hearted readings
- textbooks from other subjects—teachers can validate the usefulness of such texts in the English language arts classroom and also work with students to develop their strategies for reading texts of this nature

- newspapers, magazine articles, and television news programs and documentaries to help students develop their knowledge of the world and encourage them to become more confident speakers about global issues
- electronic print texts to develop needed computer literacy skills and to encourage students to research issues through the Internet
- video and film reviews to allow students to develop their critical viewing skills and provide yet another forum for expressing personal and critical responses
- live performances to provide a medium for reading, interpreting, analysing, and responding—whether students participate in a performance or sit as observers in an audience

Approaches to Reading/ Viewing Texts

A well-balanced English language arts classroom provides opportunities for students to read independently, as well as opportunities for students to share in reading the same text and to participate in small-group or whole-class discussion.

Note: When reading is referred to in this section, in most instances the information and ideas are relevant for viewing.

Among the many ways to work with readers and texts in the classroom are five key approaches that can be modified, integrated, or adapted to suit the nature and purpose of the reading situation and the learning needs of the students:

- independent reading
- guided reading
- shared or group reading
- reading workshop
- reading aloud

Independent Reading

A central component of a balanced reading program includes independent reading where students choose their own reading material, guided by their personal preferences and their awareness of their personal range of reading abilities. While students who already have a varied background of reading experience are capable of selecting their own reading materials, some readers may need the teacher's guidance on a regular basis in selecting texts, until they broaden their reading experience and become more confident, flexible, and able readers. Students also need opportunities to respond to what they read, and to receive feedback/response from others. This does not mean, however, that students should have to respond to everything they read or view.

The organization of independent reading time can take a variety of forms. They include scheduled uninterrupted sustained silent reading time (USSR) where teachers and students read self-selected books, home reading programs where students read the book to a parent/ caregiver, and reading workshops where students have the opportunity to engage in the behaviours of real readers—reading and responding.

Guided Reading

Like the need for independent reading, guided reading is also a critical component of the English language arts classroom. During these reading sessions, teachers guide or facilitate student discussions about various readings. Students and teachers can explore together a range of issues and topics about a particular text:

- to share, examine, and reflect upon the various personal reactions readers have to a particular text
- to anticipate and predict actions and outcomes before a text is finished
- to relate the text they are reading to prior readings—to examine the similarities and differences between two stories (or among more), to compare and/or contrast the authors' writing styles, to explore why one text was enjoyable while another was not
- to identify unfamiliar words and establish their meaning
- to consider interesting writing techniques—metaphors, personification, word clusters and phrasing, chapter introductions, and endings
- to examine how language choice and writing style contribute to a reading
- to discuss the features and characteristics of the type of writing—drama, mystery, narrative, biography
- to explore the features and characteristics of the writing—author's viewpoint, character development, story background, highlighted details, story time frame

Shared or Group Reading

The shared reading of the earlier grades can continue in the middle level classroom. All age groups enjoy reading and talking together. Middle level students may read to each other in pairs (older students can be buddied with younger students, fluent readers with struggling readers) or in small groups. They can read along while listening to a tape of a story, or read with the teacher.

Shared reading provides a safe environment for risk taking when reading. It exposes students to high quality memorable literature and provides opportunities to model, demonstrate, and practise fluent reading. Shared reading can provide a rich foundation for common reading experiences that can generate small-group and whole-class discussion and foster critical thinking, and speaking and listening skills.

Reading Workshop

The reading workshop is an effective way to manage a literature-based approach. It is an excellent way to build a community of readers. Activities generated from various readings can be designed to reflect individual interests and abilities, enrich individual experiences, offer readers a greater assurance of success, build learner confidence, and move students forward in their reading and language development.

Teaching and learning can be individualized since all students pursue their own needs and interests. Teachers can then work closely with individuals on a one-to-one basis to meet the specific needs of each learner. Each student's starting point for reading can be identified, and texts selected accordingly, so all readers meet with some success. Teachers then guide, monitor, and support further text selections so that students can continue to pursue interesting and accessible materials.

The reading workshop usually involves a short *instruction time* when some procedure, concept, skill, or strategy is modelled or demonstrated by the teacher; *reading time* when every student is engaged in reading; and *sharing time* when students share their responses to the books they are reading in whole-class or small-group discussion.

Students keep a record of their reading by making short entries in reading journals or logs. The teacher also keeps records of the students' reading, noting books read, strengths of the readers and strategies used to support the readers. However it is organized, the focus of the reading workshop is on enjoyment.

Reading Aloud

Reading aloud is essential to a balanced English language arts program. It is typically structured around a teacher taking a few moments to read aloud to students, or students reading aloud to a small group or the whole class. This approach is one of the most effective, multipurpose approaches to enhance literary experiences and appreciation among students. Teachers can use reading aloud to

- engage students in a rich variety of literature types—poetry, science fiction, mysteries, and autobiographies
- provide common reading experiences for students to share
- introduce or bring closure to particular English language arts classes
- provide a useful transition from one classroom activity to the next
- generate discussion about the various literary techniques authors use
- set the tone for and model further reading and discussion activities
- develop a trusting and supportive atmosphere in which students learn to talk about their personal feelings and reactions to various texts
- model how teachers read with expression and demonstrate how such reading contributes to the overall effect of a text
- help students learn to read with greater fluency and confidence

Responding to Texts

The cultivation of a wide range of reading experiences is of paramount importance in the English language arts classroom to develop more complex thinking processes. Of equal importance is the cultivation of students' abilities to respond to texts in many ways—through dialogue, small-group and whole-class discussion and debate, journal and dialogue writing, narrative from alternative viewpoints, reviews designed for various audiences, art and drama, to name a few.

Students need opportunities to consider the thoughts, feelings, and emotions evoked by texts and to make connections to their own experiences and to other texts. An effective response approach extends students' understanding, engages them in many levels of thinking, and invites them to represent their understanding in a variety of ways.

Personal Response

The opportunity for varied modes of response to text helps to ensure that students heighten their engagement with text, relate their reading and viewing to other knowledge and experience, and further their overall language development.

Oral Responses

Students need ample opportunities to talk about their thoughts and reactions to what they see and read in order to understand their reactions more clearly; such discussions should be organized for either small-group or whole-class participation.

To develop an even stronger sense of a text, students can prepare a passage for dramatic reading, either individually or in pairs, for presenting to a small group or the whole class; in their preparation, students can consider how characters should sound and identify why they might sound as they do.

Students can prepare a book review to present orally to the class as one means of exploring their literary experiences in greater detail, as well as informing others who might decide to read the same text.

Written Responses

Reflective journal entries are a significant way of enhancing and reinforcing students' reactions to what they read and view. In personal journals, students write to make clearer sense of their own thoughts and feelings. In dialogue journals, students exchange their reactions to a text with other readers in the class. A dialogue journal entry can be considered a discussion or possible debate that happens on paper.

Written responses to print and non-print texts can also be used in a variety of ways for various purposes. Once students have written their reactions to a text, they can then meet in small groups to consider what each thinks about the same text. Students might also identify what similarities and differences exist among their responses and determine why some reactions are the same while others differ.

Students should also be encouraged to write short, succinct summaries of what they read that pursue different slants or perspectives, depending on the nature of the reading.

Students can research the theme, settings, or history of a print or non-print text they have studied, by drawing upon a number of sources found in the school, public library or archives, or by interviewing people knowledgeable about their chosen areas of interest.

Some print and non-print texts provide useful contexts for writing poetry. Students should be encouraged to write poems as responses to reading and viewing.

When studying texts, students need to *think like writers* and examine the many writing techniques authors employ to make texts interesting and effective. One follow-up writing activity might be for students to write new or different endings to a story or play, paying close attention to the original author's style.

Students should be encouraged to write about personal experiences and events which have occurred in their own lives that relate to situations encountered in both print and non-print texts. Such writing can enhance students' textual experiences and contribute to their self-knowledge.

Other Ways of Responding

Students may find drawing or painting a useful way to internalize and capture a stronger sense of a text they read—group work on a mural depicting the events in a novel, or individual collages relating to themes and characters in novels and short stories, for example.

Students can dramatize short stories or parts of a novel, or produce screenplays based on texts. If resources are available, these dramas can be taped for future viewing. An alternative is to develop audio dramas for tape recording.

Students can watch films or videos of stories or plays they have read in order to deepen their personal responses to and understandings of literary works. As a follow-up, students might want to develop comparison pieces in which they explore the similarities and differences between the two mediums.

Critical Response

A more complex level of response emerges when students move from a purely personal or emotive response to a more critical and explanatory evaluation of various texts. These critical responses involve citing or referencing specific aspects of a text to support personal viewpoints. Critical readers and viewers need to find the key words, images, passages, actions, or events that support the claims they make.

Teachers can ask probing questions such as

> When you say that the story made you feel sad, can you point to a particular passage that caused you to feel this way?
>
> What words does the author choose to generate feelings of sadness in readers?
>
> What images are created for you?
>
> Does the setting or time of day have any impact on how readers feel after reading this passage?
>
> What can we learn from this event about how we live our own lives?

Students should learn to recognize that there is a difference between stating a personal feeling, reaction, or opinion, and interpreting a text. In the first instance, feelings are personal and do not always need to be defended or supported with critical or textual evidence. Interpretation, on the other hand, is to judge some or all of a text in some way. When readers infer from what writers, characters, and even other readers say, they are making a judgment about the view, position, or character of others. When students interpret what an author or character means by certain words or actions, for instance, they need evidence to explain, demonstrate, and support how such conclusions are drawn.

This ability to connect thoughts, feelings, opinions, reactions, and interpretations to texts requires learners to engage their logic, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities. In so doing, students become more critically aware of what they read and think, and they learn to connect their judgments to evidence. Involve students in activities that encourage critical thinking. Such activities might include *reading like a writer*—noting the author's writing techniques; *parody*—using an author's writing style; *transforming a text*—changing the ending, writing a sequel, rewriting in another genre; *guided discussions*—using carefully selected questions that help students focus on thinking critically; *comparisons*—between two characters, two texts, two settings, etc.; and *mini-lessons* on terms and concepts such as technique, genre, or style. (For additional information, see The Role of Critical Literacy.)

Understanding Texts

Responding and comprehending are interdependent, and as students grow in their abilities to respond personally and critically to texts, they are also growing in their abilities to understand texts. As well as allowing students to select reading material that interests them and is within their reading and comprehension abilities, teachers can further encourage students at any reading level to improve their reading skills. Even competent readers may have trouble understanding some texts and may not be reading as effectively as they could.

Design prereading activities that activate and/or build on prior experience.

Prereading activities, such as the following, can help students to build connections between their personal knowledge and experience, and the texts that they read:

- viewing a film or video related to the reading selection
- reading a short news story or an item related to the theme of the reading selection
- predicting from the title and other text features what the text will be about
- doing background reading for texts with stories and events situated in other provinces or countries, or for stories centred around a historical event that can be researched in advance
- discussing in small groups what they already know about the topic of the text and thinking of questions they would like answered
- writing a journal entry to predict what will happen, to imagine what a character looks like, or to relate a personal experience that the theme of the text brings to mind

Encourage students to monitor comprehension during reading.

The process of comprehension occurs before, during, and after reading. Students experiencing difficulty in understanding the texts they are reading need to develop strategies to use *as* they read. They need to be aware that the text "doesn't make sense" and have several strategies they can use to aid understanding. It is important that comprehension strategies, such as the following, be taught in a meaningful context:

Monitor understanding by asking questions such as
Does this make sense? Does it sound right?

Adjust reading pace to match the purpose and difficulty of the text (e.g. skimming, reading closely).

Reread difficult passages.

Read on or read back to achieve or retain meaning.

Ask for help when language, vocabulary, or concepts interfere with comprehension.

Select a reading mode (silent or oral) to suit the purpose.

Predict, take risks, and read *between the lines*.

Understand and use the structure of text.

Conference with individual readers on an ongoing basis.

Since teachers need to know the reading progress of their students, they can rely on student-teacher conferences, essentially one-on-one discussions, for gathering such information. Through conferencing, teachers can

- monitor the likes and dislikes of students and offer suggestions for future reading
- better identify the texts students find problematic and guide future reading choices toward books that are more manageable for learners
- work with individual students to address specific reading problems —vocabulary, reading fluency, confidence, or recognizing story elements
- assess the progress of individual readers and implement appropriate intervention measures suited to particular reading problems

The Role of the Teacher in the Reading Classroom

Teachers are facilitators and animators in the reading classroom, setting up individual classes, organizing students to pursue various study projects, and motivating some small-group and most whole-class discussion. They also guide students in selecting their reading materials, and give feedback on oral and written responses to readings.

On other occasions, teachers allow students to carry the momentum of the class on their own. In these situations, teachers become listeners, observers, and class participants.

The following guiding principles may help teachers to maintain the balance between the roles of facilitator, observer, and animator:

Provide as many opportunities as possible for students to pursue their personal reading interests.

Provide learners with both print and non-print texts so they are exposed to a wide and rich assortment of texts.

Participate in class discussion and share their own views and opinions along with all of the other members of their classroom reading community. Speculate about what they themselves think and seek help from students when shaping personal thoughts and perspectives.

Ask lots of questions that cause readers to probe and enrich their understanding and awareness, and suggest lines of inquiry.

Guide and negotiate student reading selections when it seems necessary or relevant to do so.

Help readers to find their starting point or level of reading ability, so they can choose books that they can grasp, and thereby avoid becoming discouraged and giving up on reading.

Encourage students to extend their reading and viewing experiences by pursuing a variety of talking, listening, writing, and dramatizing activities.

Monitor closely the progress of readers and provide regular and ongoing feedback that will allow them to grow as readers, viewers, and thinkers.

Offer constant support, and celebrate students' successes so they have the courage and confidence to forge ahead.

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

Introduction

Note: When writing is referred to in this section, in most instances the information and ideas are relevant for other ways of representing.

Every student has the potential to become an effective writer. The English language arts classroom provides the context in which this potential can be realized. An effective writing program provides students with opportunities to explore, practise, and use language in a wide range and variety of rhetorical circumstances.

Writing is not an isolated skill.

The development of writing skills depends on other elements of language arts such as reading, talking, listening, and viewing. Experiences in using the skills of talking, listening, reading, and viewing can inform a writer's thinking. A writer habitually engaged in text and talk learns to develop concepts and ideas and at the same time becomes aware of forms, structures, styles, and conventions used by other writers and speakers.

Participation in the English language arts classroom in activities related to other forms of representation such as mural making, improvisational drama, choral reading, dance and movement, and media production can provide a variety of experiences designed to develop the critical faculties and creativity of students. Thus texts are both stimuli and models for the development of writing and representing.

Writing serves many purposes.

A broad distinction may be made between writing that serves a communicative purpose—to inform, instruct, persuade, delight, or entertain—and writing that addresses an internal need, that seeks to explore or clarify or articulate fledgling ideas and feelings.

The former normally implies an external audience, which may be as individual as a friend, relative, teacher, or employer, or as broad and general as the world at large. Sensitivity to this audience influences form and style.

Writing that addresses an internal need is most often associated with journal writing, which allows a writer to express doubts, explore feelings, and come to terms with ideas freely in a safe writing environment. Such writing is primarily for one's self and serves a private need.

Such writing may also serve an important function as a part of learning and in the communicative writing process. Sometimes its purpose is to clarify thinking, perhaps to discover what one already knows, perhaps to extend one's knowledge. Such writing can explore, discover, recall, reformulate, hypothesize, create, and question. It is through such exploratory writing that thinking and language develop.

Writing entails an experimental process.

Research in the teaching of writing has resulted in a clearer understanding of the ways writing is produced. It is important that students have time in class to discover what writing process or processes work for them. Writers, typically, do not follow a set of linear steps where they first identify a topic, write a complete draft, make minor modifications, and then produce a good copy. Writing is a process that moves back and forth among various elements, and each writer develops a personal way of drafting and composing a text.

The focus, at this stage, should be on the composing process, and it is essential that students understand that writing is a process that requires thought, trial and error, and risk taking.

The Process of Writing

All writers, including student writers, develop a process (or processes) by which they work. Yet, despite this uniqueness, writers do go through similar processes and often complete them in the same order. All writers come up with ideas. They get these ideas on paper and develop them by adding, deleting, changing, and rearranging. They rid their writing of errors and publish their work.

PreWriting

It is helpful for students to employ a variety of ways to generate ideas for their writing topics since this provides the starting point for discovering what it is they actually want to say about their subjects. The more strategies students know, the more they are able to explore their topics and prepare themselves for beginning to write. A student may wish to

- talk with others knowledgeable about his/her topic
- reflect on personal experiences related to the topic
- read books to gather information
- brainstorm a list of ideas about the topic
- jot down an outline, perhaps based on his/her brainstorming
- organize ideas around the questions of who? what? where? when? why? how?
- freewrite journal entries to explore ideas
- develop an outline
- map, web, cluster, or sketch
- organize ideas into categories to formulate an outline
- write a short summary

Organizing and Drafting

The issues a writer needs to consider at this stage include

- deciding what *purpose* and focus his/her topic will take (to describe something, to explain, to advise, to direct, to inform, to entertain, to guide)
- establishing who the *reader or readers* will be (other students in the class or the school, a friend or parent, an editor or a publisher, a specific interest group)
- figuring out what the *introduction* should say based on the writing purpose
- deciding on a suitable *tone* for the piece (humorous, serious, academic, informal, poetic)
- determining what *form* the text should take (a story, a letter, a newspaper editorial)

Writers then need to write out first drafts based on the topics generated during prewriting and the plans made for developing the texts. It is during this drafting stage that the writing begins to take shape and focus. As writers progress, they often modify their initial planning. A more comprehensive and elaborated framework for the writing only really begins to evolve once students start to commit ideas to paper.

Revising

Once students generate their first drafts, they can review their work and make decisions about how to bring greater clarity, organization, focus, and meaning to the texts. The focus at this stage of the writing is largely on content, so it is at this stage that writers need to add, move, or delete ideas and sections so the writing better captures what they want to convey. Writers also revise how they have worded some ideas to make them more clear or to use a tone or word choice more appropriate to the nature, purpose, and style of the writing.

Writers often need to revise their texts a number of times before they are satisfied with their finished products. As this ongoing attention to adding, removing, replacing, or rearranging ideas unfolds, the text takes on a stronger shape and focus. In many ways, revising enables writers to align what actually appears on paper with their personal purpose and intent for writing.

Editing/Proofreading

Writers need to attend to editing for features such as paragraph length, sentence variety, vocabulary choice, unnecessary clauses, verb tense, and excess jargon. (See Appendices I and J.)

They also need to proofread for errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation to ensure their writing follows proper conventions. This is an important phase of composing a text since mechanical and surface errors impede a reader's progress through a text. Writers need considerable time, practice, and guidance in learning to identify such problems in their own or others' writing, and subsequently to diagnose and correct each problem.

Publishing/Presenting

In many cases, publication provides the motive for writing, so students should be encouraged to consider publishing in a variety of ways:

- posting completed work on a bulletin board
- distributing copies of their work to classmates or reading the work aloud
- entering contests
- submitting entries to the class or school newspaper
- recording the writing for others to hear
- taking texts home to share with others
- sharing with another class
- submitting stories, articles, or class anthologies to the school library
- writing a class book
- forwarding texts to authentic, intended readers external to the school
- publishing electronically

Guiding Students through the Process of Writing

Teachers can employ several strategies to guide and assist writers through the various stages of developing a written text. The most effective way to work with writers is through conferencing with them about various issues and aspects related to their writing.

Writing Conferences

Writing conferences are generally characterized as discussions about someone's writing that occur between a teacher and a student, or between two or more students. Their purpose is not intended primarily to make a writer's product better, but rather to help writers develop control over their writing process and gain insights. These conferences, usually short, are intended to address only one or two specific concerns so that writers can return fairly quickly to their writing. Most importantly, conferences can occur at any stage of a text's development and deal with any of a number of possible writing problems, issues, or concerns.

Teachers and peers can help writers discover the central problems they face and guide them toward finding solutions. When conferencing, both teachers and peers need to encourage writers to talk about their composing problems and ask questions that help writers clarify their thinking. The essential ingredients are to listen and ask probing questions that cause writers to think about various aspects of the writing, and not simply tell writers what they should or should not do to fix their writing.

Content Conferences

Content conferences focus on issues related to a text's content and thus help writers address issues about idea development. These conferences are aimed at helping writers get back on track and move forward with their writing. Following are some questions teachers and peers can use to help writers:

What's the most important thing you're trying to say?

What's your favourite part? How can you build on it?

I don't understand. Please tell me more about your topic. What else do you know about your subject?

Is all of this information relevant or important to your subject? What parts don't you need?

Where does your piece really begin? Can information be deleted prior to this start?

What do you want your reader to know or feel at the end of your piece?

Does this conclusion do what you want?

What do you think you'll do next?

Editing/Proofreading Conferences

Editing conferences are aimed at helping writers polish their texts so that a reader's enjoyment and understanding are not impeded by grammar, spelling, wording, and punctuation errors. Students should be encouraged to rely on dictionaries, writing style manuals, thesauri, and any other helpful style guides. When writers are not able to solve a problem on their own, they should seek help from peers or the teacher.

(For editing suggestions see Appendix G, I, and J.) .

Developing Students as Peer Editors

Students require guidance and practice in becoming effective responders to the writing that other students produce. They need many opportunities to develop their responding abilities in order to make more effective judgments when reading their own and others' writing. Students may have a sense that something is not right in a text, but they do not always know how to articulate the weakness and offer constructive feedback to writers. Teachers can help students develop a strong understanding of why it is important to have work edited and what it means to be an editor. They can also help students understand that giving a writer useful feedback means more than just correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

Teachers can model how to

- read a paragraph by looking at each sentence to see if the information presented flows in a logical order
- see if there are transitional statements or ideas that lead from one main point or paragraph to the next

- take a sentence apart by separating the ideas and checking to see if they all really go together in one sentence
- mark parts of a paper with brackets to signal that something might be wrong, even if they don't know exactly what the problem is or know how to articulate what they think is wrong
- conference with readers while they edit another writer's text so they can learn
- identify and articulate problems encountered in the writing
- help writers learn about themselves as writers by studying and understanding the feedback they get from readers

(For additional information on peer editing, see Appendices I and J.)

Writing and Representing: Modes and Forms

Flexible writers are able to adapt their writing to meet differing purposes, needs, audiences, and styles. Students can become strong, effective writers if they practise writing in three modes — expressive, transactional, and poetic — learning to adjust their writing style and format to meet a range of purposes for writing and a range of reading audiences for whom various texts are intended.

Expressive

Expressive or exploratory writing is largely personal writing and is done for the self rather than an external audience or reader. This mode of writing allows students to think about and explore ideas and opinions freely, without worrying about following the writing conventions required to accommodate the needs of an outside reader. This writing typically takes place in jotted notes, learning logs, and often first attempts at writing. Students may, for instance, choose to keep a writer's notebook or log to record raw material for writing and to experiment with language and form. Diaries and journals are also important avenues for writers to probe their personal thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Journals are an excellent vehicle for exploratory writing because they represent a safe place to write: personal experiments in thinking and writing are not made public.

In addition to using journals for exploratory purposes, writers may also keep personal journals to write about any topics and experiences that interest them. Response and dialogue journals are also often used to encourage students to see the connection between themselves and the literature they read. These journal entries can often serve as the springboard for developing texts into more refined compositions intended for a wider audience.

Transactional

Transactional writing involves using language to get things done: to inform, advise, persuade, instruct, record, report, explain, generalize, theorize, and speculate. Transactional writing is a more formalized type of writing that requires writers to present their ideas in a clear and organized manner. Prose that is intended to explain, report, or convince must present

a statement of purpose, have a clearly developed structure, provide supporting evidence, and come to an appropriate conclusion. To develop such texts, writers must become skilled at knowing how to organize and develop content, quote and paraphrase resource materials, structure paragraphs, ensure smooth transitions between paragraphs and sections, and so on. The types of transactional texts students should be familiar with include essays, letters, reports, editorials, book reviews, and research projects.

Poetic

Poetic writing uses language as an art medium. A piece of poetic writing is a verbal construct, an object made out of language that exists for its own sake rather than as a means of achieving something else. The imaginative pieces of poetic writing that students can compose include poetry, stories, songs, plays, monologues, and dialogue. When students write imaginative or literary works of their own, such as poems, short stories, or scenes from plays, they experience making the same decisions that published authors do. The writing also requires critical decision making about and commitment to elements such as form, style, character development, event sequencing, and the logic of plot.

Other Ways of Representing

In addition to writing, students need to engage in and explore many ways of representing that allow them to clarify and reflect upon their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning. Various modes of representing appeal to the needs of visual learners—those who learn by viewing to gather information, and those who find artistic modes more appropriate for conveying personal expression and personal understanding.

Representing thus refers to the range of ways in which students create meaning and the many forms and processes they can use to represent that meaning. In addition to written language, this variety of representing processes can include music, dance, movement, visual representation (drawings and paintings, photography in photo essays or narratives, posters, cartoons, and pamphlets and brochures), drama (skits, plays, mimes, and role-playing), media production (videos, films, storyboards, radio interviews, documentaries), and technological and other forms of representation.

(Refer to Appendices K and L, for suggestions of forms students might explore in writing and other ways of representing.)

Independent Writing

Students need to engage daily in the process of writing independently for a sustained period of time. This process includes many kinds of writing for many purposes across the curriculum—learning logs, notes, reports, journal writing, charts, graphs, and fiction.

Teachers support students in a variety of ways as they engage in independent writing. They create a supportive environment that encourages risk taking, provide instruction through modelling and other types of mini-lessons, monitor progress, and provide feedback. A classroom writing workshop is a highly effective way to engage students in independent writing.

The Writing Workshop

Every classroom writing workshop will be different. Students, teachers, the dynamic in each classroom, even the furniture and how it is arranged differ from one class to the next. Though such differences mean there is no single formula, there are a number of important elements for creating a classroom writing workshop.

Writers need regular blocks of writing time—Students need ample time to write in order to get immersed in their work. Teachers therefore need to foster a strong writing momentum in the classroom so that students can learn and benefit from a strong accumulation of writing experiences.

Writers need personal, meaningful reasons to write—Encouraging students to explore what is important to them in writing is important for creating a positive and productive writing workshop. Students invest themselves in their writing and assume greater ownership over their written texts if they write about topics and ideas that are personally relevant and important.

Writers need ample responses and reactions to what they write—Writers require feedback from both peers and teachers as their written texts unfold. These responses to their writing during the development of texts enable writers to refine their thinking and ensure that ideas are communicated effectively to a reading audience.

Mini-Lessons/Modelling

Teachers constantly help writers learn and grow as they move about the classroom to confer with individuals and small groups of students. When a teacher provides short lessons to one student or a small group of students experiencing the same difficulties with their writing, these brief sessions are the *mini-lessons* of the classroom writing workshop.

In some instances, teachers may offer mini-lessons to one writer who is having difficulty developing a suitable introduction to a text. On other occasions, when a small group may need assistance with paragraphing or run-on sentences, teachers can offer a short lesson on developing effective paragraphs or editing sentences that are too long. Occasions for teachers to offer the whole class instruction occur if, for instance, most writers are

experiencing problems with proper use of the dash, question mark, or quotation marks. Teachers might also offer a lesson to all students on the use of metaphors and similes as effective writing devices.

Students also benefit from having opportunities to see adults writing for everyday purposes. Teachers should make opportunities to model various aspects of the writing process, dealing with writing issues such as getting an effective opening or making transitional statements to move from one paragraph or idea to the next.

Writing with Computers

Word processing software facilitates writing. It allows for easy insertion, deletion, and rearrangement of text. Writing at the computer involves composing, editing, and revising on screen. The writer can also vary the font, make layout changes, save the document for future use, and print a finished product. The full benefits of the power of word processing are revealed when students compose on screen rather than simply transcribing work to the screen. The use of word processing enhances the process of writing by

- facilitating the revising and editing stages
- enhancing the presentation (font, layout, etc.)
- enhancing group or collaborative writing

Writing at the computer involves the same processes as writing with pen and paper: drafting, editing, and revising. The only difference is that it is done on a computer screen. The focus is on the process of writing, and the full benefit of the power of word processing is revealed when students compose on screen rather than simply transcribe work to the screen.

(See also Integrating Technology with English Language Arts.)

Note: Keyboard skills should not be considered a prerequisite for beginning word processing.

Assessment and Evaluation

Introduction

What learning is assessed and evaluated, how it is assessed and evaluated, and how results are communicated send clear messages to students and others about what is really valued—what is worth learning, how it should be learned, what elements or qualities are considered important. For example, if teachers value risk taking in learning, then it is important to reward risk taking as part of determining marks or grades.

Using a Variety of Assessment Strategies

Assessment involves gathering information on the full range of student learning in a variety of ways so that a clear and valid picture emerges of what students know and are able to do in English language arts. This assessment process should provide a rich collection of information that reflects students' progress in working toward achievement of learning outcomes, and thereby should guide future instruction.

Assessment is the systematic process of gathering information on student learning.

Evaluation is the process of analysing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information, and making judgments or decisions based upon the information gathered.

Teachers are encouraged to use assessment and evaluation practices that are consistent with student-centred instructional practices, for example,

- designing assessment tasks that help students make judgments about their own learning and performance
- designing assessment tasks that incorporate varying learning styles
- individualizing assessment tasks as appropriate to accommodate students' particular learning needs
- negotiating and making explicit the criteria by which performance will be evaluated
- providing feedback on student learning and performance on a regular basis

Assessment activities, tasks, and strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- anecdotal records
- artifacts
- audiotapes
- checklists
- conferences
- demonstrations
- examinations
- exhibitions
- holistic scales
- interviews
- inventories
- investigations
- learning logs/journals
- media products observation
- peer assessments
- performance tasks
- portfolios
- seminar presentations
- projects
- questioning
- reviews of performance
- scoring guides (rubrics)
- self-assessments
- surveys
- questionnaires
- tests
- videotapes
- work samples
- written assignments

When students are aware of the outcomes they are responsible for and the criteria by which their work will be assessed, they can make informed choices about the most effective ways to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

Involving Students in the Assessment Process

It is important that students participate actively in the assessment of their own learning, developing their own criteria, and learning to judge different qualities in their work. To get an idea of some possible criteria, students may benefit from examining various scoring criteria, rubrics, and sample pieces of work.

To become lifelong learners, students need to wean themselves from external motivators such as grades or marks. They are more likely to perceive learning as its own reward when they are empowered to assess their own progress. Rather than asking teachers, What do you want?, students should be asking themselves questions such as, What have I learned? What can I do now that I couldn't do before? What do I need to learn next? Assessment must provide opportunities for students to reflect on their progress, evaluate their learning, and set goals for future learning.

Diverse Learners

Assessment practices should accept and appreciate learners' linguistic and cultural diversity. Teachers should consider patterns of social interaction, diverse learning styles, and the ways people use oral and written language across different cultures. Student performance on any assessment task is not only task-dependent, but also culture-dependent. It is crucial that assessment practices be fair and equitable, as free as possible of biases, recognizing that no assessment practice can shore up the differences in educational experiences that arise from unequal opportunities to learn.

Teachers are encouraged to be flexible in assessing the learning success of all students and to seek diverse ways in which students might demonstrate their personal best. In inclusive classrooms, students with special needs are expected to demonstrate success in their own way. They are not expected to do the same things in the same ways in the same amount of time as their peers; indeed, the assessment criteria and the methods of achieving success may be significantly different from those of their classmates.

Assessing Speaking and Listening

Valid assessment of speaking and listening involves recognizing the complexities of these processes. Informal assessment, for example, the use of observation and checklists by both the teacher and the students, can be used to assess achievement of many of the speaking and listening outcomes. Students can use checklists and journal entries to explore and reflect on their own and others' perceptions of themselves as speakers and listeners. Scales or rubrics may also be helpful for teachers and students to use in scoring individual or group assessment tasks. (Sample rubrics for group evaluation, self-evaluation, and teacher observation for speaking and listening can be found in Appendices M, N, O.) When students are to be evaluated on their performance in formal speaking situations, most students will need opportunities in a small-group situation to rehearse, receive feedback, and revise their presentations.

Reflections on discussion and performance, listener and observer responses, and peer assessments and self-assessments of speaking and listening can be included in the student's portfolio.

Teachers might also consider the inclusion of audiotapes and videotapes in students' portfolios to document their growth and achievements.

Assessing Responses to Text

A major function of the English language arts curriculum is to help students develop preferences or habits of mind in reading and viewing texts. In devising ways to assess learners' interactions with texts and responses to their reading and viewing experiences, teachers might consider asking students the following questions:

- Did you enjoy reading/viewing the text? Can you identify why you did or did not?
- Did the text offer any new insight or point of view? If so, did it lead you to a change in your own thinking? If not, did it confirm thoughts or opinions you already held?
- Did the discussion reveal anything about the text, about other readers/viewers, or about you?

These questions ask students to evaluate their own interactions with text and with other readers/viewers, rather than focussing only on the details of the text.

In analysing students' comments on texts over time, both written and oral, teachers might consider the following questions to determine how the students are progressing:

- Do the students seem willing to express responses to a text?
- Do the students ever change their minds about aspects of a text?
- Do the students participate in discussions, listening to others, considering their ideas, and presenting their own thoughts?
- Do the students distinguish between the thoughts and feelings they bring to a text and those that can reasonably be attributed to the text?

Are the students able to distinguish between fact, inference, and opinion in the reading/viewing of a text?

Are the students able to relate the text to other human experiences, especially their own? Are they able to generalize and abstract?

Do the students accept responsibility for making meaning out of a text and discussion on the text?

Do the students perceive differences and similarities in the visions offered by different texts? Are they aware of the subtleties?

Do the students understand that each text, including their responses to a reading or viewing experience, reflects a particular viewpoint and set of values which are shaped by the social, cultural, or historical context of the text?

In developing criteria for evaluating response, for example, through examination of students' response logs or journals, teachers and students might consider evidence of students' abilities to

- generate, articulate, and elaborate on responses and perceptions
- describe difficulties in understanding a text
- define connections or relationships among various log/journal entries
- reflect on the nature or types of responses
- reflect on the range of voices or styles they use in their responses
- reflect on the meaning of their responses to texts or reading/viewing experiences, inferring the larger significance of those responses

In developing criteria for evaluating peer dialogue journals, teachers and students might consider

- the extent to which students invite their partners to respond and to which they acknowledge and build on those responses
- the extent to which students demonstrate respect for each other's ideas, attitudes, and beliefs
- the abilities of the students to collaboratively explore issues or ideas

Assessing Reading

In the preliminary assessment of reading abilities, teachers can use informal assessment to discover students' specific reading strengths and needs, and plan appropriate learning experiences. For example, the teacher might ask the student to read orally a short selection (perhaps a section from two or three texts of varying difficulty). While listening to the reading, the teacher makes observations to determine whether the student is reading for meaning or simply decoding words, and notes what strategies the student employs to construct meaning. Through the student's story making, conversation, or writing, the teacher gathers information about the student's interests, reading background, strengths, needs, and learning goals in English language arts.

Such assessment practices

- build a rapport between the teacher and the students
- reassure students who experience difficulties that, whatever their individual starting points, progress will build from there
- assure students that the teacher will be supportive in recommending or approving appropriate reading materials and in negotiating assignments that will permit them to demonstrate their personal best
- set the tone and the expectation for individual conferencing on an as-needed basis

Assessing and Evaluating Student Writing

In the preliminary assessment of writing abilities, teachers might ask students to provide writing samples on topics of their own choice or in response to a selection of short articles on controversial issues. As well as valuing what the writing communicates to the reader, teachers can use a student's writing samples to identify strengths and weaknesses, analyse errors, and detect the patterns of errors. Such an analysis provides a wealth of information about an individual learner. Similarly, what is not written can tell as much about the learner as what has been included. The following is a list of the kinds of information the teacher should address:

- limited vocabulary
- literal interpretation (only surface response)
- spelling patterns revealing lack of basic word knowledge
- non-conventional grammatical patterns
- inconsistent use of tense
- absence of creative detail, description, figurative language
- length of piece and overall effort in light of the time provided to complete the assignment

In responding to the student, the teacher should speak about what the writing reveals. The emphasis should be on helping the student to recognize and build on writing strengths and to set goals for improvement. The students should

- record these goals

- use these goals as a focal point in building an assessment portfolio
- update goals on an ongoing basis
- use these goals as a reference point during teacher-student writing conferences

Rather than assigning marks or grades to an individual piece of writing, some teachers prefer to evaluate a student's overall progress as seen in a portfolio, specifying areas where improvement is evident or needed.

Students benefit from the opportunity to participate in the creation of criteria for the evaluation of written work and to practise scoring pieces of writing, comparing the scores they assign for each criterion. Such experiences help students to find a commonality of language for talking about their own and others' writing.

Portfolios

A major feature of assessment and evaluation in English language arts is the use of portfolios. Portfolios are a purposeful selection of student work that tells the story of the student's efforts, progress, and achievement.

Portfolios engage students in the assessment process and allow them some control in the evaluation of their learning. Portfolios are most effective when they encourage students to become more reflective about and involved in their own learning. Students should participate in decision making regarding the contents of their portfolios and in developing the criteria by which their portfolios will be evaluated. Portfolios should include

- the guidelines for selection
- the criteria for judging merit
- evidence of student reflection

Portfolio assessment is especially valuable for the student who needs significant support. Teachers should place notes and work samples from informal assessments in the student's portfolio and conference with the student about his/her individual starting points, strengths, and needs. Students, in consultation with the teacher, set goals and then select pieces that reflect progress toward their goals. Students who have difficulty in English language arts also need to see samples of work done by their peers—not to create competition but to challenge them as learners. They need to see exemplars in order to understand and explore more complex and sophisticated ways of expressing their own thoughts and ideas. Multiple revisions of assignments saved all together in the students' portfolios allow them to examine how they have progressed to more complex levels of thought.

Tests and Examinations

Traditional tests and internal or external examinations are by themselves inadequate instruments with which to measure the learning required by this curriculum. Evaluation must be consistent with the philosophy articulated in this document and in *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum*. Some teachers have designed tests and examinations that reflect key aspects of the curriculum, such as collaborative small-group work, the process approach to writing, and response-based approaches to text. Creating opportunities for students to collaborate on a test or an examination can be a legitimate practice and useful strategy in an interactive classroom.

For example, in constructing a co-operative response to an exam question, students might work in pairs or small groups to negotiate meanings and achieve consensus in their response. An essay test based on the reading of a novel or play might consist of several questions from which students select one to write on over a two- or three-day period, using the text to find quotes or examples as evidence to support their answers. Students may be given opportunities to discuss their ideas with classmates and to seek response to their draft writing.

Alternatively, students might be given three to five essay questions a few days before the test or examination. Students would use the class time before the test or examination to rehearse possible responses to essay questions with their classmates.

Process-based examinations allow students time to apply a range of skills and strategies for prewriting (brainstorming and freewriting, for example), drafting, conferencing, revising, editing, and proofreading. The examination might comprise a single comprehensive question requiring the production, through the stages of the writing process, of a polished essay making reference to several of the texts studied during the year. Alternatively, teachers might design a range of questions or invite students to submit questions from which the teacher will make the final selection.

Some process-based examinations involve class periods over several days. During the examination, students might be permitted to make free use of texts, including dictionaries and other reference tools, but have to pass in all notes and drafts produced during these class periods to be filed and retained by the teacher each day. The teacher could structure particular activities for each day. On day one, for example, students might read and select questions, brainstorm, discuss in small groups, make rough outlines or notes, and begin their first drafts. On the next day, students might complete the first drafts and revise them in peer conferences. Day three might involve further revision, peer editing, and self-editing. On the last day, students might use notes and drafts from days one to three to produce and proofread the final pieces. Points could be awarded for notes and early drafts as well as for the final drafts.

Effective Assessment and Evaluation Practices

Effective assessment improves the quality of learning and teaching. It can help students to become more self-reflective and feel in control of their own learning, and it can help teachers to monitor and focus the effectiveness of their instructional programs. Assessment and evaluation of student learning should recognize the complexity of learning and reflect the complexity of the curriculum. In order for judgments to be balanced, evaluation should be based on the range of learning outcomes addressed in the reporting period and focus on general patterns of achievement, rather than single instances.

Some aspects of English language arts are easier to assess than others—the ability to spell and to apply the principles of punctuation, for example. Useful as these skills are, they are less significant than the ability to create, to imagine, to relate one idea to another, to organize information, to discern the subtleties of fine prose or poetry. Response, reasoning, and reflection are significant areas of learning in English language arts, but do not lend themselves readily to traditional assessment methods such as tests.

In reflecting on the effectiveness of their assessment programs, teachers should consider to what extent their assessment practices

- are fair in terms of the student's background or circumstances
- are integrated with instruction as a component in the curriculum rather than an interruption of it
- require students to engage in real-life language use
- emphasize what students can do rather than what they cannot do
- allow them to provide relevant, supportive feedback that helps students move ahead
- reflect where the students are in terms of learning a process or strategy, and help to determine what kind of support or instruction will follow
- support risk taking
- provide specific information about the processes and strategies students are using
- provide students with diverse and multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they are capable of
- provide evidence of achievement in which the student can genuinely take pride

- recognize positive attitudes and values as important learning outcomes
- encourage students to reflect on their learning in productive ways and to set learning goals
- aid decision making regarding appropriate teaching strategies, learning experiences and environments, groupings, and learning materials
- accommodate multiple responses and different types of texts and tasks
- involve students in the development, interpretation, and reporting of assessment
- enable them to respond constructively to parent(s)/caregiver(s) and student inquiries about learning in English language arts

Appendix A

Clarification of English Language Arts Outcomes

Speaking and Listening (outcomes 1-3)

Students will be expected to:

- speak and listen in order to form and express their thoughts
- communicate information and ideas to others
- choose language appropriate to the audience, situation, and purpose

Outcomes 1-3 might be accomplished by participating in activities such as small-group discussion, informal debat*e,* and oral presentations.

Reading and Viewing (outcomes 4-7)

Students will be expected to:

- select and demonstrate understanding of a wide range of print and visual materials
- use a variety of resources and methods to research topics
- express reactions to and opinions about print and visual materials
- understand the effect of language, style, and format on print and visual material

Outcomes 4-7 might be accomplished by reading poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama from contemporary, pre-twentieth century, Canadian, and world writing; by viewing broadcast journalism, film, video, TV, advertising, CD-ROM, and Internet.

Writing and Representing (outcomes 8-10)

Students will be expected to:

- write and use other means (such as drama, multi-media to express thoughts and feelings
- produce written and other types of creative work individually and in groups
- use effective style and format (including spelling, grammar and punctuation) in writing and other forms of expression

Outcomes 8-10 might be accomplished by keeping logs, diaries, journals; generating notes, outlines, and paraphrases; creating original print, media, and visual products, critiquing print, media, and visual products.

Appendix B

Categorizing

Categorizing is a strategy that students use to group together related ideas or things.

Categorizing Strategies

- Categorize all the ideas and then establish headings for the categories.

- Establish headings after eight or ten ideas are categorized.

- Establish headings after any group has three ideas.

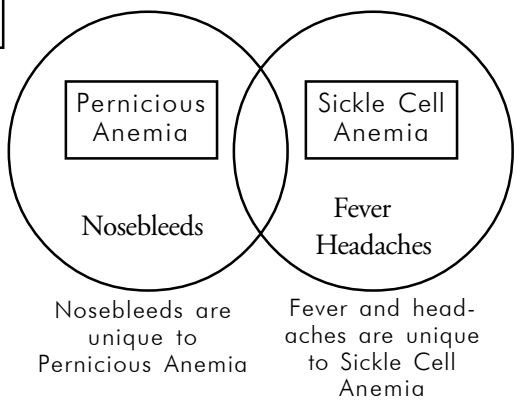
- Use symbols such as *#?! or colour coding at first to identify possible groupings and establish headings at the end.

- Begin with a few categories and then expand or refine.

LINEAR MAP
Anemias

Description	Symptoms	Tests	Causes	Treatments

VENN DIAGRAM
Comparing and Contrasting Symptoms of Anemias



Appendix C

Note Taking

Note Taking: Recording in your own words key words and phrases from material.

Guidelines for Taking Notes

- Record only relevant information, but do not show prejudice by recording information for only one side of the argument.
- Be clear and concise.
- Summarize or paraphrase in your own words.
- Use direct quotations sparingly, only when an authority has concisely stated a fact or an opinion about your research question.
- Separate facts from opinions. Opinions can be collected, but they should be indicated as such.
- Be creative. Add your own ideas that you develop as you read. Indicate these as your own ideas.

A note should include

- information that supports your statement of purpose or thesis
- facts
- statistics
- definitions
- opinions of authorities on the subject

Four Types of Notes

- Paraphrase note • Direct quotation • Summary note • Idea note

A **paraphrase** note is the most common type of note that you will use. Paraphrasing is putting another person's ideas into your own words.

Hints for Paraphrasing:

- Ask yourself, What is the author's main idea?
- Put this idea in your own words.
- Reread what you have written. Ask, Is this what the author was trying to say?

Use a **direct quotation** when the author has said something particularly well. Be sure to record the page and the source so you can document a direct quotation in a footnote or endnote.

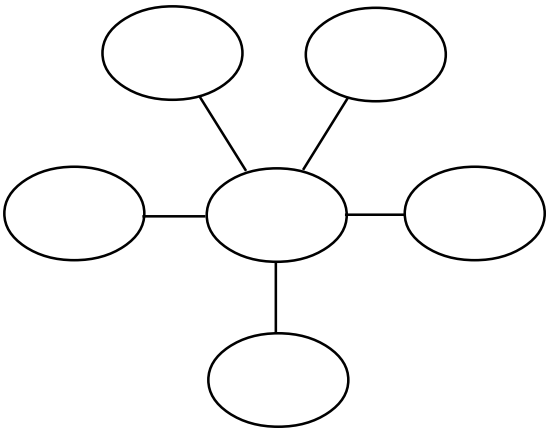
Summary notes are used for less important information. After reading a part of the source from which you are taking notes, put the author's purpose or main idea in a few words.

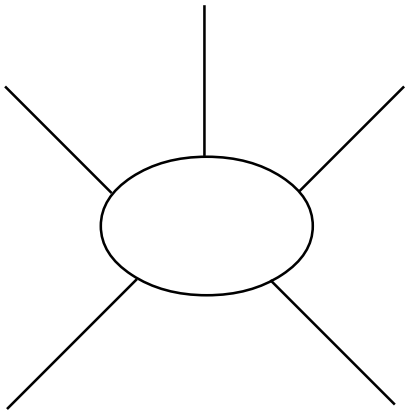
Record **your own ideas** as **notes**. As you are reading your sources, you will be forming opinions as you record your information. These ideas should become part of your notes. Be sure to indicate that these are your own opinions or ideas.

Appendix D

Webs

Graphic organizers that use circles and lines

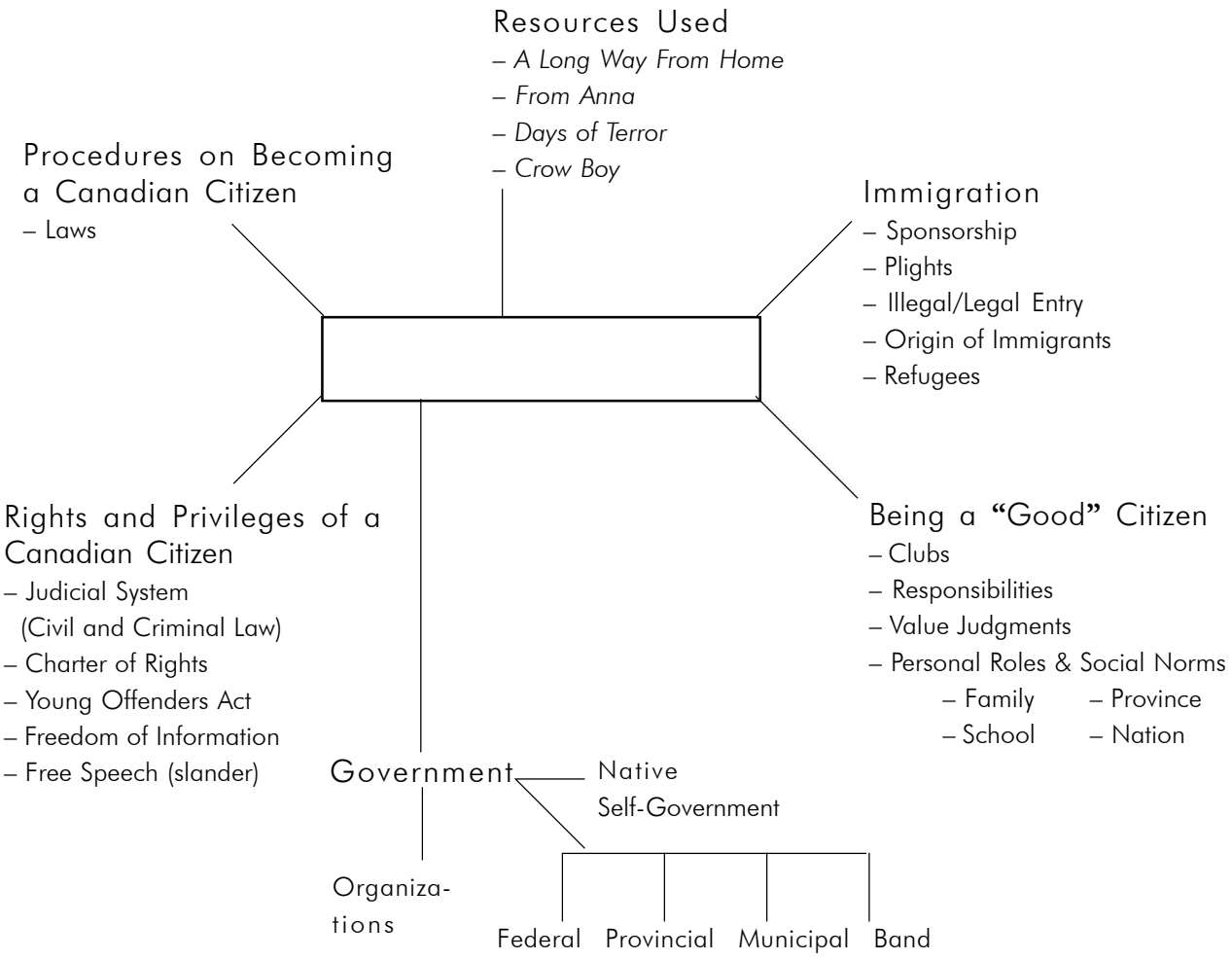




Appendix D (continued)

Sample Web

Canadian Citizenship



Appendix E

Organizing Students to Work Effectively in Small Groups

When engaging students in group work, teachers may want to monitor with whom students prefer to work during small-group discussion. While it is most beneficial to allow students to select their own working groups, some combinations may not work out well for a variety of reasons. At times, effective group process will be better promoted when the teacher designates some or all of the group arrangements. For example, shy or less vocal students may have difficulty voicing their positions and concerns. Consequently, teachers may need to facilitate group arrangements that prevent such students from feeling left out. At times, teachers may choose to closely monitor group discussions to ensure that these students have an opportunity to have their say. Similarly, some students may require extra support to learn the appropriate social behaviours and common courtesies necessary to function in a group. Examples of activities that promote classroom group discussion of an informal/exploratory nature include conversations, brainstorming, and group sharing time.

There are essentially two issues that weaken the effectiveness of small group work in the English language arts classroom—students may have so many personal topics to discuss that they do not get around to dealing with what they were expected to accomplish for class, and differences of opinion among group members about how to do things may prevent effective collaboration.

Even though off-topic talk is a natural part of group work, too much can at times become an impediment to learning. Teachers may need to implement any one of a several interventions in order to help students to focus on the topic.

- Group configurations can be reorganized by exchanging a few students in one group with those in another group.
- Teachers can ask students to maintain a detailed log of their discussion and work progress for the duration of the group project.
- Teachers can establish intermediate deadlines so students have short-term goals to work toward, increasing the chance that they will meet their final deadlines.
- Teachers may elect to spend a substantial amount of time with a group which is having problems, but caution needs to be exercised with this option since such singular attention takes away valuable time teachers could spend with other learners.

Appendix E (continued)

While differences of opinion can challenge and stimulate thinking and learning, too great a difference can hinder productivity and progress. When conflict reaches a counterproductive degree, it moves from being intellectually challenging and stimulating to being emotionally destructive. Here again, teachers may want to implement several strategies to help students overcome various obstacles:

Have students keep a log of each meeting where they note their progress and identify any problems. Teachers can then review these logs and help students deal with the problems they have identified.

Students can keep a detailed log of their collaborative process by identifying how tasks and responsibilities for all group members are assigned. By reviewing these particular write-ups, teachers may find that problems rest in the process students have adopted for pursuing their projects.

Tape-record the group sessions and then review these with students. They can often identify problems themselves and recognize when they have contributed to a negative situation.

Appendix F

Integrated Teaching and Learning

Integrated learning occurs when the regular curriculum provides a natural overlap among subject areas and when students can see the relevance and the interrelatedness of curricula. This approach to teaching and learning is based on the realization that skills in problem solving, organization, thinking, and writing span the curricula.

Teams of teachers in different subject areas can design interdisciplinary units based on themes or issues (e.g. multiculturalism, music, environmental concerns, architecture) that are integrated across the curriculum and involve skills and content from several academic areas. By planning and teaching together, many teachers feel their themes and the students' learning experiences are enriched.

Integrated teaching and learning requires choosing an area of the curriculum that is of special interest. Working in collaborative partnership, colleagues share ideas about a theme. The unit can last for several days or it can be a school project that lasts for several months.

When there are common content, concepts, processes, and skills among the disciplines, teachers and students begin to sense a new meaning for the word integration. The challenge in effective integration of this type is to ensure that the skills, strategies, and knowledge components of each discipline are respected and deliberately included, since there is potential for one discipline's agenda to override or dilute another's.

Appendix G

Suggestions for Editors

Paragraphs

Are paragraphs logically ordered?

Is there one main point to each paragraph?

Is the length of each paragraph appropriate? Have paragraphs of one line or those that run over one page been eliminated?

Sentences

Are all sentences necessary, or are there any that do not help or advance what is being said?

Have unnecessary clauses been eliminated?

Has the person, thing, or concept being discussed been placed at the beginning of the sentence?

Is there a variety of long and short sentences to give rhythm and flow to the writing?

Words

Have tenses been used consistently throughout the text?

Are word repetitions purposeful or necessary?

Has sexist, racist, … language been avoided?

Has unnecessary jargon been avoided or specialized vocabulary been explained?

Has an appropriate level of diction been used for the intended readers?

Appendix H

Suggestions for Student Writers

Note: This is **NOT** meant to be used as a checklist.

Submit your draft when you're ready for feedback, but leave yourself time to make revisions.

Make sure your draft is legible to a reader.

Make sure you know your goals for writing before you ask for feedback.

Prepare in advance the questions you want answered about your draft.

Be open to the feedback you receive.

Ask readers to clarify any advice you don't understand.

Be confident that you can resist suggestions you don't feel are helpful.

Don't feel you have to defend everything a reader points out.

Try to read your own writing as objectively and as honestly as you can.

Try to make an assessment about your own strengths and weaknesses as well as the writing overall.

Correct obvious errors before giving your paper to a reader.

Understand that the writing is yours and that you have ownership over your paper.

Be committed to your writing.

Seek feedback from more than one reader.

Appendix I

General Pointers for Editors and Readers

Note: This is **NOT** meant to be used as a checklist.

Ask writers to explain their writing goals before you begin to read so you can judge how well they've succeeded.

Keep your focus on how well writers handle their topics for meeting their goals, rather than lapsing into discussions about the topics themselves.

Don't take over the paper and do a major rewrite.

Point out the strengths of a paper as well as its weaknesses.

Try to explain the logic behind your suggestions.

Offer specific solutions for the problems you point out.

Make sure your written responses are legible and expressed clearly.

Make sure your verbal comments are also clear and precise.

Don't embarrass or insult a writer—you may be a reader today, but you could be a writer in need of feedback tomorrow.

Seek opinions from other readers when you're unsure about something.

Be committed to giving a helpful response—being an effective reader will help you be a stronger writer.

Trust your instincts when you read someone's paper.

Think and reflect a moment before you speak.

Appendix J

Suggested Focus on Audience, Ideas, Organization for Editors and Readers

Audience

Who is the audience? Is the language choice, form, etc. appropriate for the audience?

Is the tone correct for the reader?

Is the format appropriate?

Are the reader's key questions answered?

Are they answered in a logical order?

Ideas

Is the information in the paper useful to the reader?

Is there plenty of information?

Is the information focussed on the topic?

Is there too little or too much information?

Is there a focus through the entire text that keeps the reader reading and moving forward?

Are there unnecessary tangents, repetition, or padding?

Strategies for Assessing the Overall Organization of a Paper

Make an outline or an idea web while reading the paper.

Check to see if the main ideas are distinguished from supporting ideas.

Check for repetition of ideas throughout the text.

Write a summary paragraph of the paper to review with the writer.

Appendix K
Other Ways to Represent

Diorama

A diorama is a small-scale exhibit that can be viewed through a window-like opening. A shoebox is often used to create a miniature setting. This is often created with a combination of painting and sculpture.

Drawings and Paintings

Students use coloured pencils, felt markers, pastels, brushes and paint, or a software drawing program to express their ideas. They also use elements such as line, colour, shape/form, and texture to give specific impressions or create certain moods.

Collage

A collage is a picture made by gluing different shapes onto a surface to express an idea, theme, or feeling. Collages may be cut from all kinds of paper or fabric or can be made of mixed media such as buttons, wood, seeds, or feathers.

Poster

A poster is a sign usually consisting of a combination of print and some other form of representing. Although posters may be used for many purposes, above all they are designed to attract and hold the attention of people, so they will read and think about the message.

Role-Play

The English language arts curriculum offers many opportunities for students to assume the role of various characters they meet in the literature they read or to assume roles in imagined situations. Role-play can deepen and extend students' response to literature, and provide opportunities to develop problem-solving skills and imagination.

Tableau

A tableau is a still picture that a group of actors make of a scene from a story, poem, or other text. The actors plan how they will stand and what facial expressions they will use. They may use simple props and costumes to help them create the scene. A tableau looks like a scene from a movie frozen in time.

Mime

Mime is acting without words. Hand gestures, body movements, and facial expressions are used to represent a feeling, idea, or story.

Appendix K (continued)

Cartoon

A cartoon is a story told in pictures and words. Cartoons are used to entertain and often to give information and provoke thought. A single cartoon tells a joke in one picture. It is often printed in black and white and found in newspapers and magazines. There may be a short caption underneath to help the reader understand the joke. A comic strip is a story told in more than one frame. Each stage of the story is shown in a separate box.

Pamphlets/Brochures

Pamphlets and brochures are made to advertise products and services or to inform the public about issues or events.

Book Jackets

The front covers of paperbacks and the dust jackets on hardcover books are carefully designed to attract attention. Bright colours, interesting pictures or photographs, and creative printing are used for effect. The picture gives a clue to the story or information. The title is often printed on the top half of the cover. The author's name is usually found in smaller printing above or below the title. The illustrator's name would be below the author's name. A photograph and information about the author may be shown on the back cover. The writing on the back cover, sometimes called a blurb, may be a summary of the book or a passage from an exciting part of the book. There may also be quotes from people who have read or reviewed the book. Or there may be information about the author and other books written. The blurb is meant to make the reader want to read the book.

Self-Published Books

Self-published books are books that students write, edit, illustrate, design, and publish themselves or with their friends. Such books can be of many different forms. The simplest method of publishing is for students to purchase an unlined notebook and fill it with text and illustrations and to design their own cover to glue over the top of the original notebook cover. Accordion or folded books can be produced by folding long sheets of paper to form a series of pages. Books can also be produced by stapling or stitching pages together. Wallpaper books can be made with wallpaper, cardboard, and construction paper.

Appendix L

Writing: Some Forms to Explore

acknowledgment
advertisement
agenda
announcement
article
autobiography
ballad
biography
blurb, e.g. for book
broadsheet
brochure
caption
cartoon
catalogue
certificate
charter
confession
constitution
critique
crossword
curriculum vitae
definition
dialogue
diary
directions
directory
edict
editorial
epitaph
essay
eulogy
feature article
forecast
form
glossary
greeting card
guide
headline
horoscope
instruction
inventory
invitation
journal
label
legal brief
letter
libel
list
log
lyric
magazine
manifesto
manual
memo
menu
minutes
monologue
news
notes
notice
novel
obituary
pamphlet
paraphrase
parody
pastiche
petition
placard
play
poem
postcard
poster
prayer
précis
proclamation
prospectus
questionnaire
recipe
record
reference
regulation
report
résumé
review
rule
schedule
script
sermon
sketch
slogan
song
sonnet
spell
statement
story
summary
syllabus
synopsis
testimonial
testimony
travelogue
weather forecast
will

Appendix M

Sample Rubric for Group Evaluation: Speaking and Listening Outcome #1

Group #1 Date of Record _____

Learning progress: Speaking and Listening: Outcome #1		To a great extent 4 3	To some extent 2	Not at all 1
• recognizes need for contributions to facilitate discussion	CLAUDIA			
	SHELLEY			
	BRIAN			
	ROY			
• asks timely questions for elaboration and responds to request for elaborations	CLAUDIA			
	SHELLEY			
	BRIAN			
	ROY			
• expresses viewpoints clearly and with conviction; elaborates views	CLAUDIA			
	SHELLEY			
	BRIAN			
	ROY			
• listens attentively; grasps essential information and details	CLAUDIA			
	SHELLEY			
	BRIAN			
	ROY			

Appendix N

Sample Rubric for Self-Evaluation: Speaking and Listening Outcome #1

Name: _____ Dates Recorded _____

Learning progress: Speaking and Listening: Outcome #1	Always	Sometimes	Seldom
• I contribute to keeping the discussion going.			
• I invite others to contribute.			
• I ask questions for clarification; I offer further information to explain my views.			
• I willingly express my own viewpoint; I explain my thinking as required.			
• I listen carefully in order to get a full understanding of the views of others.			

Pick the ability you think is your strongest. Describe some of the ways you think you have demonstrated this ability in your group exchange.

_____

_____

_____ (date:)

_____

_____

_____ (date:)

_____

_____

_____ (date:)

What do you feel you need to work on? How do you intend to proceed?

_____

_____

_____ (date:)

_____

_____

_____ (date:)

_____

_____

_____ (date:)

Appendix O

Sample Rubric for Teacher's Observation: Speaking and Listening Outcome #1

Student: _____ Date: _____

Learning Operations: Speaking and Listening: Outcome #1	Surpasses outcome consistently	Sometimes	Seldom
• Contributes to sustaining the talk			
• Asks pertinent questions; elaborates when asked			
• Expresses personal viewpoints clearly and convincingly			
• Listens attentively; receives well and shows full understanding			

Notes:

_____

_____

_____ (date:)

Appendix P

Sample Rubric for Writing Proficiency

(from *English Language Proficiency Assessment*)

Superior

- clear commitment to purpose and audience
- confident, lively voice/strong personal engagement with subject
- insightful and well-considered ideas
- precise choice of words
- fluent development of sentences and paragraphs
- purposeful development of argument
- minimal mechanical flaws

Competent

- appreciation of purpose and audience
- confident, appropriate voice/good personal engagement with subject
- thoughtful and clear ideas
- appropriate choice of words
- effective development of sentences and paragraphs
- logical development of argument
- occasional mechanical flaws

Acceptable

- awareness of purpose and audience
- adequate sense of voice/discernible personal engagement with subject
- straightforward, new and clear ideas
- adequate choice of words
- evidence of developed sentences and paragraphs
- some evidence of organization of argument
- some mechanical flaws but not sufficient to interfere with overall meaning

Marginal

- some awareness of purpose and audience
- inconsistent voice
- repetitive ideas not organized or supported
- inadequate vocabulary
- some evidence of sentences and paragraphs
- mechanical errors are distracting and interfere with overall message/argument

Weak

- diminished or little awareness of purpose and audience
- voice confused; personal engagement with subject fragmented
- imprecise ideas, undeveloped
- limited and repetitive vocabulary
- little or no evidence of sentences and paragraphs
- mechanical errors are jarring and seriously interfere with overall meaning

Unrateable

- cannot be scored for specific reason(s)

Omitted

- no answer given

Appendix Q

Sample Program Design Chart

Based on Continuation of the Broad Range of Texts Introduced in Elementary Grades

Reading and Viewing	**Grade 6**	**Grade 7**	**Grade 8**
Traditional Literature—folk tales, fables, myths, legends, etc. **Modern Fantasy**—talking animals, talking toys, time warps, little people, spirits, science fiction, strange/curious worlds, preposterous characters, etc. **Contemporary Realistic Fiction**—people stories, animal stories, sports stories, mysteries, survival stories, humorous stories, etc. **Historical Fiction** **Plays—**silent plays (tableau/ pantomime), stage plays, puppet plays, radio plays **Poetry—**free verse, lyrics, narrative poems and ballads, shape or concrete poems, syllable and word-count poems, formula poems, etc. **Autobiography and Biography** **Information Texts**—process, people, events, reference material **Technological Resources**—computer software, computer networks, databases, CD-ROMs, laser disks, etc. **Mass Media and Other Visual Texts**—pictures and illustrations, films and videos, selected television programs, magazines, newspapers **Significant Social Texts** (Oral and Written)—speeches, advertisements, radio and television broadcasts, political documents, editorials, advertisements **Everyday Texts**—letters, notices, signs, memos, etc. **Class-produced Material**—individual and group texts			

Writing and Other Ways of Representing	**Grade 6**	**Grade 7**	**Grade 8**
Expressive Writing—journals, learning response logs, friendly letters, invitations, thank-you notes, etc. **Transactional Writing**—project reports, reviews, letters, directions and instructions, autobiographies and biographies, advertisements and commercials, persuasive texts, articles, summaries, matrix, etc. **Poetic Writing**—stories, poems, plays, etc.			
Speaking and Listening	**Grade 6**	**Grade 7**	**Grade 8**
Group Discussion—conversation, brainstorming, group sharing, interviewing **Oral Interpretation**—oral reading, choral speaking, Readers Theatre, storytelling **Oral Presentations**—booktalks, short oral report, persuasive talks, illustrated media talks			

Sample Program Design Chart

Repertoire of Processes and Strategies

Processes and Strategies	**Grade 6**	**Grade 7**	**Grade 8**
Use of Prior Knowledge to Construct Meaning			
Use of Cueing Systems—graphophonic, syntactic, semantic			
Predicting, Confirming, Correcting			
Previewing			
Brainstorming, Categorizing			
Questioning—I wonder/I think, reciprocal questioning			
Semantic Mapping, Webbing—emotions, characters, story structures			
Researching			
Skimming, Scanning			
Using Text Structures—comparison/contrast, sequence/events, cause/effect, problem–solution, description			
Study Strategies to Enhance Learning and Recall			
Process Approach Strategies to Writing—prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, post-writing			

Sample Program Design Chart

Aspects of Language Structure and Use

Language Structure and Use	**Grade 6**	**Grade 7**	**Grade 8**
Abbreviations Capitalization Punctuation Parts of Speech Words/Vocabulary—root words, prefixes, suffixes, compound and hyphenated words, homophones, possessives, contractions, plurals Sentences Reference Material Manuscript Form—headings, margins, title Printing/Handwriting Spelling Strategies			

Appendix R

Sample Writing Chart from Grades 4-6 ELA Document

Modes of Writing	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Expressive	Personal Journals Learning/Response Logs Friendly Letters Invitations Thank-you Notes	Personal Journals Learning/Response Logs	Personal Journals Learning/Response Logs
Transactional	Book Comments Photo Essays with Labels and Captions Project Reports Surveys (with Lists) Matrixes Summaries Instructions/Procedures Adverisements and TV Commercials Autobiographies with Pictures/Posters	Movie and Book Comparisons Newspaper Articles and Headlines Project Reviews with Bibliographies Survey Questionnaires Matrixes (larger) Summaries (larger) Comparison/Contrasts Instructions/Procedures Interviews and Tapings Business Letters Letters to the Editor Biographies	Book Reviews Magazine Articles Project Reports Matrixes (larger) Summaries (larger) Instructions/Procedures Editorials/Opinions Biographies
Poetic			
Poetry	Shape/Concrete Poems Haiku Rhyming Couplets Chants/Raps "I wish ..." Poems "If I were ..." Poems "I used to be ..." Poems Acrostic Poems	Free Verse Poems Cinquains Limericks Three-Word Models Poems Four-Word Reactions Model Poems Riddles	Tanka Poems Lyrics/Songs "What is it?" Poems Comic Strips Crosswords Tongue Twisters
Play/Drama	Jokes Rebuses TV Commercials Puppet Shows	Skits Short Plays Dialogues	Skits Short Plays Monologues
Story	Personal Narratives Descriptions Surprise/Humorous Ghost Stories Fables and Hero Tales Adventure Stories	Personal Narratives Descriptions Tall Tales Fairy Tales Mystery Stories Legends	Personal Narratives Descriptions Relationships Myths Folk Tales

Appendix S

Sample Writing/Representing Record Chart

Formats	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	Dates:	Dates:	Dates:
Journal	_____	_____	_____
Learning Log	_____	_____	_____
Response Log	_____	_____	_____
Friendly Letter	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
	Dates:	Dates:	Dates:
Project Report	_____	_____	_____
News Report	_____	_____	_____
Book Report	_____	_____	_____
Survey/Questionnaire	_____	_____	_____
Compare-Contrast Report	_____	_____	_____
Outline	_____	_____	_____
Summary	_____	_____	_____
Instructions	_____	_____	_____
Interview	_____	_____	_____
Business Letter	_____	_____	_____
Letter to the Editor	_____	_____	_____
Advertisement	_____	_____	_____
Persuasive Essay	_____	_____	_____
Autobiography	_____	_____	_____
Biography	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Formats	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Free Form Poems Free Verse Concrete Syllable/Word Count Haiku Tanka Cinquain Rhyme Verse Limerick Formula Poems I Wish ... Three-Word Acrostic Other: _____ _____	Dates: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Dates: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Dates: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Narrative/Story Type: _____ _____ _____	Date: _____ _____ _____	Date: _____ _____ _____	Date: _____ _____ _____
Play Script Dialogue	Date: _____ _____	Date: _____ _____	Date: _____ _____

Appendix T
Sample Writing Frames

A: Retell Events Frames. Students retell events to inform or to entertain their audience. A retelling usually consists of

- an opening (e.g. I visited Prince Edward Island this summer.)
- a retelling of events as they occurred (e.g. We crossed the Confederation Bridge ...)
- a closing (e.g. When I got back home, I began reading *Anne of Green Gables*.)

Teachers can help some students get started on a retelling by suggesting frames such as the following:

Examples:

Several things happening ...

First ... (incident #1)

Secondly ... (incident #2)

Another thing that happened ... (incident #3)

Finally ... (incident #4)

By the time ...

It all began when ...

First ...

Then ...

Next ...

At the end ...

B: Explanation Frames. In addition to using these types of frames in English language arts, explanation frames can be helpful in health, social studies, and science. Explanations are written to explain the process or to explain how something works. An explanation usually consists of

- a general statement to introduce the topic (e.g. Depletion of the ozone layer is a problem for Atlantic Canadians for several reasons.)
- a series of logical steps/reasons explaining how or why (The first reason is...; The second reason is...; Depletion of the ozone is also a problem because...; Therefore, the federal and provincial governments must...)

Teachers can help some students begin an explanation by suggesting frames such as the following:

Procedures

In order to ..., you begin by ...

Then ...

Next ...

After that ...

If you follow these steps ...

Problem / Solution

The problem is ...

This problem occurred because ...

The following actions were taken ...

The result was ...

Cause/Effect

_____ is caused by ...

_____ also happens because ...

There is also evidence that ...

As a result, ...

Therefore ...

C: Report Frames. Reports are written to describe and/or explain things and situations. A report usually consists of

- an opening, general classification (e.g. St. John's is a city in Newfoundland.)
- a more technical classification (e.g. It is the province's capital and is believed to be the oldest city in North America.)
- a description including qualities, parts and their function, habits/behaviours or uses (e.g. St. John's is the major distribution centre for goods and services.)

Compare/Contrasts are more complex versions of report frames. Organizers such as the following may help some students outline their comparisons and contrasts prior to their writing the actual report:

Characteristics	*A*	*B*
	Basketball	Hockey
players	_____	_____
rules	_____	_____
ball/puck	_____	_____
equipment	_____	_____

Comparison Frame

_____ and _____ are alike in several ways.

They both ...

They are also alike in ...

The ... is the same as ...

Finally, they both ...

Contrast Frame

_____ and _____ are alike in that ...

However, they differ in several ways.

_____ has ... while _____ has ...

They are also different in that ...

Finally ...

(The use of the Venn Diagram can be useful in this activity.)

D: Opinion/Persuasion Frames. Arguments are written to present information from differing viewpoints and to support a position. This type of text usually consists of

- a statement of the issue and a preview of the main argument (e.g. Our school is trying to decide whether to have cheerleaders. Some students think that cheerleaders would improve school spirit and help the team to win more games, while other students argue the opposite.)
- supported arguments for the issue or viewpoint (e.g. Many of the local schools already have cheerleaders and they get full support for their games ...)
- supported arguments against the issue or viewpoint (e.g. Many of the players feel very strongly that cheerleaders break the flow of the game and cause players to lose concentration ...)
- a conclusion that includes the writer's position (e.g. One group wants ... While another group wants ... I think ...)

Students can make notes using a format such as the following when preparing an argumentative/persuasive piece of writing:

For opinions:

Statement of opinion: _____

Reason #1	Support/Evidence
Reason #2	Support/Evidence
Reason #3	Support/Evidence
Reason #4	Support/Evidence

Concluding Statement: _____

For persuasion:

The issue is ...

Arguments for	Support	Arguments against	Support
...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...

My conclusion, based on the arguments, is ...

Example:

I believe ... for several reasons

The first reason is ...

The second reason is ...

Also ...

Therefore, although some students argue that ...

I have shown that ...

Appendix U

Forms of Poetry

(Reprinted from ELA 4-6 Document)

Free Verse

Free verse is a form of poetry that does not follow a regular pattern. The lines can be of different lengths, and there is no definite rhyme or rhythm.

One way to get started in **free verse writing** is to choose an idea and express it in prose, using two to four sentences. Students could then compress the thought by crossing out unnecessary words. Then rewrite the idea in a simple stanza form and continue to cut, polish, and perfect.

Each poem generates its own rules of form. However, students need a great deal of practice to develop effective intuitions for free verse. After a few tries, students may not have to write in prose beforehand. With practice, students can write long free verse poems with emphasis on rhythm, imagery, and compact speech. The following is an example of one student's efforts at writing free verse:

First try (prose):

When I feel jealous, my mind is confused by my emotions. I feel angry, sad, and frustrated. I feel like I'm entrapped in a spider's web.

Second try (prose):

Jealously creeps within me. It's like a spider spinning its web. The threads wind round me and capture and confuse me.

Final draft (free verse):

Jealousy creeps within me

a spider spinning its web

threading a trap

to capture and confuse.

Shape/Concrete Poems

Shape or concrete poems are arranged in the shape of the topic. They make a picture that is as much a part of the poem's message as the words.

Students enjoy the experimentation involved with making **concrete or shape poems**. Encourage students to work with simple shapes before tackling more complex ones. The words used must relate to the title.

Shape poems can be a collection of words about a subject, or they can be written in free verse in the shape of the object.

The shape of the poem may also suggest movement instead of a definite shape. Such shape poems offer a fresh and interesting way of exploring something old and familiar.

Haiku

The **haiku** is of Japanese origin. The English interpretation is three short lines of five, seven, and five syllables respectively.

The words of a **haiku** speak of a mood, a strong feeling, or an atmosphere. Although the poem is usually about nature, a person's thoughts and emotions are included. The first line contains the setting, the second line conveys an action, the third line completes the thought.

Haiku poems focus on one element and are always written in the present tense. A haiku should leave the reader thinking. It should provide not only a sense but an insight. The magic of good haiku lies in the power of suggestion. The one visual image creates a tension designed to make the reader think. This tension is usually produced by presenting a contrast and forcing the reader to make the connections between seemingly disjointed parts of the image. The following is a sample haiku:

Salmon

Playing in the night
Playing in the great big waves
Dark and deep below

by a grade 6 student

Tanka

The **tanka** is a type of Japanese poem that is almost like an extension of the haiku. The tanka adds two lines to the haiku, each of seven syllables. (A tanka in English may not have the specific number of syllables.)

The word *tanka* means *short song* in Japanese. Tankas are related to the haiku because they are word pictures about something in nature. **Tanka**, like haiku, typically deals with a season of the year; although, often the subject can be a season or a plant. With the additional two lines, the tanka conveys an insight beyond that of the haiku's single moment. Depth of meaning and striking imagery are of great importance. A tanka may show a progression of ideas or events; a series of tankas related to a central theme can be joined together to form a longer poem. Following is an example of a tanka:

Tree

Swaying in the wind
I catch people's attention.
I begin to wave,
They never wave back to me.
I think nobody likes me.

by a grade 5 student

Cinquain

Cinquains follow a specific pattern. The pattern can be based on words or syllables.

Words follow a 1, 2, 3, 4, 1 pattern:

A **cinquain** (pronounced sing-kane) is a poem of five lines. The name comes from the French word cinq, which means five.

Line 1 - one word for the title
Line 2 - two words to describe the topic
Line 3 - three words that express actions
(Often an *-ing* word is used)
Line 4 - four words that express feelings
Line 5 - another word or synonym is given for the topic

Syllables follow a 2, 4, 6, 8, 2 pattern.

Cinquains do not rhyme.

Examples:

(Word pattern)

Daniel
Funny, athletic
Runs, eats, sleeps
Likes to play baseball
Boy

by a grade 6 student

(Syllable pattern)

Raindrops
Clear, watery.
Falling in a rhythm,
Leaving a freshness in the air.
Dew-like.

by a grade 6 student

Limerick

A **limerick** is a humorous verse that is five lines long.

Many **limericks** begin with the words "There once was a ... " or "There was a ... " The last line is usually funny or surprising and acts as a punch line for the poem. Lines 1, 2, and 5 rhyme with one another and have three strong beats. Lines 3 and 4 rhyme and have two strong beats.

The ideas in a limerick often progress from the possible to the impossible, drawing attention to real or imaginary situations, people, or places. Fun to write and even more fun to read, the main purpose of a limerick is to entertain.

Example:

Sunny

There once was a dog named Sunny,
She really was quite funny.
She bought a new hat,
Just think of that,
Because she had some money.

by a grade 6 student

Formula Poems

"I wish ... " Poems

Wishes make very good early writing assignments. Students are great makers of wishes and they like to write about them. It gives them a whole lot of new subject matter. Wishes can engage their imaginations quickly. Students may choose any of their wishes and expand on the ideas in several lines.

Example:

I wish I was a Super human being.
I wish I could go anywhere I want to.
I wish that I had my own tree that grew oranges.
I wish I could make it snow and rain.

"If I were ... " Poems

Students can write about how they would feel and what they would do if they were something else—a Tyrannosaurus Rex, a hamburger, or sunshine. Students often use personification in composing "If I were ... " poems, exploring ideas and feelings, and considering the world from a different vantage point.

Example:

"If I were ..."

If I were a duck,
I would swim across the pond.
I could race the fish that swim with the light.
I could float in the wind.
I could waddle where I please.

by a grade 5 student

"I used to be ... /But now ... " Poems

Students in the elementary grades enjoy writing about the difference between the way they are now and the way they used to be. The changes in their lives are big and dramatic, and have happened fast. With this formula, students can explore ways in which they have changed as well as how things change.

Example:

I used to be a hunk of gold sitting in
A mine having no worries
Or responsibilities
Now I'm a wedding band bonding
Two people together, with all
The worries of the world.

(Tompkins 1990)

"I like ..." Poems

Have students think about things they like. Poems may be written by students who put together a number of "I like ... " statements or a class poem can be created. More than one poem may be created from the lines contributed by class members. Finding the most effective ways of organizing and combining the contributions is a useful editing exercise.

Example:

I like scary movies on really dark nights.
I like writing adventure stories.
I like riding horses.
I like rain dancing on the roof.
I like getting good grades.

by a grade 5 student

Three-Word Model

The three-word model poem demands patience, thought, and the ability to discriminate. The choice of the adverb hinges on the exact meaning the student is trying to convey.

babies
boldly

Why use boldly?
Why not use
bountifully
brazenly
brashly
beautifully

Ask students to make a three-word piece with the following pattern:

Noun (Subject) _____
Verb (Action) _____
Adverb (How) _____

To give the verse a unifying thread through sound, have each of the three words start with the same letter. This is an example of alliteration.

Examples:

Seals	People
Swim	Pass
Silently	Politely

Four-Line Reaction Model

In the first line of a **Four-Line Reaction Model**, name the subject, either in one word or a few words.

- In the second line describe the action, likewise, in a word or in more detail.
- In the third line make a simile describing the subject.
- In the fourth line give a reaction to the subject.

Subject:	Black cat,
Action:	Prowling,
Simile:	Like a shadow,
Reaction:	I'm scared.

The form demands detail, conciseness, comparison, and reaction (feeling).

Examples:

Love
Lingers
Like a candle light,
Covered my head with a pillow
Don't blow it out.

What Is It? Model

The heart of any expression lies in picking the appropriate word for a given context. For a **What Is It? Poem**, have students select a subject and write about it, using as many of the five senses—taste, touch, smell, sight, sound—as they can apply. One-word descriptions work well. Withhold the title until the final line.

Sight:	_____
Sound:	_____
Taste	_____
Touch:	_____
Smell:	_____
Subject:	_____

Students should arrange the order of senses to suit the subject. Several word descriptions for the senses make the task more challenging.

Examples:

red	Stringy with little pieces of meat
smoky	Spicy and hot
crackling	The tender smell of herbs and cheese
hot	Hard to get on a fork
fire	Spaghetti

"_____is" Poem

Students write images for the following:

Summer is ...
Hate is ...
Kindness is ...
Anger is ...
Sadness is ...
Wisdom is ...
Freedom is ...
Wonder is ...
Beauty is ...

In these **description or definition poems**, students describe what something is or what something or someone means to them. This exercise can start with short examples and then move to longer descriptions. Students can write very powerful poems when they move beyond "Love is ..." and "Happiness is ..."

Examples:

Happiness is ...

when your sister leaves you alone
getting a present
winning a prize
seeing your nan.

by a grade 6 student

Acrostic Poems

In an **acrostic poem**, a word is written vertically down the left-hand margin of the paper. Each line then starts with a word beginning with the designated letter. The lines can be either single words or complete sentences.

Word ideas can be varied. Acrostic poems using names can become self-portraits. Acrostic poems can include sports, seasons, buildings, clubs, slogans, teams—practically anything. Acrostic poems can be composed for names of novels and/or characters. Such acrostic poems can really be character sketches based on what students have learned from the novel. Acrostic poems can become greeting cards by using the person's name.

Examples:

Winter

Wishing on a winter star!
In the dark cold sky.
Nobody knows what your wishing for.
Tiny snowflakes falling in your hair.

Everywhere a blanket of snow.
Really really cold.

by a grade 6 student

Snow

Sliding is fun
Night and day
On the hill
Where we play.

by a grade 5 student

Appendix V
Sample Writing Process Observation Guide

Student's Name: _____

Writing Process

Comments

Prewriting

Does the student

- have a purpose and audience?
- have a range of prewriting strategies?
- choose topics for personal writing?
- establish a focus for a writing topic?

First-Draft Writing

Does the student

- understand the function of a first draft?
- write freely without undue concern for spelling?
- reflect thoughtful planning?

Revising

Does the student

- understand the need for revision?
- make content changes? (details)
- select style and vocabulary appropriate to audience?
- consider the organization?

Editing and Proofreading

Does the student

- understand the purpose of editing?
- ask for help from peers and the teacher?
- help others?
- assume responsibility for his/her own work?
- use a variety of strategies to correct spelling errors?

Post-Writing

Does the student

- show an interest in having the writing published?
- submit the writing for final edition?
- choose an appropriate format for publication?

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