

PHILOSOPHY FOR THE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

The limits of man's language are the limits of his world. Language is a human invention through which man reveals his behavior. Because the language is the unifying ingredient in the English curriculum, each student should acquire a perspective of and an appreciation for language.

Language is a medium through which inductive learning takes place. A student learns and retains information and rules best when there is an element of self-discovery and self-generation in the thought process.

GOALS OF LANGUAGE STUDY

The student should gain a basic understanding of the concepts in the curriculum:

Language is symbolic.

Language is a system.

Language is speech.

Language has a traceable history and is constantly changing.

Language operates on various levels.

Language concepts are acquired gradually and must be reviewed and reinforced. Language instruction should be functional and applicable to the needs of the student, with emphasis on oral participation for the less able student.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

The student at the junior and senior high school needs practice in oral composition. Because modern methods of communication rely heavily on the spoken word, it is imperative that each student learns to listen to the language and to speak the language well.

Listening techniques must be taught. Each student should be involved in situations which motivate him to listen purposefully.

USAGE

The student should be aware of the levels of usage and use them appropriately. Because standard English has economic and social advantages the student should become familiar with and have a use of the dialect which has the widespread approval of people in positions of influence and leadership. He should also know that as the expectations of society change, so will usage.

GRAMMAR

The student should be familiar with the phonology, syntax, and semantics of our language. The study of grammar should make the student aware of the choices open to him in developing sentence variety, conciseness, and effectiveness of expression.

VOCABULARY AND SPELLING

The student should learn how words undergo changes in meaning and should recognize the power of words and use them forcefully. For vocabulary growth and spelling the student should study the ways by which English words are made. He should learn spelling through morphology and phonology.

MECHANICS

Conventions of mechanics should be taught in relationship to composition. Emphasis should be on the clarification that mechanics gives to sentence meaning rather than on mere rule learning.

PHILOSOPHY FOR THE LITERATURE CURRICULUM

Growth in literary skills is sequential and cumulative. Understanding of subject matter precedes sensitivity to form and style; analytical skill aids in developing discrimination in taste. Every expanding skill rests on a firm basis of comprehension and application of previous learning.

A well-planned program of literature consists of a judicious balance between writings of universally acknowledged merit and contemporary writings of literary merit (including student work) that offer insights into current problems and vital issues.

Literature helps an individual to mature by involving him in vicarious experiences of life. It brings out personal potentialities and leads him toward his full status as a human being.

The study of literature encompasses the humanistic dimension, genre, and multiple levels of meaning. The humanistic dimension deals with ideas that have engrossed men over the centuries: the relationship of man to himself, of man to his fellow man, of man to nature and environment, and of man to a supreme being. Genre contributes meaning to the work or controls the meaning of the work in special ways, so that the consideration of form in general and of forms in particular becomes a necessary part of the curriculum in literature. Meaning exists in a literary work on multiple levels, but no one meaning can be totally isolated from the other levels within a work.

GOALS

Every student should understand and appreciate literature for its humanistic values. He should develop, inductively, an awareness of his relationship to the spectrum of human experience, be familiar with the various genre, and recognize various levels of meaning.

ASPECTS OF LITERATURE

I. The Humanistic Dimension of Literature

The serious writer is concerned with the relationship of man to himself, to his fellow man, to nature and his environment, and to a supreme being. Each of these areas contributes to and interacts with the others to influence the character, desires, and aspirations of man. Separation of the areas simplifies analysis, promotes understanding, and facilitates teaching. It is essential to realize the inseparability of the four aspects of man's environment.

A. Man's relationship to himself

One of the most important relationships developed by the author involves man's awareness of himself - his strengths and his weaknesses, his triumphs and his failures, his actions and his inactions. How does

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMPOSITION:
DESCRIPTIVE

SENSORY IMAGERY
SIGHT AND SOUND

SKILL:

AIMS: To understand that a description is a word picture
To become more observant of things around one
To use sensory imagery to create an effective word picture
To use precise words of sight and sound
To use comparison to help create a clearer picture

EMPHASIS: Descriptive writing receives intensive treatment in the eighth grade. Review time order done in seventh grade. Intensive work should be done on spatial order and consistent point of view.

INSTRUCTIONAL
MATERIALS:

SRA Lab, Lessons 1 and 2
Descriptive poetry section from Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle
The Roberts English Series 8, "The Fish" (pp. 1-4)
Composition: Models and Exercises 8, Lessons 9, 10, 11, 12
Film: Rainshower
Filmstrips: Fresh Perspectives in Composition, "Stop Look and Start Seeing," "Developing Concrete Details" Eyegate
Filmstrip: "To See - Discovery 1" Media Plus, Inc.
Film: The Adventures of *, rental

SUGGESTIONS: Prepare students for descriptive writing by using materials and exercises which will stress observation.

Correlate descriptive poetry with this section on descriptive writing. Note special words and comparisons used. Do some writing of descriptive poetry. (See literature section, poetry unit.)

After discussion of some models using good sight and sound words, a descriptive paragraph using details of sight and sound should be written. Possible assignments:

1. SRA Notebook, pp. 18-19
2. Composition: Models and Exercises 8, p. 8 (1), p. 80 (2,3)
3. Without using the words below, write a word picture that gives an impression of one of the following:

a cold day
a lonely spot
a dark night
a busy street corner

a bad storm
a noisy crowd of people
an untidy room
a severe pain

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMPOSITION:
DESCRIPTIVE

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

SKILL:

AIMS: To create a dominant impression in describing a person

EMPHASIS: Descriptive writing receives intensive treatment in the eighth grade.

INSTRUCTIONAL
MATERIALS:

SRA Lab, Lessons 5 and 6
Composition: Models and Exercises 8 (pp. 3(1), 75(33), 91(39)
English 8, Chapter 12 (Addison Wesley)
Adventures for Readers, Book Two, "Legend of Sleepy Hollow"
description of Ichabod Crane. Character descriptions in other
literature selections might also be used.

SUGGESTIONS: After the three aspects of character description have been covered individually, write a description of a person revealing more than just physical appearance and leaving a dominant impression. Use comparison when helpful.

Possible assignments:

SRA Notebook, pp. 35-36

Composition: Models and Exercises 8, pp. 5, 80
English 8, p. 194

LANGUAGE

CONCEPT: Language is made up of social, professional, and regional dialects which operate on various levels.

AIMS: To understand and use appropriately the various levels of language

EMPHASIS: Teaching of the standard dialect is done on all levels. The following items are taught in seventh grade and should be reinforced during eighth grade:

1. Subject-verb agreement
2. Pronoun usage (subject, object, after "be")
3. Troublesome verbs (such as lie, lay)
4. Modifiers (comparison, good and well)
5. Double negatives

Except for reinforcement of usage rules of the standard dialect, the emphasis will be on recognition of dialect as it may appear in literature taught in eighth grade.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

English 8, Chapter 11, also pp. 7-9
Macmillan English Series 8 (pp. 11-14, 302-305, 271-273, 276-279, 306-307, 334, 328-332)
The English Language 8 (pp. 52-55, 330-341, 278-284, 289-297, 358-368)

SUGGESTIONS: The sources give ideas for work on the levels of language and usage rules.

See "Language is speech" for related material.

Relate usage rules to student speaking and composition.

Adventures for Readers, Book Two (pp. 82-83, 189-193, 285-306, 309-340, 375-387)
A Curriculum for English: God and Man
Narratives, Part III, Part IV
How Did It Begin? (paperback)
English 8, Chapters 4 and 9 (Addison-Wesley)
"American Folklore," reprint from Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia

SUGGESTIONS: Note activities section after each unit in Lore of Our Land.

The Addison-Wesley text, pages 125-138, may be used for discussion on the origin of myths, tales, and heroes. Composition ideas are also given.

Compare three creation stories: the Hebrew version from Genesis; "The Creation," by James Weldon Johnson; and an Indian version. Refer to creation stories from Norse, Roman, and Greek mythology read in seventh grade.

The Addison-Wesley text, pages 58-67, may be used for a discussion of how legends originate about real historical characters, such as the story of George Washington and the cherry tree.

Students may keep charts on any of the five areas of folklore, filling in material on stories discussed in class and having space for outside assignment. Sample chart for folk heroes:

Title of Story	Hero/Heroine Main Character	Occupation	Outstanding Qualities or Achievements

Crossword puzzles, such as "An American Song Bag" and "Folklore Heroes, Heroines, and Critters," found in a TAB crossword book, might be used for variety.

In discussion of exaggeration, students may be asked to choose comparisons which form the greatest hyperboles and try to "top" some hyperboles they are given. Example: He was so tired he had to lean against the building to sneeze.

These are characteristics of a "standard" Western that might be used in the discussion of Western stories:

1. Most Westerns have a good guy and a bad guy.
2. The good guy is usually good-looking, smooth-spoken, neatly dressed, skillful with a gun, shy with women, etc. He may be a stranger or a lawman.
3. The bad guy or "heavy" is usually without the winning traits of the good guy. He is usually dishonest, tricky, a bully, etc.
4. Often the conflict is between the bad guy and the honest

SUGGESTIONS: The one-act play may be included with the short story for discussion of characterization

Relate the short story to the narrative poem.

Create the awareness that the short story is an American invention.

Use the words found in this area for vocabulary study.

Use the character description found in the short stories for background for descriptive writing dealing with people.

Read the sequel to "The Lady or the Tiger?" entitled "The Discourager of Hesitancy" after having students write an ending for the former.

Note "Suggestions for Composition" after selections in Literature II.

Have the students learn the new short story terms:
 surprise ending as in "After Twenty Years"
 flashback as in "Man Without a Country"
 theme as in "Man Without a Country"
 foreshadowing as in "The Landlady" or "After Twenty Years"

Have students compare the ways of identifying characters in real life:

1. Name
2. Relationships
3. Appearance
4. Character traits
5. Other categories

Ways of identifying characters in literature:

1. Description of appearance
2. Description of movement
3. Description of actions
4. What the character says
5. Details that give his manner of speaking
6. Other student suggestions