

English Language Arts Curriculum

Strand: Meaning and Communication

Class: Contemporary 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.
5. Respond personally, analytically, and critically to a variety of oral, visual, written, and electronic texts, providing examples of how texts influence their lives and their role in society.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Read *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*
- Write responses to material read—example question—How do you know who you are? Trace and compare your journey and questions you ask to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Resources:

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard

Agatha Christie's mystery plays

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring by J.R. Tolkein

Something Wicked this Way comes by Ray Bradbury

www.phschool.com

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

Benchmarks:

4. Write fluently for multiple purposes to produce compositions.
4. Demonstrate precision in selecting appropriate language conventions when editing text.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Write responses to novels and plays.
- Check for correct usage of grammar and mechanics.

Resources:

Rosencrants and Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard
Agatha Christies mystery plays
The Lord of the Rings: the Fellowship of the Ring by J. R. R. Tolkein
Something Wicked This Way Comes by Ray Bradbury
A Pocket Style Manuel by Diane Hacker
Grammar for Writing by Sadlier-Oxford
Merriam Webster's Guide to Punctuation and Style

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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:

4. Consistently use effective listening strategies and elements of effective speaking.
6. Determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and concepts in oral, visual, and written texts by using a variety of resources.
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:

- Generate class discussions of texts.
- Give critical responses to new concepts by applying them to the texts.
- Share responses which ask them to connect materials to their own lives, for example, “How do friendships in *The fellowship of the Rings* compare to your own?”

Resources:

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard
Agatha Christie’s Mystery Plays
The Lord of the Rings: the Fellowship of the Ring by J. R. R. Tolkein
Something wicked This Way Comes by Ray Bradbury

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Strand: Language

Class: Contemporary 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 can have different usages and meanings in different contexts, cultures, and communities.
4. Demonstrate ways in which communication can be influenced through word usage.
5. Recognize and use levels of discourse appropriate for varied contexts, purposes and audiences, including terminology specific to Particular fields.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

Resources:

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Strand: Literature

Class: Contemporary 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 interaction as it Relates to our common heritage.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Write responses to the materials read.
- Identify Christian principles in Tolkein's plots.
- Write responses or discuss the universal themes in Tolkein's work.
- Compare archetypes from *the Lord of the Rings* with biblical archetypes.

Resources:

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring by J. R. R. Tolkein
Agatha Christie's Mystery Plays
Something Wicked This Way Comes by Ray Bradbury

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Strand: Voice

Class: Contemporary 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:

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:

- Set activity—List reasons why Tolkein is so popular.
- Write responses to questions concerning text.

Resources:

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard
Agatha Christie's Mystery Plays
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring by J. R. R. Tolkein
Something Wicked This Way Comes by Ray Bradbury

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Strand: Skills and Processes

Class: Contemporary 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.
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:

- Present notes on metadrama and deconstructionism and discuss.
- Write down 5 questions concerning the idea of metadrama in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.
- Write or discuss responses to various questions, such as “How are Sam and Frodo examples of fantasy characters?”
- Hand in drafts of written responses.

Resources:

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard

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Strand: Genre and Craft of Language

Class: Contemporary 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.
3. Describe and use characteristics of informational genre and complex elements of expository texts to convey ideas.
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:

- Include an assessment of grammar and mechanics in responses.
- Watch a documentary on Tolkein.
- Apply the material viewed to a written response,

Resources:

A Pocket Style Manual by Diane Hacker
Elements of Style by Strunk and White
The Only Grammar Book You'll Ever Need by Susan Thurman
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring by J. R. R. Tolkein
Documentary film on Tolkein

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Strand: Depth of Understanding

Class: Contemporary 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. Develop and extend a thesis by analyzing differing perspectives and resolving inconsistencies in order to support a position.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Discuss universal themes presented in mysteries—either written or oral.
- Read an article on the Elves and defend whether they fit in today's world.

Resources:

Agatha Christie's Mystery Plays

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Strand: Ideas in Action

Class: Contemporary 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. Utilize the persuasive power of text as instrument of change in their community, nation, and the world.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Write a response on the idea of war and fighting against evil as presented in Tolkein's work and how it applies today.
- Relate response to the Catholic Social Justice Teachings.

Resources:

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings by J. R. Tolkein
www.justicelearning.com

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Strand: Inquiry and Research

Class: Contemporary 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:

Resources:

English Language Arts Curriculum

Strand: Critical Standards

Class: Contemporary 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 contexts.
3. Use literary history, tradition, theory, terminology, and other critical standards to develop and justify judgments about the craft and significance of oral, visual, and written texts.
5. Apply diverse standards (rhetorical and societal) to evaluate whether a communication is truthful, responsible and ethical for a specific content.

Sample Activity/Assessment Tasks:

- Compare the movie *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* to the play.
- Write a response using terminology presented in class and apply to text.
- Assess response on standards presented in class—grammar, structure, application of theory and terms. For Example, apply Aristotelian drama to Tom Stoppard's play.
- Apply evaluation of philosophical articles on Tolkein's work to what students read in class.

Resources:

Rosencrants and Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard.
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings by J. R. Tolkein