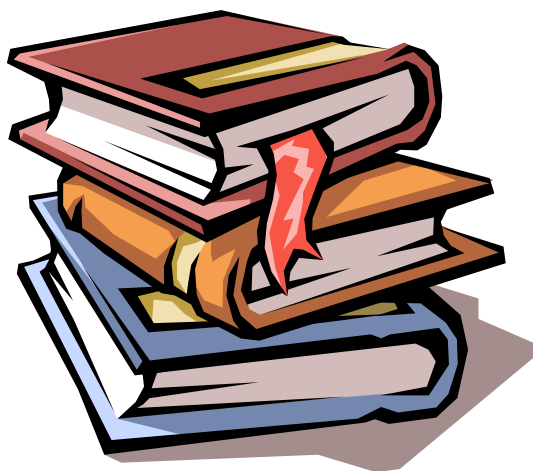


ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS/ BENCHMARKS*
GRADES 5 AND 6

DECEMBER 2004



*This document represents the agreed-upon English Language Arts benchmarks for the Acton Public Schools. The Department of Education's language has been modified occasionally. Where the district has modified the state's original language, the number of the standard is followed by (APS). The examples are a blend of the DoE document (June 2001) and those developed by Acton Public Schools. Specific APS grade-level examples are designated, e.g. (APS 3).

Language Strand

Grades 5 & 6

Most of the benchmarks listed in the fifth- and sixth-grade level are introduced in fifth grade and worked on further through sixth grade. Fifth-grade teachers do not need to expect student mastery by the end of fifth grade.

Teachers should continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult work.

Standard 1: Discussion

Students will use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.

1.3 Apply understanding of agreed-upon rules and individual roles in order to make decisions.

For example:

A group chooses which scene from a play to enact and decides who will play each character, using agreed-upon rules for eliciting and considering suggestions from each group member and for coming to consensus.

As part of the study of the American Revolution, students work in small discussion groups to analyze the issue of colonial taxation. Using their knowledge from previous content reading and class discussions, they identify specific pros and cons from the perspective of both Loyalists and Patriots. Once each group has identified several key points from each perspective, they hold a whole class discussion/informal debate. Student participation in both small group and whole class discussion is assessed, as well as demonstration of content knowledge. (APS 5)

Working in reading conference groups, students meet twice a week to discuss a question in common related to story elements, reading comprehension, or writer's style. The children have previously read, and have for homework responded in writing to, the aforementioned question. Each child is assessed for his/her participation in the group, as well as for "book talk." Prior to this mode of literature groups, students have experienced the modeling of and practice with the dynamics of collaborative group discussions. (APS 6)

Standard 2: Questioning, Listening, and Contributing

Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.

2.3 Gather relevant information for a research project or composition through interviews.

For example:

Students generate questions about their family history, interview family members, and present their information to the class.

After working with a local writer on a classroom writer-in-residence project, two students schedule an interview with the writer. The students formulate the interview questions and practice interview skills with an adult, considering possible follow-up questions. During the interview, students record responses. They then use the information they have gathered to compose an article for publication in the school newsletter. (APS 5)

In the context of student involvement in community service learning, small groups meet regularly with senior citizens at various sites in greater Acton. Before interviewing the elders for an intergenerational writing piece, students practice developing open-ended questions and role playing interview techniques (e.g. active listening, contextual response). The information gathered from the interview is used in a multi-paragraph, comparative essay. (APS 6)

Students conduct a variety of interviews throughout the school year, including introduction interviews in September, medical interviews and parent interviews during health units, and simulated interviews of historical figures during the social studies class. (APS 6)

Standard 3: Oral Presentation

Students will make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.

- 3.8 Give oral presentations for various purposes, showing appropriate changes in delivery (gestures, vocabulary, pace, visuals) and using language for dramatic effect.

For example:

Students watch a video clip of the movie review show, “ At the Movies”. They discuss elements, such as eye contact, hand gestures and content, that make the presentation successful. Based on this discussion, they develop a class rubric for a two-person, review-style presentation. Students then work with a partner to read and review a selected book. They prepare a team review using the class rubric as a guide. The presentations are assessed by their peers and also video taped so that students can self-assess. (APS 5)

Students develop their public speaking skills during current events presentation/news reports. (APS 6)

In the study of ancient civilizations, students have the opportunity to choose an ancient society and, within their chosen culture, a specific area of interest. They then proceed through the research process and subsequently select from an array of media options (e.g. web pages, Hyperstudio stacks, videos, picture books, sculptures, models) to demonstrate their learning. Demonstrations are required to be shared in a public display. Audiences range from kindergartners to professional historians, with students adjusting their delivery accordingly. (APS 6)

- 3.9 Use teacher-developed assessment criteria to prepare their presentations.

Standard 4: Vocabulary and Concept Development

Students will understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly in reading and writing.

For example:

Throughout the year students maintain a vocabulary source book made of new/interesting words they have found in their reading. Each week students are asked to identify five new words to add to their books. In addition to the practice of defining the word, making connections to synonyms and antonyms, and generating context use of the new vocabulary, the source books are used as a tool for students to expand word choices in their own writing. The appreciation of words and language is furthered when students share their discoveries in small groups or as the words are recognized in student drafts. (APS 6)

- 4.17 Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues (definitions, examples, explanations in the text).

For example:

Students choose vocabulary words and write them in sentences that use definition or example context clues, such as, “Residents were aghast–shocked–at the destruction.”

While reading Carry On, Mr. Bowditch, students examine new vocabulary words in relation to the text. They focus on words and terms such as “privateer,” “chandlery,” “merchant,” and “becalmed.” Using the information provided in the text, they begin to create a class reference of sailing-related terms. They continue to add to or revise their definitions throughout their reading. After completing the book, students create their own almanac, as Nathaniel Bowditch did which documents what they have learned about sailing and navigation from the book. (APS 5)

During the Voyage of the Mimi program, students note and identify the meanings of Spanish words. (APS 6)

- 4.18 Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using knowledge of common Greek and Latin roots, suffixes, and prefixes.

For example:

Students learn and analyze challenging math and science words, determining their meaning by analyzing prefixes, suffixes, and Latin/Greek roots. (APS 6)

- 4.19 Determine pronunciations, meanings, alternate word choices, and parts of speech of words using dictionaries and thesauruses.

Standard 5: Structure and Origins of Modern English

Students will analyze Standard English grammar and usage and recognize how its vocabulary has developed and been influenced by other languages.

- 5.8. Identify words or word parts from other languages that have been adopted into the English language.

For example:

Students analyze the influence of the settlement of Dutch colonists in the New York area on current geographical names and common English words, e.g. “cookies,” “Wall Street.” They then select other common words or geographical names and research their origin. (APS 5)

- 5.9 Identify the eight basic parts of speech (noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, conjunction, preposition, interjection).

- 5.12 Recognize that a word performs different functions according to its position in the sentence.

For example:

Students identify “light” as a verb in the sentence, “The children light the candle.” Then they write using the word “light” in other places in sentences and discuss the meaning and function of “light” in each.

- 5.13 Identify simple and compound sentences.

- 5.14 Identify correct mechanics (apostrophes, quotation marks, comma use in compound sentences, paragraph indentations) and correct sentence structure (elimination of sentence fragments and run-ons).

Standard 6: Formal and Informal English

Students will describe, analyze, and use appropriately formal and informal English.

For example:

While reading Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, students discuss the role of dialect. (APS 6)

- 6.4 Demonstrate through role-playing appropriate use of formal and informal language.
- 6.5 Write stories using a mix of formal and informal language.
- 6.6 Identify differences between oral and written language patterns.

Reading and Literature Strand

Grades 5 & 6

Most of the benchmarks listed in the fifth- and sixth-grade level are introduced in fifth grade and worked on further through sixth grade. Fifth-grade teachers do not need to expect student mastery by the end of fifth grade. Teachers should continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult work.

Standard 7: Beginning Reading

Students will understand the nature of written English and the relationship of letters and spelling patterns to the sounds of speech.

(The majority of students will have met this standard by the end of Grade 4.)

Standard 8: Understanding a Text

Students will identify the basic facts and main ideas in a text and use them as the basis for interpretation.

For imaginative/literary texts:

8.19 Identify and analyze sensory details and figurative language.

8.20 Identify and analyze the author's use of dialogue, description, setting, characters and events.

For informational/expository texts

8.21 Recognize organizational structures (chronological order, logical order, cause and effect, classification schemes).

8.22 Identify and analyze main ideas, supporting ideas, and supporting details.

For example:

Students write short summaries of individual chapters from nonfiction; i.e., from the Joy Hakim series, America Will Be. (APS 5)

In recognition of the life of Martin Luther King on his birthday in January, students read excerpts from King's "Letter From Birmingham Jail," as well as "The Declaration of Independence." In response to their reading, students work together to identify the main ideas and supportive evidence used in each piece of writing. They continue on their own by crafting a persuasive essay stating their thoughts, feelings and reactions to this relevant comparison. (APS 6)

After reading the text of the Magna Carta, students will work in small teams to pick out the main ideas. Further discussion will then distill the essence of the document. (APS 6)

Standard 9: Making Connections

Students will deepen their understanding of a literary or non-literary work by relating it to its contemporary context or historical background.

9.4 Relate a literary work to information about its setting.

For example:

Students read The Remarkable Journey of Prince Jen, by Lloyd Alexander. In order to understand its historical background, they read information about the T'ang dynasty of China and excerpts from the Analects of Confucius and relate what they learn to events and characters in the book.

Students read “I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman. They discuss Whitman’s purpose and the pride he feels in being an American, as well as the different faces of Americans that he presents. Later, students read “I, Too” by Langston Hughes. They discuss Hughes’ response to the Whitman poem and consider whether or not the “tomorrow” about which Hughes wrote has arrived. (APS 5)

When students read *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry?* by Mildred Taylor, their discussions and writings about the novel center on how the story of the Logan family is influenced by their study and understanding of Taylor’s own growing-up years in the south. (APS 6)

Standard 10: Genre

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the characteristics of different genres.

- 10.3 Identify and analyze the characteristics of various genres as forms with distinct characteristics and purposes; i.e., poetry, fiction (sub-genres such as mystery, adventure, historical or survival novels), nonfiction, short story, and dramatic literature.

For example:

Students read a variety of materials and write a short anthology of works, including several genres of literature, on an event or person in American history, or on an animal they have studied.

Students sort the class library by the four main genres. The books that they are unable to classify easily are put into a review bin. Over time, individuals or small groups of students read and review the unlabeled books to determine their correct genre. (APS 5)

As students read choice or assigned literature throughout the year, they are asked periodically to write or present a review of the book. Within this context, students are required to identify genre and support both their classification and their stated opinion and story summary. All reviews are subsequently organized in a class binder by genre for student access in literature selection. (APS 6)

Standard 11: Theme

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in a literary work and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

- 11.3 Analyze and evaluate similar themes across a variety of selections, distinguishing them from topic and main idea.

For example:

Students explore the theme, “Understanding involves putting yourself in someone else’s shoes” in interviews with adults, in fiction, and in biographies to identify what real and fictional people have experienced, and report their findings to the class.

Students first read the book, *From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. They consider the theme of friendship within the book by analyzing the development of the friendship between Claudia and her brother, Jamie. They identify events and conversations between the characters that indicate the two are developing a stronger relationship and becoming a team as they share a common adventure. Later, students read *Bridge to Terabithia*. They again consider the theme of friendship by analyzing the development of the friendship between Jesse and Leslie as they share common experiences and their own secret place. After reading the two books, students compare the way the two authors developed the theme of friendship in the two different books. (APS 5)

When reading *Dragonwings* by Laurence Yep, a story that brings to life the lost history of the many Chinese people who came to America on both sides of the turn of the century, students are asked to discover concurrent themes that filter through the book. First as a class discussion, then through individual writing, students explore such thematic issues as trust and loyalty and good versus evil and demonstrate how the characters and plot of the novel support these themes. (APS 6)

Standard 12: Fiction

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

12.3 Identify and analyze the elements of setting, characterization, conflict and plot structure.

Identify personality traits of characters and how their thoughts, words and actions reveal their personalities.

Describe how main characters change over time.

For example:

Students read selections of their own choice stressing survival, such as Julie of the Wolves by Jean George, Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell, and The Big Wave by Pearl Buck. They explore conflict and characterization by posing and answering questions such as, "What qualities of the central characters enable them to survive?"

While reading Toliver's Secret, students meet in small groups to discuss the development of the main character, Ellen Toliver. They consider changes in her physical appearance as she disguises herself as a boy, as well as her personal growth as she perseveres on her mission to deliver a secret message for her grandfather. After completing the book, students create a graphic organizer that reflects the way in which the supporting characters viewed Ellen throughout the book. They then write about the way the author has used the supporting characters and events in the book to develop the main character. (APS 5)

Students read Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls. Each week as they read they are assigned a question that guides their reading response. One query focuses on the character development of Billy. Students come to class prepared with a written response that describes Billy's character attributes throughout the story and how they are expressed as the story unfolds. Students then participate in small group discussion of the same. (APS 6)

Standard 13: Nonfiction

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the purpose, structure, and elements of nonfiction or informational materials and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

- 13.13 Identify and use knowledge of common textual features (title, headings, key words, captions, paragraphs, topic sentences, table of contents, concluding sentences, glossary, and index).
- 13.14 Identify and use knowledge of common graphic features (charts, graphs, maps, diagrams, captions, and illustrations).
- 13.15 Identify and use knowledge of common organizational structures (chronological order, logical order, cause and effect, classification schemes).
- 13.17 Identify, summarize and analyze main ideas, supporting ideas, and supporting details.

For example:

After a visit by an author, students write logical, one-paragraph summary reports after identifying and arranging the most important points made by the author.

Standard 14: Poetry

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the themes, structure, and elements of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

- 14.3 Respond to and analyze the effects of sound, figurative language, and graphics in order to uncover meaning in poetry:
 - sound (alliteration; onomatopoeia; rhyme scheme; free verse; couplets; A, B, A, B);
 - figurative language (personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole); and
 - graphics (capital letters, line length).

For example:

Students read Robert Francis' The Base Stealer and discuss the various ways that Francis presents the movement of a baseball player getting ready to steal a base. They discuss elements such as simile and the

way the rhythm of the poem changes as he lists the verbs. Volunteers act out some of the movements of the base stealer as described by Francis. Students then write their own poems describing the movement of an athlete of their choice. (APS 5)

Students select, read, enjoy and analyze poetry from a variety of authors, such as Robert Frost, e. e. cummings, Shel Silverstein. Form, imagery and poetic elements are noticed and compared with the intent of having the audience think your feelings and feel your thoughts. (APS 6)

Students read the free verse novel *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse. Use selections from the book to identify and discuss her word choices, use of simile and metaphor, development of imagery and other poetic elements. (APS 6)

Standard 15: Style and Language

Students will identify and analyze how an author's words appeal to the senses, create imagery, suggest mood, and set tone and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

15.3 Identify imagery, figurative language, rhythm, or flow when responding to literature.

For example:

After reading and discussing Cynthia Rylant's poems in Soda Jerk, students write their own poems, choosing words that evoke a sense of the soda jerk's drug store.

While reading Tuck Everlasting, students consider Natalie Babbitt's use of figurative language, such as her opening paragraph comparing the first, hot, still week of August to the top of a Ferris wheel ride. As they become increasingly aware of Babbitt's use of figurative language, they identify other examples throughout the book. (APS 5)

In reading Hesse's Out of the Dust, a book written in free verse about a young girl's experience in the Oklahoma of the 1930's, students explore, through formal and informal discussion and written response, her choice of genre, intent in telling the story in the voice of Billie Jo (the central character), the imagery she evokes, and, within each poem, the words through which she crafts this work of historic fiction. (APS 6)

15.4 Identify and analyze the importance of shades of meaning in determining word choice in a piece of literature.

Standard 16: Myth, Traditional Narrative, and Classical Literature

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the themes, structure, and elements of myths, traditional narratives, and classical literature and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

16.7 Compare traditional literature from different cultures.

For example:

Students read stories about constellations from several cultures and show how each culture configured and explained a group of stars.

Students read American Black folktales during their study of American History, creating comparisons between these tales and those of traditional European folktales. (APS 5)

In the context of studying archeology and ancient civilizations, students read creation myths from different cultures. Having read, shared, written, illustrated and dramatized myths, students are asked to compare a chosen myth with either a fairy tale or legend. Students work collaboratively to create a comparison chart that identifies similarities and differences (e.g., culture, setting, problem, sequence of action, character types, relationships, objects of power, rewards/punishments). (APS 6)

Students read a variety of Greek/Roman myths and fairy tales and analyze common themes of virtue, loyalty, etc. (APS 6)

After reading several "Cinderella" tales from different cultures, students compare them to the modern-day tale of "Ella Enchanted" by Gail Carson Levine. This exercise could lead to students creating their own "fractured fairy tales" and possibly to the development of a play. (APS 6)

- 16.8 Identify common structures in traditional literature (i.e., magic helpers: talking animals, fairies, genies or elves; the rule of three: characters or story elements often come in threes, such as three bears, three sisters, three wishes or three tasks; transformation) and stylistic elements (hyperbole, repeated refrains, similes).

For example:

Having read, analyzed, discussed and compared different myths in their study of archeology and ancient civilizations, students review the elements and structure of a myth and create their own modern myth. The assignment begins with an opportunity for self-exploration in response to the question: What fills you with a sense of awe and wonder? (APS 6)

Standard 17: Dramatic Literature

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the themes, structure, and elements of drama and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

- 17.3 Identify and analyze structural elements particular to dramatic literature (scenes, acts, cast of characters, stage directions) in the plays they read, view, write, and perform.

For example:

When studying ancient myths and folklore, students work toward sharing their stories orally, as is inherent to the tradition. (APS 6)

- 17.4 Identify and analyze the similarities and differences between a narrative text and its film or play version.

For example:

*After reading Norton Juster's novel, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, and watching the filmed version, students adapt passages of the novel as they write their own scenes, present them, and justify their specific choices in adapting the narrative to a script edition.*

Standard 18: Dramatic Reading and Performance

Students will plan and present dramatic readings, recitations, and performances that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience and purpose.

For example:

As part of a poetry study, students memorize and recite poems of their choice to classmates. (APS 5)

- 18.3 Develop characters through the use of basic acting skills (memorization, sensory recall, concentration, diction, body alignment, expressive detail) and self-assess using teacher-developed criteria before performing.

Composition Strand

Grades 5 & 6

Most of the benchmarks listed in the fifth- and sixth-grade level are introduced in fifth grade and worked on further through sixth grade. Fifth-grade teachers do not need to expect student mastery by the end of fifth grade.

Teachers should continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult work.

Standard 19: Writing

Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.

For example:

In a variety of pieces throughout the year, students take a piece of writing from draft stage to final publication. Opportunities will arise in many units, including reports for Ancient Civilizations, D.A.R.E., essays, poems for a class anthology, persuasive letters to elected officials, book reviews for class newspaper. (APS 6)

Students keep a draft notebook for writers' workshop throughout the year. At a minimum of three times a week, children are exposed to different writing genres or provided with prompts to inspire their writing. Using the given prompts, literary sources, or teacher demonstrations, students notice and then practice the craft of paragraph development, content organization, integrating interesting and supportive detail, and building vocabulary. This notebook is then a source for story or narrative starts that proceed through revision. (APS 6)

For imaginative/literary writing:

19.14 Write stories or scripts containing the basic elements of fiction (characters, dialogue, setting, plot) with a clear resolution.

19.15 Write poems using poetic techniques (alliteration, onomatopoeia), figurative language (simile, metaphor), and graphic elements (capital letters, line length).

For example:

Students use postcards of paintings or sculptures from an art museum they have visited as the inspiration for their own paintings. They write a poem or short story to go with their artwork, revise, edit, and critique it, and share their work at a school art exhibit or local senior center.

For informational/expository writing:

19.16 Write brief research reports with clear focus and supporting detail.

For example:

In studying the human body, specific emphasis is placed on challenges to the different systems. Students investigate health problems through a mini-research project on topics such as lung cancer (respiratory system), heart attacks (circulatory system), or indigestion (digestive system). Planning techniques are used to organize the research; focus is on developing the content through the writing process. Students recognize that their audiences are the health care professionals in their school and community who will provide students with feedback on the clarity of their written work. (APS 5)

19.17 Write a short explanation of a process that includes a topic statement, supporting details, and a conclusion.

19.18 Write formal letters to correspondents such as authors, newspapers, businesses, or government officials.

Standard 20: Consideration of Audience and Purpose

Students will write for different audiences and purposes.

- 20.3 Make distinctions among fiction, nonfiction, dramatic literature, and poetry, and use these genres selectively when writing for different purposes.

For example:

Fifth graders visit the Revolutionary battlegrounds in Lexington and Concord and write a press release about their trip for the local newspaper and a script about the beginning of the American Revolution to be performed for younger students.

In the context of memoir writing, students read The Jacket by Gary Soto, both for content and to analyze the writer's style in paragraphing and chronology. Along with this reading, certain poems of Soto's from A Fire in My Hands are shared. Small group and whole class discussion follow on Soto's topic choices for poetry in comparison to his ideas for short stories. (APS 6)

Standard 21: Revising

Students will demonstrate improvement in organization, content, paragraph development, level of detail, style, tone, and word choice (diction) in their compositions after revising them.

- 21.4 Revise writing to improve level of detail and precision of language after determining where to add images and sensory detail, combine sentences, vary sentences, and rearrange text.

For example:

Students write autobiographies entitled "The Worst and Best of Me." In pairs they read each other's work and suggest places where more descriptive detail is needed and where sentences could be combined for variety in length and structure.

During their study of Westward Expansion, students play the computer game "The Oregon Trail." As part of their experience, they download their trail log after each session and use the log as the framework for a separate journal-writing session. Over time, they write a minimum of 10 journal entries documenting the events that are occurring on the trail and their personal reaction, as a pioneer, to these events. After completing their draft entries, they share their journals with peers, revising for clarity and content. Finally, they select one of these entries as the basis for a letter of advice about the trail to a fictitious friend or family member in the east. (APS 5)

- 21.5 Improve word choice by using dictionaries or thesauruses.

Standard 22: Standard English Conventions

Students will use knowledge of Standard English conventions in their writing, revising, and editing.

- 22.3 Write legibly in cursive, leaving space between words in a sentence.

For example:

As a part of the writing program and other curriculum areas such as social studies, there should be a balance of opportunities for students to practice manuscript and cursive, in addition to word processing. (APS 6)

- 22.7 Use additional knowledge of correct mechanics (apostrophes, quotation marks, comma use in compound sentences, paragraph indentations), correct sentence structure (elimination of fragments and run-ons), and correct standard English spelling (commonly used homophones) when writing, revising, and editing.

For example:

After practice with identifying a specific convention, students participate in a scavenger hunt style game, identifying the element in their own writing or in published text. (APS 5)

Students are asked to recall a popular folk tale such as “Jack and the Beanstalk.” They are asked to consider characters in the story that do not partake in conversation: Jack’s mother and the Giant’s wife, for example. Working with a partner, students are asked to create dialogue within 3 – 5 paragraphs that might occur between these characters, given their understanding of the respective personal attributes of the characters they select. Students follow with peer conferencing to revise and edit for the convention of quotations. (APS 6)

Standard 23: Organizing Ideas in Writing

Students will organize ideas in writing in a way that makes sense for their purpose.

23.6 Decide on the placement of descriptive details about setting, characters, and events in stories.

For example:

When writing their own mystery stories, students plan in advance where clues will be located, what red herrings will complicate the search, and what special talents the detective will employ to solve the mystery.

23.7 Group related ideas and place them in logical order when writing summaries or reports.

For example:

Students write a summary of a biography of George Washington, grouping their ideas in categories that make sense for the biography (early life, education, battle strategies, actions as president) and placing the categories in a logical order as they compose a multi-paragraph report.

23.8 Organize information about a topic into a coherent paragraph with a topic sentence, sufficient supporting detail, and a concluding sentence.

Standard 24: Research

Students will gather information from a variety of sources, analyze and evaluate the quality of the information they obtain, and use it to answer their own questions.

24.3 Apply steps for obtaining information from a variety of sources, organizing information, documenting sources, and presenting research in individual and group projects:

- Use an expanded range of print and non-print sources (atlases, databases, electronic, on-line resources).
- Follow established criteria for evaluating information.
- Locate specific information within resources by using indexes, tables of contents, electronic search key words.
- Organize and present research using the grades 5–6 Learning Standards in the Composition Strand as a guide for writing.
- Provide appropriate documentation in a consistent format.

For example:

Students complete a project detailing how they would spend one million dollars. They select a spending focus such as opening a wildlife preserve, starting their own pet store, or operating a ski lodge. They develop questions about their focus and conduct research to determine if their project is feasible, what the costs will be, and where they can obtain the items they will need. They create a final presentation that not only documents their spending but also presents their rationale, plans and resources. (APS 5)

As part of their study of Motion and Design, students choose a related topic such as hot air balloons, bicycles, sports cars or submarines. After practicing with different phases of the research process, students prepare a research report on their selected topic. They use appropriate research strategies, such as webbing, “gathering grids”, and note-taking sheets as preparation for more formal research experiences. (APS 5)

During the “Microworld” unit, students are asked to think about the uses of lenses and magnification in science, medicine, business, the arts, or other industry. In refining their questions, students elicit opinions and ideas (and take notes). Students design a research project to find the answers using a combination of resources and hands-on investigations. (APS 6)

Following direct instruction, students practice with each phase of the research process using a variety of informational formats. Students participate in an independent study of a topic of their choice. This inquiry project is monitored and assessed at each step of the process and culminates in a completed research paper, copies of which are shared with relevant audiences and then become part of the classroom library. (APS 6)

Following a study of ancient Egypt, students have the opportunity to pursue a query of interest that will take them through the research process and end with a demonstration of their learning. This demonstration is required to include a well-organized and coherent oral and written presentation. Self-assessment, followed by assessment from peers and professional historians, provide constructive feedback on both content completeness and presentation clarity. (APS 6)

Standard 25: Evaluating Writing and Presentations

Students will develop and use appropriate rhetorical, logical, and stylistic criteria for assessing final versions of their compositions or research projects before presenting them to varied audiences.

- 25.3 Use prescribed criteria from a scoring rubric to evaluate compositions, recitations, or performances before presenting them to an audience.

For example:

As they rehearse a program of original poetry for residents of a nursing home, students apply criteria for poetry writing and presentation skills

Media Strand

Grades 5 & 6

Most of the benchmarks listed in the fifth- and sixth-grade level are introduced in fifth grade and worked on further through sixth grade. Fifth-grade teachers do not need to expect student mastery by the end of fifth grade.

Teachers should continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult work.

Standard 26: Analysis of Media

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the conventions, elements, and techniques of film, radio, video, television, multimedia productions, the Internet, and emerging technologies, and provide evidence from the works to support their understanding.

- 26.1 Identify techniques used in television (animation, close-ups, wide-angle shots, sound effects, music, and graphics) and use knowledge of these techniques to distinguish between facts and misleading information.

While the state describes this standard as applying to first and second grade, the district wishes to especially encourage teachers in all grades to continue to address 26.1

- 26.3 Identify techniques used in educational reference software and websites and describe how these techniques are the same as or different from the techniques used by authors and illustrators of print materials.

For example:

Students research the lives of authors and illustrators on the Internet and compare the kind of information they receive through this technology to the kind of information they can find in printed reference books.

As part of their study of "Ecosystems," students look at National Geographic Magazines to identify different geographical and ecological areas of the world. They then listen to one of "National Geographic's Radio Expeditions" (NPR). They discuss the differences between the two media. They consider the use of graphics and text in the magazine versus the use of sound, recorded interview and oral observations. They then create their own "expedition" report on an ecological area in Acton, using the medium that they feel is most effective. (APS 5)

During a political campaign, students monitor a candidate's website and then compare that information to the reports published in daily newspapers or newsmagazines. (APS 6)

Standard 27: Media Production

Students will design and create coherent media productions (audio, video, television, multimedia, Internet, emerging technologies) with a clear controlling idea, adequate detail, and appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and medium.

- 27.3 Create a media production using effective images, text, music, sound effects, or graphics.

For example:

Students create a storyboard for an animated or live filmed version of Shiloh, by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. As they work, they consider places in the script in which close-up and distance shots, voice-over narrations, or captions would enhance viewers' understanding.

Students collect information on a state of their choice. They create a Hyperstudio slide show that highlights key facts about their selected state. They incorporate maps, photos and other graphic images obtained from on-line reference resources or the Internet. (APS 5)

When presenting a report for a study of Ancient Civilizations, students incorporate overhead transparencies of artwork and Internet web images into their demonstration of ancient sculpture. (APS 6)