Unit 9.1: Becoming Critical Readers and Writers

Enduring Understandings
- Literature reflects the history of a people and enriches its culture.
- Particular conventions and characteristics define literary genres.
- Effective readers, writers, and speakers engage actively with text to create meaning.
- Effective readers make inferences about characters in a text.

Essential Questions
- How do authors reflect the dynamics of a society?
- How do the characteristics of a genre affect the expression of ideas?
- How does subtext deepen understanding of a text?
- How do culture, gender, and social factors affect communication?

Common Tasks
Students should engage in a variety of tasks that demonstrate and deepen their learning. Teachers should provide specific instruction on strategies during each stage of the writing process for at least one of the common tasks. For other common tasks, teachers may focus instruction on one stage or may implement the tasks as homework, timed writings, presentations, or structured discussions.

- Set up a portfolio with at least one reading and one writing goal for academic improvement. (Creative and Reflective/Exemplification)
- Define a motif in the text and explain how the motif reinforces a theme in the text. Support your thinking with textual evidence. (Textual Analysis/Exemplification and Definition)
- After reading an excerpt from a critical essay about an anchor text, evaluate the critical interpretation of the text. Support your ideas with evidence from both texts. (Research and Synthesis/Exemplification)
- Describe an interesting place using vivid sensory imagery and strong verbs to create a picture for the reader. (Creative and Reflective/Description)
- Prepare and present a two-minute speech arguing whether or not a character’s actions in one of the texts are justified. Support your work with textual evidence. (Argument/Cause-Effect)
- In a multi-paragraph essay, analyze how setting shapes characterization or plot. Support your ideas with textual evidence. (Textual Analysis/Exemplification)

Extended definition helps explain new or complex concepts. A writer can state the concept first and then discuss the defining characteristics or define the characteristics and then reveal the term or concept. Extended definition is useful when defining a term that is abstract or difficult to understand.
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Recommended Tasks

- View Naturalism PowerPoint, and select one visual that captures the essence of a passage from the text. Write a well-developed paragraph that defines naturalism and explains how the text and the art fit the definition. [http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/secenglish/grade9/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/secenglish/grade9/) (Textual Analysis/Definition and Exemplification)
- Participate in a Socratic Seminar discussion about an issue of genuine doubt raised by the text. Use the text to support and extend insights. (Textual Analysis/Cause-Effect)
- In small groups, discuss how the author uses names to create or comment on the characters and the traits that define them. (Textual Analysis/Exemplification)

Paragraph Development

Unit 1 has a dual focus, introducing definition as well as exemplification as methods of developing an essay. In English 6–8 students have used examples—facts, quotations, illustrations, anecdotes, or stories—to support the thesis. This unit introduces definition as another method of development. Lessons in this unit give students multiple opportunities to learn how to incorporate examples that add credibility, clarity, and color to what they say.

Grammar, Usage, and Sentence Composing

A balanced approach to teaching grammar is required; separated instruction alone does not work. After students receive direct instruction on grammar and usage rules, they must apply these skills to authentic tasks. The ultimate goal is to have students recognize language conventions as they read and to incorporate correct grammar and usage into their own writing in a purposeful way. Students will

- avoid sentence fragments and run-ons by applying rules governing the writing of independent and dependent clauses.
- use specific nouns and strong verbs to enliven their writing.
- apply rules governing agreement of subjects and verbs, pronouns and antecedents.
- use appropriate transitions and quotation marks.
- review commonly-confused and misused words (accept/except, continual/continuous, hanged/hung, quiet/quite) and correct problems in usage.
Unit 9.1 Focus Indicators

Standard 1: The student will comprehend and interpret a variety of print, non-print and electronic texts, and other media.

1.1.1— Prepare for reading, viewing, and/or listening to a text.
1.1.2— Monitor understanding while reading, viewing, and/or listening to a text.
1.1.3— Confirm understanding after reading, viewing, and/or listening to a text.
1.1.4— Apply knowledge of a word meaning, context, structure, and origin to define unfamiliar words.
1.2.1— Determine the contributions of literary elements in classical and contemporary texts.
1.2.2— Determine the critical or central idea(s) of a text.
1.2.3— Determine the relationship among format, structure, and meaning of informational texts.
1.2.4— Interpret a literary work by using a critical approach (e.g., reader response, historical, cultural, biographical, structural).

Standard 2: The student will analyze and evaluate a variety of print, non-print and electronic texts, and other media.

2.1.1— Analyze organization, structure, and syntax that reveal an author’s purpose.
2.1.2— Analyze stylistic elements in a text or across texts that communicate an author’s purpose.
2.1.3— Analyze connections between and among themes, ideas, and/or styles of two or more texts.
2.1.4— Analyze and evaluate the purpose and effect of non-print texts, including visual, aural, and electronic media.
2.1.5— Analyze and evaluate evidence and determine the credibility of information in a text.

Standard 3: The student will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

3.1.1— Compose effective informative or expository texts.
3.1.2— Compose effective persuasive essays and arguments that advance, modify, or refute a position; use a logical structure; provide relevant and complete support; and employ effective rhetorical strategies.
3.1.3— Compose effective oral presentations that engage the audience by developing a controlling idea, using a logical structure, providing relevant and complete support or evidence, and including effective rhetorical strategies.
3.2.1— Prepare for writing by generating and developing ideas.
3.2.2— Select and organize ideas for specific audiences and purposes.
3.2.3— Revise and edit texts for clarity, completeness, and effectiveness.
3.2.4— Use general and specialized resources to correct or confirm revisions and/or editorial choices.
3.3.3— Evaluate the appropriateness of information to accomplish a purpose.
3.3.4— Use a systematic process for recording and documenting information.

Standard 4: The student will control language by applying Standard English in writing and speaking and making effective language choices.

4.1.1— Determine the relationship among the meaning, position, form, function and the grammatical classification of words.
4.1.2— Apply Standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling in speaking and/or writing.

Standard 5: The student will communicate orally in a variety of situations, for different audiences and purposes, and in different formats.

5.1.2— Participate in and contribute to large- and small-group collaboration for a variety of assigned and self-selected purposes.
5.1.3— Determine the effectiveness of large- and small-group collaboration and its associated product(s).

Standard 6: The student will listen effectively in a variety of situations and for a variety of purposes.

6.1.1— Apply skills and strategies to gather and interpret verbal messages.
6.1.2— Demonstrate understanding of information and ideas communicated orally.

ICON KEY

Reading
Viewing
Listening
Writing
Speaking
Unit 9.1 Course Terms

Alliteration
Allusion
Annotation
Assonance
Audience
Characterization
  o Dynamic
  o Static
Compression
Connotative
Context
Denotation
Epitaph
Figurative language
  o Hyperbole
  o Metaphor
  o Personification
  o Simile
Foreshadowing
Frame story
Imagery
Inference
Interpretation
Irony

Juxtaposition
Mood
Motif
Narrative elements
  o Exposition
  o Inciting incident
  o Conflict
  o Rising action
  o Climax
  o Falling action
  o Denouement
  o Resolution
  o Setting
  o Theme
Naturalism
Point of view
Portfolio
Satire
Self-reflection
Six Traits of Writing
  o Ideas and Development
  o Organization
  o Voice
  o Diction or Word Choice
  o Syntax or Sentence
    Fluency
  o Conventions

Stage directions
Symbol
Thesis statement
Tone
Visual literacy
  o Arrangement
  o Line
  o Perspective
Voice
Writing
  Purposes
    o Argument
    o Creative and Reflective
    o Textual Analysis
    o Research and Synthesis
Methods of development
  o Cause-Effect
  o Comparison-Contrast
  o Definition
  o Description
  o Exemplification
  o Problem-Solution
Unit 9.1: Texts

Texts

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
Antigone
April Morning
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night
The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter
Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
Jacob Have I Loved
My Antonia
Of Mice and Men
Our Town
The Red Badge of Courage
Spoon River Anthology
The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor
Sunrise over Falluhah
Uncle Tom’s Cabin

Sherman Alexie
Sophocles
Mark Haddon
Carson McCullers
Harriet Jacobs
Katherine Paterson
Willa Cather
John Steinbeck
Thornton Wilder
Edgar Lee Masters
Gabriel Garcia-Marquez
Harriet Beecher Stowe

Nonfiction

“Ain’t I a Woman?”
Autobiography of Miss Jane Pitman
Excerpts from The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
Excerpts from I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
“I Will Fight No More Forever”
Models for Writers

Sojourner Truth
Ernest Gaines
Benjamin Franklin
Maya Angelou
Chief Joseph
Rosa and Eschholz

Poetry

“Ellis Island”
“First Lesson”
“Richard Cory”
Spoon River Anthology
“To a Daughter Leaving Home”

Joseph Bruchac
Phyllis McGinley
Edwin Arlington Robinson
Edgar Lee Masters
Linda Pastan

Short Stories

“Eveline”
“Everyday Use”
“A Mystery of Heroism”
“Paul’s Case”
“Two Soldiers”

James Joyce
Alice Walker
Stephen Crane
Willa Cather
William Faulkner

Essays from Models for Writers

“Doubts about Doublespeak”
“The Hoax”
“Intelligence”
“My Name”

William Lutz
John Berendt
Isaac Asimov
Sandra Cisneros

Students continue to build their repertoire of reading strategies by practicing close reading of texts, which includes annotating and asking questions of both written and non-print texts.
Unit 9.1: Language Acquisition

Vocabulary and Language Skills

Vocabulary acquisition continues to be a necessary and vital part of the English curriculum. Vocabulary study not only enhances understanding of the writer’s craft—how word choice creates character, defines mood, and sets tone—but also is the key to a richer reading of all texts. Vocabulary instruction incorporates the three instructional approaches outlined by Judith Langer: separated, simulated, and integrated. Determining meaning and understanding word structure give students the tools to become independent, strategic readers of challenging texts. As students learn about the variety and richness of English, they should be encouraged to use language that is both precise and expressive.

Students will

- study unfamiliar words that are critical to understanding the text, including those identified by the teacher and themselves.
- study terms and concepts central to the meaning of a particular text to promote deeper understanding. These words include course terms that are part of the language used to talk about texts.
- use knowledge of word relationships and word parts to make connections to unknown words.
- study the structure of words by working with designated lists of roots and affixes and with words drawn from the assigned texts.
- incorporate rich, precise, and varied language in their own writing and speaking.

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