

English Language Arts Curriculum

Strand: Meaning and Communication

Class: American Literature

Standard 1: All students will read and comprehend general and technical material.

Benchmarks:

1. Use reading for multiple purposes, such as enjoyment, learning complex procedures, completing technical tasks, making workplace decisions, evaluating and analyzing information, and pursuing in-depth studies.
2. Read with developing fluency a variety of texts, such as novels, poetry, drama, essays, research texts, technical manuals, and documents.
3. Selectively employ the most effective strategies to construct meaning, such as generating questions, scanning, analyzing and evaluating for specific information, and deciding how to represent content through summarizing, clustering, and mapping.
4. Selectively employ the most effective strategies to recognize words as they construct meaning, including the use of context clues, etymological study, and reference materials.
5. Respond personally, analytically, and critically to a variety of oral, visual, written and electronic texts, providing examples of how the texts influence their lives and their role in society.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- After reading a novel and getting a college application form, fill out the application as the main character would, including writing an essay from the character's point of view.
- Compare historical narratives as primary sources for the role of the author, his/her purpose, and intended point of view.
- Select an author for a research paper by completing a personal interest inventory using a graphic organizer.
- Assign groups to research a set of words that have similar etymologies.
- Compare (in writing or orally) connections between texts from different time periods, such as the Jews fleeing Germany in the 1930s and 40s to the Puritans leaving Anglican England.

Resources:

Ethan Frome by Edith Wharton
The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams
The Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano by Olaudah Equiano
Of Plymouth Plantation by William Bradford
Collected poems of Anne Bradstreet
"Winter Night" by Kate Boyle

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Standard 2: All students will demonstrate the ability to write clear and grammatically correct sentences, paragraphs, and compositions.

Benchmarks:

1. Write fluently for multiple purposes to produce compositions, such as stories, poetry, personal narratives, editorials, research reports, persuasive essays, resumes, and memos.
2. Recognize and approximate authors' innovative techniques to convey meaning and influence an audience when composing their own texts.
3. Plan, draft, revise, and edit their texts and analyze and critique the texts of others in such areas as purpose, effectiveness, cohesion and creativity.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Write an editorial or persuasive essay to respond to historical elements in novels, poems, or short stories.
- After reading a stream of consciousness work, write additional chapters for the work using stream of consciousness.
- Assign a research paper that requires students to use peer editing critiques and at least a 1st and final draft.

Resources:

"Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King
"The Death of a Ball Turret Gunner" by Randall Jarrell
"The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" by Katherine Anne Porter
As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner

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Strand: Meaning and Communication

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Standard 3: All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal social, occupational, and civic contexts.

Benchmarks:

1. Integrate listening, viewing, speaking, and writing skills for multiple purposes and in varied contexts.
3. Read and write fluently, speak confidently, listen and interact appropriately, view critically, and represent creatively.
4. Consistently use effective listening strategies.
5. Employ the most effective strategies to construct meaning while reading, listening to, viewing, or creating texts.
6. Determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and concepts in oral, visual, and written texts by using a variety of resources.
7. Recognize and use varied innovative techniques to construct text, convey meaning, and express feelings to influence an audience.
8. Analyze their responses to oral, visual, written and electronic texts, providing examples of how texts affect their lives, connect them with the contemporary world, and transmit issues across time.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Have students select a poem from the Harlem renaissance and work in groups to teach the poem to the class, including a beginning activity, outline, and assessment.
- Prepare a formal debate presenting two different influences on the works of a common author.
- Have students create tapes or videos of themselves reading literature (possible poems or psalms) and play them for the entire class.
- Create story maps for drama or short fiction, which include conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
- Practice dialogue in a work that includes dialect.
- Rewrite a short story told in the 1st person from another character's point of view.
- Use an author's works and a contemporary issue (capital punishment, free speech, etc.) to explain how authors from the 18th and 19th centuries would respond.

Resources:

"The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe

Poems by Emily Dickinson, Gwendolyn Brooks and various other writers

"The Crucible" by Arthur Miller

"A worn Path" by Eudora Welty

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

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Strand: Language

Class: American Literature

Standard 4: All students will use the English language effectively.

Benchmarks:

1. Demonstrate how language usage is related to successful communication in their different spoken, written, and visual communication contexts.
2. Use an understanding of how language patterns and vocabularies transmit culture and affect the meaning in formal and informal situations.
3. Explore and explain how the same words have different usages and meanings in different contexts, cultures, and communities.
4. Demonstrate ways in which communication can be influenced through word usage.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Construct an advertisement for a historical political position from a primary source. (e. g. Revolutionary writings)
- Read several works containing local color and regionalism of the late 1800s and have students revise several paragraphs using a different region.
- Read and construct loaded questions.
- Evaluate political cartoons to explore irony and satire.

Resources:

“Declaration of Independence” by Thomas Jefferson
“Speech in the Virginia Convention” by Patrick Henry
“Outcasts of Poker Flat” by Bret Harte
Transcripts from Salem Witchcraft trials
The Crucible by Arthur Miller

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Strand: Literature

Class: American Literature

Standard 5: All students will read and analyze a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature and other materials to seek information, ideas, enjoyment, and understanding of their individuality, our society's common heritage, common humanity and rich diversity.

Benchmarks:

1. Select, read, listen to, view, and respond to classic and contemporary texts recognized for quality and merit.
2. Describe and discuss archetypal human experiences that appear in literature and other texts from around the world.
3. Analyze how tensions among characters, communities, themes, and issues in literature and other texts reflect the substance of the human experience.
4. Analyze how cultures interact with one another in literature and other texts, and describe the consequences of the interactions it relates to our common heritage.
5. Analyze and evaluate the authenticity of the portrayal of various societies and cultures in literature and other texts.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Create a time capsule from a particular period in American History using 1 novel, 2 short stories, 1 drama, and 2 poems.
- Read a work with stock characters or an allegory and create a caricature that illustrates those traits.
- Compare *The Crucible* and the cold war tensions of the 20th century.
- Read or listen to traditional and contemporary Native American works.
- Assign students to select and evaluate works from various American ethnicities.

Resources:

"The Devil and Tom Walker" by Washington Irving

"The Masque of the Red Death" by Edgar Allen Poe

"The Crucible" by Arthur Miller

Works by Leslie Marman Silko, Scott Momaday, Morning Dove

Native American Legends and Myths

Works by Sandra Cisneros, Rita Dove, Gwendolyn Brooks, Amy Tan

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Strand: Voice

Class: American Literature

Standard 6: All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written, and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

Benchmarks:

2. Evaluate the power of using multiple voices in their oral and written communication to persuade, inform, entertain, and to inspire their audiences.
3. Analyze the style and characteristics of authors, actors, and artists of classics and masterpieces to determine why these voices endure.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Select a Native American Myth that includes dialogue and present it to the class with audio visual aids.
- Compare written works to film interpretations.

Resources:

Native American Myths and Legends
Our Town by Thornton Wilder
Ethan Frome by Edith Wharton

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Strand: Skills and Processes

Class: American Literature

Standard 7: All students will demonstrate, analyze, and reflect upon the skills and processes used to communicate through listening, speaking, viewing, reading, and writing.

Benchmarks:

1. Use a combination of strategies when encountering unfamiliar texts while constructing meaning.
2. Monitor their progress while using a variety of strategies to overcome difficulties when constructing and conveying meaning and demonstrate flexible use of strategies across a wide range of situations.
4. Demonstrate flexibility in using strategies for planning, drafting, revising, and editing complex texts in a variety of genre and describe the relationship between form and meaning.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Compare tone and mood in Realism, especially poetry.
- Develop quizzes to assess understanding of novels, short stories, etc.
- Develop a thesis statement and write a persuasive essay defending the opposite position.

Resources:

“Richard Cary” and “Miniver Cheevy” by Edwin Arlington Robinson
The Pocket Style Manual by Diane Hacker

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Strand: Genre and Craft of Language

Class: American Literature

Standard 8: All students will explore and use the characteristics of different types of texts, aesthetic elements, and mechanics—including text structure, figurative and descriptive language, spelling, punctuation, and grammar—to construct and convey meaning.

Benchmarks:

1. Identify and use selectively mechanics that facilitate understanding.
2. Describe and use characteristics of various narrative genre and complex elements of narrative technique to convey ideas and perspectives.
3. Describe and use characteristics of informational genre and complex elements of expository texts to convey ideas.
4. Identify and use aspects of the craft of speaker, writer, and illustrator to formulate and express their ideas artistically.
5. Describe and use the characteristics of various oral, visual, and written texts and the textual aids they employ to convey meaning and inspire audiences.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Compare documentation of sources using various styles—Chicago, APA, MLA.
- Write a progressive narrative (short fiction) that uses narrative elements as well as appropriate parallel elements.(refrain, parallelism, incremental repetition)
- Write a research paper analyzing the effect of a historical event on a particular author.
- Adopt an author’s style to produce a piece of writing or visual presentation and use appropriate figurative language, word choice, syntax, etc.
- Watch two interpretations of a play or novel and evaluate the effectiveness of stage direction.

Resources:

A Pocket Style Manual by Diane Hacker
Elements of Style by Strunk and White
Poems by e.e cummings, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman
Short stories by Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, Ambrose Bierce
Our Town by Edith Wharton
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

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Strand: Depth of Understanding

Class: American Literature

Standard 9: All students will demonstrate understanding of the complexity of enduring issues and recurring problems by making connections and generating themes within and across texts.

Benchmarks:

1. Analyze and reflect on universal themes and substantive issues from oral, visual and written texts.
2. Synthesize from multiple texts representing varied perspectives and apply the principles and generalizations needed to investigate and confront complex issues and problems.
3. Develop and extend a thesis by analyzing differing perspectives and resolving inconsistencies in order to support a position.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Compare two works, one which has an explicit theme and one with an implicit theme.
- Compare a primary and secondary source.
- Identify elements of persuasive rhetoric (logical, emotional, ethical appeals and deductive and inductive reasoning) in a text.

Resources:

“The Masque of the Red Death” and “The Fall of the House of Usher” by Edgar Allan Poe
Of Plymouth Plantation by William Bradford
“Women and Children First” by Alicia Crane Williams
Abigail Adams’s Letters to John Adams
www.justicelearning.com

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Strand: Ideas in Action

Class: American Literature

Standard 10: All students will apply knowledge, ideas, and issues drawn from texts to their lives and the lives of others.

Benchmarks:

1. Use themes and central ideas in literature and other texts to generate solutions to problems and formulate perspectives on issues in their own lives.
2. Function as literate individuals in varied contexts within the students' lives and beyond the classroom.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Role play alternate endings to short stories.
- Write letters to living authors to gather primary sources.

Resources:

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” by Ambrose Bierce

“The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

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Strand: Inquiry and Research

Class: American Literature

Standard 11: All students will define and investigate important issues and problems using a variety of resources, including technology, to explore and create texts.

Benchmarks:

1. Generate questions about important issues that affect them or society, or topics about which they are curious: narrow the questions to a clear focus, and create a thesis or hypothesis.
2. Determine, evaluate and use resources that are most appropriate and readily available for investigating a particular question or topic.
3. Synthesize and evaluate information to draw conclusions and implications based on their investigation of an issue or problem.
4. Research and select the medium and format to be used to present conclusions based on the investigation of an issue or problem.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Edit “sample” thesis statements.
- Include at least 5 different sources for a research paper/project.
- Design a survey of American issues to use as a source for a research paper/project.

Resources:

A Pocket Style Manual by Diane Hacker
Works by Mark Twain, Nikki, Giovanni, Anne Tyler

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Strand: Critical Standards

Class: American Literature

Standard 12: All students will develop and apply personal, shared, and academic criteria for the enjoyment, appreciation, and evaluation of their own and others' oral, written, and visual texts.

Benchmarks:

1. Apply sets of standards for individual use according to the purpose of the communication context.
2. Analyze and apply individual, shared, and academic standards in various texts.
3. Use literary history, tradition, theory, terminology, and other critical standards to develop and justify judgements about the craft and significance of oral, visual, and written texts.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Create a rubric for comparing a play to a film interpretation.
- List characteristics of various literary movements (Romanticism, Realism, etc.) and identify works according to qualities.

Resources:

Our Town by Thornton Wilder
The Crucible by Arthur Miller
"The Open Boat" by Stephen Crane