

Montgomery County Public Schools
Secondary English Language Arts Curriculum Framework
(Original Pre-K–12 Version Approved July 2001; Updated Elementary Version Approved
December 2010)

The goal of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Pre-K–12 English Language Arts program is to create literate, thoughtful communicators, capable of controlling language effectively as they negotiate an increasingly complex and information-rich world. Students will refine specific skills and strategies in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing and will use these skills and strategies widely as tools for learning and reflection. Exploring a variety of texts, students will understand and appreciate language and literature as catalysts for deep thought and emotion.

Enduring Understandings

- Language is a powerful tool for expressing ideas, beliefs, and feelings.
- Knowledge of language facilitates thought.
- Readers, listeners, and viewers continually develop and apply strategies to construct meaning from increasingly complex and challenging texts.
- Writers and speakers strategically use language to communicate for a variety of purposes.
- Individuals need advanced literacy skills to participate actively and successfully in today’s demanding, information-based society.
- Literature reveals the complexities of the world and human experience.

Content

The MCPS Secondary English Language Arts Curriculum Framework incorporates the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Literacy for Grades 6–12 in its entirety. With a previous adoption of the CCSS in elementary grades, the full progression of learning outcomes is documented for all grades.

The MCPS Pre-K–12 English Language Arts program focuses on the communication processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing through the study of language and literature. Each unit integrates the communication processes and contents. No one process (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing) is taught in isolation; neither of the contents (literature and language) is taught in isolation. Rather, students learn the dynamic relationships among them as they study the significant role language plays in literature and in the craft of expressing oneself through the written and spoken word. Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions for each unit provide a larger purpose for learning targeted content. Specifically, each unit exposes students to the following aspects of the communication processes, literature, and language:

Reading and Listening—Effective readers and listeners use strategies before, during, and after reading or listening to construct and extend meaning according to the text and purpose. They access background knowledge, survey structure, predict, question, summarize, clarify, visualize, draw conclusions, validate perceptions, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate. In English language

arts classes, students develop and apply these strategies to a variety of increasingly challenging and complex texts.

Viewing—Effective viewers approach visual texts in much the same way they approach written or spoken texts. In English language arts, students actively view visual texts by applying and refining strategies they use when reading and listening and learn new concepts specific to understanding visual media.

Writing and Speaking—Effective communicators are aware of the essential elements of powerful writing and speaking—ideas and development, organization, diction, syntax, voice, and language conventions. They use their knowledge of the nature, organization, and structure of language to improve as writers and speakers. Effective writers employ a recursive process that includes pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. In English language arts, students apply their understanding of language and the writing process to develop organized and coherent responses to literature, synthesize information, develop arguments for a variety of purposes, describe situations or events, and express their personal ideas.

Literature—Effective readers realize that universal human experiences often serve as sources of literary themes. Readers also understand that authors make conscious decisions to affect an audience. In English language arts, students read, listen to, and view traditional and contemporary works to examine how authors, speakers, and directors use language, literary elements, and genres to provide their audiences with new insights and perspectives.

Language—Effective communicators are aware of the rules that govern language, grammar, syntax, and organization, and they understand the power of word choice and semantics. In English language arts, students use their knowledge of language to improve as communicators and to analyze the textual decisions authors make to influence voice, tone, and meaning in literary works.

Instructional Approach

Designed to provide challenge for all learners, the Pre-K–12 English language arts curriculum offers a flexible program focused on developing strategies for active reading and clear writing. Instructional activities guide students to examine the techniques authors use to develop universal themes in various genres. Students build, refine, and apply skills in organization and clear use of language in recursive writing tasks throughout the year. The English language arts curriculum promotes instruction that—

- integrates the communication processes and contents;
- pledges to be student-centered and challenging for all learners;
- provides experiences for students to construct and produce their own meaning;
- encourages critical thinking and metacognition;
- places literature study in a social and personal context;
- includes ongoing assessment for the purpose of modifying instruction to ensure student success;

- promotes opportunities for teachers to provide frequent and immediate feedback to students;
- values all learners and is differentiated for their strengths, interests, and learning styles;
- nurtures appreciation and understanding of diverse individuals, groups, and cultures;
- offers students many opportunities to demonstrate and apply their learning in a variety of modes;
- includes a variety of instructional approaches and conceptual models, such as simulations, shared inquiry, seminars, research, and concept formation;
- uses flexible grouping practices and collaboration;
- provides frequent formal and informal writing opportunities, with attention to the writing process and portfolio assessment;
- incorporates grammar and vocabulary study in the context of writing and literature study;
- emphasizes and models critical thinking and problem solving;
- includes a wide variety of texts, both assigned and student selected, representing diverse cultures and a range of difficulty;
- provides opportunities to study speaking, listening, and viewing processes to enhance the study of text;
- offers frequent opportunities for close critical reading, analysis, and discussion;
- provides active and direct work with writing, using models, frequent feedback, and rubrics to give students opportunities to improve their work;
- incorporates and encourages the use of technology; and
- develops strategic readers and writers.

Documents and Concepts Considered in this Framework

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