

A Parent's Guide To Sixth Grade English Language Arts

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Sixth Grade English Language Arts (ELA) develops strength in reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing skills. Your child should increase his/her ability to analyze and synthesize information, increase reading ability and become a more proficient writer.

Glossary Terms

Words that have asterisks (*) are defined in the Glossary section located in the back of this booklet.

By the end of the sixth grade, your child should be able to do the following:

READING

Word Study

- Use word structure, sentence structure, and prediction* to aid in decoding and understanding the meanings of words in context.
- Use structural*, syntactic*, and semantic* analysis to recognize unfamiliar words in context, such as origins and meanings of foreign words, words with multiple meanings, knowledge of major word chunks/rimes, syllabication.
- Automatically recognize frequently encountered words.
- Know the meaning of frequently encountered words in written and oral contexts.
- Apply strategies to construct meaning and identify unknown words.
- Fluently read sixth grade texts.
- Use strategies (example: connotation*, denotation*) to determine the meaning of words and phrases in context (example: regional idioms*, content area vocabulary, technical terms).



Narrative Text

- Describe how characters in classic and contemporary literature recognized for quality and literary merit form opinions about one another in ways that can be fair and unfair.
- Analyze elements and style of narrative genres (example: folktales, fantasy, adventure, action).
- Analyze the role of dialogue*, plot*, characters, themes, major and minor characters, and climax*.
- Analyze how authors use dialogue, imagery*, and understatement* to develop plot.

Informational Text

- Analyze elements and style of informational genre (examples: research report, how-to-articles, essays).
- Analyze organizational patterns.
- Explain how authors use text features to enhance the understanding of central, key, and supporting ideas.
Examples:
 - footnotes*
 - bibliographies*
 - introductions
 - summaries
 - conclusions
 - appendices*



Comprehension

- Connect personal knowledge, experience, and understanding of the world to themes and perspectives in the text.
- Read, retell and summarize grade level appropriate narrative and informational texts.
- State global themes, universal truths, and principles within and across texts to create a deeper understanding.
- Apply knowledge from what has been read in grade level appropriate science and social studies.

Metacognition

- Independently self-monitor comprehension when reading or listening to text by automatically using and discussing the strategies used to increase comprehension and engage in discussions.

Examples:

- predicting
 - questioning
 - inferring*
 - summarizing
 - constructing mental images representing ideas in text
 - rereading or listening again if uncertain about meaning
- Plan, monitor, regulate, and evaluate skills, strategies, and processes for their own reading comprehension by applying appropriate metacognitive skills.
(Examples: SQ3R*, pattern guides, process of reading guides)



Critical Standards

- Compare the appropriateness of shared, individual, and expert standards based on purpose, context, and audience in order to assess his/her own work and the work of others.

Reading Attitude

- Be enthusiastic about reading.

WRITING

Writing Genres

- Write a narrative piece such as a personal narrative, adventure story, tall tale, folk tale, or fantasy that includes elements of characterization for major and minor characters, internal and/or external conflict, and address issues of plot, theme*, and imagery.
- Write an essay such as a personal, persuasive*, or comparative* essay, for an audience that includes organizational patterns that support key ideas.
- Develop research questions using multiple resources and perspectives that allows him/her to organize, analyze, and explore problems and pose solutions. The final project will be presented to peers.

Writing Process



- Set a purpose, consider audience, and replicate authors' styles and patterns when writing narrative or informational text.
- Apply a variety of pre-writing strategies for narrative text. This could include the use of graphic organizers such as story maps or webs designed to develop a plot that includes major and minor characters, builds climax*, and uses dialogue to enhance a theme.
- Apply a variety of pre-writing strategies for informational text. Examples of informational text include problem/solution, and sequence.
- Review and revise drafts with audience and purpose in mind regarding consistent voice* and genre characteristics.
- Write for a specific purpose by using multiple paragraphs, sentence variety and voice to meet the needs of an audience. (Examples: word choice, level of formality, example.)
- Edit writing using proofreader's checklists both individually and in peer editing groups.

Personal Style

- Exhibit individual style to enhance the written message.
 - In narrative text, this could include personification*, humor or element of surprise.
 - In informational text, this could include emotional appeal, strong opinion or credible support.



Grammar and Usage

- Use style conventions and a variety of grammatical structures in their writing including:
 - indefinite* and predicate pronouns
 - transitive* and intransitive* verbs
 - adjective and adverbial phrases
 - adjective and adverbial subordinate clauses*
 - comparative adverbs and adjectives
 - superlatives*
 - conjunctions*
 - compound sentences
 - appositives*
 - independent and dependent clauses*
 - introductory phrases
 - periods
 - commas
 - quotation marksand the uses of underlining and italics for specific purposes.

Spelling

- Spell frequently misspelled words correctly in the context of writing.

Handwriting

- Write legibly in his/her compositions.

Writing Attitude

- Be enthusiastic about writing.

SPEAKING

Conventions

- Ask and respond to questions and remarks to engage the audience when presenting texts.
- Use rhyme, rhythm, cadence*, and word play for effect when presenting.
- Present work in standard American English or a developing version of Standard English if s/he is in the process of learning English.

Discourse

- Engage in interactive, extended discourse to socially construct meaning (examples: book clubs, literature circles, partnerships, or other conversation protocols).
- Discuss multiple text types in order to compare/contrast
 - ideas
 - form
 - styleto evaluate quality and to identify personally with a universal theme.
- Discuss written narratives that include a variety of literary and plot devices (examples: established context plot, point of view, sensory details, dialogue, suspense).
- Plan a focused and coherent oral presentation using an informational text pattern (example: problem/solution sequence), select a focus question to address, and organize the message to ensure that it matches the intent and the audience to which it will be delivered.

LISTENING AND VIEWING

Conventions

- Respond to, evaluate, and analyze speeches and presentations delivered by peers.
- Demonstrate the appropriate social skills of audience behavior during speeches and presentations.

Examples:

- eye contact
- quiet and still
- attentive
- supportive

Response

- Summarize, take notes on key points, and ask clarifying questions.
- Respond thoughtfully to both classic and contemporary texts recognized for quality and literary merit.
- Identify a speaker's affective communications expressed through tone, mood and emotional cues.
- Relate a speaker's verbal communication such as tone of voice to the non-verbal message such as eye contact, posture or gestures.
- Respond to multiple texts when listened to or viewed by speaking, illustrating, and/or writing in order to compare/contrast similarities and differences in idea, form and style. Then evaluate quality and identify personal and universal themes.
- Respond to, evaluate, and analyze the credibility of a speaker who uses persuasion to affirm his/her point of view in a speech or presentation.
- Identify persuasive* and propaganda* techniques used in television, and identify false and misleading information.

GLOSSARY TERMS

appendices (pl.) – additional materials attached to the end of a piece of writing

appositive – a noun or noun phrase that identifies another noun or pronoun that comes before it (Example: “Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer”.)

bibliography – a list of writings used or considered by an author in preparing a particular work

cadence – balanced, rhythmic flow, as of poetry

climax – a moment of great or culminating intensity in a narrative, especially the conclusion of a conflict or problem

comparative essay – a piece of writing that makes a comparison

conjunction – the part of speech that serves to connect words, phrases, clauses, or sentences

connotation – an idea or meaning suggested by or associated with a word or thing

denotation – the most direct or specific meaning of a word or expression

dependent clause – a group of words that cannot stand alone in a sentence

dialogue – a conversation between two or more people

external conflict – character struggle against an outside force

footnote – a note placed at the bottom of a book or manuscript that comments on or cites a reference for a part of the text

idioms – words used in a special way that may be different from their literal meaning. (Example: She felt *hot under the collar* when she was treated unfairly.)

imagery – the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions or ideas

indefinite pronouns – a pronoun that does not specifically name its antecedent (the noun or pronoun it replaces)

Glossary Terms, continued



independent clause – a group of words in a complex sentence that could stand alone as a complete sentence

inferring – to arrive at a conclusion with the material you have read, an educated guess

internal conflict – a struggle within a character's own mind. Usually a struggle between opposing desires, needs or emotions

intransitive verb – a verb that does not require an object to be grammatically correct

personification – the practice of giving a non-human thing the ability to act and speak as if it is human

persuasive – the ability to convince someone of something they may not have originally been in favor of

persuasive essay – a piece of writing that has the purpose of convincing the reader to agree with the position of the writer

plot – the series of events in a narrative piece

prediction – guessing what is going to happen in the future

propaganda – information that is meant to mislead or persuade

semantic analysis – the reader studies the meaning of words

SQ3R – (Survey, Question, Read, Review, Recite) a reading strategy used to better understand a selection

structural analysis – reader studies the way writing is organized

subordinate clause – a group of words that cannot stand alone in a sentence

superlative – the extreme degree of comparison of an adjective or adverb, as in best or brightest

Glossary Terms, continued

syntactic analysis – reader examines the way words are put together in a sentence

theme – the central or main idea in a piece of writing

transitive verb – a verb that requires an object in order to be grammatically correct

understatement – the opposite of exaggeration

(Example: Michigan weather in January is slightly chilly.)

voice – a writer's distinctive, personal tone or style



