

English Language Arts

The English Language Arts program at Oak Middle School is one part of a K-12 curriculum plan that is designed to teach learners how to reason and use language purposefully as they comprehend, construct and convey meaning. The goals of the program are in alignment with those identified by Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks. The goals are:

- to demonstrate understanding of the dynamic nature and structure of the English language
- to acquire strategies to decode, comprehend and analyze a variety of written, spoken and visual materials
- to learn to reflect and respond thoughtfully to various forms of spoken and written language
- to learn to write and speak with clarity, focus, coherence, and personal engagement
- to use print and electronic media effectively

At the middle level, the program is both challenging and enriching. Strong emphasis is placed on developing thinking and language skills; emphasizing writing as an essential way to develop, clarify and communicate ideas in various formats; teaching strategies necessary for acquiring academic knowledge and achieving common academic standards and attaining independence in learning. It is a balanced program and instruction includes a variety of methods, texts, strategies, and materials to encourage learners to excel and reach their highest potential.

The curriculum provides for explicit instruction in reading/writing strategies; speaking, listening and presenting; grammar, usage and mechanics; vocabulary study; and research and technology. It draws on literature from many genres, time periods and cultures. As a core discipline, it is tied to and integrated into all other disciplines in a variety of ways. Specific interdisciplinary units of study are incorporated into each grade level.

Student progress is measured by a variety of assessment techniques. These may include formative assessments that measure a student's progress against a standard such as review of class work and homework, quizzes, or oral presentations. It also may include summative assessment that measures a student's attainment of the standard such as tests, performances, essays and research reports. It is expected that written answers and essays demonstrate understanding of key ideas, contain appropriate support of ideas and opinions, and have insightful vocabulary. It is further expected that written responses be well organized and contain correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Oak Middle School students participate in experiences that are designed to enrich and enhance learning. All students write often using a wide variety of genres including informational essays, persuasive essays, descriptive essays, short essay responses and many more. All participate in a Summer Reading Program that is specifically designed for their particular interest and grade level. Upon returning to school each year, students discuss assigned selections and choice selections.

Grade 7 ELA Standards

Standards 1 - 5

Nonfiction reading strategies are reinforced using the text *Read for Real*. Students will also read several texts from a variety of genres such as *Waiting for the Rain*, *Journey to Jo'burg: A South African Story*, *Chain of Fire*, *So Far From the Bamboo Grove*, and short stories. They will learn and practice formal strategies to locate main idea and supporting details in different texts as well as practice using textual evidence to support ideas, connections, and inferences.

Standard 1: Reads, comprehends and analyzes a variety of grade level texts

- Read, analyze, and discuss the characteristics of various genres
- Interpret character's traits, emotions, or motivations and give supporting evidence from a text
- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme across a variety of selections, distinguish theme from topic
- Read, analyze and discuss drama, science fiction, short stories, poetry, historical fiction, nonfiction and young adult literature selections
- Determine importance, make connections, visualize, and synthesize information to strengthen comprehension of text
- Interpret mood and tone and give supporting textual evidence

Standard 2: Applies reading strategies to strengthen comprehension

- Identify basic facts and main ideas in a text and write well formatted, concise summaries
- Use knowledge of genre to analyze text
- Distinguish between fact and opinion and detect bias
- Identify evidence used to support an argument
- Apply strategies for using text features such as titles, subtitles, captions, italics, bold face, text boxes, and pictures to enhance comprehension
- Use knowledge of common textual features, graphic features, and organizational structures to deepen comprehension
- Annotate and bookmark text

Standard 3: Analyzes the elements of historical fiction

- Read, analyze, and discuss novels of this genre
- Relate a literary work to artifacts, artistic creations, or historical sites
- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme across a variety of selections

Standard 4: Analyzes the elements of realistic fiction

- Read, analyze, and discuss novels of this genre
- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme across a variety of selections

Standard 5: Analyzes dramatic literature

- Read, analyze, and discuss plays and other works of drama
- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme across a variety of selections
- Identify and analyze the elements of setting, plot, and characterization in plays that are read, viewed, and/or performed
- Develop and present characters through the use of basic acting skills (memorization, sensory recall, concentration, diction, body alignment, expressive details, etc.)

Standards 5, 7, 8, 9 - All students will write descriptive essays and personal narratives. This is formal preparation for the long composition on MCAS. Additionally, instruction will focus on using the writing process and sharpening language and writing skills. Reading and writing will be linked through essays and open responses. Grammar, usage, and spelling will be taught and proper usage is expected.

Standard 5: Writes descriptive and narrative essays

- Identify and use strategies such as organizational patterns, words, tones and images, leads and conclusions, point of view, figurative language, setting and characterization
- Answers prompts using some/all of the following techniques: vignette, dialogue, vivid verbs, similes, metaphors, various organizational structures, flashback, and rich description

Standard 7: Uses strategies to answer open response question

- Apply reading comprehension strategies to open response prompts
- Analyze the prompt to determine what is being asked
- Organize ideas and textual evidence
- Write concise and well supported responses
- Self assess

Standard 8: Writes with focus, organization, and supporting details

- Summarize and restate key ideas
- Write reports that include quotations and a bibliography

- Write poems using poetic techniques
- Revise work to improve organization and the precision of vocabulary
- Improve word choice by using dictionaries and thesauruses
- Use transitions and connections between ideas and chunks of information.
- Organize ideas into coherent essays or reports with a thesis statement, transition sentences to link paragraphs, and a conclusion

Standard 9: Uses standard English conventions in writing, revising and editing

- Study and discuss word structure, meaning, usage and origins using Classical Roots.
- Apply identified grammar competencies in speaking, writing and editing.
- Identify simple, compound, and complex sentences.
- Distinguish phrases from clauses
- Identify the eight parts of speech, their functions, and usage in sentences
- Identify and use phrases in sentences; eliminate sentence fragments and run-ons; correctly capitalize and punctuate
- Spell high frequency words correctly in all writing
- Employ grammar and usage rhetorically by combining, reordering and reducing sentences

Standard 6 - Students will work on interdisciplinary units linking content knowledge with research and writing skills. A variety of presentation methods will be explored (i.e., Power Point, oral presentations, written reports, etc.)

Standard 6: Understands and applies research skills

- Apply steps for obtaining information from a variety of sources, organize and document sources, present research in a project or paper
- Differentiate between primary and secondary sources
- Differentiate between paraphrasing and using direct quotes in a report
- Use standard bibliographic format to document sources
- Use appropriate techniques for oral presentations
- Present an organized interpretation of a literary work

Grade 8 ELA Standards

Standards 1 - 5

Reading strategies are taught and reinforced throughout the year using many different texts. Students will read novels from a variety of genres such as *The Giver*, *Crispin*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and short stories. They will learn how to use textual evidence to support ideas, connections, and inferences to enhance analysis of text.

Standard 1: Reads, comprehends and analyzes a variety of grade level texts

- Read, analyze, and discuss the characteristics of various genres
- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme across a variety of selections, distinguish theme from topic
- Read, analyze and discuss drama, science fiction, short stories, poetry, historical fiction, nonfiction and young adult literature selections
- Determine importance, make connections, visualize, and synthesize information to strengthen comprehension of text
- Interpret mood and tone and give supporting textual evidence
- Use knowledge of common textual features, graphic features, and organizational structures to deepen comprehension
- Annotate and bookmark text

Standard 2: Analyzes the development of fictional characters

- Interpret character's traits, emotions, or motivations and give supporting evidence from a text

Standard 3: Analyzes the elements of historical fiction

- Read, analyze, and discuss novels of this genre
- Use knowledge of genre to analyze text
- Relate a literary work to artifacts, artistic creations, or historical sites
- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme across a variety of selections

Standard 4: Analyzes the elements of Elizabethan drama

- Read, analyze, and discuss Shakespeare's plays

Standard 5:

- Reads and analyzes poetry

Standards 6, 7 All students will write descriptive essays and personal narratives. This is formal preparation for the long composition on MCAS. Additionally, instruction will focus on using the writing process and sharpening language and writing skills. Reading and writing will be linked through essays and open responses. Grammar, usage, and spelling will be taught and proper usage is expected.

Standard 6: Writes with focus, organization, and supporting details

- Summarize and restate key ideas
- Write poems using poetic techniques
- Revise work to improve organization and the precision of vocabulary
- Improve word choice by using dictionaries and thesauruses
- Use transitions and connections between ideas and chunks of information
- Organize ideas into coherent essays or reports with a thesis statement, transition

- sentences to link paragraphs, and a conclusion
- Write reports that include quotations and a bibliography

Standard 9: Uses standard English conventions in writing, revising and editing

- Study and discuss word structure, meaning, usage and origins
- Apply identified grammar competencies in speaking, writing and editing
- Identify simple, compound, and complex sentences
- Distinguish phrases from clauses
- Identify the eight parts of speech, their functions, and usage in sentences
- Identify and use phrases in sentences; eliminate sentence fragments and run-ons; correctly capitalize and punctuate
- Spell high frequency words correctly in all writing
- Employ grammar and usage rhetorically by combining, reordering and reducing sentences

Standard 10 Students will work on interdisciplinary units linking content knowledge with research and writing skills. A variety of presentation methods will be explored (i.e., Power Point, oral presentations, written reports, etc.)

Standard 10: Understands and applies research skills

- Apply steps for obtaining information from a variety of sources, organize and document sources, present research in a project or paper
- Differentiate between primary and secondary sources
- Differentiate between paraphrasing and using direct quotes in a report
- Use standard bibliographic format to document sources
- Use appropriate techniques for oral presentations
- Present an organized interpretation of a literary work