



F.E. Peacock Middle School

Eighth Grade

Language Arts & Reading

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Resources: *The Language of Literature, The Writer's Choice, Scott-Foresman; SpellingConnections, Zaner-Bloser*

LANGUAGE ARTS:

Understand and apply proper grammar, mechanics, and usage.
Strengthen writing skills through State Frameworks and 6+1 Traits.
Sharpen research skills through papers and special projects.
Further speaking and listening skills through discussions, speeches, debate, and drama.
Improve study habits and test-taking skills through learning reading and study strategies.

First Semester (Skill focus)

Language Arts

Spelling
Adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, verbs
Sentence structures for improved writing

Speech

Group discussion
Persuasive and Narrative
(storytelling) individual speeches

Reading

All reading aligned with Illinois State Frameworks
Literary terms; figurative language
Novels: *The Outsiders*, and *Nothing but the Truth* (reading, vocabulary, extended literature response, and literary skills)
Outside reading, *Accelerated Reader*, active reading, and in-class reading skill work
Diagnosis of need for skill direct instruction and/or review
Poetry

Writing

Personal assessment of current writing skills; addressing skill gaps and setting improvement goals
In-depth skill-level work writing paragraphs and different types of responses to reading utilizing literary frameworks to support the ISAT Extended Response
Extending paragraph work to full essays
Cross-curricular work with 6+1 Traits

Research

Online and Media Center research skills and procedures to support cross-curricular research projects

Second Semester (Practical application of skills)

Language Arts

Spelling continues
Verbs (tense, number, voice, agreement, conjugation)
Punctuation and sentence structure

ISAT Prep

Understanding and applying SCQR to reading selections for increased reading
Using knowledge of frameworks to thoroughly respond to extended reading selections

Writing

Further development of skills and writing style for EVERYONE at each person's level
In-depth skill-level work writing essays and extended responses to reading within literary frameworks
Continued cross-curricular work with 6+1 Traits and research skills

Speech

Persuasive and Narrative (storytelling) individual speeches continue
Oral presentations with *PowerPoint* presentations

Reading

All reading aligned with Illinois State Frameworks
Outside reading utilizes *Accelerated Reader*
Homelessness & Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome: *December Stillness* (reading, vocabulary, literature response, and literary skills). Novel: *December Stillness*
Research on Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome or homelessness using a web-quest; create a *PowerPoint* presentation to report.

Amusement Park

Research, plan, and design a theme park using *Roller Coaster Tycoon II*.
Devise PR plan for marketing the park and present to class in a *PowerPoint* presentation. Design a brochure to accompany the presentation using *Publisher*.

Language Arts Grade Breakdown

25% Common Time
40% Large projects and papers
15% Spelling
10% Homework
10% In-class work and participation
**All percentages subject to change based on quarterly assignments.

COMMON TIME

This class is an interdisciplinary extension of Language Arts. All core 8th grade teachers follow a common plan developed from the State Reading and Math Frameworks. Common Time grades are averaged into the Language Arts grade. There will also be a reading class for students who could benefit from special instruction based on their test scores.

First Semester

(Skill Focus)

State Reading & Math Frameworks
Research Unit, Invention Convention
Horror vs. Terror (Narrative voice)

Second Semester

(Practical Application of Skills)

State Reading & Math Frameworks
ISAT test preparation
Holocaust

On Thursdays, students are required to bring an independent reading book on the *Accelerated Reader* (AR) list to Common Time for Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). They will receive points for bringing a book and for reading. Students who choose not to come prepared to participate will lose points. Students will practice ISAT-style response in their “Connections” journal. Students will earn points with AR after reading a book and taking an online test.

Each quarter students rotate to another core discipline teacher to practice writing for a variety of audiences and evaluators. All Common Time teachers are experienced with teaching and evaluating reading and writing. A reading intervention class will be available.

PROCEDURES

SPELLING: Our spelling series gives students a tremendous opportunity each week to improve their vocabulary as well as their spelling. Students will have differentiated assignments. Some will be assigned the “Green Review,” the “Purple Challenge,” or “Champion Challenge” along with the regular list word assignments for each unit. On Thursdays spelling homework is DUE DURING CLASS. It is checked, and the week’s spelling test is given. Extra credit is optional, but must be earned by completing the extra credit assignment in each unit and spelling the words correctly on the test.

Students who excel in spelling may participate in a fun contest, CHASING FARAH and FRANCIS. Several years ago, Farah Ansari was a student who turned all her homework in on time and only missed *two* words (including challenge words) the *entire year*. Three years ago, Francis Jimenez equaled her achievement, so he joins her in the title of this little contest.

LATE WORK: “On time” credit is earned when the work is turned in on the assigned day in class. Any student who is absent will be allowed a grace period as stated in the school’s attendance/late work policy.

TAG ASSIGNMENTS: Pretests will be given for students to demonstrate their level of proficiency for all skill areas. As appropriate, alternative assignments will be given to compact the curriculum, and students will be given the opportunity to opt back into the regular class assignment as they feel the need. It is not appropriate for TAG students to have learning gaps. Additionally, when assignments are evaluated on a rubric, TAG students will be expected to achieve certain levels of accomplishment. For unit projects, students will be assigned deeper alternative assignments and be expected to demonstrate a more thorough understanding of the unit.