

Mendham Borough Public Schools  
Mendham, New Jersey

*Curriculum and Instruction*

Course of Study

**Language Arts: Grade 6**

**August 23, 2016**

**I. RATIONALE, DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE**

The Mendham Borough Schools seek to instill and cultivate a love of reading and writing; independent reading and writing for varied purposes, including individual genre and learning interests; and “readerly” and “writerly” lives in students’ school and personal worlds. In addition to the literary genres, young adolescents read and write to inquire, investigate and learn, with increasing attention to nonfiction content-area texts. Middle school students read with recognition of authorial purpose and strategies in the service of this purpose, and then write with specific strategies to satisfy a given purpose and prospective audience (readership).

Language arts literacy embraces the integrated development of reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing/media literacy skills in purposeful and meaningful contexts. Literacy skills develop within a continuum according to each student’s readiness.

The Teachers College sixth grade reading and writing workshops cultivate reading and writing within fiction and nonfiction genres for authentic and engaging purposes. The Teachers College model proceeds on three premises. First, students are readers and writers who develop distinctive reading and writing identities that include preferences, strengths and needs. Readers and writers engage reading and writing lives in the classroom and in their out-of-school worlds. Second, the fundamental goal of reading and writing is to develop a love of both interactions with text, ideas and the larger world. Third, readers and writers need tools and strategies to engage their craft purposefully and authentically. Teachers of reading and writing provide direct and explicit instruction in the development of these tools and strategies as meets readers’ and writers’ varying readiness levels.

**II. DISTRICT OBJECTIVES**

The district adopts the Anchor Standards set forth in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, as objectives for all students to meet by the end of Grade 8. Separate objectives for reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language, are as follows:

**Reading**

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

## **Writing**

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a

single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### **Speaking & Listening**

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

### **Language**

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

### III. ALIGNMENT TO STANDARDS

Language arts literacy development in sixth grade aligns with the following **New Jersey Student Learning Standards:**

#### Reading

- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RI.6.1)
- Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. (RI.6.2)
- Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes). (RI.6.3)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. (RI.6.4)
- Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas. (RI.6.5)
- Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text. (RI.6.6)
- Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue. (RI.6.7)
- Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not. (RI.6.8)
- Compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person). (RI.6.9)
- By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. (RI.6.10)
- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL.6.1)
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. (RL.6.2)
- Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution. (RL.6.3)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone. (RL.6.4)
- Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot. (RL.6.5)
- Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text. (RL.6.6)
- Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch. (RL.6.7)

- Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics. (RL.6.9)
- By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. (RL.6.10)

## **Writing**

- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (W.6.1)
  - Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.
  - Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
  - Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.
  - Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. (W.6.2)
  - Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
  - Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
  - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
  - Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. (W.6.3)
  - Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
  - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
  - Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
  - Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
  - Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.) (W.6.4)
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. (W.6.5)
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting. (W.6.6)

- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate. (W.6.7)
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources. (W.6.8)
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (W.6.9)
  - Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres [e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories] in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics”).
  - Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not”).
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.6.10)

### **Speaking & Listening**

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly. (SL.6.1)
  - Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
  - Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
  - Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
  - Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
- Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study. (SL.6.2)
- Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not. (SL.6.3)
- Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. (SL.6.4)
- Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information. (SL.6.5)
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.6.6)

### **Language**

- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.6.1)
  - Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).

- Use intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).
- Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.\*
- Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).\*
- Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.\*
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (L.6.2)
  - Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.\*
  - Spell correctly.
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. (L.6.3)
  - Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.\*
  - Maintain consistency in style and tone.\*
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. (L.6.4)
  - Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
  - Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., audience, auditory, audible).
  - Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
  - Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (L.6.5)
  - Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
  - Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.
  - Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., stingy, scrimping, economical, unwasteful, thrifty).
- Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (L.6.6)

#### **IV. CONTENT, SCOPE AND SEQUENCE, LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Grade level benchmarks in sixth grade Language Arts Literacy are built into the following units of study:

Unit 1: Launching the Reading and Writing Workshops
Unit 2: Realistic Short Fiction Reading Workshop
Unit 3: Realistic Short Fiction Writing Workshop
Unit 4: Social Issues Reading Workshop
Unit 5: Social Issues Writing Workshop

Unit 6: Personal/Persuasive Reading and Writing Workshops
Unit 7: Speculative Writing/Textual Response Reading and Writing Workshops
Unit 8: Poetry Reading and Writing Workshops
Unit 9: Author Study Reading Workshop; Reflection and Planning Summer Reading and Writing

## Unit 1: Launching the Reading and Writing Workshops

This unit “launches” the reading and writing workshops. Readers determine independent “just right” reading levels; enact expectations and routines in the reading workshop; and read with stamina and comprehension. Writers enact expectations and routines in the writing workshop; demonstrate their accumulated knowledge of the writing process and the qualities of good narrative writing; and use the writing process to produce “published” pieces. Students and teacher create a community of readers, writers and storytellers within the classroom.

In unit 1, readers and writers will understand that:

1. Routines and expectations in the reading and writing workshops support independent, partner and small group (“book club”) work; enable the development of text comprehension skills; and foster the recognition and cultivation of literacy interests, preferences and habits.
2. Stages of writing, writing “tools” and the craft of revision enhance the effectiveness of a writing piece; i.e., writer’s purpose in light of prospective readership.

In unit 1, readers and writers will be able to:

1. Enact routines and expectations in the reading and writing workshops;
2. Read and write with increasing focus and stamina by setting goals for independent work;
3. Select “just right” books;
4. Read with accuracy, fluency, comprehension, intonation, expression and phrasing that reflect text comprehension;
5. Enact partner reading (e.g., collaborative decision making) and accountable talk;
6. Recall texts with an emphasis on story elements (e.g., character, plot, setting);
7. Monitor for sense in reading;
8. Apply reading strategies to construct meaning; e.g., reading with stamina and engagement; interpreting unfamiliar words in context; retelling; envisioning; synthesizing story elements; inferring about character and story; empathizing with characters; determining importance; questioning; interpreting (e.g., theme, author’s purpose, main idea); predicting; revising meaning during reading; interpreting unfamiliar words in context;
9. Interpret the author’s thematic meaning; e.g., “What is this story really about?” (bumper sticker);
10. Gather, nurture and draft the “seeds” of writing in the writer’s notebook;
11. Navigate the stages of the writing process: gathering entries, choosing a “seed”, nurturing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing;
12. Develop a sense of story and how to share and respond to stories;
13. Identify tools that enhance the effectiveness of narrative writing (e.g., dialogue, internal and external plot events, setting, “loaded” word choice to set mood and tone);
14. Explore different strategies of revision; e.g., perspectives (i.e., writing partner’s feedback) through which to rewrite a given story, novel endings, novel beginnings, modeling after mentor texts.

## **Unit 2: Realistic Short Fiction Reading Workshop**

This unit introduces readers to the distinctive elements of realistic short fiction and provides mentor texts to inform their writing of realistic short fiction in unit 3.

In unit 2, readers will understand that:

1. Distinctive elements of realistic short fiction define the genre and distinguish it from the story genre.
2. The crux of realistic short fiction is a real-life character who enacts a plausible solution in response to an authentic problem.

In unit 2, readers will be able to:

1. Identify the elements of story (e.g., setting, character, plot, problem, resolution);
2. Apply the elements of story to realistic short fiction and identify distinctive elements of this genre;
3. Activate relevant prior knowledge regarding the genre of realistic short fiction; note new learning about the genre while reading mentor texts; and use this new learning to pose questions about the genre and a given text;
4. Analyze an author's use of the distinctive elements of the genre to convey meaning (realistic characters' external and internal traits; characters' motivations and struggles; author's construction of realistic setting, action and dialogue; inner thinking; development of the story over time; main character's story climax; strong ending that provides a realistic and reasonable solution);
5. Apply reading strategies to construct meaning; e.g., reading with stamina and engagement; interpreting unfamiliar words in context; retelling; envisioning; synthesizing story elements; inferring about character and story; empathizing with characters; determining importance; questioning; interpreting (e.g., theme, author's purpose, main idea); predicting; revising meaning during reading;
6. Analyze a text's plotline;
7. Recognize what writers of realistic short fiction do well (e.g., writing a "lead", writing a powerful ending, real-life characters);
8. Analyze the main character's internal struggles vs. external conflict and recognize that problems prompt solutions and that characters change as a result;
9. Recognize that movement through time may play a large role in the degree of change that a particular character may reasonably experience;
10. Interpret the author's thematic meaning (i.e., "What is this story really about?") and articulate it concisely (e.g., bumper sticker);
11. Analyze the multiple strategies or devices used by an author to convey content, mood, tone and feelings of the writing.

## **Unit 3: Realistic Short Fiction Writing Workshop**

In this unit, writers continue to develop the craft of realistic short fiction. They incorporate the elements of story as they distinctively define this genre, and return to mentor texts studied in unit 2 for guidance regarding specific challenges encountered in their own writing.

In unit 3, writers will understand that:

1. They can study mentor texts to analyze the author’s use of distinctive elements of the genre to convey meaning, and that they can import these lessons into their own writing.
2. The foundational work of the realistic fiction writer is to craft a believable character who confronts an authentic problem and enacts a plausible solution.

In unit 3, writers will be able to:

1. Gather “seeds” for realistic short fiction by rereading their notebooks and thinking about true stories in their own lives;
2. Nurture the “seed” of a true story by fictionalizing one or more of its story elements;
3. Nurture the “seed” from their notebooks by sketching the pace of the story’s progression through time on a story map;
4. Develop realistic characters (i.e., external and internal traits) and one or more possible plotlines using a “story mountain” graphic organizer;
5. Develop characters’ motivations and struggles, and create scenes that illustrate these (“show, don’t tell”);
6. Plan and write scenes that are similar to “small moments”, in which characters become realistic through actions and dialogue (“show, don’t tell”);
7. Vividly imagine the drama (problem, solution) of the plot to enable the reader to visualize the story;
8. “Stay in the scene” to write realistic setting, action and dialogue;
9. Slow the climax of the story so that the reader experiences the high point empathically with the main character;
10. Study mentor texts to recognize what other writers of realistic short fiction do well (e.g., writing a “lead”, writing a powerful ending, “fleshing out” characters);
11. Apply crafts to enrich the story (e.g., inner thinking, adding voice to characters, using adjectives and adverbs to further modify nouns and other adjectives, foreshadowing, flashback);
12. Write strong endings that are realistic and provide a reasonable solution to the character’s story (problem);
13. Recognize that problems prompt solutions and that characters change as a result, and that movement through time may play a large role in the degree of change that a particular character may reasonably experience;
14. Study mentor texts for guidance with a specific writing challenge;
15. Revise (“re-see”) by rereading with a lens; e.g., “What is this story really about? Have I brought out that deeper story? Have I made my characters vulnerable or flesh-and-blood enough to seem human?”;
16. Edit by rereading with a lens (“listening ear”) to convey content, mood, tone and feelings of the writing.

#### **Unit 4: Social Issues Reading Workshop**

Young adolescents develop a growing awareness of and interest in the larger world. In this unit, readers explore the social, political and ethical issues that encircle their personal experience, including themes of prejudice and intolerance. Readers study the Holocaust by learning about life in a concentration camp.

In unit 4, readers will understand that:

1. They actively engage the social, political and ethical issues that encircle their personal experience.
2. They respond to text affectively and empathize with perspectives and experiences that are not their own.

In unit 4, readers will be able to:

1. Define a “social issue” as one that affects many people, and one in which the group to which a person belongs becomes a defining force without consent, and causes, in many cases, a power imbalance, a limiting or expanding of people’s opportunities and freedoms, or unjust and unfair actions;
2. Observe and reflect upon the social, political and ethical issues that encircle their personal experience in the reader’s notebook and double-entry reading log;
3. Use the reader’s notebook to record insights gained regarding their understanding of intolerance and prejudice;
4. Activate relevant prior knowledge regarding the genre of social issues; note new learning about the genre while reading mentor texts; and use this new learning to pose questions about the genre and a given text;
5. Recognize important or provocative ideas within and across texts by using the double-entry reading log and “post-it” notes;
6. Use various accountable talk moves or prompts to sustain conversation in which readers expand on one another’s ideas within and across texts;
7. Empathize with perspectives that are not their own;
8. Respond to text affectively;
9. Apply reading strategies to construct meaning; e.g., reading with stamina and engagement; retelling; envisioning; synthesizing story elements; inferring about character, story and information; empathizing with characters; determining importance; questioning; interpreting (e.g., theme, author’s purpose, main idea); predicting; revising meaning during reading; interpreting unfamiliar words in context.

## **Unit 5: Social Issues Writing Workshop**

In unit 4, readers encountered and reflected on a variety of social issues, including but not limited to animal rights, environmental concerns, bullying and peer pressure. In the companion writing workshop unit, writers confront an issue of personal significance in a genre that provides an appropriate medium for their intended message; e.g., nonfiction, persuasion, realistic short fiction, poetry.

In unit 5, writers will understand that:

1. They actively engage the social, political and ethical issues that encircle their personal experience.
2. They choose a writing genre to provide an effective medium to convey their intended message.

In unit 5, writers will be able to:

1. Observe and reflect upon the social, political and ethical issues that encircle their personal experience in the reader's notebook and double-entry reading log;
2. Gather "seeds" for social issues writing by rereading their notebooks, recognizing social issues "stories" in their own lives, and reflecting on the texts studied in unit 4;
3. Nurture the "seed" of a social issues piece by probing their own intellectual and affective responses to a specific observation or insight;
4. Plan the content of their writing and choose an appropriate genre as the vehicle of this writing;
5. Develop and articulate a clear perspective or point of view;
6. Study mentor texts for guidance with a specific writing challenge;
7. Revise ("re-see") by rereading with a lens; e.g., "What is this writing really about? Do I articulate a clear and compelling perspective that evokes the reader's empathy?";
8. Edit by rereading with a lens ("listening ear") to convey content, mood, tone and feelings of the writing.

## **Unit 6: Personal/Persuasive Reading and Writing Workshops**

Readers study the features of the persuasive genre and enact the strategies of persuasive writing within personally meaningful contexts and in preparation for NJASK. Students will articulate clear and convincing claims; provide compelling evidence to support each claim; and anticipate and respond to counter-arguments.

In unit 6, readers and writers understand that:

1. They actively engage the social, political and ethical controversies that encircle their personal experience.
2. The persuasive writer adopts the prospective reader's perspective in crafting convincing claims and compelling evidence, and in anticipating plausible counter-arguments.

In unit 6, readers and writers will be able to:

1. Recognize and reflect on a controversial topic that is personally meaningful;
2. Apply reading strategies to construct meaning; e.g., reading with stamina and engagement; retelling; envisioning; synthesizing elements of the genre; inferring; empathizing with the writer's stance; determining importance; questioning; interpreting (e.g., theme, author's purpose, main idea); predicting; revising meaning during reading; interpreting unfamiliar words in context;
3. Identify distinctive elements of the genre of persuasion;
4. Use and develop graphic organizers to analyze an author's use of claims/arguments, evidence and counter-arguments;

5. Analyze the effectiveness with which an author frames claims/arguments, evidence and counter-arguments in consideration of a given audience;
6. Evaluate the strength of an author’s claims/arguments, evidence and counter-arguments *per se* and from the perspective of a given audience (readership);
7. Analyze the devices with which an author cultivates a persuasive voice;
8. Use and develop graphic organizers to organize claims/arguments, evidence and counter-arguments;
9. Frame claims/arguments, evidence and counter-arguments from the perspective of a given audience (readership);
10. Evaluate the strength of claims/arguments, evidence and counter-arguments *per se* and from the perspective of a given audience (readership);
11. Cultivate a persuasive voice.

### **Unit 7: Speculative Writing/Textual Response Reading and Writing Workshops**

Readers and writers analyze speculative text to understand features of the genre and enact strategies for speculative writing. Writers develop strategies to respond to texts.

In unit 7, readers and writers will understand that:

1. They read and write to demonstrate and synthesize the skills that they have been developing all year.
2. Specific strategies will help them read and write effectively.

In unit 7, readers and writers will be able to:

1. Self-monitor comprehension by asking, “Does this make sense?”;
2. Self-monitor their use of time in a timed task;
3. Identify the genre (fantasy, realistic fiction, science fiction, mystery, historical fiction) of a given text;
4. Determine the theme or main idea by asking, “What is this [narrative story or nonfiction text] mainly about?”;
5. Identify supporting details for the main idea in a narrative story by paying attention to story elements (e.g., character, setting, plot);
6. Identify the supporting details and main idea in a narrative story by paying attention to character (i.e., setting, plot, conflict and resolution) and author’s craft in structure (i.e., foreshadowing, flashback, theme) and language choice (i.e., descriptive detail, “setting the scene”);

7. Identify supporting details (i.e., evidence) for the main idea (“big ideas”) in nonfiction text by paying attention to structure, headings, textual features (e.g., bold, italics, charts, graphs, photographs) and topic sentences (paragraphs) to locate and refer to details;
8. Read the questions before reading the passage to be alert to key portions of the text;
9. Reread and use key words to locate the part of the text to which a question directly refers;
10. Focus on the main character in a narrative story with attention to motivation and sequence of actions/events;
11. Attend to the characters and their inter-relationships in a narrative story;
12. Apply context clues to interpret new words and difficult text in nonfiction text;
13. Apply reading strategies to construct meaning; e.g., reading with stamina and engagement; retelling; envisioning; synthesizing story elements; inferring about character, story and information; empathizing with characters; determining importance; questioning; interpreting (e.g., theme, author’s purpose, main idea); predicting; revising meaning during reading; interpreting unfamiliar words in context;
14. Incorporate evidence from the text to answer questions;
15. Connect their personal opinion to the author’s text and write with their own opinion about the story in mind;
16. Read all parts of the question before answering;
17. Plan their answers using graphic organizers;
18. Provide evidence/ details from the text to support their answers;
19. Apply sequencing and transitional words and phrases to answer questions effectively;
20. Reread their answers to check for clarity and that all parts of the question are answered.

### **Unit 8: Poetry Reading and Writing Workshops**

This unit introduces readers and writers to the genre of poetry. They read and study mentor texts to inform their own poetry.

In unit 8, reader and writers will understand that:

1. They can study mentor authors and exemplar poems to analyze the author’s use of distinctive elements of the genre to convey meaning, and that they can import these lessons into their own writing.
2. The poet’s work is to convey a message (i.e., “big idea”) through the distinctive elements of the genre (i.e., forms, sound and language patterns, feelings, symbols, words, images, figurative language, economy of language, punctuation, repetition).

In unit 8, readers and writers will be able to:

1. Notice how poems look (form); e.g., shape, textual features;
2. Notice with their “listening ear” how poetry sounds;
3. Identify distinctive elements of the poetry genre (i.e., forms, sound and language patterns, feelings, symbols, words, images, figurative language, economy of language, punctuation, repetition);
4. Identify line breaks in a poem as a device to create mood and tension;
5. Analyze the poet’s use of punctuation to convey meaning (e.g., emotion);
6. Analyze the poet’s use of the distinctive elements of the genre to convey meaning;
7. Apply reading strategies to construct meaning; e.g., reading with stamina and engagement; retelling; envisioning; synthesizing elements of the genre; inferring the author’s message;

empathizing with the author’s stance; determining importance; questioning; interpreting (e.g., theme, author’s purpose, main idea); revising meaning during reading; interpreting unfamiliar words in context;

8. Self-monitor comprehension by asking, “Does this make sense?”;
9. Apply their physical senses, hearts, minds and imaginations to notice the details of their lives and the world around them in “fresh” ways (“seeing with poets’ eyes”);
10. Gather “seeds” for writing poetry by recording experiences (e.g., #9), rereading their notebooks and rereading previous writing;
11. Nurture a poetry “seed” by noting small details about big topics;
12. Nurture a poetry “seed” by using strong feelings to develop a poem;
13. Convey ideas and emotions with vivid images (“show, not tell”);
14. Sketch the layout of their poems to achieve an intended purpose;
15. Use line breaks to shape the sound of a poem.

## **Unit 9: Author Study Reading Workshop; Reflection and Planning Summer Reading and Writing**

In this unit, readers approach the study of an author like they have studied genre: content, distinctive elements, craft. Students reflect on their reading and writing during the year, and plan how to live their “readerly” and “writerly” lives during the summer.

In unit 9, readers and writers will understand that:

1. The personal and societal circumstances (context) of an author’s writing inform its meaning.
2. They can continue to cultivate their “readerly” and “writerly” lives (i.e., interests, habits, preferences) during the summer.

In unit 9, readers and writers will be able to:

1. Analyze how the context (e.g., time, place, life story) of an author’s writing shapes its meaning (e.g., themes);
2. Read an author’s texts and ask, “How does this book fit with what we know about the author?” “How does this book, in its content or craft, depart from our understanding of this author?”;
3. Analyze several of the author’s texts to “look closely and think deeply” about how the author writes (e.g., use of story elements and genre devices to convey meaning);
4. Analyze book club texts to notice what this writer does well (e.g., writing a “lead”, developing a plotline, “fleshing out” characters);
5. Consult book club texts for one or more strategies regarding a specific writing challenge encountered in their writing year;
6. Study book club texts with a “listening ear” to understand how the author conveys content, mood, tone and feelings of the writing;
7. Compare and contrast two or more of the author’s texts regarding one or more of the elements of author study (cf. #1-6);
8. Reflect on their reading and writing lives in sixth grade: read alouds, genre, partner work, artifacts from reading work (i.e., post-its, notebook), artifacts from writing work (i.e., notebook, drafts, published pieces), habits and preferences;
9. Reflect in writing and in partner talk on their achievements and difficulties as readers and writers:

- What was hard about reading/writing this year?
- What do I feel good about as a reader/writer?
- What is still hard for me as a reader/writer?
- What do I still want to learn as a reader/writer?
- What can I go out and do in the world as a reader/writer?

10. Plan summer reading and writing as follows:

- What's my goal?
- What materials will I need?
- How would I share this work with others?
- How much time do I have?
- How much can I realistically do each day?
- How will I know when I'm finished?
- What other projects do I want to do?

## V. INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

The reading and writing workshops incorporate a variety of instructional techniques to meet the continuum of learners' interests, learning profiles and readiness levels. Differentiation is the commitment and mechanism through which the developmental needs of a range of readiness levels are met. Differentiated instruction is accomplished through pre-assessment and ongoing formative assessment that inform independent work, the small group strategy lesson and the individual conference. Differentiation in content, product and/or process addresses the needs of exceptionally able students, and scaffolding of varying degree is provided to support less ready students in meeting worthy and appropriately rigorous learning outcomes. Instructional objectives, strategies and materials emphasize relevance, authenticity, and student-centered learning.

Instructional techniques in the reading workshop include the following:

- Mini-lessons (connection, teaching point, modeling, active student engagement, link to independent work)
- Independent reading
- Partnership and book club talk (including retelling and accountable talk)
- Whole class sharing
- Read aloud with teacher modeling/thinking aloud
- Read aloud with accountable talk (“turn and talk”, “stop and jot”)
- Small group strategy lesson
- Individual reading conference
- Using a double-entry reading log
- Using a reading notebook

- Writing about reading (cognitive and affective reader’s response)
- Reading of short text and reader’s response (“quick read”)

Instructional techniques in the writing workshop include the following:

- Mini-lessons (connection, teaching point, modeling, active student engagement, link to independent work)
- Independent writing
- Mid-workshop interruption
- Partnership talk
- Whole class sharing
- Read aloud with teacher modeling/thinking aloud
- Read aloud with accountable talk (“turn and talk”, “stop and jot”)
- Small group strategy lesson
- Individual writing conference
- Using a writing folder
- Written prompt response (“quick write”)

## VI. ASSESSMENT

Assessment in the reading workshop includes **interim/formative assessments of the reading life, including performance assessment:**

- Periodic teacher-student reading conferences to assess development of unit skills (performance assessment of fluency, thinking during reading, independent application of decoding and comprehension problem-solving skills)
- Periodic review of the reading log (“think marks”) to assess developing stamina (i.e., length of independent reading time, number of pages read, independent application of reading strategies)
- Teachers’ observation of students’ independent reading behavior (i.e., stamina for focused reading, decoding and comprehension problem-solving skills)
- Teachers’ observation of students’ partnership and book club reading (i.e., retelling, accountable talk)
- Periodic completion and review of timed NJASK-type reading prompts and tasks

Assessment in the reading workshop includes **summative assessments of the reading life, including performance assessment:**

- Teachers College running record assessment to identify students’ baseline and maturing independent reading levels

- End-of-unit “celebrations” in which students demonstrate integrated use of the reading strategies (i.e., sensemaking and comprehension problem solving) taught in the unit

Assessment in the writing workshop includes **interim/formative assessments of the writing life, including performance assessment:**

- Draft of each student’s topic/genre piece (maintained in the writing folder)
- Periodic teacher-student writing conferences to assess development of unit skills (performance assessment of planning and independent application of writing and problem solving strategies)
- Periodic review of the writing folder to assess developing stamina (i.e., number of pieces and “staying with” a piece [revision, editing])
- Teachers’ observation of students’ independent writing behavior (i.e., stamina for focused writing, encoding, content problem-solving skills, independent application of writing strategies)
- Teachers’ observation of students’ partnership writing (i.e., questioning, suggestions for revision and editing)
- Students’ use of the New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric to self-assess content and organization, usage, sentence construction and mechanics
- Periodic completion and review of timed NJASK-type writing prompts and tasks

Assessment in the writing workshop includes **summative assessments of the writing life, including performance assessment:**

- Baseline (portfolio, summer writing) writing assessment to identify students’ current levels of readiness with regard to content and organization, usage, sentence construction and mechanics (New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring rubric criteria)
- End-of-unit “celebrations” in which students “publish” the unit’s topic/genre piece
- Students’ year-end review of the writing folder to self-assess growth in the writing life
- Teacher’s year-end review of the writing folder to assess growth in the writing life