Teaching in Action
Grades 7–9

A Teaching Resource

NOVA SCOTIA
Education

Teaching in Action
Grades 7–9

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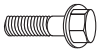
Contents

Introduction

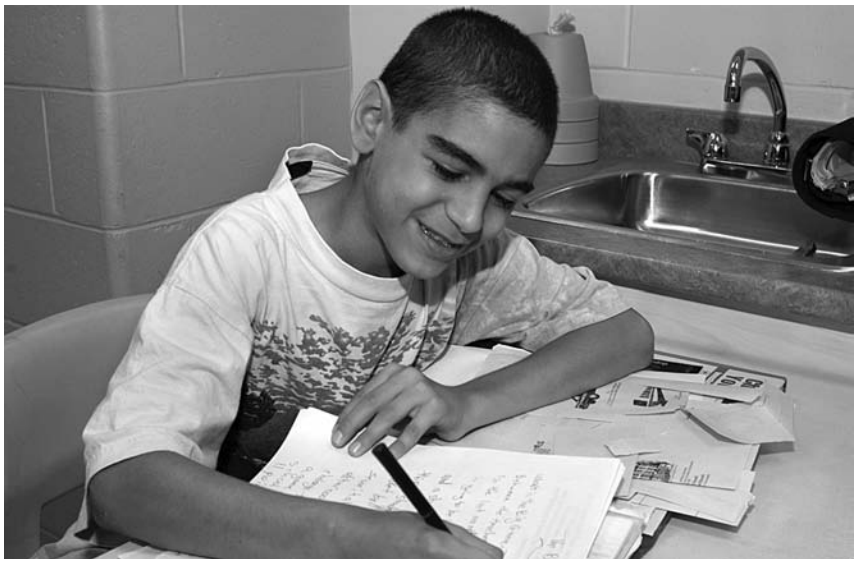
The intention of this resource is to provide further support to you, the teachers of English language arts at the grades 7–9 level. This is not a replacement for the English language arts curriculum guide but rather a complement to it. This document addresses the same curriculum outcomes but provides additional support from a practical perspective. Suggested learning experiences are intended to describe teaching in action. This resource is a combination of the how and the why.

The English language arts curriculum focusses on three strands, or areas, of language: **Speaking and Listening**, **Reading and Viewing**, and **Writing and Other Ways of Representing**. Throughout this resource, information and practical suggestions pertaining to all three areas will be provided.

The resource itself is divided into 10 main sections. First is the section that addresses the English language arts curriculum at the grades 7–9 levels. Second is a section that looks at **Program Design and Components**. In other words, how the program can be structured in order to support learners meeting various outcomes. The third section, **Assessment and Evaluation**, provides some background about assessment and evaluation, as well as many practical assessment strategies that teachers can use in their classrooms. The fourth, fifth, and sixth sections provide details for identifying characteristics of and organizing for Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing and Other Ways of Representing. The seventh section, **In Action, an Integrated Approach**, highlights seven different approaches to instruction and provides concrete examples of how they would actually work in a classroom. Each approach is brought to life through an inquiry unit that is relevant and appropriate to adolescent learners. The eighth section of the resource comprises the **Appendices**. Here you will find valuable forms and templates that have been described previously and can be used directly with students. The ninth section of the resource is the **Glossary**, where you will find definitions of terms that have been used in the document. Finally, the tenth section is a **Bibliography** that offers many references for your use.

You will also find helpful information in the margins. These brief but practical bits of information can be used immediately or to determine a direction for future exploration. **Vignettes** Vignettes are short narratives by teachers that describe or explain a personal experience in the classroom. These are often very practical and offer great ideas. **Nuts and Bolts**  refers to management issues and ideas. These

suggestions describe how to organize our classrooms in terms of the routines, the organization of space and resources, etc. This organization is what holds everything together. The **Check It Out** feature Check It Out offers a list of professional resources for locating additional detailed information about a topic. **Tech Tools** offers suggestions for technology integration. Finally, **Ideas for Differentiation** IDEAS provides suggestions about differentiating instruction to meet the needs of our diverse learners. This might mean differentiating to meet the needs of students who struggle, or providing a greater level of challenge for those who excel.



The English Language Arts Curriculum

The English language arts curriculum is divided into three strands, or areas: Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing and Other Ways of Representing. To articulate what students should know and be able to do in these areas, 10 general curriculum outcomes (GCOs) act as beacons to guide our instruction. These GCOs are consistent from grade primary to grade 12. Each has been carefully written to articulate a desired concept or skill. It is, however, difficult at times to share these outcomes with students and parents/guardians as they are complex in nature and use educational jargon. The following chart provides this information in a student- and parent-friendly version. Page references are to *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9*.

GCOs (General Curriculum Outcomes)

Strand	GCO *Students will be expected to*		What This Means	Where You Can Find More Information
Listening and Speaking	#1	speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences	learn about themselves and the world through speaking and listening	pp. 36–41
	#2	communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically	clearly communicate their ideas	pp. 42–47
	#3	interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose	be courteous and respectful toward others and accepting of their ideas	pp. 48–53
Reading and Viewing	#4	select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts	read with understanding a variety of texts (books, magazines, poetry, visuals, charts ...)	pp. 54–59
	#5	interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources and technologies	gather information from multiple texts; conduct research	pp. 60–65
	#6	respond personally to a range of texts	give personal opinions, connections, and reactions	pp. 66–71
	#7	respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre	recognize what texts say and how they are created	pp. 72–77

GCOs (General Curriculum Outcomes) *continued*

Strand	GCO *Students will be expected to*		What This Means	Where You Can Find More Information
Writing and Other Ways of Representing	#8	use writing and other forms of representation to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imaginations	write for a variety of reasons	pp. 78–83
	#9	create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes	create a wide range of texts	pp. 84–89
	#10	use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing and to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness	create texts that are clear and accurate; apply proper conventions (spelling, grammar, usage)	pp. 90–95

SCOs (Specific Curriculum Outcomes)

The general curriculum outcomes provide the big picture by identifying the areas of importance and an overall direction for instruction. At each grade level more specific direction is required and can be found in the specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs). Each of these outcomes is one step in a series of steps toward achieving success. These grade-specific outcomes articulate what students at that grade level should know and be able to do as a result of the instruction provided. Together SCOs provide a continuum of learning from grade primary through 12.

The charts on pages 6–12 capture the essence of the SCOs for grades 7, 8, and 9. Each of these learning outcomes is written in student-friendly, action-oriented language and focusses on what students should be demonstrating at a particular grade level. The outcomes are written so that teachers can easily use them as descriptors in a checklist, to guide observation, and to plan instruction. The GCOs at the top of these charts have been rewritten according to the "What This Means" language provided in the preceding chart.

In some cases, the learning outcomes are the same for more than one grade level. This is indicated by a box that spans two or, in some cases, three grade levels. In each of these situations, teachers at all grade levels should provide support and opportunity for students to explore the outcomes, with the intention that students will continue to develop and refine their skills.

It is important to note that the chart and the outcomes are cumulative. Students in grade 9 are expected to achieve the outcomes identified for grade 9, with the assumption that the preceding outcomes have also been met.

For actual wording of all SCOs see *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9,* pages 26–35.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">GCO 1: learns about him or herself and the world through speaking and listening</th></tr>
<tr><th>Grade 7</th><th>Grade 8</th><th>Grade 9</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">(1.1) invites others to participate in discussions and thinks about what other people have said during a discussion</td><td>(1.1) reinforces or develops new understanding based on what other people share during a discussion</td></tr>
<tr><td>(1.2) asks questions of others in order to clarify and get more information</td><td colspan="2">(1.2) asks questions of others in order to get more detailed information or to clarify or qualify what is being said; also questions the relevance, accuracy, and validity of what is being said</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">(1.3) answers questions asked by others in order to clarify or give more information</td></tr>
<tr><td>(1.4) states point of view and supports it with explanations, reasoning, or personal examples</td><td>(1.4) states point of view in a convincing way and supports it with personal examples as well as multiple pieces of evidence from an outside source</td><td>(1.4) explains and advocates point of view and supports it with evidence from various sources</td></tr>
<tr><td>(1.5) listens to others closely, and identifies the main ideas and details of their message</td><td>(1.5) listens to others closely and identifies the key points of their messages; evaluates the relevance of the common details</td><td>(1.5) listens critically and determines the effectiveness of the speaker based on the accuracy and appropriateness of the information he or she presents</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">GCO 2: clearly communicates his or her ideas</th></tr>
<tr><th>Grade 7</th><th>Grade 8</th><th>Grade 9</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">(2.1) contributes to small-group and whole-class discussions using a variety of strategies for effective talk</td></tr>
<tr><td>(2.2) realizes that how we communicate (vocabulary, sentence structure, speed of talking, and tone) is influenced by communication with others</td><td colspan="2">(2.2) uses appropriate vocabulary, sentence structure, speed of talking, and tone for different audiences and purposes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">(2.3) gives and follows instructions</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">(2.4) responds appropriately to instructions, directions, and questions</td><td>(2.4) responds to questions and follows directions of increasing complexity</td></tr>
<tr><td>(2.5) considers the effectiveness of a speaker based on his or her presentation</td><td>(2.5) evaluates the effectiveness of his or her own and others' talk based on the content and message</td><td>(2.5) evaluates the effectiveness of his or her own and others' spoken language in a variety of situations, recognizing the effects of significant verbal and non-verbal features</td></tr>
<tr><td>(2.6) identifies the verbal and non-verbal cues speakers use (repetition, volume, and eye contact)</td><td colspan="2">(2.6) understands how the content and message are affected by verbal and non-verbal language (e.g., repetition, volume, eye contact, summaries, examples, and body gestures)</td></tr>
</table>

GCO 3: is courteous and respectful toward others		
Grade 7	**Grade 8**	**Grade 9**
(3.1) demonstrates active listening and respect for others (makes eye contact, rephrases, makes clarifying comments, extends, refines, and summarizes what someone has said)		
(3.2) shows respect and sensitivity toward others and their differences when giving personal opinions		
(3.3) recognizes that our values, attitudes, bias, beliefs, and prejudices are reflected in our spoken language		
(3.4) understands how language is used to influence and manipulate		**(3.4)** demonstrates an awareness of the power of spoken language to influence and manipulate, to reveal ideas, values, and attitudes
(3.5) recognizes that different situations (interviews, speeches, debates, conversation) require different conventions (questioning techniques, persuasive talk, formal language)		**(3.5)** demonstrates an awareness that spoken language has different conventions in different situations and cultures; uses language appropriate to the situation

GCO 4: reads with understanding a variety of texts (books, magazines, poetry, visuals, charts ...)		
Grade 7	**Grade 8**	**Grade 9**
(4.1) selects texts that meet his or her needs and interests		
(4.2) reads a variety of texts including fiction and literature, non-fiction, and media texts from different provinces and countries		
(4.3) explains how authors use text features (bold print, visuals, headings, etc.) to create meaning		
(4.4) uses text features to construct meaning and understand the text		
(4.5) uses all the cuing systems (meaning, structure, visual information) to make meaning from increasingly complex text	**(4.5)** reads complex texts with greater fluency, confidence, and comprehension as a result of his or her understanding and use of various cuing systems	
(4.6) independently uses a range of reading strategies (predicting, questioning, inferring, etc.) to make meaning from complex print and media texts		
(4.7) identifies and discusses the kinds of strategies good readers use		
(4.8) recognizes and explains personal processes and strategies for reading various texts	**(4.8)** reflects on own reading and viewing processes and strategies in order to develop ability	

GCO 5: gathers information from multiple texts; conduct research		
Grade 7	**Grade 8**	**Grade 9**
(5.1) identifies relevant or interesting topics or questions for further study		
(5.2) recognizes the need for additional information to meet learning needs		
(5.3) locates information from a variety of sources (primary sources such as interviews, letters, and diaries; or secondary sources such as print, media, and web-based text)	**(5.3)** locates information from a variety of sources with greater speed, accuracy, and confidence (primary sources such as interviews, letters, and diaries; or secondary sources such as print, media, and web-based text)	
(5.4) develops approaches and strategies for conducting research (e.g., generating questions, narrowing topics, webbing, note-taking, drafting an outline, using graphic organizers)		**(5.4)** refines approaches and strategies for conducting research

GCO 6: gives personal opinions, connections, and reactions		
Grade 7	**Grade 8**	**Grade 9**
(6.1) gives initial response, orally or in writing, to what is read or viewed		**(6.1)** goes beyond initial response to more thoughtful interpretations of what is read or viewed by questioning, connecting, evaluating, and extending
(6.2) supports personal response to the issues, themes, and situations within texts by giving personal examples and citing evidence from the text		**(6.2)** supports personal response to the issues, themes, and situations within texts by giving personal examples and citing evidence from the text with increasing sophistication

GCO 7: recognizes what texts say and how they are created		
Grade 7	**Grade 8**	**Grade 9**
(7.1) recognizes that print and media texts can be biased		
(7.2) begins to question and think critically about the relevance and reliability of the content presented		**(7.2)** evaluates the relevance and reliability of the content presented
(7.3) recognizes the tools that authors use in their writing to achieve their purpose (e.g., organization of information, language choice, use of time, imagery, etc.)		**(7.3)** recognizes increasingly complex tools that authors use in their writing to achieve their purpose (e.g., organization of information, language choice, use of time, imagery)
(7.4) identifies, describes, and discusses the impact that text form, content, and structure have on meaning		
(7.5) understands that values and personal experiences influence understanding and critical response		
(7.6) explores culture and reality as portrayed in media text		

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">GCO 8: writes for a variety of reasons</th></tr>
<tr><th>Grade 7</th><th>Grade 8</th><th>Grade 9</th></tr>
<tr><td>(8.1) experiments with a number of strategies such as brainstorming, sketching, free-writing</td><td colspan="2">(8.1) frequently uses writing and representing strategies as a language learner</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">(8.2) writes for a variety of reasons including
• to extend ideas and experiences
• to explore and reflect feelings, values, and attitudes
• to consider others' perspectives
• to reflect on problems and respond to problems
• to describe and evaluate learning processes and strategies
• to reflect on growth as a language learner</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">(8.3) reflects on the writing strategies that help him/her learn and describes his or her personal growth as a language learner</td></tr>
<tr><td>(8.4) understands the purpose and benefits of note-making (personal use, gathering information for an assignment, recording what has happened or what others have said) and the forms of note-making (lists, summaries, observations, descriptions)</td><td colspan="2">(8.4) uses various forms of note-making for different purposes and situations</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">(8.5) integrates interesting effects in his or her writing:
• includes thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities
• integrates detail that adds richness and density
• finds and corrects inconsistencies
• avoids extraneous detail
• makes effective language choices
• selects more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing</td></tr>
</table>

GCO 9: creates a wide range of texts		
Grade 7	**Grade 8**	**Grade 9**
(9.1) produces a range of writing forms	**(9.1)** further develops previously introduced writing forms and expands on them	**(9.1)** continues to use a variety of writing forms as well as other art forms such as visual arts, music, and drama
• advertisements • announcements • autobiography • biographies • brochures • business and personal letters • cartoons • essays • graphs • illustrations • interviews • journals • literary responses • poems • posters • reports • résumé • reviews • scripts • song • speeches • stories • summaries • surveys		
(9.2) understands that what is written (content, word choice, style, tone of voice) and how it is written (form, structure, organization) must fit the audience and the purpose for writing	**(9.2)** considers and crafts writing (content, word choice, style, tone of voice, form, structure, organization) to suit the audience and the purpose	
(9.3) understands that ideas can be represented in more than one way and experiments with many forms		
(9.4) asks for feedback about writing and applies it in future drafts		

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">GCO 10: creates texts that are clear and accurate; applies proper conventions (spelling, grammar, sentence structure, usage, mechanics)</th></tr>
<tr><th>Grade 7</th><th>Grade 8</th><th>Grade 9</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">(10.1) demonstrates the following to aid effective communication:
• spells familiar words correctly
• uses knowledge of spelling conventions to spell unfamiliar words
• checks for correctness
• uses resource texts to verify spelling
• has control over standard punctuation and grammar most of the time
• uses a variety of sentence patterns
• uses a wide vocabulary in writing
• uses a variety of paragraph structures</td><td>(10.1) consistently uses the conventions of written language in final products</td></tr>
<tr><td>(10.2) is beginning to use specific strategies for creating texts, including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and presenting</td><td colspan="2">(10.2) chooses and applies the appropriate prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presenting strategies when creating texts</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">(10.3) uses various technologies for the purposes of communicating (video, e-mail, word processing, audio tapes, Internet)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">(10.4) demonstrates a commitment to crafting writing and other representations</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">(10.5) collects and combines information from several sources (interviews, film, CD, text)</td></tr>
</table>

Vignettes

On one wall of my classroom, I mount large-font lists of the specific curriculum outcomes that my students are expected to achieve during the school year. Each time my students engage in a learning task, I write the date and task on stickies, which I place beside the outcome(s) that the task supports. Besides alerting students to the purpose(s) of every learning experience, the stickies allow me to identify, at a glance, those outcomes that I have yet to address in my classroom, which facilitates long-range planning. In addition, they provide a useful visual to share with parents when they meet with me to discuss student performance in light of course objectives.

~ Grade 8 Teacher

An effective way to be sure my assignments are aligned to the outcomes is to create an outcomes tracking sheet. I create a table and put all of the outcomes into the left column. In the next column I write in learning activities that helped students meet particular outcomes. The extension to this chart would be to create a third column that has methods of assessment and the date.

~ Grade 9 Teacher

Planning and Collaboration

If you look across the grade levels, the SCOs provide the scope of the junior high/middle level English language arts program. At the school level, it is most effective if teachers of English language arts discuss programming and curriculum across the grade levels in order to ease transition and to ensure that a comprehensive program is offered. Through such discussions it will be apparent if there are gaps in the program or if certain aspects are repetitious. For example, if in a school every junior high/middle level English teacher does a unit that focusses on mythology, and poetry or persuasive writing is overlooked, the students will leave at the end of grade 9 with gaps in their learning. Regular meetings and discussion between teachers can help to avoid this situation. Another area of concern is the need for collaboration between teachers of English language arts and teachers of French language arts. This situation demands careful planning; the reduced amount of time for instruction in English must be used effectively. A planning chart (see Appendix A) can be used by teachers of English language arts to map out a balanced program for students.

It is important to remember that while advanced planning is important, you must also consider the needs of your students. Any plan can only be created in draft form while you get to know your students. If characterization and character development is identified as an essential concept for instruction, but students have little background in identifying character traits, the plan may have to be altered. Once you know your students, you can carry out the plan or amend it as necessary.

The planning chart provided has space to record information and ideas in eight different areas:

- **Essential Questions/Focus:** includes the key questions and outcomes upon which instruction is based
- **Essential Terms/Vocabulary:** may include the 40 or more essential terms and vocabulary that, as a team, have been identified for each grade level
- **Content:** includes topics and concepts pertaining to language arts
- **Skills:** specific skills and strategies you want students to develop as a result of the learning experiences
- **Assessment:** an outline or plan of assessment that identifies how to collect data about student learning
- **Learning Experiences:** some of the specific organizational methods of instruction
- **Notes for Differentiation:** suggestions for ways to differentiate the learning experience in order to meet the needs of diverse learners
- **Resources:** not necessarily specific to a grade level (you can record resources you plan to use for whole-class instruction)

Appendix A: Planning Chart

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Essential Questions or Focus			
Essential Terms and Vocabulary			
Content			
Skills			

Planning Chart *Continued*

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Assessment			
Learning Experiences			
Notes for Differentiation			
Resources			

Key Concepts and Vocabulary

One factor that affects student achievement that can be influenced by teachers is the background knowledge that a student has about topics related to curriculum. While all students cannot attend a Shakespearean play or travel across Canada, such experiences can be brought to life in the classroom.

In his book *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement*, Robert Marzano (2004) talks about two things we can do to increase students' background knowledge: 1) we can provide students with the opportunity to read widely about a variety of topics, and 2) we need to teach key academic vocabulary to students in a variety of ways. The book discusses what can be done to promote reading with students. It also describes how collaboration of colleagues will ensure that students have a solid understanding of key concepts and vocabulary.

Teaching for academic background knowledge is most effective if done with a whole-school approach. School-based planning is essential to ensure that students are receiving balanced and comprehensive instruction as they move through the grades. Teachers need to plan and understand where and when to teach particular forms, genres, vocabulary, and concepts. This planning should be flexible to accommodate the individual strengths of teachers, as well as the individual needs of students.

The first step is for staff to differentiate between essential and supplemental concepts and terms. The following chart identifies a comprehensive list of the vocabulary or concepts for English language arts at the grades 7–9 levels (a list for grades 4–6 can be found in Appendix H10). It is the responsibility of teachers at each grade level in a school to collectively determine which vocabulary/concepts are the most essential for that grade. Distinguishing between concepts teachers would expect students to have learned previously, and concepts that will be explicitly taught within a grade level allows teachers to develop a plan outlining what they can expect students to know already. This plan will identify what should be reviewed and what should be taught explicitly.

Check It Out

Marzano, Robert, *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement* (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2004).

Suggested List of Concepts/Vocabulary: Grades 7–9

abstract nouns
acronym
active voice
allegory
allusion
analogy
analysing
anecdote
antagonist
argument
artifact
ballad
bias
bibliography
broadcast
camera angle
camera shot
censorship
character development
choral montage
chronology
citation
clarify
clause
cliche
close-up
collective nouns
colloquialisms/slang
complex sentence
compound sentence
concrete nouns
conflict
connotative/denotative meaning
convention
counter-argument
credibility
criteria
criticism
cross-reference
dash
declarative sentence
derivation
dialect
document
documentary
editorial
elaboration
ellipsis
enunciation
epilogue
episode
essay
etymology
euphemism
evidence
excerpt
exclamatory sentence
explicit/implicit
exposition
external/internal conflict
extraneous information
facilitator
feature article/story
feedback
fictional narrative
figurative language
figure of speech
film director
flashback
footnote
foreshadowing
formal language
format
gender
generalization
gesture
historical fiction
hyperbole
hyphen
idiom
imagery
imperative sentence
inconsistency
informal language
information source
interjection
Internet research
interrogative sentence
interpretation
intonation
irony
irregular verb
jargon
layout
lecture
linking verb
literal phrase
literary device
logic
main clause
mass media
mechanics (language)
metaphor
metre
modifier
monologue
multimedia
mythology
nonverbal cue
objective view
omniscient
onomatopoeia
oral tradition
overview
oxymoron
pacing
parallels
paraphrase
parody
parenthesis
passive voice
periodical
personal narrative
personification
perspective

physical description
plagiarism
political cartoon
political speech
possessive
preface
preposition
prepositional phrase
present/past/future tense
primary source
producer
prologue
propaganda
protagonist
proverb
pull-down menu
questionnaire
recurring theme
reference
relative pronoun
relevant detail
rephrasing
representation
research paper
resolution
résumé
rhyme scheme
rhythm
run-on sentence
salutation
sarcasm
satire
science fiction
scriptwriter
secondary source
second person
semicolon
sentence combining
sentence fragment
simple sentence
singular/plural
software
special effects
special interests
stanza
stereotype
style
subjective pronoun
subjective view
subject/predicate
subject/verb agreement
subliminal message
supporting character
syntax
synthesize
technical language
tempo
tension (in a story)
text structure
textual clue
time lapse
transition
translation
verbal cue
viewpoint
visual text
word origin
word play

Using the list

- Not all words will be chosen. Determine which vocabulary/concepts are essential and therefore will be introduced and explicitly taught. Rank or prioritize the list from essential to nonessential.
- At each grade level, attempt to choose about 40 essential terms for instruction. Record essential terms and share with all grade levels (see Appendix B).
- Plan instruction that explicitly teaches the terms/concepts identified.
- Remember, teaching is contextual. The "word of the week" approach is not advised.
- Remember to revisit and provide opportunities for students to use, reflect on, and extend their understanding of terms/concepts introduced in previous grade levels. Students need to use new vocabulary 10–15 times before they really understand it.
- Recognize the importance of providing vocabulary instruction for other terms that you consider to be important but not essential. Take your lead from students and provide instruction that is responsive to their needs and interests.

Appendix B: Key Terms, Grades 7–9

Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9

The second step in vocabulary instruction is to decide as a team of teachers what effective vocabulary instruction looks like at the grades 7–9 level. What we do know is that effective vocabulary instruction does not involve assigning words and having students record definitions and then use the word in a sentence. It is also not the spelling model of pre-test on Monday, work on the words through the week, and do a post-test on Friday. When building background knowledge it is your responsibility to provide a range of experiences that will help students understand the concept over an extended period of time. This means providing explicit instruction during the school year and revisiting the concepts in the following years.

Tech Tools 

Once you decide which vocabulary terms students will learn for a subject area, you can post this list online so students and parents can quickly and easily access them.

Nuts and Bolts 

Finding time to meet—Plan a monthly lunch date to meet with other English language arts (ELA) teachers and discuss curriculum. If lunch is too rushed, try a monthly after-school meeting and alternate bringing snacks.

When beginning a new unit, post a note in the staffroom saying, "I will soon be starting a new unit on _____. If you come across anything that you think would be helpful I would love to see/hear about it. Thanks."

Program Design and Components

Multiple Literacies

Today the term *literacy* extends well beyond simply reading and writing. It is no longer sufficient for our students to be considered literate when they have the ability to read and write traditional texts. The concept of literacy is an ever-expanding domain. To be successful in school and in the larger world, students require multiple literacies. These include, but are not limited to, media literacy, critical literacy, visual literacy, and information literacy.

The following four charts offer further explanation and practical suggestions for instruction and assessment in each of these forms of literacy.

Media Literacy

Explanation

Media literacy is about culture and lifestyle as portrayed by mass media (television, radio, film, magazines, Internet, etc.). It is about helping students to look critically at how they affect popular media and how these media affect them. A goal of the English language arts program is to help students develop the skills necessary to analyse and evaluate what they view, read, and hear. It is also important that the program support students in learning how to create media texts for themselves and others.

Key Understandings	Instructional Ideas	Assessment Ideas
Media texts are constructed. Media texts are designed with a particular audience in mind. Existing media texts need to be deconstructed and evaluated. Students can create media texts to convey ideas.	• Survey students about their media "diet." Ask about the kinds of media interactions they have and the frequency and duration of these interactions (see Appendix C1). • View and discuss the purpose and elements of various types of media (see Appendix C2). • Examine a variety of ads. Discuss how the advertiser tries to get you to buy into a product, service, or idea. Create a list of advertising techniques (see Appendix C3). • Collect a variety of ads and ask students to classify them based on a number of criteria (e.g., Who is the target audience? Is it a product, service, or idea? What is the advertising strategy used? Is it effective or not?). • Role-play an interview with an advertising executive where the interviewer asks questions about the ad, how it was constructed, whom it targets, and why it was constructed the way it is. • Create two advertisements (each for the same product, service, or idea) for two different target groups. • Role-play a meeting between advertising executives where each person must "pitch" an ad campaign for a particular product, service, or idea.	• Observe student participation in small and large group discussions. Develop a checklist with the students, outlining effective listening and speaking behaviours (see Appendix G6). • Provide students with a copy of a print ad and ask them to write a proposal "pitching" it to a prospective buyer. What is the product/service/idea? Who is the target audience? What advertising strategies are being used? • Use a target self-assessment for students to use after creating their own ads. Develop the criteria with students before completing the assignment (see Appendix C4). • Develop a rubric with students to assess the media texts they create (see Appendix C5).

Critical Literacy

Explanation

Critical literacy is about questioning assumptions and looking at how language is used to construct particular historical, social, cultural, political, and economic realities. Critical literacy also involves looking at how language and power are related. It is a goal of critical literacy to address issues of social justice and equity in an effort to promote and effect positive change.

Key Understandings	Instructional Ideas	Assessment Ideas
Texts are constructed. Language is power. Audience and purpose are important when creating or reading a text. Point of view and voice influence a text. Recognizing bias is essential. Texts and their content can be accepted, resisted, or altered.	• Identify a number of words in a text that are neutral, or words that strongly promote a particular perspective. Ask students to consider alternate words that will change the tone or meaning of the piece by making it either more or less favourable than the original perspective. • Rewrite a piece of text from an oppositional point of view. • Rewrite a piece for a different audience. • Read samples of text and identify words and phrases that strongly convey an idea or a position. Create a list of "power" words (see Appendix D1). • Ask some of the following questions about a text: Who constructed this (age/nationality/gender/race)? What are the writer's beliefs? How/where was the text shared? For what purpose could the text be used? What is the topic? How is the topic presented? How else could the topic have been presented? What has been included? What has been omitted? Whose voice is being expressed? Whose voice is not expressed? (see Appendix D2). • "Hoax" web pages are widely available. Share some with students and ask them to respond critically to the information that is presented.	• Provide students with a number of texts written for different audiences. Ask them to decide who the intended audience is and to give reasons or evidence to support their opinion. • With students, create a checklist of things to consider when writing for a particular audience (e.g., topic, word choice, level of detail, degree of formality, form). Ask students to reflect on their writing using this checklist. • Provide students with a piece of text in which bias is evident. Ask them to write an analysis of the text. • Ask students to evaluate a website using the templates (see Appendices D3, D4).

Visual Literacy

Explanation

Visual literacy is the ability to respond to a visual image. This includes understanding any information and ideas conveyed by the visual image, how the author/artist created the image, and how the reader/viewer feels about the visual. It is also important that the English language arts program support students in learning how to create visual images.

Key Understandings	Instructional Ideas	Assessment Ideas
Visuals are effective means of communicating ideas. A large amount of information can be communicated through a visual. Visuals are carefully constructed. Multiple techniques are used effectively to create visuals.	• Provide students with a range of visuals and have them classify them into categories (e.g., photo, illustration, diagram, cross-section, bar graph, line graph, pie graph, map, table, chart, time line). • Skim books, newspapers, magazines, etc. to see how many different kinds of visuals are used. • Have students create a fact sheet about different kinds of visuals (e.g., name of visual, purpose, required elements, example) (see Appendices E1, E2). • Choose a visual to share with the class. Using an overhead, model how to "read" a visual text. • Provide students with information about a topic. Discuss some of the possibilities for sharing this information. What information is best shared visually? What would be the most effective type of visual to use? • Provide students with two photos of the same object or scene but with differences in lighting, perspective, etc. Ask the students to compare them. • Share with students a photo where they see only the main subject. Then share a photo where the same main subject is in context (with surroundings). Ask students to consider the importance of context. • Ask students to create a visual to share information about a particular topic.	• With students, build a rubric or checklist that outlines the features and components of various visuals. Use this to assess student work samples that include visuals (see Appendix E3). • Choose a visual that conveys a great deal of specific information (e.g., a map, graph, chart, diagram). Ask the students to explain or interpret the visual. Record your observations. • Give students information written in paragraph form and ask them to create a corresponding visual. Also, ask the students to construct a paragraph when provided a visual.

Information Literacy

Explanation

Information literacy is about ensuring that students have the necessary skills to access, effectively interpret, evaluate, organize, select, produce, and communicate information that is available through books, CD-ROM, the Internet, electronic bulletin boards, magazines, newspapers, etc.

Key Understandings	Instructional Ideas	Assessment Ideas
Information is presented in many ways (website, newspaper, book, video ...). Locating information involves defining a question and then locating and accessing information from a variety of sources. Not all information in print is accurate or relevant. Note-taking is an important skill that involves reading and identifying important information and then recording it in a manner that is useful. Copyright is the legal right of ownership of a particular work. Plagiarism is using all or part of a particular work as if it were one's own, without seeking permission to share the material or crediting the original author or copyright holder.	• Share a chapter from a textbook with students and discuss the layout and organization. Make note of various text features (titles, headings, charts, boldface, use of colour, etc.). • Present students with a piece of text that contains obviously inaccurate or irrelevant information. Ask students to read the text and identify which sections are inaccurate or irrelevant. • Provide students with a scavenger hunt that requires them to locate specific information on a CD-ROM or on the Internet. • Ask students to make a comparison chart that shows the similarities and differences in locating information on the Internet or in a book. • Teach a variety of approaches to note-making. Ask students to choose a process that will work for them. • Teach students the correct format for references to the work of others and for citing direct quotes.	• Have a conversation with students about how they locate information in a variety of texts including both print and online. Ask the students to demonstrate, by giving them a text and asking them to find specific information. Observe their approach (see Appendix F1). • Provide students with a note-making grid (see Appendix F2) and have them include the source, notes, and direct quotes for some research. • Ask the students to research a topic and write a report. Assess the report based on criteria discussed with the students. Criteria may include use of multiple sources, accuracy of information, originality of student's own work, use of correct format for references, etc.

The Need for Explicit Instruction

Learning is not something that happens simply by osmosis. It is not enough to surround students with books, an audience, and computers and hope that they develop the necessary skills as thinkers, speakers, readers, and writers. While students will develop and learn many things on their own, it is important that in the English language arts classroom teachers provide explicit instruction in a variety of areas. The level of support this instruction provides will vary depending on the needs of each student. Ultimately, the goal of the teacher is gradually to decrease the level of support provided until the student is able to engage in the learning experience independently and successfully. This requires supportive instruction that ranges from directed, to supported, and finally to independent learning.

Direct instruction

Direct instruction is essential in every class. This kind of instruction might be necessary to introduce a new or difficult concept or to ensure that the entire group receives a common message. Direct instruction is also helpful in showing students how to exercise a particular skill. It is important however, that direct instruction be followed up with supported instruction in situations where the student is still developing the necessary skills or when the concept is difficult. Telling and modelling are two kinds of direct instruction.

Telling: The teacher tells or explains; the student(s) listen(s).

- Includes: lecture

  Example: During a lesson about paragraphing, the teacher explains to students that a new paragraph is needed each time there is a new topic, a new speaker (dialogue), a change in time, or a change in location, or to make something stand out (emphasis).

Modelling: The teacher demonstrates, the student(s) observe(s).

- Includes: reading aloud, lifting text, thinking aloud and coding text, demonstration

  Example: The teacher shares a short story with the class. Using the overhead, the story is read aloud. Each time a new paragraph begins the teacher points out why the new paragraph is needed.

Supportive instruction

Supportive instruction goes beyond simply telling or showing students how to do something. This kind of instruction allows you to provide some assistance to students as they work toward independence.

Sharing: The teacher and student(s) work together.

- Includes: shared reading, shared writing

  Example: Students are given a copy of a short story and they follow along as the teacher reads the story. Together the group locates each new paragraph. The teacher asks student volunteers for suggestions about where a new paragraph is needed. This list is recorded and a legend added (e.g., NT = new topic, CT = change in time, CL = change in location, NS = new speaker, E = emphasis). Each student works with a partner to code the story with the reason for each new paragraph. The group discusses ideas.

Guiding: The student(s) complete(s) the task with support from the teacher as needed.

- Includes: guided reading, guided writing

  Example: Students are given a short story to read and asked to look for signal words that indicate passage of time, place, or topic (e.g., "later that day … ," "back at home … ," or a series of asterisks ***). Then students are given a simple storyboard. Each frame should represent characters engaged in a different activity, location, or time. Using the frame provided, students write a simple story. Each frame should be represented by a new paragraph. Students can also be challenged to try to include signal words, as well as one segment of dialogue.

Independent Learning

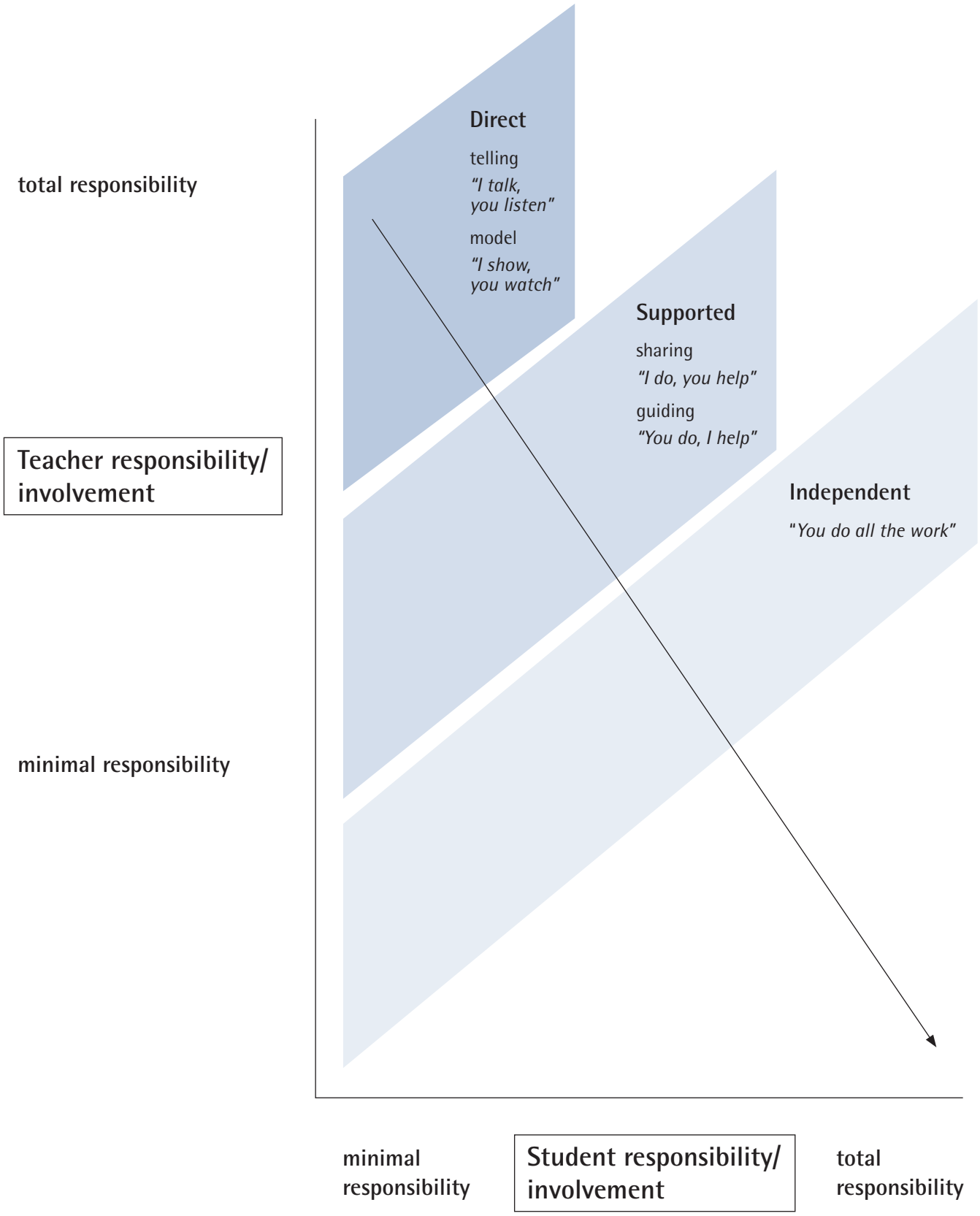
Independent learning is the ultimate goal. It is at the independent stage that students are able to demonstrate and apply understanding of concepts and skills.

Independence: The students complete the task without support from the teacher.

- Includes: assigned work, projects, independent reading, independent writing

  Example: Students are asked to write a story about a topic of their choice. Explain that part of the assessment criteria will be correct paragraphing.

The challenge most teachers face is the tendency to jump from telling students what to do to expecting them to complete the work independently. For many students this jump is too great, and as a result they experience frustration and a lack of success. The term "gradual release of responsibility" is about avoiding this pitfall. The following chart illustrates the need to progress through the period of supporting students as learners before they reach a level of independence.


total responsibility
Teacher responsibility/ involvement
minimal responsibility
Direct
telling
"I talk, you listen"
model
"I show, you watch"
Supported
sharing
"I do, you help"
guiding
"You do, I help"
Independent
"You do all the work"
minimal responsibility
Student responsibility/ involvement
total responsibility

Common Approaches to Instruction

English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9 identifies a number of common approaches to instruction. On page 101 of the curriculum guide the following chart is provided:

Focus	Description	Teacher Roles
Issues	This approach involves active inquiry focussing on diverse perspectives, experiences, and values.	• Provide a framework for inquiry and discussion. • Coach students in gathering/assessing information. • Coach students through group processes. • Encourage variety and diversity of opinions.
Theme	This approach involves creation of and response to a range of texts focussed on a central idea.	• Identify a variety of themes arising from available resources. • Help students choose a theme to match interests and concerns. • Suggest strategies for inquiry and discussion. • Negotiate a culminating activity and give feedback on its development.
Project	This approach focusses on finding information and building knowledge through investigative techniques and processes.	• Negotiate topics and tasks. • Suggest resources and research strategies. • Give feedback and coach students on strategies for selection and integration of information. • Coach students on decision making about content and form.
Workshop	In this approach, the environment is organized as a working studio or workshop; e.g., drama, readers', viewers', or writers' workshops.	• Negotiate a group focus and the planning of activities. • Monitor and coach students on group process. • Give feedback on group and individual progress. • Negotiate a focus and task, as well as evaluation criteria.
Concept	In this approach, experiences and investigations focus on a language arts concept or topic; e.g., voice, imagery, satire, symbols, archetypes, or place.	• Negotiate a focus and a task, as well as evaluation criteria. • Suggest resources. • Suggest questions and directions for inquiry. • Coach students in decision making and reformulation. • Give feedback to shape the culminating activity.

Continued

Focus	Description	Teacher Roles
Major Text	This approach encourages close exploration of diverse aspects of a major work (novel, play, or film) with options to extend experiences with responses to the text.	• Negotiate a focus and a task, as well as evaluation criteria. • Suggest resources and issues to explore. • Coach students in evaluating and selecting information. • Encourage students to reformulate and redirect inquiry. • Give feedback on progress and suggest directions for development. • Ask questions about form and format decisions.
Author Study	Explorations and investigations of specific authors may include historical and historical background information, texts, and cultural contexts in which the works were created or set.	• Identify a range of authors for which resources are available. • Negotiate focus, strategies, and task. • Coach students on strategies for selection and integration of information. • Coach students on decision making about content and form. • Encourage students to reformulate and redirect inquiry in response to information and emerging ideas.
Integrated Learning	Integrated learning occurs when the regular curriculum provides a natural overlap among subject areas and when students can see the relevance and the interrelatedness of curricula.	• Develop learning activities that involve skills and content from several academic areas. • Negotiate themes or issues. • Collaborate with colleagues to form partnerships.

In this teaching resource, we will look at additional support and practical ideas for seven of the eight approaches (see the In Action section, pages 119–162. For detailed information about Workshop as an instructional approach, see pages 78–79 regarding Reading Workshop and pages 102–103 regarding Writing Workshop.

While these are not the only approaches to instruction, and the suggestions presented here are not exhaustive, they are intended to offer a starting point from which to continue to develop and adjust further instruction. You are encouraged to add to, revise, change, omit, and make these your own in a way that best meets the learning needs of your students.

Check It Out

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9* (Province of Nova Scotia, 1998).

The Importance of Integration

Curriculum integration, cross-curricular instruction, curriculum compacting … All of these are different ways to say that the many aspects of teaching and learning should be interconnected. To dissect the English program and present it to students as isolated chunks does not make sense. Learning happens when students look at the whole picture and when they see the connections that exist between one subject and another or between aspects of the same subject. Our job, as teachers, is to help students see the relationships that exist between the parts so they are better prepared to learn and understand the whole of English language arts.

Suggestions for Integration

- Map out a yearly plan.
- Communicate with other teachers at the same grade level and in previous and subsequent grades to ensure balanced programming.
- Make plans for cross-curricular instruction to maximize learning time and show the interconnectedness of learning.
- Teach essential terms and concepts identified for your school.
- Ensure there is opportunity for all three strands (speaking and listening, reading and viewing, writing and other ways of representing) on a daily or weekly basis.
- Infuse each unit with instruction from multiple literacies.
- Consider teaching each literacy (i.e., media literacy) as a unit, but include connections to other literacies (i.e., critical literacy, computer literacy).
- Integrate technology. Bring computers into the classroom so they are easily accessible.
- Consider the computer and other technologies as tools to be used when appropriate.
- Provide explicit instruction when needed.
- Know the strengths and needs of your students.

Check It Out

Allen, Janet, *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy* (Pembroke, 2004).

Carty, Maria, *Exploring Writing in the Content Areas* (Pembroke, 2005).

Daniels, Harvey, and Steven Zemelman, *Subjects Matter* (Heineman, 2004).

Differentiating Our Instruction

If you ask any number of people to learn the same thing, they will all learn it in different ways and at different times. Differentiation of instruction becomes very important in a classroom because we know each classroom has such a diverse range of learners. On the one hand, differentiation will allow students who struggle to be supported adequately in meeting the outcomes; on the other, differentiation provides greater challenge for those who need it.

Differentiation is not about creating individualized programs for each student in the classroom. It occurs within the outcomes themselves. It is also not about establishing permanent homogeneous groups in which students will work. Differentiation is about flexibility and understanding

students well enough that your instruction can be responsive to their needs. Most of the time it is about **how you address an outcome or teach a concept over time**. When we provide students with multiple exposures to a concept, in multiple ways, there is a greater chance of meeting the needs of more of our learners, and a greater chance of students successfully meeting outcomes.

Differentiation is occurring in classrooms where the climate is safe, inclusive, and encourages collaboration, and where the teacher and the students understand their learning styles and strengths and where a range of instructional strategies are used, and multiple representations are encouraged. Differentiation is really nothing more than good instruction.

The following chart shows how the same learning outcome is addressed through differentiation. In this case, the students are provided with learning experiences related to note-making that depend on multiple exposures and multiple ways of teaching and learning. The result is the same; however, students may require multiple paths to arrive at that destination.

Learning Outcome 8.4: uses various forms of note-making for different purposes and situations				
Path 1	**Path 2**	**Path 3**	**Path 4**	**Path 5**
Model for students how to code text while reading. Have students code a piece of information text.	Have students as a group read aloud a paragraph and discuss the key points. Model how you could record these points in bulleted or numbered format.	Provide students with topic headings for a research project. Then, using index cards or stickies, students make notes while conducting their research. Show them how to colour-code these notes according to topic.	Provide students with printed text that describes a scientific process (i.e., the water cycle). Have students create a visual representation of the text.	Using technology such as Inspiration, have students make a web/outline for a research topic.
Modelled	*Shared*	*Guided*	*Independent*	*Independent*

Sometimes it is necessary to further differentiate how and what is taught for different groups and individuals in order for students to successfully meet outcomes. This is often viewed in two ways: differentiation of the content that a student is learning, and differentiation of the classroom.

Differentiating the content areas: process and product. It is possible to differentiate each of these in order to meet the needs of the learner.

- **content/concepts:** what the student is expected to learn within the parameters of curriculum outcomes
- **process:** how the student is expected to work
- **product:** what the student is expected to produce (our expectations for the student may be greater or lesser, or there could be differences in what they create to show their learning)

Differentiating the classroom occurs when what the student is learning is the same as the identified outcomes for that grade but the environment in which the student is learning has changed.

- **environment:** the situation in which the student is learning (includes grouping, position in the classroom)

The following chart shows how learning experiences can be differentiated in order to meet the needs of the learner while working toward the same curriculum outcomes. In situations 1 and 3, the content has been differentiated. The expectations are lower in situation 1, higher in situation 3. Other ways of differentiating instruction are also indicated. Where text is italicized, there has been no differentiation.

Learning Outcome 4.6: independently uses a range of reading strategies to make meaning from complex print and media text; 8.4: uses various forms of note-making for different purposes and situations

Learning activity: Students independently read a short story and make notes for a class discussion about the relationship between the characters in the story.

	Content	Process	Product	Environment
Situation 1	The student is asked to describe each of the characters in the story (may be a different story).	The student reads the text through independently. Then, with direction, re-reads in smaller chunks to focus on the task.	The student draws a picture of the characters in the story.	The student works with peer support to complete the task.
Situation 2	*The student is asked to describe the relationship between characters.*	The student is given ample time to read independently, and then works with a peer on details.	The student records notes for small group discussion.	The student works with some support to complete the task.
Situation 3	The student is asked to describe the techniques used by the author in creating believable characters.	The student reads independently.	The student records notes for his or her own use.	The student works independently to complete the task.

Note: Since Outcome 4.6 requires the student to read independently, active construction of meaning from text is required.

Check It Out

Tomlinson, Carol Ann, *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms* (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001).

Tomlinson, Carol Ann, and Jay McTighe, *Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design* (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2006).

"When a teacher tries to teach something to the entire class at the same time, chances are that one-third of the kids already know it, one-third will get it, and the remaining third won't. So two-thirds of the children are wasting their time."

Lillian Katz (from "Differentiation of Instruction" by Bruce Oliver)

Assessment and Evaluation

The information in this section provides an overview of the basic principles and understandings related to assessment and evaluation in the English language arts classroom. Specific examples of tools that can be used to assess student learning within each of the three strands of language arts are explained in the corresponding sections on listening and speaking, reading and viewing, and writing and other ways of representing. For more detailed information, as well as additional examples pertaining to the assessment, refer to the following documents/resources:

Specific to reading and viewing, the *Active Readers, Grades 7–9, Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents* is recommended. This resource can also be downloaded from the Department of Education website (www.EDnet.ns.ca). The teacher resource component has been distributed to every grade 7, 8, and 9 teacher and should be available in your school. Additional copies can be ordered through the Nova Scotia School Book Bureau at no charge.

Specific to writing and other ways of representing, the Nova Scotia *Writing Exemplars Project* is recommended. This is an online resource.

Check It Out

Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Active Readers Grades 7–9 Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents* (Province of Nova Scotia, 2005).

Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Active Readers Assessment Resource: Content Passages: Grades 7–9* (Province of Nova Scotia, 2005).

Nova Scotia Board Program Co-ordinators: Writing Exemplars Project hosted on the Nova Scotia Department of Education website, (nswritingexemplars.EDnet.ns.ca). Revised 2006

The Importance of Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment is the systematic process of gathering information on student learning.

Evaluation is the process of analysing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information and making judgments or decisions based on the information collected.

Assessment information is important for many reasons:

- It helps students understand their strengths and needs so they can continue to learn and grow.
- It can be used by teachers to make decisions about instruction.
- It is necessary in order to provide parents/guardians with a clear picture of students' learning and progress.
- It is essential in communication with other educators who share responsibility for a student's learning.

Check It Out

Davies, Anne, *Making Classroom Assessment Work* (Connections, 2000).

Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Active Readers Grades 7–9 Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents* (Province of Nova Scotia, 2005).

Gregory, Kathleen, Caren Cameron, and Anne Davies, *Conferencing and Reporting* (Connections, 2001).

Gregory, Kathleen, Caren Cameron, and Anne Davies, *Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting* (Connections, 2000).

Gregory, Kathleen, Caren Cameron, and Anne Davies, *Setting and Using Criteria* (Connections, 1997).

Stiggins, Richard J., *Student-Involved Classroom Assessment*, 3rd Ed. (Merrill Prentice-Hall, 2001).

It is also important to recognize the importance of record keeping for assessment and evaluation. Trying to remember all the information you collect is impractical. Record-keeping systems, such as a systematic approach to anecdotal notes, checklists, or electronic grade books, will make the collection and organization of this information easier and make the information more useful.

Assessment *of* Learning, Assessment *for* Learning, Assessment *as* Learning

Assessment of, for, and as learning are phrases used frequently in education. It is important for English teachers to consider what each of these phrases means, and how each looks in practice in the classroom.

Assessment *of* learning is about collecting information about a student's learning and communicating it to the student or to the parent. Assessment of learning is the process of determining what a student has learned.

Assessment *for* learning also requires collecting data on student learning. However, the emphasis is on how this information can be used to make informed decisions about future instructional decisions.

Assessment *as* learning is students learning about their own learning as a result of the assessment process. Reflection and metacognition are key when it comes to assessment as learning.

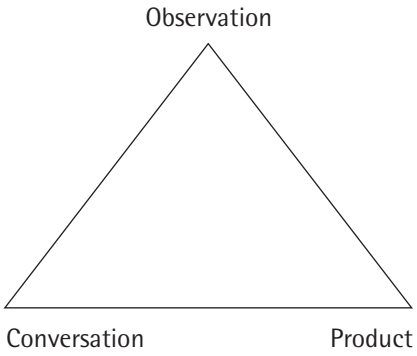
Designing Assessments

Here are some basic principles of assessment that apply to all learning outcomes:

- Assessment must reflect the intended learning outcomes.
- Assessment must occur over time.
- Assessment must be varied.
- Assessment must be free of bias.

When it comes to deciding how to assess student learning, a teacher must collect evidence of learning in a variety of ways. In her book *Making Classroom Assessment Work*, Anne Davies describes three sources of assessment information: conversations, observations, and products. It is important that teachers value all three sources. Over-reliance on any one area can be problematic. Having a balance among the three is the best way to ensure that the assessment and evaluation process is as reliable and valid as possible.

Conversations



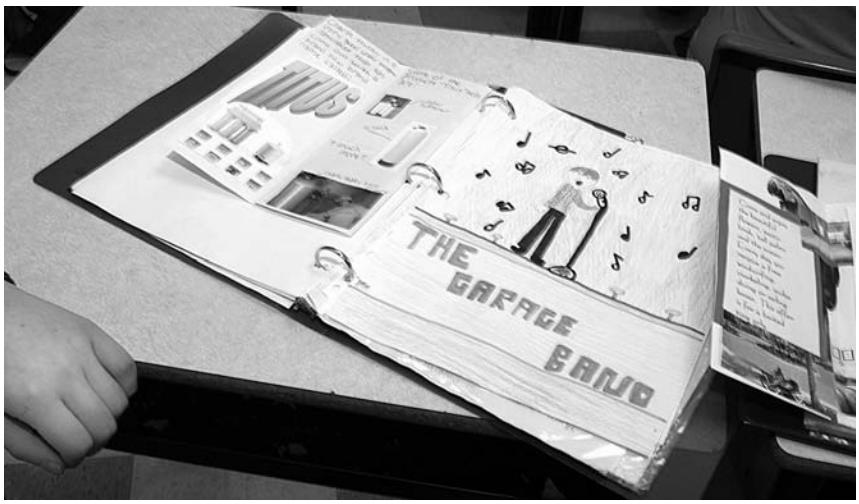
Talking with a student is when you gain insight into the student's learning. Conversations may be very informal, or they can be quite structured, in the form of a conference. A talk can provide insight into things that might not be apparent simply from observation or from products. Conversations allow students the opportunity to explain how or why they did something, as well as giving the teacher a chance to ask probing questions requiring deeper thinking.

Observations

Observations are what you notice about a student engaged in the learning process. This is a great way to gain insight into the learning process at various points along the way and does not require the process to be complete. Observation is an ideal way to assess many of the speaking and listening outcomes.

Products

Products include all of the work that a student completes. They can be written texts such as essays, lists of books read, responses, or poetry. They can also include visual or oral products such as posters, radio or video ads, or a role-play of a scene from a novel.



Using Assessment Information for Instruction

The value of assessment information is really in how it informs future instruction. Rather than viewing assessment as something that occurs at the end of a unit of study, assessment is necessary prior to instruction to set a direction and, in the middle, to determine pace. Assessment information gathered on an ongoing basis helps determine where to slow down, where to provide more explicit instruction, or when to speed up and plan for more independent work. Assessment information helps determine the pace for individual students as well as the entire group. While it is not practical to provide individualized instruction for each student, it is important to read the signs that a student is struggling and to read them early enough to provide additional support. Finding out that a student needs support at the end of a unit could be too late.

The following chart offers some helpful suggestions for follow-up support. Because each student's situation is unique, the recommendations might need revision. They are intended as suggestions only.

Speaking and Listening

If you notice that ...	... you need to
a student is reluctant to participate in group discussions	• provide opportunity to share in other ways • pair students (then move to small groups before whole group)
a student has difficulty following oral directions	• give one or two directions at a time • have the student paraphrase the directions given • provide written or visual instructions
a student struggles to summarize what was said	• activate prior knowledge before the presentation • provide an outline before the presentation • provide a structure or key ideas for the student to listen for • model summarizing techniques
a student does not ask clarifying questions of another speaker	• prompt the student to ask questions • model different types of questions • allow the student to write questions • encourage the student to investigate the questions others ask
a student is not respectful of the ideas and opinions expressed by others	• speak to the student and model appropriate behaviour • generate a list of group norms • pair the student with a strong student who will model positive behaviour • provide the student with a protocol for group participation
a student has difficulty evaluating the effectiveness of a speaker	• provide criteria for evaluation • model effective and ineffective presentations and discuss each • prompt or ask questions that will require the student to think about particular aspects of the presentation
a student has difficulty expressing his or her own ideas and opinions	• allow the student to express ideas in writing or other representations • encourage the student to share first with a partner, then a small group, and finally whole group

Check It Out

Beers, Kylene, *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do* (Heinemann, 2003).

Reading and Viewing

If you notice that ...	... you need to
a student is consistently reading text that is too difficult or too easy	• set goals with the student • model techniques for selecting text • assign short pieces of text that provide a little bit of challenge for students • provide the student with a number of texts to choose from
a student has difficulty with reading fluency (reads slow and choppy or much too fast)	• model fluent reading • have the student read the same piece more than once • have the student practise with text that is at his or her independent reading level
a student has difficulty with comprehension and understanding text	• confer with the student • ensure the student is reading text that is at his or her instructional level • encourage the student to discuss the text with a small group
a student does not provide evidence and support for his or her opinions and statements	• model and scaffold the process • provide a graphic organizer that prompts the student to give evidence
a student is unable to locate information relevant to a topic of study	• provide questions for investigation • model questioning and the process of locating information
a student does not critically evaluate text	• provide the student with questions or prompts to encourage critical thinking • model critical thinking using a think-aloud • begin by providing the student with easy/obvious texts for evaluation and move toward more complex text

Check It Out

Atwell, Nancie, *Lessons That Change Writers* (Heineman, 2002).

Carty, Maria, *Exploring Writing in the Content Areas* (Pembroke, 2005).

Culham, Ruth, *6+1 Traits of Writing* (Scholastic, 2003).

Fletcher, Ralph, and Joann Portalupi, *Craft Lessons: Teaching Writing K–8* (Stenhouse, 1998).

Fletcher, Ralph, *What a Writer Needs* (Heinemann, 1993).

Rog, Lori Jamison, and Paul Kropp, *The Write Genre* (Pembroke, 2004).

Spandell, Vicki, *Creating Writers* (Pearson Allyn and Bacon, 2005).

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

If you notice that ...	... you need to
a student's writing is not focussed, or lacks relevant and accurate information (ideas)	• confer with the student • model effective use of ideas using mentor texts • brainstorm ideas with students • model the process of grouping and classifying information • provide opportunity for practice and sharing
a student's writing lacks organization (organization)	• confer with the student • model effective organization patterns using mentor texts • explicitly teach organization using graphic organizers as a starting point • provide opportunity for practice and sharing
a student's writing has many mechanical errors (conventions)	• confer with the student • model effective use of mechanics using mentor texts • explicitly teach conventions • provide opportunity for practice and sharing • create and post "living posters" that address issues of mechanics
a student's work consists of largely the same type of writing/representation	• provide students with a checklist and a minimum goal each term • provide models of various text types • read aloud and encourage others to share various text types
a student's writing/representation does not include the necessary text features and structure for that type of text (presentation)	• read aloud various types of text and conduct think-alouds highlighting key features • create and post "living posters" that address text features
a student's writing is not appropriate for the intended audience and purpose	• confer with the student • encourage the student to share his or her writing with a peer for feedback
a student rarely shows commitment to a piece of writing/representation	• set small and manageable goals for the student, and confer or check with the student at regular intervals • give the student a choice of writing topic or form or audience • invite the student to make decisions about the topic, form, and/or audience
a student is reluctant to make revisions or editing improvements to his or her work (conventions)	• confer with the student • model using mentor texts • start small—choose one or two areas to focus on

Speaking and Listening

The outcomes associated with speaking and listening are important, and often overlooked. With a greater emphasis placed on reading and writing, it is sometimes easy to forget about teaching students how to be effective speakers and listeners. Fortunately, a great deal of instruction in these areas can occur as part of the learning experiences provided for students in the areas of reading and writing. The challenge, however, is to make these experiences intentional and specific to the listening and speaking outcomes and not simply something that happens by chance or by accident.

Role of Speaking and Listening in the Classroom

Speaking and listening are important in the English language arts classroom, and in life. In life, although these are the two most often used modes of communication, they often receive the least amount of instruction, time, and focus. Perhaps this is because speaking and listening are also the first modes of communication students learn. From birth, children are exposed to oral language, and developmentally they learn to communicate in this manner long before they learn how to read or write. Due to this factor, students might seem proficient in speaking and listening. The challenge for teachers, then, is to assess students' strengths and needs and to provide instruction in the required areas.

Check It Out

Harvey, Stephanie, and Anne Goudvis, *Strategies That Work* (Stenhouse, 2000).

Robb, Laura, *Teaching Reading in Middle School* (Scholastic, 2000).

Wilhelm, Jeffrey, *Action Strategies for Deepening Comprehension* (Scholastic, 2002).

Wilhelm, Jeffrey, *Improving Comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategies* (Scholastic, 2001).

Another reason to value and emphasize the importance of speaking and listening in the classroom is the amount of insight and information they can provide about a student's knowledge and skills in other areas. When asked to talk about the strategies used when reading, or the process engaged in when writing, students are given the opportunity to speak to their learning—information that might ordinarily be ascertained only through obeservation.

A third reason to value speaking and listening is the role they play in students' learning and developing conceptual understanding. Listening enables students to learn from others and their experiences. It provides additional or new points of view, allowing students to gain insight into things they have not experienced. Speaking also plays an important role. When students talk about their understandings, they are solidifying understanding of the concepts.

Characteristics of Effective Speakers and Listeners

Almost everyone is able to recognize an effective speaker, or knows whom to go to when a good listener is needed. Recognizing the characteristics of effective speakers and listeners is almost instinctive, but in the classroom it must be intentional and clearly communicated to students.

If you were asked to brainstorm qualities that effective speakers and listeners possess your list might resemble the one below. It is no coincidence that such a list closely resembles the expected outcomes outlined in the English language arts curriculum guide. Ensuring consistency between personal expectations and the expectations outlined in the guide is important.

Expectations for Speaking and Listening

It is essential that you know what your expectations are for your students. This list provides an overview of common expectations about speaking and listening. A student

- takes turns during a conversation
- is a good speaker and listener
- invites others to participate in discussions
- participates in discussion with small groups and larger groups
- exhibits effective group behaviour
- listens attentively to others
- clearly states ideas
- adjusts what is said and how it is said depending on the audience
- expresses opinions and point of view respectfully
- supports opinions with examples, or evidence from another source
- asks others for clarification
- rephrases what someone else said
- summarizes what someone else said
- makes eye contact with the speaker or with the audience when speaking
- evaluates the effectiveness of a speaker and his or her presentation or style
- evaluates the content or message of a speaker
- follows instructions
- gives clear instructions

For more detailed or specific information as it pertains to grade level, refer to the SCOs in the curriculum guide.

Check It Out

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9* (Province of Nova Scotia, 1998).

Wilhelm, Jeffrey, *Action Strategies for Deepening Comprehension* (Scholastic, 2002).

Suggested Curriculum Map: Recommended Experiences in Speaking and Listening

Because each group of students is different, and because each teacher brings different strengths to the classroom, it is difficult to identify a firm list of topics for each grade level. What is most important is that teachers at a school discuss the diversity of experiences provided to students during the junior high/middle years.

The following chart offers a list of suggested experiences. It is organized so the experiences increase in complexity from left to right. Also, the diversity or kinds of experiences change from top to bottom. It is impossible to do everything in one year, so it is important that teachers decide among themselves how to divide up the experiences. This can be done vertically or horizontally, depending on student need and teacher strength. Ultimately, however, students need to experience each of the components during the junior high/middle level years.

public speaking (informational)	public speaking (persuasive)	public speaking (entertaining)
modelling	demonstration	teaching a concept
sharing in small and large groups (informal)	formal presentations (e.g., presenting projects)	
discussing multiple sides of an issue	informal debate	formal debate
book talk (informational)	book talk (persuasive)	book talk (analytic)
author's chair (sharing own writing)		
role-play	drama and script presentation	screenplay

Organizing for Speaking and Listening: The Environment

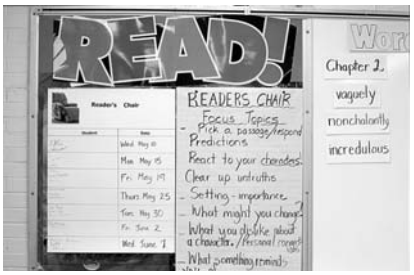
When it comes to encouraging speaking and listening, it is essential that the classroom environment be safe. Students need to feel that they can talk without fear of judgment. This feeling of safety develops over time. Here are some things to consider when creating a positive speaking and listening environment:

- Develop norms or expectations for listening and speaking in the classroom, post them in a prominent place, and refer to them often (looks, sounds, feels like—see appendices G1, G2).
- Ensure respect (two-way).
- If space permits, make a permanent area in the room for small group conversation; have a table with chairs for 4–6 people.
- Consider a chair or stool in a prominent position to be used as an author's chair.
- Establish and reinforce expectations for quiet.

Vignette

Each year I have my students bring in pillows, and we decorate the pillowcases with words and images related to a favourite book. During the rest of the year, students use the pillows to sit on during Reader's Chair. For Reader's Chair we place a large tarp on the floor, and students bring their pillows and sit in a circle. Two or three students share their reading with the group each time we gather. This happens twice a cycle, with students signing up prior to the date.

~ Grade 8 Teacher



Check It Out

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9* (Province of Nova Scotia, 1998).

Wilhelm, Jeffrey, *Action Strategies for Deepening Comprehension* (Scholastic, 2002).

Organizing for Speaking and Listening: Instruction

Many classrooms include a great deal of instruction that focusses on reading and writing. While classrooms often include multiple opportunities for students to engage in listening and speaking activities, it is just as important that these classrooms also provide explicit instruction as necessary.

When it comes to instruction, there are a number of basic principles to consider:

- Students need opportunities to speak and listen daily.
- Students need to be given multiple situations for speaking and listening (partner, formal, informal, making/listening to a presentation).
- Instruction should be scaffolded and based on gradual release of responsibility.

When deciding the focus of instruction, it is important to return to the outcomes. This framework, along with assessment information, will help determine the focus for instruction. Areas of instruction that will allow students to achieve outcomes include

- effective group work and group discussions
- drama, role-play
- poetry, choral montage
- oral presentations (giving and receiving)
- recognizing bias in oral language

Organizing for Speaking and Listening: Management

The key to management is in developing routines and expectations that are known to the students. Here are some things that will help develop routine and shared expectation:

Fish bowl strategy: A small group models a group conversation or task while the rest of the students surround them and observe the process. Those watching have specific areas on which to focus, such as taking turns and asking clarifying questions. At the end, the entire class can discuss the effectiveness of the group's speaking and listening skills and identify suggestions for improvement.

Turn and talk, appointment book (see Appendix G3)**, clock calendar** (see Appendix G4)**, number off, and name drawing:** These organizers allow students to quickly identify partners with whom to speak. Students can meet with these partners at the request of the teacher.

Talking stick: A stick or other object is used to indicate the speaker. Only the person holding the stick can speak. Once the speaker has spoken, the stick is passed so others can contribute.

Check It Out

Tovani, Cris, *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* (Stenhouse, 2004), pp. 106–110.

Rubrics and checklists: Clear expectations and criteria are established (see Appendices G6, G7, G9, G10, G11).

Self-assessment, peer assessment: Students are responsible for self-monitoring and self- or peer-assessing (see Appendices G8, G9).

Hand signals (visual cues): Signals such as pointing to your eyes and then to the person speaking or bringing one finger to your mouth are ways to indicate that a student needs to look or listen. This allows you to correct behaviour without interrupting the entire group.

Timers (verbal reminder, computer timer, kitchen timer): Timers allow students to know how much time they have to complete a task. This is helpful in learning how to pace conversations and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute. Time can be allocated for the entire group to complete a task, or individual groups can allocate time to complete specific parts of a task.

Protocols: Protocols help provide structure. Give students explicit instructions regarding their roles in a discussion (discussion director, reporter, note-maker, etc.) or protocols that outline expectations for the entire group (e.g., each person must contribute two ideas and one question, or each person in the group has one minute to speak).

Check It Out

Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Active Readers Grades 7–9 Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents* (Province of Nova Scotia, 2005).

Assessing Speaking and Listening

Check It Out

Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Active Readers Grades 7–9 Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents* (Province of Nova Scotia, 2005).

Assessment of speaking and listening relies heavily on observation. As this is the oral component of the English language arts curriculum, there are often few products associated with the listening and speaking outcomes. This can make assessment of speaking and listening outcomes challenging for teachers. The key things to remember when it comes to assessing speaking and listening outcomes are to have clear expectations and to have a manageable way of documenting your observations.

Using Checklists

Checklists can be very helpful in assessing speaking and listening. In constructing a checklist, you and the students must determine what behaviours or skills are desired, which are then recorded on the checklist. Checklists are most effective if they are constructed with students, as this ensures that students understand the expectations for success. Record the desired skills or behaviours in action terms describing what the student demonstrates. Once the checklist is made,

the teacher, the student, or the student's peers can use it to document outcomes that have been successfully demonstrated.

A couple of things to consider when developing the checklist are ways to record observations and the validity of the information recorded. Many teachers would say that demonstrating achievement of an outcome one time does not mean that the student has met that outcome. Rather, you should be looking to see that the student has consistently and over time demonstrated proficiency in this area. One way to address this is to choose a system that is more than a simple checklist on which a single check mark is recorded. Here are some systems that are more than simple checklists:

Three Is a Magic Number

Each time a student demonstrates one of the skills, one-third of the box is shaded in. This tool allows you to see the frequency of a student's ability to demonstrate a desired skill or meet an outcome. If you would like to be able to document the degree or level of proficiency, a rating scale or rubric might be more appropriate.

Here is a sample of the Magic of Three checklist (see Appendix G7 for a full-page checklist):

The Magic of Three Checklist

Class: _____ **Term:** _____

Name	Takes turns			Invites others to participate			Clearly states ideas			Asks for clarification					
James Adams															
Saul Al-Awaid															
Jess Barr															
Danielle Best															

Check It Out

Wormeli, Rick, *Fair Isn't Always Equal* (Stenhouse, 2006).

What and When

Each time a student demonstrates a skill, a checkmark is placed in the appropriate box indicating both the skill and the lesson or activity in which it was demonstrated. While this method requires more paper than the Magic of Three method, it also provides greater detail for future discussion with students and parents.

Here is a sample of the What and When checklist (see appendix G8 for blank templates):

What and When Checklist (Sample)

Student: _____ **Date:** _____

	Takes turns	Invites others to participate	Clearly states ideas	Asks for clarification	
class discussion (class expectations: 09/15)	✓				
class discussion (character: 10/22)	✓				
planning: (media project: 11/09)	✓	✓			

Using Rating Scales

A rating scale takes a checklist to another level. It lists the desired criteria, but instead of simply recording "met" or "not met," a rating scale allows you or the student to assign a value that represents the degree to which an outcome, behaviour, or skill is met. Rating scales are great tools to use with students for self-assessment or peer assessment. They provide clarity about what is expected, and provide a simple and easy way to record a student's level of achievement.

Rating scales are most effective when they are created with and by the students. First, choose criteria such as those listed on page 47 (Expectations for Speaking and Listening) as the core of this assessment tool. It is best if these criteria are written in language created by the students. Next, decide on the scale. Common rating scales are four- or five-point scales. The benefit of an even number is that students can't choose "the middle ground." Some people use a ten-point scale; others find a scale of five to be more manageable while still meeting their needs. The final decision is to decide how to organize the rating scale. Often it is a line numbered from one to five, lowest to highest. Also common is a scale without numbers. In this case, words or descriptors describe the level of achievement.

Sample rating scales are included in Appendices G10 and G11. The first shows a simple four-point scale that can be used by the student as well as a peer or the teacher. In this case, the person completing the assessment simply shades in the circle that most closely shows the degree to which the student meets the outcomes listed. To show multiple assessments, each person would record the score he or she would assign, on the same piece of paper. To avoid confusion, each person should use a different colour of ink. (In the case of two or more different colours being placed in the same position on the rubric, record the subsequent colours next to, not on top of, the original colour.) See Appendix G10.

Check It Out

Tovani, Cris, *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* (Stenhouse, 2004), pp. 106–110.

Rating Scale

Student: _____ **Peer:** _____ **Teacher:** _____

	low			high
Takes turns	1	2	3	4
Invites others to participate	1	2	3	4
Clearly states ideas	1	2	3	4
Asks for clarification	1	2	3	4

Here is a sample of the Where Am I? rating scale (see Appendix G11 for a blank version).

Where Am I?

Name: John Smith **Date:** October 2/07

	Need a lot of work	Getting started	Almost there	You've got it
Take turns	✓			
Invite others to participate				✓
Clearly state ideas		✓		
Ask for clarification			✓	

Vignettes

Each September, my students invariably groan when I tell them I will construct many of the groups they will work in during the year, because most students want to work only with their friends. I use this opportunity to help them recognize the importance of working well with a variety of people. I have them scan employment ads in newspapers and identify jobs they might be interested in working at as adults. Then I ask them to share the skills these jobs require. In nearly all cases, "strong interpersonal skills" or "the ability to work well with others" is listed. This activity gives real-world validity to the emphasis I place on helpful group behaviours as well as working with a variety of classmates throughout the year.

~ Grade 8 Teacher

In discussing group work expectations with my class I utilize a simple "Y" chart graphic organizer entitled "What does effective group work look, sound, and feel like?" The three sections of the Y chart are labeled "look like," "sound like," and "feel like." Students work in groups to discuss and complete the chart. This is followed by a whole-class discussion. It has been my experience that the discussions about what it "feels like" are the most powerful.

~ Grade 7 Teacher

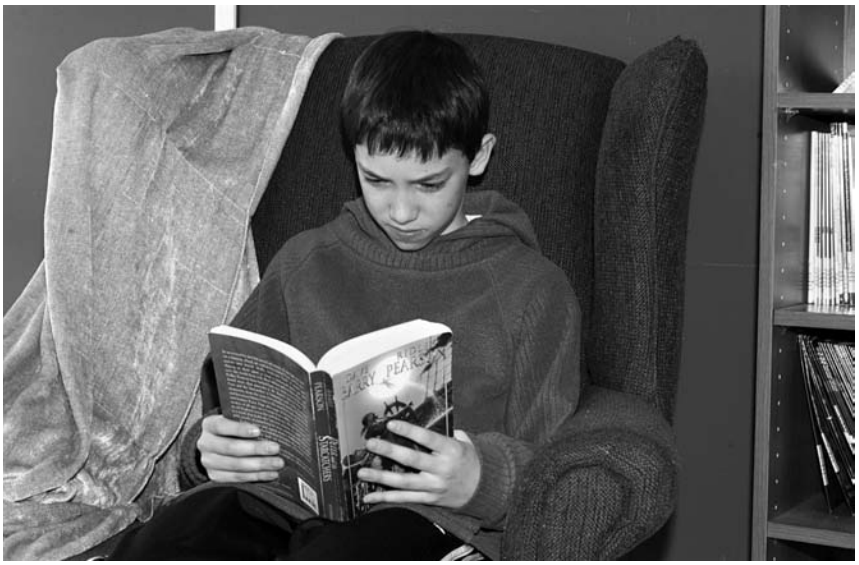
An effective way to communicate with all the students in my class on a daily basis is by using a conversation calendar [see Appendix G5]. Students write two or three sentences to me in the space for that day on the calendar. They write about what they have learned, any questions they might have about what we did in class, or about anything that is going on their lives in or outside of school. Students must also complete a self-evaluation based on a variety of criteria that we develop together as a class. These criteria are posted as a rubric in the classroom. I hand out the calendars at the end of each class and then collect them as they leave. I write back to each student before next class. I also give them a mark based on the class-created rubric. At the end of the week, I average out the marks, both student and teacher, and record the average mark as part of my "conversations" component of my term mark. This activity is specifically tied to GCO 8, SCO 8.2. My favourite part of this activity is the opportunity to connect with all the students in my class on a more personal level. The students cannot wait to get their calendars to read what I have written. Responding to the calendars can be time consuming, so I only use the calendar with one class at a time. As well, I only use the calendar for a one- or two-week period, two to three times a term.

~ Grade 8 Teacher

Reading and Viewing

Role of Reading and Viewing in the Classroom

Reading and viewing make up one-third of the English language arts curriculum. This part of the curriculum is crucial in helping students develop the necessary literacy skills for communication and academic success. Reading and viewing allow students to learn about a world that they have not experienced or heard of from others. Reading is also a common means of communicating across the curriculum. Students are frequently expected to make meaning from print, visual, and media text. Ensuring they have the necessary skills to do this is an important part of the English language arts program as well as other curriculum areas.



Characteristics of Effective Readers and Viewers

When asked to describe what it means to be a good reader, almost anyone can construct a list of expected qualities. In the classroom, our vision of what it means to be an effective reader must be clearly communicated to all students.

If you were asked to brainstorm a list of qualities that effective readers and viewers possess, your list might resemble the one below. It should be no coincidence that such a list closely resembles the expected outcomes outlined in the English language arts curriculum guide. Ensuring consistency between our personal expectations and the expectations outlined in the guide is important.

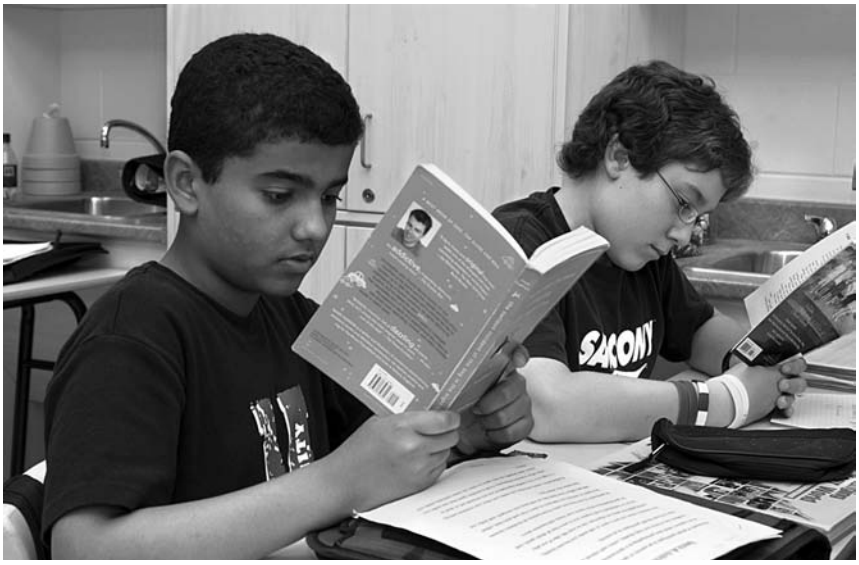
Expectations for Reading and Viewing

It is essential that you clearly know what your expectations are for your students. This list provides an overview of common expectations for reading and viewing. A student

- is able to choose books that are at an appropriate reading level (instructional or independent)
- reads a variety of print text with understanding
- reads and interprets visuals (charts, tables, maps, diagrams, photographs, graphs, etc.)
- reads and views a variety of media text with a critical eye (print ads, television ads, film, video, television, magazines, newspapers, music videos, radio)
- connects new information to previous understandings
- questions the text
- makes inferences based on clues left by the author and his or her own knowledge
- is able to summarize the main idea of a text
- locates specific information in a text
- uses "fix-up" strategies when decoding and meaning are breaking down (read on, reread, use context clues)
- employs various strategies to solve unknown words
- gives opinions and personal responses to what has been read
- looks critically at what has been written, who wrote it, and how it was written

- gives evidence from the text or from personal experience to support his or her responses
- uses technologies such as the Internet to locate information related to an area of interest
- evaluates the validity and the effectiveness of what has been read or viewed
- recognizes the techniques used by authors in their writing to create interest and effect (figurative language, foreshadowing)
- can identify and discuss elements of a story (character, plot, setting, theme, conflict, resolution)
- recognizes various character traits and the techniques used by authors to develop character

For more detailed or specific information as it pertains to grade level, refer to the specific curriculum outcomes in the curriculum guide.



Stages of Reading Development

Reading, like most things, is developmental. Not everyone learns how to read at the same time or in the same way. We do know, however, that there are some common stages through which a reader progresses. Emergent readers are found predominantly in the earliest grades. Readers whose characteristics are more reflective of students in grades 7 to 9 are as follows:

Early: Readers at the early stage can identify and discuss many different kinds of text. They can read familiar text with confidence but are slow and deliberate when reading unfamiliar text. Early readers may

Check It Out

Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Active Readers, Grades 7–9, Assessment Resource Young Adolescents* (Province of Nova Scotia, 2005).

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9* (Province of Nova Scotia, 1998).

Robb, Laura, *Teaching Reading In The Middle School* (Scholastic, 2000), pp. 88–90.

rely heavily on initial letters and sounds. They are beginning to develop new strategies to solve words.

Transitional: Transitional readers use a variety of reading strategies and can adapt reading to the type of text. Transitional readers enjoy texts that have a familiar structure or set of characters. These readers are able to read aloud with expression and are able to respond personally to what they have read.

Fluent: Fluent readers use a variety of strategies automatically when reading. They also use their knowledge of text structures to construct meaning. Fluent readers are able to read about topics that are abstract or outside their own experiences. They make both personal and critical responses to what was read. Fluent readers read with appropriate phrasing, expression, and rate.

Extended Fluent: The extended fluent reader has an extensive vocabulary and is able to read very complex and sophisticated texts with understanding. This reader uses multiple strategies and easily synthesizes information and constructs new meaning.

Reading Strategies

When it comes to reading comprehension there are a number of essential strategies for readers in all stages of reading development to use and develop. The following chart outlines seven key strategies. You can find additional information about reading strategies in *Active Readers Grades 7–9 Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents.*

Strategy		Sounds Like ...
Connecting	linking what is being read with personal experience, with what was previously read, and with a knowledge of the world to better understand what is being read	• This reminds me of a time when ... • Oh. This part explains the part on page ...
Questioning	asking questions about the text or the topic in order to better understand what is being read	• Before I started to read I wondered ... • I am confused because the visuals seem to say something different than the text. • This part makes me wonder about ... • This doesn't seem to make sense. I wonder if there is a mistake.
Inferring	interpreting "clues" left by the author and combining this with prior knowledge to create meaning	• Based on what I am reading I think the word means ... • I think ... because it says ...
Visualizing	picturing ideas and images based on the language and description used by the author	• I can picture the part where it says ... • I can imagine what it must be like to ... • I like the way the author describes ...
Determining Importance	knowing what is important and being able to identify key ideas	• This is about ... • This is important because ... • This information is interesting but it isn't part of the main idea. • This word is in bold so it must be important. • I can use headings and subheadings to help me find the information I am looking for.
Analysing	examining parts or all of a text in terms of its content, its structure, and its meaning	• I notice the author used this technique/word choice ... • I think the author tried to ... • This doesn't fit with what I know ... • This would have been better if ...
Synthesizing	building a new understanding by combining what is already known with what was read	• Now that I have read this I am beginning to think differently about ... • For me this is about ...

It is not enough simply to know what the strategies are; it is essential that we explicitly teach students each of the strategies and how to apply them as they are reading. One of the best ways that we can do this is by modelling and providing support to students as they learn how and when to use these strategies. Using short pieces of text allows this to happen.

Check It Out

Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, The (CAMET), *Cross-Curricular Reading Tools* (Crown Copyright, 2006).

Harvey, Stephanie, and Anne Goudvis, *Strategies That Work* (Stenhouse, 2000).

Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Active Readers, Grades 7–9, Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents* (Province of Nova Scotia, 2005).

Keene, Ellin Olliver, and Susan Zimmermann, *Mosaic of Thought*, second edition (Heinemann, 2007).

Tovani, Cris, *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* (Stenhouse, 2004).

Tovani, Cris. *I Read It, But I Don't Get It* (Stenhouse, 2000).

Reading? Try ...	
Connecting	• This reminds me of a time when ... • Oh. This part explains the part on page ...
Questioning	• Before I started to read, I wondered ... • I am confused because the visuals seem to say something different than the text. • This part makes me wonder about ... • This doesn't seem to make sense. I wonder if there is a mistake.
Inferring	• Based on what I am reading, I think the word means ... • I think ... because it says ...
Visualizing	• I can picture the part where it says ... • I can imagine what it must be like to ... • I like the way the author describes ...
Determining Importance	• This is about ... • This is important because ... • This information is interesting but it isn't part of the main idea. • This word is in bold so it must be important. • I can use headings and subheadings to help me find the information I am looking for.
Analysing	• I notice the author used this technique/word choice: ... • I think the author tried to ... • This doesn't fit with what I know ... • This would have been better if ...
Synthesizing	• Now that I have read this I am beginning to think differently about ... • For me this is about ...

Flagging

An example of explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies is an activity called "flagging." With flagging, you do the following:

1. Prepare the bookmark (see Appendix H11) with two or three colour-coded flags for each strategy.
2. Choose a piece to read aloud and prepare a copy large enough for everyone to see (e.g., from the overhead, poster, or LCD).
3. As you read the passage aloud, you think aloud using various strategies.
4. Each time a strategy is used, place its flag on the appropriate part of the passage.
5. When the reading has been completed, the flags are there as a reminder, as prompts for discussion, and as evidence of engagement.

After you have modelled the process, students can be given their own bookmarks with flags and encouraged to flag text as they read it.

Another variation would be to place the flags on the text ahead of time. As students read the text, the flags alert them to the fact that they should/could be making an inference, a connection, etc.

Drawing

Students can use drawing as a way to develop visualization and to gain greater insight into the reading. Here is an example of how students can use drawing to help understand the relationship between setting and character:

1. Ask students to close their eyes and listen as you read aloud. During this time they should be imagining the scene as you read.
2. Invite students to reread the text silently.
3. Following the reading ask the students to take 10 to 15 minutes to draw what they see.
4. Then have the students choose three or four images associated with the setting to analyse more closely. They should examine these images literally and symbolically to see what meaning the images contribute.
5. Next, invite students to discuss the various images and consider how the images contribute to the recurring theme of the poem or story.
6. Finally, ask the students to think about the setting and the character. Based on their analysis of the setting, students should write a statement or sentence about the character and use evidence from the story/poem to support it.

Check It Out

Wilhelm, Jeffrey, *Reading Is Seeing* (Scholastic, 2004)

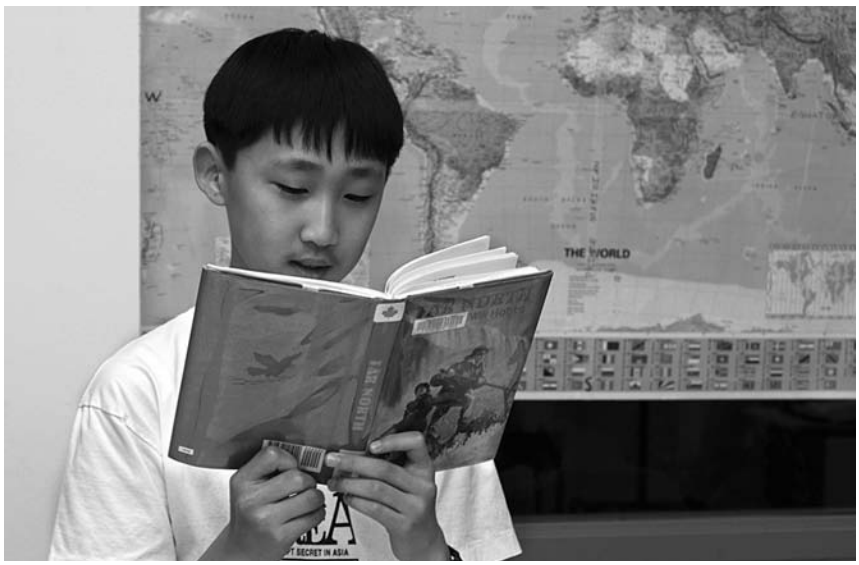
Moline, Steve, *I See What You Mean* (Stenhouse, 1995).

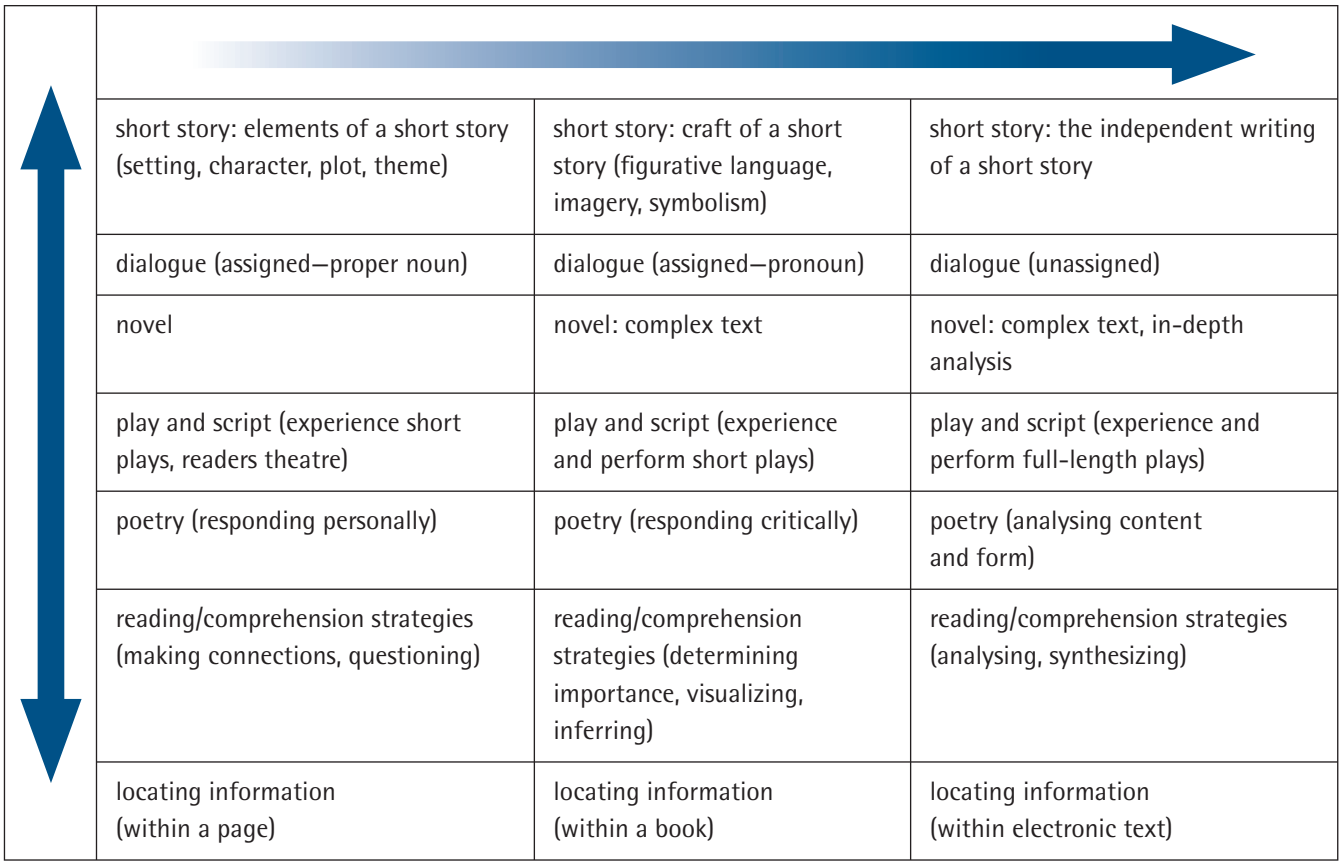
Suggested Curriculum Map: Recommended Experiences in Reading and Viewing

Because each group of students is different and each teacher brings different strengths to the classroom, it is difficult to identify a firm list of topics for each grade level. What is most important is that teachers discuss at the school level the kinds and diversity of experiences provided to students during the junior high/middle years.

The following chart offers a list of suggested experiences. It is organized so the experiences increase in complexity from left to right. Also, the diversity or kinds of experiences change from top to bottom. It is impossible to do everything in one year, so it is important that teachers decide among themselves how to divide up the experiences. This can be done vertically or horizontally, depending on student need and teacher strength. Ultimately, however, students need to have the opportunity to experience each of the components during their junior high/middle level years.

It is important to remember that short stories, novels, poetry, etc. should be used each year. The sophistication of the texts (topic, theme, text complexity, etc.) and the expectations for learning activities should increase. It is also important to note that the following does not necessarily require study of each mode of writing as an independent unit.





short story: elements of a short story (setting, character, plot, theme)	short story: craft of a short story (figurative language, imagery, symbolism)	short story: the independent writing of a short story
dialogue (assigned—proper noun)	dialogue (assigned—pronoun)	dialogue (unassigned)
novel	novel: complex text	novel: complex text, in-depth analysis
play and script (experience short plays, readers theatre)	play and script (experience and perform short plays)	play and script (experience and perform full-length plays)
poetry (responding personally)	poetry (responding critically)	poetry (analysing content and form)
reading/comprehension strategies (making connections, questioning)	reading/comprehension strategies (determining importance, visualizing, inferring)	reading/comprehension strategies (analysing, synthesizing)
locating information (within a page)	locating information (within a book)	locating information (within electronic text)

Suggested Reading List

While there is no prescribed reading list for junior high/middle level students, the following chart provides a range of texts that are highly recommended by teachers and students. The accompanying information might be helpful in selecting texts for instruction or in making recommendations to students. However, it is always important that teachers familiarize themselves with the texts in the classroom to ensure that they are appropriate (in terms of reading difficulty and the students' maturity level).

For the most current and up-to-date book recommendations, check the Canadian Children's Book Centre (www.bookcentre.ca).

Check It Out

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9* (Province of Nova Scotia, 1998).

Title	Recommended by		Text Type	Reading Level	AR books
	Students	Teachers			
A Wrinkle in Time		✓	F	F	ALR
Stuck in Neutral		✓	RF	F	
Of Things Not Seen		✓	RF	F	AR8
Across the Steel Ribbon		✓	HF	F	
The Outsiders		✓	RF	F	ALR
Stargirl	✓ (7, 8)		RF	F	AR8
The Baby Project		✓	RF	T	ALR
If I Just Had Two Wings		✓	HF	F	AR8
Freak the Mighty	✓	✓	RF	F	
The Giver		✓	F	F	ALR
Fallen Angels		✓	HF	T	
Ruby in the Smoke		✓	M	T	
Son of the Mob	✓		A/H	T	AR9
Son of the Mob II	✓		A/H	T	
Molly Moon Stops the World	✓		F	F	
Between a Rock and a Hard Place	✓		NF	T	
Quid Pro Quo	✓		RF	F	AR9
Spirit Walker	✓		F	F	
Touching Spirit Bear		✓	RF	F	
The People of Sparks	✓		F/SF	F	
Camp 30	✓		RF	F	
Molly Moon's Incredible Book of Hypnotism	✓		F	F	
Emlyns Moon	✓		F	F	
The House of the Scorpion	✓		F/SF	T	
Hit and Run	✓		RF	T	AR
The Cay	✓		A/HF	T	ALR
Ice Fire	✓		F	T	
Growing Wings	✓ (7)		F	T	
Camp X	✓ (8)		A/RF	T	
Awake and Dreaming	✓ (8)		F/RF	T	AR8
Rimshots	✓ (8)		P	T	AR8
The Fires of Merlin	✓ (8)		F	F	AR8
The Chronicles of Faerie	✓ (8)		F	F	AR8
Wizard of Earthsea	✓ (8)		F	F	AR8
Not as Crazy as I Seem		✓	RF	T	

Here are some popular and recommended authors or series:

Author/Series	Recommended by		Text Type	Reading Level	AR books
	Students	Teachers			
Lurlene McDaniel	✓ (7)		RF	T	
J.K. Rowling	✓ (7)		F	F	
C.S. Lewis	✓ (7)		F	F	
Lemony Snicket	✓ (7)		F	T	
Gary Paulsen	✓ (7)		A	T	
Kit Pearson	✓ (7)		RF	F	
Gordon Korman	✓ (7)		RF	T	
J.R.R. Tolkien	✓ (7-9)		F	F	
Beth Goobie	✓ (9)		RF		
Kenneth Opel	✓ (7)		F	F	
Paul Kropp	✓ (7)	✓	RF	T	
Lesley Choyce		✓	RF/SF	T/F	AR9
Budge Wilson		✓	RF/HF	T	AR8
Don Aker	✓	✓	RF	F	
Chicken Soup for the Soul (series)	✓		various	T	
Orca Soundings (series)	✓		RF	F	

Reading level:

Levelling formula as created by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell. See: Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell, *The Fountas and Pinnell Levelled Booklist K–8* (Heinnemann, 2006).

Text type:

(A-action, AR-Active Readers collections, F-fiction, H-horror, HF-historical fiction, M-mystery, NF-non-fiction, P- poetry, RF-realistic fiction, SF-science fiction)

Organizing for Reading: The Environment

Physical Environment

As students get older the tendency might be to worry less about the physical learning environment. It is certainly a challenge to fit older and larger bodies, plus a range of resources needed to learn, in one room. However, it is still important that attention be paid to this aspect of teaching and learning. Here are some things to consider with regard to the environment:

- space for meeting (whole group, small group)
- a few comfortable seats reserved for reading
- author's chair
- desks and seating that allow for work as individuals, pairs, or small groups
- attractive and accessible classroom library
- book displays, shelves, bins, ledges, rain gutter
- student work displayed around the room and school
- supportive text displayed around the room (charts, word walls, etc.)
- an expectation of reading with no interruption

Materials

To enhance opportunities and instruction in the area of reading and viewing, certain materials can be made available in classrooms. Some of these materials can be available in the classroom at all times, others accessible somewhere in the school. Here are some examples of materials that teachers and students may find helpful:

- computers
- highlighters
- listening centres, MP3 players
- overhead projector
- LCD projector
- plastic bins
- sticky notes
- tabs
- whiteboards (full size or smaller)
- bookmarks (strategy, note-making)
- range of text (full text, short text, novels, non-fiction, etc.)

The Classroom Library

At one time the classroom library in a junior high or middle school might have been nonexistent. If there were a library in the classroom, it likely consisted of a class set of anthologies and class sets of novels used to teach literature. To support the writing program, classes might also have had a few dictionaries available to students. Today, junior high and middle level classroom libraries look vastly different.

Due to a shift in thinking, an expanding notion of literacy and text, the greater role and availability of technology, and the infusion of print resources to classrooms as a result of the Active Readers initiative, classrooms today have a wide range of texts available to students and teachers.

Check It Out

Serafini, Frank, *The Reading Workshop* (Heinemann, 2001), pp. 28–33.

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell, *Guiding Readers and Writers (Grades 3–6)* (Heinemann, 2001).

Allen, Janet, *Yellow Brick Roads* (Pembroke, 2000), pp. 102–107.

Beyond the Short Story, Novel, Poetry, and Script: Teaching with a Range of Text

To provide the kind of instruction necessary to address the range of concepts and topics at the junior high/middle level, a classroom library should have a range of texts, including the following:

- **Short texts:** The benefits of short texts are numerous. When it comes to instruction, short texts are ideal. They can be used to model strategies and are great for students to practise independently. One of the greatest benefits of short texts is that they allow students and teachers to address a topic within a shorter time period, or even in a single class. Short texts include short stories, articles (newspaper or magazine), excerpts from longer text, and poetry.
- **Long texts:** Long texts are important as well. Students need to develop stamina in reading, and longer texts help them to achieve this. The ability to sustain interest and comprehension over a longer period is developed from reading longer pieces of text such as novels.
- **Visual texts:** Visual texts offer the reader information that is presented with the use of visuals rather than print. Charts, graphs, diagrams, photos, illustrations, webs, maps, etc., all present information visually. Because this kind of text is different from traditional print text, it requires a different set of strategies for reading it.
- **Electronic texts:** Electronic texts are an everyday part of life for most adolescents. Computers, the Internet, web pages, and electronic forms of communication such as e-mail and chat are becoming a bigger and bigger part of our students' lives. Teaching students how to navigate such texts effectively and responsibly means bringing them into the classroom.

- **Media texts:** Media texts are a form of electronic texts that also require a set of skills to engage in them. Advertisements, television, film, radio, etc., all require careful reading by students. Using these forms of text in the classroom will allow students the opportunity to develop this necessary set of skills.
- **Reference texts:** Reference texts, including atlases, dictionaries, thesauri, and multimedia encyclopedias, are sources of information that students should be able to use with confidence and success. Having these texts available and explicitly showing students how to use them is an important part of the English program.

Beyond the Short Story, Novel, Poetry, and Script: Teaching with Fiction and Non-fiction

In addition to the text forms identified above, it is also important that the English program be about more than teaching literature. For this to happen, English teachers must use, and teach students how to engage with, both fiction and non-fiction.

As students enter the junior high/middle level, their exposure to non-fiction increases dramatically. In the content areas, students are expected to be able to read and understand a wide range of material that is pertinent to the subject. They are also asked to create texts that are factual in nature. As students get older, their exposure to non-fiction continues to increase. Consider as an adult the amount of text you encounter each day that is informational, or non-fiction. Think about the kinds of things you are required to write—it is likely not poetry or stories. The amount of non-fiction in our lives can be staggering. As English teachers, we have to provide students with opportunities to develop the level of skill and comfort needed to engage with non-fiction both as readers and as writers.

Fiction and Non-fiction Genres

Genre is described as the type or kind of writing. A similar account of the following information is taken from the Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Active Readers Grades 7–9 Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents,* page 7. It outlines a number of genres for both fiction and non-fiction. Junior high/middle school students are expected to be familiar with these genres.

Check It Out

Atwell, Nancie, *Lessons That Change Writers* (Heinemann, 2002).

Atwell Nancie. *Naming The World* (Firsthand, 2006).

Buss, Kathleen, and Lee Karnowski, *Reading and Writing Nonfiction Genres* (International Reading Association, 2002).

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell, *Guiding Readers and Writers (Grades 3–6)* (Heinemann, 2001.)

Lesesne, Teri S, *Making the Match* (Stenhouse, 2003).

Genres at a Glance

Non-fiction

Code	Genre	Definition
I	Informational	Informational text provides information, facts, and principles related to physical, natural, or social topics or ideas.
E	Expository	Expository text explains or provides direction.
B	Biographical	A biography is an account of a person's life.
AB	Autobiographical	An autobiography is a biography written by the subject of the book.
Mem.	Memoir	Memoir is an account or reflection of a particular event, time, or period in a person's life.
Mes	Messaging Text	Computer-mediated language is now referred to as the fourth language-based medium of communication that people have invented. The first three are spoken, written, and sign language. Computer-mediated language is presented in a range of text messaging formats and resembles typed speech or "Text Talk," a phrase coined by John Suler, author of the online book *The Psychology of Cyberspace* (Suler 2003). Electronic text messages are conversational in tone. Because they are usually not written in real-time, the writer generally takes time to think, reflect, and evaluate what he or she will "say" before communicating.

Fiction

Code	Genre	Definition
TL	Traditional literature	Traditional literature began with oral stories passed down throughout history. It includes folktales, (including fairy tales), myths, legends, and epics.
F	Fantasy	Fantasy contains unrealistic or unworldly elements. It includes science fiction.
SF	Science Fiction	Science fiction contains unworldly elements or phenomena. It may be set in distant places or times, involve alien or superhuman characters, and use technologies currently unavailable to us.
RF	Realistic Fiction	Realistic fiction often focusses on universal human problems and issues. Although it comes from the writer's imagination, it is true to life, or realistic.
HF	Historical Fiction	Historical fiction is a fictional account of events created by the author, but true to life in some period of the past.
M	Mystery	Mystery offers the reader suspense and wonder as the author reveals the plot and characters, bit by bit. Central to this genre is the element of the unknown and the reader's attempt to solve the mystery using the clues provided by the author.
A	Adventure	Adventure provides the reader with the opportunity to explore circumstances in which characters experience new situations, overcome adversity, and grow as individuals. The plot is often fast-paced and exciting.

Fiction and Non-fiction Text Structure

Text structure refers to the way a text is organized. Narrative text and information text have distinct structures; each is determined by the author's intent and purpose in writing. The following information, taken from *Active Readers Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents,* Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2005*,* describes various text structures.

Narrative text typically has the following structure:

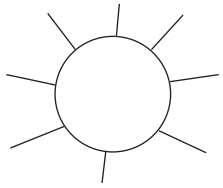
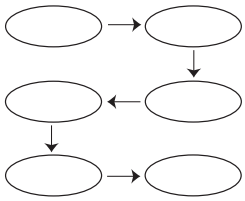
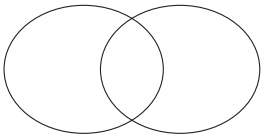
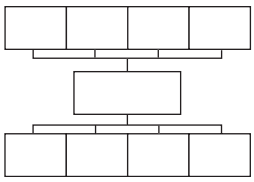
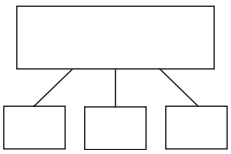
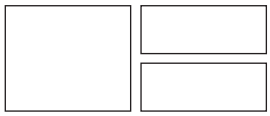
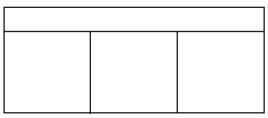
beginning/lead ⟶ middle/plot ⟶ end/resolution

Students easily recognize this structure, and this familiarity supports their reading of the text.

Besides the structure, narrative text has other common elements:

- **setting:** time and location of the story
- **character:** those individuals involved in the story (may be human or animal)
- **plot:** events of the story
- **conflict:** the problem that forms the basis of the story (person against person, person against nature, person against himself or herself, person against society, or person against the supernatural)
- **climax:** the point in the story to which everything builds—often the turning point
- **theme:** a central unifying idea
- **point of view:** the perspective from which the story is told (first person, third person, omniscient)

Information text does not fit within the same text structure as fiction. Common text patterns for information text are defined and illustrated in the following chart.

Text Pattern	Definition	Key Words	Graphic Organizer
Description	uses language to help the reader visualize what is being described by the author	verbs (meandered, jumped, snapped) relational words (on, over, beyond, within) adjectives (large, colourful) adverbs (slowly, quickly)	
Sequence	presents ideas or events in the order in which they occur	first, second, before, after, finally, then, next, earlier, later, last	
Compare and Contrast	discusses two or more ideas, events, or phenomena, explaining how they are similar and different	while, yet, rather, most, either, like, unlike, same, as opposed to, as well as, on the other hand, although, similarly, opposite	
Cause and Effect	provides explanations or reasons for an event/ occurrence, as well as the results and impact	because, since, thus, so that, if ... then ..., therefore, nevertheless, due to, this led to, as a result, then ... so, for this reason, on account of, consequently	
Problem/ Solution	identifies problems and poses possible solutions	propose, conclude, a solution, the problem, the question, research shows, the evidence is, a reason for	
Question and Answer	poses a question and offers an answer or explanation	who, what, when, where, why, how	
Proposition and Support	makes a statement or gives a position or an opinion, then supports it with reasoning and evidence	value words: agree, wrong, unjust, support adjectives: gigantic mistake, huge catastrophe, testimonials: experts say, studies show, research says	

If students recognize various text structures, they will be able to anticipate and make predictions about the text. These predictions provide a framework for their reading and can support the meaning-making process.

In addition to supporting students as readers, understanding text patterns assists them as writers. With understanding and experience about the many ways in which text is structured, students can more readily incorporate these patterns into their own construction of written text. For students to achieve a high degree of understanding, teachers must point out these text patterns and provide related instruction in reading and writing contexts.

Organizing for Reading: Instruction

Throughout the year, reading and viewing instruction will focus on a number of different skills and concepts. In addition, it may also include routines such as

- how to work in small groups
- how to read independently
- how to read with a partner (e.g., reciprocal read)
- how to select and sign out books
- how to record and document reading
- how to respond to text

Check It Out

Allen, Janet, *Yellow Brick Roads* (Pembroke, 2000).

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell, *Guiding Readers and Writers (Grades 3–6)* (Heinemann, 2001).

Robb, Laura. *Teaching Reading in the Middle School* (Scholastic Publishing, 2000).

"Just Right" Text

Because not every student reads with the same confidence, skill, and interest, our classroom libraries must include texts that are accessible and engaging for all of our learners. We need texts that challenge, but don't defeat, our stronger readers, as well as those who struggle. A junior high/middle level classroom will likely have a few students who are reading at the early stage of development. Most students, however, will probably be reading at the transitional and fluent stages of development. This means that the texts available in the classroom must range from the very straightforward to the very complex.

Classrooms also need texts about topics that will motivate and engage a diverse population. A wide variety of topics is key to hooking the reluctant learner.

See Appendix H9 for a sample Reading Interest Inventory.

IDEAS

Ideas for Differentiation:

Get to know students' interests. You can do this through a survey or general conversation. Sign out books from the library that deal with a range of topics including those in which students have expressed an interest. Make these available to students who are reluctant to read.

Teaching Vocabulary

Vocabulary is key to building conceptual understanding and the ability to communicate. Words, are really nothing more than tags to place on concepts in order to aid communication with others. In the section on Planning and Collaboration (page 18), vocabulary is discussed in terms of our need to collaborate and work with others to define an academic vocabulary. In this section we will expand on the idea of vocabulary, with suggestions about vocabulary instruction.

The following chart outlines a number of characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction. When teaching concepts and the vocabulary associated with them, you should consider whether instruction reflects some or all of these characteristics.

Characteristic	What This Means
Focus on terms that have potential for high payoff.	Selection is key. The words selected for explicit instruction should be words that are necessary for academic success. Words that are interesting or unusual do not necessarily build or reinforce the prior knowledge necessary to be successful academically.
Build on what students already know about the concept/term.	Students may already have prior knowledge of the meaning of the concept/term being discussed. It is important to recognize this, reinforce accurate understandings, and use this as a scaffold for constructing new knowledge. Teachers can also build on students' understanding of word parts such as common affixes and roots, and of word origins or etymology.
Focus on descriptions, not definitions.	Students do not improve their understanding of a word by reading or recording definitions. Instead, they should describe and use the vocabulary in language that is their own.
Encourage multiple representations (linguistic and nonlinguistic).	The more ways students can represent their understanding of a work, the better their understanding will be. Students should write, draw, act, etc., to build understanding.
Provide multiple exposures.	Students need to hear and use a word multiple times and in multiple ways before they truly understand it.
Don't underestimate the value of talk and oral language.	The more students use the word in their oral language the better their understanding will be. Also, by discussing words with others students will revise, expand, and continue to develop their understanding with the help of their peers.
Provide opportunity for students to play with the words.	Games are a great way to reinforce vocabulary. Games are enjoyable, require the student to use the vocabulary repeatedly, and can be very quick.

Documenting or Recording Vocabulary

One thing that you may wish to consider is the collaborative use of a vocabulary journal that students develop and keep throughout their junior high/middle school years. Not only does this provide a place for students to record their learning, but it also demonstrates growth and illustrates the level of sophistication that students have developed in their understanding over time. A vocabulary journal can simply be a three-ring binder with alphabetical sections for identified vocabulary. Each vocabulary term can be assigned its own page, (see Appendices H2–H5 for sample vocabulary templates). As students develop their understanding of a term, it is recorded on the sheet and placed in the appropriate section of the binder. Although some sample templates have been provided, you should create your own templates based on the needs of your students. Computer programs such as *Microsoft Word* and *Inspiration* can be very helpful when constructing these templates.

The vocabulary box template (Appendix H2) provides students with an organizer. In the top left box the student records the word. The top right is for related or similar words. The bottom left is for notes or an explanation of the term. The bottom right box provides a space where the student can draw a picture or create a visual image to help with understanding.

The vocabulary spider template (Appendix H3) requires similar information. In this case, the word is recorded in the centre. On the lines the student records examples of how the term is used in context. The oval space is for a visual, and the thought bubble is a place for questions about the term. The empty space in the bottom right corner is where the student can record notes or an explanation.

The vocabulary pyramid template (Appendix H4) records increasing levels of sophistication. When a term is first introduced, the student records what he or she knows or understands in the top box. As the student learns more about the term/concept, he or she adds this new understanding in the boxes below, each time restating or incorporating previous understandings.

The vocabulary notes template (Appendix H5) is used to record what a student knows or currently understands about a term or concept. The vocabulary term is written on the top line, and a description is recorded below. The empty space on the left is for a picture or diagram to help explain the concept. The blank space on the right is for any additional information that the student wishes to record that will help him/her understand the term. Finally, the space in the right margin is where the students can record the subject area(s) in which the term is used.

Check It Out

Marzano, Robert, *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement* (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2004).

Beers, Kylene, *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do* (Heinemann, 2003) pp. 223–229.

Should the usage or meaning be different from one subject to another the student would complete a template for each. Each page provides two templates. This allows the student to record their understanding of the same term on two occasions. Students should look for a higher level of understanding and sophistication over time.

Organizing for Reading: Management

One way to organize a reading program is to use a reading workshop format. A reading workshop actively engages students in a number of purposeful reading experiences, ranging from those directed by the teacher to experiences that the students select and complete independently. A reading workshop is not without structure; the key is finding the structure that best suits the situation. Here are some things to consider regarding management:

- Decide what is negotiable.
- Establish expectations with students and post these expectations in the room or provide students with a copy to keep in their binders.
- Explicitly teach or model the expectations (how to choose books, read documents, work with groups).
- Consider how time will be organized (perhaps begin every class with a read-aloud, or time for independent reading; consider ending a class with a whole group sharing, ensure there is opportunity for direct instruction, supported instruction, and independent work).
- Try to organize time in larger chunks or blocks.
- Post an agenda for the day or the week so students know what to expect and what materials to bring to class.
- Have materials on hand for student work.
- Decide how and when you will find time to listen to and discuss reading of an individual or small group.
- Consider how you will document student learning (student portfolios, observational notes, checklists, recording of grades based on student work samples, etc.).

Components of Reading Workshop

There is no one correct way to organize a reading workshop; however, a number of components are common to the time known as Reading Workshop, including

- reading aloud
- dedicating time for independent reading
- short mini-lessons and modelling of reading strategies
- providing instruction about core texts and big ideas
- making time for student work
- providing opportunity for sharing (literature circles, reader's chair, book talks, etc.)
- offering specific feedback and communication between teacher and student
- creating a comfortable, print-rich environment

Scheduling Reading Workshop

Reading Workshop as a framework, is not something that has to happen every day. The following charts illustrate some basic factors to scheduling Reading Workshop:

- providing a shorter amount of time each day (schedule A)
- providing longer blocks of time each week (schedule B)
- providing extended blocks for a period of time (schedule C)
- providing abbreviated periods clustered over time (*schedule D)

These are examples only. It is important to note that a minimum of 60 minutes of English language arts instruction is required every day in grades 7 and 8. In grade 9, the amount of time devoted to reading and reading related activity may require varying scheduling scenarios. The Listening and Speaking strand requires both embedded contexts for learning as well as opportunities for more explicit attention.

Schedule A

60 minutes of English language arts each day:

- 20 minutes of reading workshop
- 40 minutes of writing workshop (during which read-aloud, mini-lessons, etc., are also a component)
- 20–30 minutes of independent reading homework each night (Monday to Thursday)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
20 minutes **Reading Workshop** • read-aloud • mini-lesson	**20 minutes** **Reading Workshop** • mini-lesson	**20 minutes** **Reading Workshop** • independent reading (of teacher selected text)	**20 minutes** **Reading Workshop** • book talks or literature circles	**20 minutes** **Reading Workshop** • independent reading (free choice)
40 minutes Writing Workshop	40 minutes Writing Workshop	40 minutes Writing Workshop	40 minutes Writing Workshop	40 minutes Writing Workshop

Schedule B

60 minutes of English language arts each day:

- Reading Workshop for 2 of 5 days
- Writing Workshop for 3 of 5 days
- 20–30 minutes of independent reading homework each night (Monday to Thursday)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
60 minutes **Writing Workshop**	**60 minutes** **Writing Workshop**	**60 minutes** **Writing Workshop**	**60 minutes** **Reading Workshop** • independent reading • book talks or literature circles	**60 minutes** **Reading Workshop** • read-aloud • mini-lesson • independent reading

Schedule C

60 minutes of English language arts each day:

- Reading Workshop for 2–3 of 5 weeks
- Writing Workshop for remaining weeks
- 20–30 minutes of independent reading homework each night (Monday to Thursday)

week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 5
Reading Workshop • read-aloud • mini-lessons • independent reading	**Reading Workshop** • mini-lessons • independent reading • book talk/ literature circles	**Writing Workshop**	**Writing Workshop**	**Writing Workshop**
week 6	**week 7**	**week 8**	**week 9**	**week 10**
Reading Workshop • core text study	**Reading Workshop** • core text study	**Reading Workshop** • core text study	**Writing Workshop**	**Writing Workshop**

*Schedule D

40-minute English language arts periods (offered twice daily for grades 7 and 8):

- alternate periods of reading and writing workshop
- 20–30 minutes of independent reading homework each night (Monday to Thursday)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10 minutes • mini-lesson **2 minutes** • status of the class **23 minutes** • reading or writing **5 minutes** • sharing	**10 minutes** • mini-lesson **2 minutes** • status of the class **23 minutes** • reading or writing **5 minutes** • sharing	**10 minutes** • mini-lesson **2 minutes** • status of the class **23 minutes** • reading or writing **5 minutes** • sharing	**10 minutes** • mini-lesson **2 minutes** • status of the class **23 minutes** • reading or writing **5 minutes** • sharing	**10 minutes** • mini-lesson **2 minutes** • status of the class **23 minutes** • reading or writing **5 minutes** • sharing

*Please note: this schedule may be most useful for grade 9, where more abbreviated periods may be required.

Check It Out

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell, *Guiding Readers and Writers (Grades 3–6)* (Heinemann, 2001).

Robb, Laura, *Teaching Reading in Middle School* (Scholastic, 2000), pp. 48–49.

Serafini, Frank, *The Reading Workshop* (Heinemann, 2001).

In situations where the length of periods is not 60 minutes, you can adjust schedules accordingly. Teachers with two 30-minute periods a day can opt for one 30-minute Reading Workshop and one 30-minute Writing Workshop. The Reading Workshop could consist of a read-aloud or mini-lesson, followed by independent reading. It is also possible to use the entire 30 minutes for study of a core text.

A 60-minute period can also be organized into smaller chunks. Adolescents often have a difficult time focussing on any one thing for long periods of time, so organizing it into manageable chunks of time is important. Although scheduling is important, *when* you do something is not as important as *what* you do. Students do, however, need opportunity to engage in the full range of experiences. Your timetable and your students' needs will largely dictate whether you are able to provide instruction in larger blocks or spread it out over a longer period of time.

Documentation and Accountability

With Reading Workshop one of the greatest challenges for teachers is how to have students document their learning. One way is to have students keep a reading log or journal that documents their reading and their learning. How teachers use logs and journals can vary greatly from classroom to classroom. What is important is that the system be manageable for both teacher and students and that it be purposeful and meaningful.

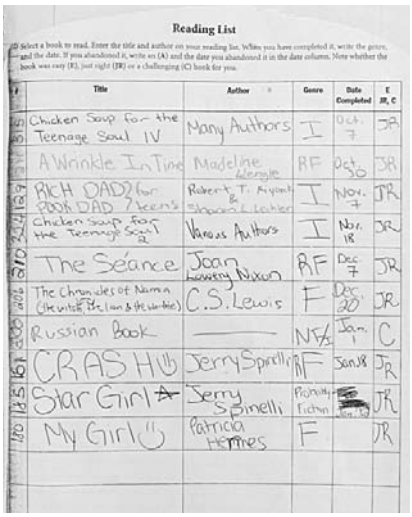
Regardless of the system used, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Artifacts should not be limited to written responses—oral, visual, dramatic, and other forms of representation should be encouraged.
- It is not necessary to document everything that is read; there are times when reading should be simply for enjoyment.
- Quality of response is of greater importance than the quantity of responses.
- It is necessary to model and explicitly teach expectations for response.
- Evaluating/grading logs and journals should be based on the students' demonstration of outcomes; thus, it may not be necessary to grade each entry, but rather to look for overall achievement across a number of entries.

The following are a number of approaches for having students document learning using logs and journals.

Reading Log/List

A reading log/list is simply a place where students keep track of the things they are reading. Often students are encouraged to set goals for quantity, as well as diversity or range, in reading (see Appendix H6).



Reading List

	Title	Author	Genre	Date Completed	E JF, C
	Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul IV	Many Authors	I	Oct. 7	JR
	A Wrinkle In Time	Madeline L'Engle	RF	Oct. 30	JR
	RICH DAD/Poor DAD for Teens	Robert T. Kiyosaki & Sharon L. Lechter	I	Nov. 7	JR
	Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul 2	Various Authors	I	Nov. 18	JR
	The Séance	Joan Lowery Nixon	RF	Dec. 7	JR
	The Chronicles of Narnia (the witch, the lion & the wardrobe)	C.S. Lewis	F	Dec. 20	JR
	Russian Book	———	NF	Jan. 1	C
	CRASH	Jerry Spinelli	RF	Jan. 8	JR
	Star Girl ~~~	Jerry Spinelli	Fiction		JR
	My Girl	Patricia Hermes	F		JR

Tech Tools

Students can review books they've read online and post their recommendations, possibly starting an online book club.

Double-Entry Diary

This journal is in a two-column format (see Appendix H7) and can be used in a number of ways. Here are three possibilities:

- In the first column the student records ideas and response to text. In the second column a peer or teacher comments, provides additional information, or asks questions.
- In the first column the student records a direct quote from the text and in the second column responds to, or comments on, the quote.
- In the first column higher-level questions are posed by the teacher or another student. In the second column the student responds.

Open Journal

An open journal is a place where students can record their responses to the text in a manner that communicates information and responses in a less structured but still meaningful way. Students must record ideas and information that relate to the text in a form that might include

- comments and connections they have made to the text
- questions or things they wonder about that are prompted by the text
- quotes from the text
- words they like the sound of
- additional information they have gathered to help extend or clarify the text
- poetry they have written based on the text
- sketches or art work
- a letter to a character, the author, etc.
- a revision or new ending, chapter, lead, etc.
- observations they have made about author's craft or the construction of the text

IDEAS

Ideas for Differentiation:

One way to differentiate is to allow students to vary what they read and the amount they read. The reading log/list sheet provides an opportunity for students to set their own minutes for reading. While this should be done in consultation with the teacher, students can increase or decrease the minutes they read depending on their reading needs and strengths. Also, note that the minutes are per week, not per day. This allows students to decide if they want to read a little bit each day, or for longer periods of time less frequently.

Check It Out

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell, *Guiding Readers and Writers (Grades 3–6)* (Heinemann, 2001).

Tovani, Cris, *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* (Stenhouse, 2004).

Wilhelm, Jeffrey, *Action Strategies for Deepening Comprehension* (Scholastic, 2002).

Vignette

I am always looking for ways to integrate technology into our curriculum and have found blogging online as a way of incorporating technology and meeting my outcomes. I have students create a secure blog and have them post their thoughts, and ideas online instead of in a journal. They also get to create fictitious names for their blogs. The benefit of this is that it is accessible anywhere, free, and environmentally friendly. They are using computers (which they love), and I can leave them a message or share my thoughts with them anytime.

~ Grade 8 Teacher

Blogging

Using technology in purposeful ways is another way to engage students in the process of conversing about text. Because technology is such a prevalent aspect of many students' lives, it can be a way to open doors and promote conversation. Some students might be more receptive to discussing text in an online format than they are with more traditional pencil and paper methods. A blog is simply an online forum where students can post messages, as well as read and respond to the posts of others. One caution, however, when it comes to using blogs or other computer technology, is to ensure that blogging is not the only option. There are likely students without easy access to, or experience with, technology, and it is important that they not be disadvantaged further.

Non-linguistic Representations

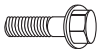
Students should be encouraged to respond to text in ways other than writing. Non-linguistic representations might include

- models
- visuals
- role-play, script, drama
- music, song
- interviews
- oral presentations
- puppet shows
- storytelling
- dance

Tech Tools

Consider using technology in your language arts curriculum for students to respond to text. Examples include

- digital storyboards
- multimedia presentations
- slideshow presentations

Nuts and Bolts 

Build a quality classroom library. Communicate the importance of books by the number of books in the classroom, the diversity of books, their presentation and display, and their access and availability to students.

Finding books for your classroom can be a challenge. Here are some suggestions for locating books:

- Locate and display the Active Readers collection of student resources.
- Borrow collections of books from the school library, public library, or Teacher's Resource Centre.
- Pair up with other teachers and rotate or swap books during the year.
- Invite students and families to donate books they have already read.
- Join book clubs and use the "credits" you receive to buy books for the classroom.
- Visit used book stores.

Tech Tools 

Consider supplementing your classroom library by using Internet, online text, books on CD, etc.

Storing books can also be a challenge, especially in classrooms with limited space and even less storage. Here are some suggestions for storing and displaying books:

- Use chalk/whiteboard ledges.
- Store books in plastic bins that can sit on counters or tables.
- See if students in the tech ed program could make bookshelves as one of their projects.
- Use inexpensive materials to make display shelves on wall space (eavestrough, crown molding).
- Whenever possible, display books with the cover facing out.

Consider lamps and soft background music in your classroom to help create a mood.

Vignettes

I had always had a tough time each year not being able to keep track of my classroom library. I had a sign-out sheet that was not 100 percent successful and I always ended up losing books. To help manage my classroom library I created library cards for each of my students. I gave each of my students two index cards. They put their names on the cards and would write the names of the books they were signing out on the card. Once they took the book from the library, they would hand me their library cards. I would keep them in a plastic container and when they finished the book they would return the book to me. I would then locate their card from the container and issue a date-returned stamp on their index card, indicating they had returned the book.

~ Grade 7 Teacher

As part of my English language arts program I read to my students every day at the beginning of class. I usually read from a novel for 10–15 minutes. This past year I taught a section of French Immersion students for ELA. Unfortunately, I only saw them for four 35-minute periods a cycle. I could not afford the class time to read to them as I did to my English program students. I found a technique in the book *Reading Reasons*, by Kelly Gallagher, called **Reading Minute**. Reading Minutes involve finding short pieces of text—articles from the newspaper, Chicken Soup stories, poetry, etc.—and reading it to your students on a daily basis. Students are responsible for writing down the title of the piece, the date, and a one-line sentence summary, connection, or question. In my class, after term 1, each student signed up for a date, found a short piece of text, and read aloud to the class.

~ Grade 8 Teacher

Vignette

With little space in the classroom to display books one option is displaying book jackets. I photocopy the front and back cover of the book, fold it in half and post the jacket of every book to a large bulletin board at the back of my room. I ensure that my students see the actual books early in the year.

The photocopied book jackets also provide a simple means of retrieving and recording borrowed books. The actual books are arranged in my cupboards in alphabetical order by title. When students wish to borrow a particular book, they find its photocopied jacket on the bulletin board (also arranged in alphabetical order). On a sticky note, I record the student's name and the date, and then I stick the sticky note inside the photocopied jacket. When I retrieve the book from the cupboard, I put the book jacket in its place, and I return the book jacket to the bulletin board (minus the sticky note) once the book is returned to me. I do not assign return dates—my students are free to keep books as long as they want except in the following cases: another student is requesting the book and the original borrower has had it for a long time (the date on the sticky note will alert me to this), or the school year is coming to a close and I want to make sure I get all my books back.

~ Grade 9 Teacher

Check It Out

Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Active Readers, Grades 7–9, Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents* (Province of Nova Scotia, 2005).

Gregory, Kathleen, Caren Cameron, and Anne Davies, *Conferencing and Reporting* (Connections, 2001).

Assessing Reading and Viewing

As is the case in assessing listening and speaking, you must know what you are looking for when assessing reading and viewing skills. Once you know what it is you hope to find out about a student's reading skills, you can choose an apt assessment tool.

Key areas that English language arts teachers must assess include

- ability to decode printed text
- comprehension of printed text, visual text, media text
- fluency
- amount and type of reading
- personal response to a text
- critical analysis and response to a text
- ability to navigate various text

Tools for reading assessment also fit within the COP triangle (see page 39). Students and teachers should be looking for evidence of growth and learning in the form of conversations, observations, and products. The following chart identifies a number of tools that can be used to document assessment information about reading and viewing. For more information related to assessment of reading see *Active Readers, Grades 7–9, Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents.*

Assessment Tool	Conversations	Observations	Products
conferences	✓	✓	
anecdotal records	✓	✓	
checklists	✓	✓	
rating scale		✓	
rubric		✓	
record of oral reading		✓	✓
performances		✓	✓
work samples			✓
portfolio			✓
tests/quiz			✓

Using Conferences

Conferring is an ideal way to collect information about a student's reading. Conferences can range from very informal conversations that teachers have with students about their reading to more formal times when teachers and students sit together to discuss reading and learning in a more focussed and in-depth manner. In either case, the goal of the conference is for the teacher to confirm what is already known about the student, or to add new insight or information.

Conferences may include discussion about

- goal setting
- what a student is reading (choices for reading)
- discussion about the text
- a chance to listen to the student read aloud
- a retelling
- strategies used and areas for growth

There is no one right way to manage conferences. The key is to find a system that works for you and your students. Here are some things to consider when using conferences as a means of assessment:

- With whom will you conference? (all students? selected students?)
- How often will you conference with students? (monthly? once per term?)
- What will be the focus of the conference?

The answers to these questions will help determine how to organize and manage conferences. Here is a sample of one kind of reading conference:

- Ensure that the class is working quietly on their own tasks (e.g., independent reading).
- Invite the student to bring a copy of the book being read and meet you at a table in the room where you have some privacy but still a good view of the class.
- Ask the student about the book (e.g., What kind of book is it? Why did you choose it? Are you enjoying the book? Why? Why not?).
- Ask the student about the book (e.g., What is it about? What is one thing you have noticed about the author's writing style? What have you liked and disliked about the book?) Here your focus should be on determining if the student's retelling and discussion show an adequate level of understanding of the book.

Vignette

During the first two or three days of school in September, I arrange my students' seats in a large circle and place several of my classroom library books on each desk. Students take a few minutes to examine the books on their desks (looking at the covers, reading the jacket blurbs, scanning the text, etc.), and then they record in their reader's logs any titles of books they think they might like to read during the year. Students then pass their books to their right, at which time they receive another handful of books from their left. They repeat the process until every student has seen all the books.

Following the book pass, I ask each student to tell the class about one or two books he or she recorded, and I invite anyone who may have read these books to offer comments. If no one has read a book that's mentioned, I perform an impromptu book talk, highlighting what I enjoyed about it.

This system allows me to keep track of my books and ensures that students take care of those they borrow from me. Also, because they know how much I value books and reading, students (and their parents) often donate some of their own to my classroom library.

~ Grade 9 Teacher

Check It Out

Atwell, Nancie, *Naming the World* (Firsthand, 2006).

- Invite the student to read aloud a portion of the book and listen for oral reading fluency (rate, expression, phrasing), as well as the strategies and the behaviours the student uses when reading (self-correcting, word solving, rereading, using context to word-solve, cross-checking, using/attending to visuals, making connections, questioning, analysing, etc.).
- Ask the student for a retelling of the portion of the text that was read aloud.
- To end the conference, have a discussion about the student's strengths, as well as areas of need that might include setting goals for the future or making recommendations about future reading.
- During or following the conference, document key points to be used for making instructional decisions in the future, or for reporting progress to parents/guardians.

See Appendix H8 for a sample conference log.

Using Performance Assessment

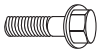
Performance assessment is essentially about having students engage in real reading activities and assessing their performance based on that work. Performance assessments can involve the students in

- reading aloud
- participating in a discussion about reading (e.g., literature circle, conference)
- responding to text (oral, written, visual, dramatic, etc.)
- providing a book talk

The essential question to ask when considering performance assessment is, What do I want to know about my student as a reader? The next essential questions is, What is the most purposeful way that I can find that out?

When using performance assessment it is also necessary to consider how the information will be collected and recorded. As always, knowing up front what you are looking for is essential. Tools such as checklists, rating scales, and rubrics can be helpful in guiding your observation.

> *"What works ... Giving students time to read. Giving students choice in what they read. Giving students time to share."*
>
> Grade 9 Teacher

Nuts and Bolts: 

Read what students are reading. Get to know young-adult fiction. Set a target or goal for yourself to read a certain number of books (e.g., one to four titles each term).

Make bookmarks to give to students that list the reading strategies. Encourage students to keep these with them as they read. See a sample reading strategy bookmark in Appendix H11.

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

Role of Writing and Other Ways of Representing in the Classroom

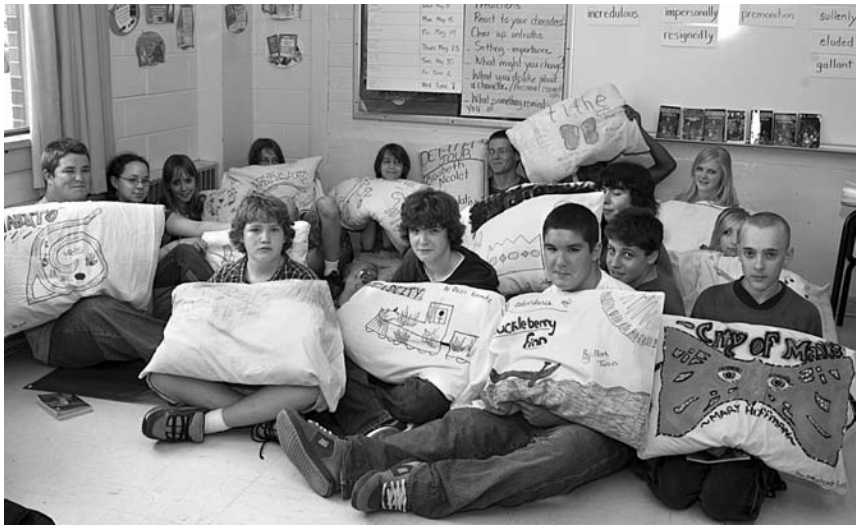
Writing and other forms of representing include many different ways of communicating, and they play a crucial role in the English language arts classroom. We are able to express ourselves and our ideas through a variety of media, not just the traditional essay or story.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for English teachers is to ensure that the other forms of representation are valued and taught along with the teaching of writing.

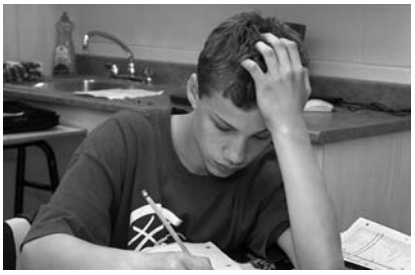
Writing and representing are really about expression and the communication of ideas and information. What form they take or how information is communicated, can be very diverse. Common forms of representation include

- posters
- drama
- art
- essays
- three-dimensional models
- graphs, charts, diagrams, maps
- mobiles
- models
- pamphlets
- photo essays
- scrapbooks
- games
- time lines
- collages
- costumes
- web pages
- video reports
- websites
- multimedia portfolios
- multimedia movies
- slideshow presentations
- podcasts
- blogs
- digital storyboards

In many cases, students might view some of these forms of representation as being easier than writing a traditional essay or paragraph explaining something. The key is to ensure that students know the organization and codes and conventions associated with different representations, as well as those used in written language. It is the use of these commonly understood codes and conventions that make smooth communication possible between two people.



Characteristics of Effective Writers and Those Who Represent



It's pretty easy to identify what it means to be a good writer. In the classroom, it is critically important to clearly communicate this to students. If you were asked to brainstorm a list of qualities that effective writers possess, your list may be similar to the one below. Again, as with Listening and Speaking and Reading and Viewing, it is not coincidental that such a list closely resembles the expected outcomes outlined in the English language arts curriculum guide. Ensuring the same consistency between personal expectations and the expectations outlined in the guide is important.

Expectations for Writing and Representing

It is essential that you know what your expectations are for your students. This list provides an overview of common expectations about writing and representing. A student

- is an effective communicator and has a clear purpose for writing
- considers the audience when writing, and chooses topics, words, and language suitable to that audience
- uses note-making strategies to record new ideas
- revises their work
- edits and proofreads written work
- uses correct procedures for references
- demonstrates commitment to their work
- shows creativity
- creates a variety of texts and knows which are best suited to each occasion
- knows the codes and conventions for various forms of written work (e.g., letter, essay, report, poster, pamphlet, picture book, recipe, multimedia presentation, etc.) and includes them in their work
- organizes ideas
- avoids including too much information
- integrates common symbols in visuals

Check It Out

Burke, Jim, *Writing Reminders* (Heinemann, 2003), pp. 187–190.

Elements of Written Communication

Regardless of what a person is writing—a shopping list, a report about volcanoes, or a poster to save the whales—there are three key questions that the author must ask:

- To whom am I writing?
- Why am I writing?
- What will the finished piece of writing look like?

These three questions are central to the writing. How an author answers them will help determine who the **audience** is, the **purpose** for writing, and the **form and structure** it should have.

Determining audience helps the writer to know how formal or informal the writing should be. A letter to a friend and a letter to one's employer should be very different because the audience is different. Knowing the audience will also help determine the level of detail and information the finished piece of writing should contain. An essay being read by someone who is knowledgeable about the topic can have much more detail and be more technical than an essay intended for an audience with little background knowledge on the topic.

About audience, the writer might ask,

- Who will be reading this piece of writing?
- Is a formal or informal style more appropriate for this audience?
- What information on this subject does this audience need?
- How much information does this audience already know?

Determining purpose is important because it helps the writers maintain a focus. The main purposes of writing are to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. Before and during the writing process the writer should ask,

- What do I want my audience to know when I have finished?
- What do I want my audience to believe or agree with?
- Is there an action that I want my audience to take?

The form and structure of the writing could be determined by the assignment. In some cases, students might be expected to follow a set form or structure if they are writing a research paper or an essay. This includes rules about placement and organization of information, paragraphing, and citing and referencing work. There are times, however, when students must decide what form will best accomplish their purpose given their particular audience. Here are some questions to ask about form:

- Is there a model or format that I am supposed to follow?
- Would formal or informal writing be more appropriate for my audience and purpose?
- How can I best organize my information to have the greatest impact on my audience?

For more information about text structure, see page 73.

Check It Out

Rog, Lori Jamison, and Paul Kropp, *The Write Genre* (Pembroke, 2004).

Gallagher, Kelly, *Teaching Adolescent Writers* (Stenhouse, 2006).

Traits/Qualities of Writing

In addition to considering audience, purpose, and form, students need instruction and opportunity to further develop the following qualities of effective writing.

Traits	What This Means	Questions to Ask
Ideas	The ideas trait is about the focus and clarity of the writing. It includes the accuracy of the information presented and the focus—one main message or several related messages.	• Does the writing stay on topic? • Is the information correct? • Have I included any "filler"? • Is my message clear?
Organization	Organization as a trait deals with how the writing is structured, the pace, and the order or sequence of the writing.	• Does the organization suit the task? • Is there a clear introduction and conclusion? • Are there transitions to move from one idea to another? • Does the writing have a good pace? Does it drag on, or is it too rushed?
Sentence Fluency	This trait is largely about the sound of the writing when read aloud. It should be easy to read and use a variety of sentence types.	• Are sentences complete? • Are there a variety of sentence lengths? • Are there run-on sentences or fragments? • Do changes in verb tense serve a purpose?

Continued

Traits	What This Means	Questions to Ask
Voice	Writing that has voice engages the reader and conveys the personality and sincerity of the author.	• Is the writing respectful of the audience? • Is there a commitment to the topic? • Does the writing sound like me?
Word Choice	Word choice means choosing the most effective words to convey meaning.	• Is vocabulary used correctly? • Does the vocabulary match the audience and the topic?
Conventions	Conventions are adhering to the standard rules of punctuation, grammar, capitalization, etc., in order to make the piece easier to read.	• Is a lot of editing needed? • Are there errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation? • Is the grammar correct? • Have paragraph breaks been used?
Presentation	Presentation is how the piece is arranged on the page and the techniques that are used to enhance meaning. Presentation can show creativity and add to a piece but should never be distracting.	• Is my work neat? • Are visuals, colour, or special effects needed? Do they enhance the text? • Does the layout make it easy to read? • Do my design and layout draw the reader's eye to key points?

Check It Out

Culham, Ruth, *6+1 Traits of Writing* (Scholastic, 2003).

Spandel, Vicki, *Creating Writers* (Pearson Allyn and Bacon, 2005).

Spandel, Vicki, and Jeff Hicks, *Write Traits Advanced: Level One* (Great Source Education Group, 2006).

Spandel, Vicki, and Jeff Hicks, *Write Traits Classroom Kit 7* (Great Source Education Group, 2002).

Spandel, Vicki, and Jeff Hicks, *Write Traits Classroom Kit 8* (Great Source Education Group, 2002).

Writing Processes

It is difficult to identify a single process that all writers go through as they write, but there are a number of processes common to the act of writing. Depending on the situation, the knowledge level of the writer, the audience, the purpose, and even the technology being used to write, these processes and the order they are used in can vary.

Processes Involved in Writing	What This Means
Generating Ideas	Perhaps the hardest part of writing is choosing a focus and deciding what information to include. Here the writer must decide on the kind of information to include knowing the audience and the purpose for writing.
Recording and Note-making	The writer makes notes or records information in a way that permits easy recovery. Inherent in this process is deciding on the information that is relevant and important, and recording it clearly and concisely.
Organizing	Organizing involves making decisions about what information is needed and the most effective order for presentation.
Drafting	The writer commits ideas to paper or the computer. Here the emphasis is on writing and getting the ideas out.
Revision	The writer reviews the writing for areas that should be changed in order to improve the substance of the piece. This can involve adding or deleting information, as well as reorganizing or adapting existing information.
Editing	When editing, the writer reviews the piece and makes any corrections to the conventions and mechanics of the writing. Spelling, sentence structure, capitalization, paragraphing, grammar, etc., are important in making the writing easy to read and understand.
Publishing/Sharing	The writer decides if and how to share the work. Writing can be given to others to read or it can be shared orally. The writer must consider aspects of presentation such as neatness, spacing, use of colour and visuals, and creativity.

Check It Out

Atwell, Nancie, *Lessons That Change Writers* (Heinemann, 2002).

Rog, Lori Jamison, and Paul Kropp, *The Write Genre* (Pembroke, 2004).

Spandel, Vicki, *Creating Writers Through 6-Trait Writing Assessment and Instruction* (Pearson Allyn and Bacon, 2005).

Suggested Curriculum Map: Recommended Forms for Writing

Just as there is no prescribed list of readings there is also no such list for writing. Students are not required to learn specific forms of writing at specific grade levels. However, it is important for teachers to develop, at the school level, an overall plan to ensure that each form of writing is taught at some point during the junior high/middle years.

The following chart offers a list of *recommended* forms, and offers a *possible* division of these forms. The chart is organized so that experiences increase in complexity from left to right. Also, the diversity or kinds of experiences change from top to bottom. Teachers may decide amongst themselves to divide the experiences vertically or horizontally depending on student need and teacher strength.

Vertically, students are exposed to a range of experiences. Horizontally, students have the opportunity to look more deeply at forms of writing as the elements increase in complexity.

If you look closely at the forms listed and their location relative to one another, you will see that there is the opportunity for those introduced in the second column to support the forms of writing expected in the third column. For example, understanding summary provides a good foundation for learning how to paraphrase. The précis, a more complex form would build on previous experiences in writing a summary and paraphrasing. Just because a form of writing is listed in one column, though, does not mean that students have to progress through them in the order listed. It simply means that a greater level of support and instruction might be required in the year it is identified and introduced. Also, if students are creating a piece of writing on the right without having experienced the earlier forms, more support may be necessary.

It is important to realize that this chart does not constitute a complete list of the various forms of text that students might explore and create. For a more complete list, see Appendix K on page 177 of *English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9.*

Suggested Division of Writing Forms

Narrative	recount	autobiography/memoir	biography
	journal or diary entry	vignette	short story
	monologue	dialogue	script
	fable	myth	parody
		children's book	
Procedural	recipe	lab report	procedural text
	"how to ..." instructions		
Informational	summary	paraphrase	précis
	survey	questionnaire	interview
	news article	feature article	newsletter
	poster	informational report	brochure
	friendly letter	business letter	résumé
	thank you note	class/lecture notes	meeting minutes
Comparative	use of graphic organizers to compare	comparative notes	comparative essay
Persuasive	letter to the editor	advertisement	application letter (to be selected for something)
	reflective essay	persuasive essay	evaluative essay
	book review	movie/TV review	
Poetic	poetry: haiku, acrostic, free verse	poetry: concrete, free verse	poetry: ballad, sonnet, free verse
Multimedia	TV/video		radio spot
	website	website	website
	multimedia presentation	multimedia presentation	multimedia presentation

Check It Out

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9* (Province of Nova Scotia, 1998).

Suggested Curriculum Map: Grammar, Usage, Mechanics, and Conventions

Teachers often wonder when concepts related to grammar, usage, conventions, and mechanics should be introduced. The simple answer is that they should be taught when students are ready. However, it is important that you consider a possible sequence of concepts and when they would likely be introduced. The following chart outlines when concepts may be introduced to students. Remember, though, that this chart offers **suggested times** for introducing concepts. All concepts will have to be revisited, reinforced, and expanded upon in later years.

P–3	4–6	7–9
end punctuation (period, question mark, exclamation mark)	internal punctuation (comma, colon, quotation marks, apostrophe)	internal punctuation (semi-colon, dash, hyphen, parentheses, ellipsis)
sentence types (simple sentence)	parts of speech (common noun, proper noun, action verb, adjective, adverb, personal pronoun, conjunction)	parts of speech (collective noun, concrete noun, abstract noun, linking verb, subjective pronoun, objective pronoun, possessive pronoun, preposition, interjection)
contractions	tense (present tense, past tense)	tense (future tense)
capitalization	sentence types (compound sentence)	parts of a sentence (subject, predicate, object, phrase, clause)
prefix/suffix	possessive, plural	sentence types (complex sentence)
	double negative	run-on sentence, sentence fragment
	abbreviations	subject-verb agreement
	homophone/homonym	italics
	synonym/antonym	jargon, cliché, euphemism, redundancy
	commonly confused words	

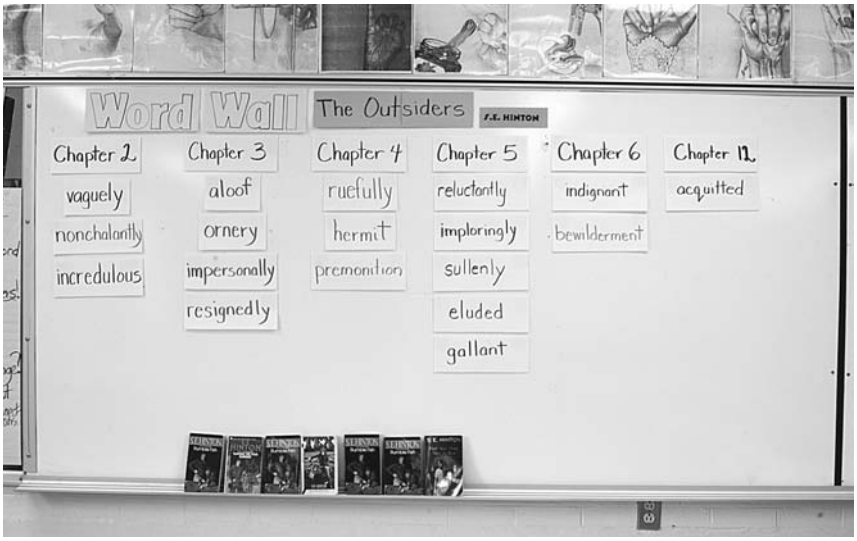
Organizing for Writing: The Environment

The classroom environment can contribute positively or negatively to student behaviour and work. Ensuring that the environment encourages and supports learning is essential.

Physical Environment

Physical environment continues to be important in the area of writing and representing. Here are some things to consider:

- space for meeting (whole group, small group)
- desks/seating that allow for work as individuals, pairs, or small groups
- author's chair (special chair, stool, etc., where students can go to read aloud their work to the group)
- access to reference materials (dictionaries, thesaurus, etc.)
- student work displayed around the room and the school
- supportive text displayed around the room (charts, word walls, etc.)



Check It Out

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Guiding Readers and Writers (Grades 3–6)* (Heinemann, 2001).

Materials

Certain materials can be made available in classrooms to enhance opportunities and instruction of writing and representing. Some of these materials might be available in the classroom at all times, others somewhere in the school. Here are some suggestions:

- computers
- highlighters
- pens, pencils, markers, etc.
- paper
- blank overheads
- overhead projector
- LCD projector
- sticky notes
- tabs
- whiteboards (full size or smaller)
- writing folders
- staplers, hole punch, etc.
- bins or portable storage

Tech Tools

Some technology materials that support writing include the use of a microphone, dictaphone, and sound recorder software.

Organizing for Writing: Instruction

Throughout the year instruction will focus on many different aspects of writing. As the year progresses it is important to consider what things will change and what will remain constant.

As with reading, the workshop is an approach for providing instruction in writing. Writing Workshop allows individual students to work on crafting pieces that are meaningful to them. Not all students have to be doing the same thing at the same time, all of the time. There are, however, times when it is important to have students experience the same instruction and learning experiences.

Here are some things to consider as constants:

- the importance of teachers writing regularly with students, and sharing their experience (both successes and frustrations)
- ensuring time for conferring with individuals or groups
- ensuring time for sharing with the whole group
- providing explicit instruction
- providing opportunity for students to apply independently what they have learned through instruction
- the use of strong mentor texts to model writing techniques

Mentor Texts

A mentor text is a strong text used to illustrate a technique or aspect of writing. Mentor texts are often from published works, but can also be pieces of text created by students or teachers. The strength of a mentor text is that it allows students to see what it is you are trying to teach them. Rather than an explanation of what they are trying to accomplish, a mentor text allows them to see the technique—it is a way of showing, not just telling.

Mentor texts can be used to model

- effective leads
- use of dialogue
- descriptive writing
- use of symbolism
- use of figurative language
- use of foreshadowing and other techniques
- use of language
- types of character
- techniques for character development
- features of information text
- organization of various text structures
- characteristics of visuals (graphs, tables, charts, diagrams, etc.)

When it comes to selecting and using mentor texts, finding them is the greatest challenge. The key to success is having available in the classroom a wide range of texts with which you are familiar. This means reading text or texts with an eye open for gems that you can share with students. Mentor texts can be short pieces of text used in their entirety or excerpts from much longer pieces of text. There are three basic approaches to locating mentor texts:

- Consider what concept or writing technique you want to show students; then look for texts that model it.
- Look for good pieces of text and label them in terms of how they might be used for instruction. File copies of the text in folders according to focus.
- Ask students or other teachers to locate and share gems with you. File them according to focus.

Drama

Drama can be a powerful tool for instruction. The key with drama is to provide instruction that focusses on it as a mode of communication. Because students do not automatically have the set of skills necessary for communication, instruction in this area, as in any other, requires modelling, explicit instruction, a safe and non-threatening environment, opportunity to develop ideas and to practise, and time for reflection and consolidation of ideas and learning.

Drama is effective in many situations:

- to portray a character or scene from the text
- to show a scene from before or after the text
- as an alternative to written communication
- as a fun experience
- to encourage participation and group work
- to extend/enhance understanding of concepts
- as frontloading
- in response to learning
- as a tool for assessment

Types of dramatic experiences include

- puppetry
- Readers Theatre
- role-play
- tableau
- skit
- analysing the codes and conventions of script
- developing/writing scripts
- performing short scripts
- choral reading/choral montage
- reading in role
- radio call-in talk show
- interviews or news program featuring characters
- radio show with oral storytelling accompanied by sound effects

Tech Tools

Technology can enhance dramatic experiences by offering students different tools, such as multimedia videos and podcasting.

Visual Representations

Just as many students excel at drama and oral communication, there are students for whom visual expression is the preferred method of sharing understanding. Like all forms of representation, visual representation also requires instruction and support so that all students can develop skills in this area. This is true for those who have a great deal of natural talent, as well as for those who might have trouble with some elements of visual representation.

Visual representations include

- illustrations
- paintings
- diagrams
- tables
- charts
- graphs
- maps
- mobiles
- models
- sculptures
- photographs
- collage
- multimedia presentations

Tech Tools 

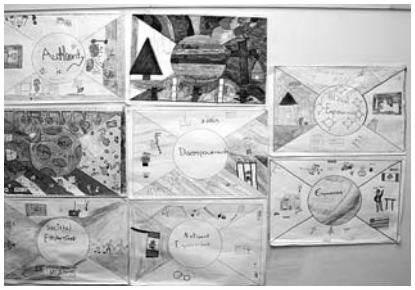
Using technology to visually represent ideas can be rewarding for many students. Consider allowing some of these methods to be used for sharing understanding: websites, digital storyboards, video book talks, and slideshow presentations.

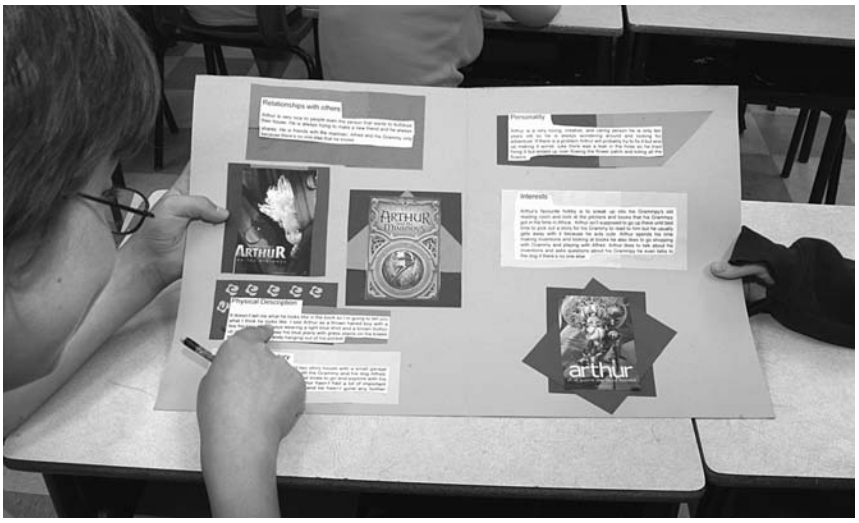
Opportunities for visual representation are essentially limited only by one's imagination.

Two of the greatest challenges for teachers in encouraging visual representation are instruction (especially if it is an area where the teacher lacks confidence) and assessment. Here are some suggestions for overcoming these difficulties:

- Use models.
- Save work samples from past years.
- Encourage students to share with one another.
- Talk with other teachers and gather ideas from them.
- Admit your apprehension and learn with students.
- Establish criteria with students before completion of the assignment.
- Provide short but regular mini-lessons (making borders, using space, use of colour, using images, etc.).


POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS
The Outsiders
Stay Gold
THE BIG BAD WOLF TELLS ALL
GRIZZLY ATTACK
THE TAKING
No Slackers
30 years from now, it won't matter what shoes you wore, how your hair looked, or the jeans you bought.
Different individuals united each other regardless of skin




Relationships with others
Personality
Interests
ARTHUR
arthur

Check It Out

Burke, Jim, *Writing Reminders* (Heinemann, 2003).

Wilheim, Jeffrey, *Action Strategies for Deepening Comprehension* (Scholastic, 2002).

IDEAS

Ideas for Differentiation:

Look for samples that show the same writing technique, but at various levels of sophistication. Choose texts to share with small groups or the whole group based on need. Try to ensure that what is being shared will support but not overwhelm students.

Organizing for Writing: Management

Management of writing instruction is just as important as management of reading instruction. As with reading, it is a challenge to manage instruction that must meet the needs of a diverse group of learners. In writing, students will range from the highly skilled to those who require a great deal of support. Finding a system that will meet all of these needs, while providing an adequate level of challenge, is not easy. Again, the workshop is one approach that can be used.

Components of Writing Workshop

Writing Workshop allows you to provide structure and instruction in specific areas, and then for the students to be able to apply their learning in ways that are meaningful for them. Components of Writing Workshop include

- dedicated time for independent writing
- short mini-lessons and modelling of the craft of writing
- time for student work
- a commitment to reflection and improvement
- opportunity for sharing
- specific feedback and communication between teacher and student

Revision and Editing

Revision and editing are two of the most challenging aspects of writing. Students are often reluctant to revise and edit, largely because they are unskilled in these processes. One of the things that we can do to support them in improving the quality of their writing is to provide support and direction in this area.

Revision requires writers to ask questions of their writing. Appendix I1 is a series of prompts that can help students with this process. Simply providing students with the prompts is not sufficient. Like anything, this process requires modelling, conversation, and practice.

Editing and proofreading are more straightforward and involve improving the correctness of a piece of writing. In addition to explicitly teaching students the proper conventions required for written work, it is necessary to have a standard way of communicating this information. Appendix H12 is a list of common editor's marks. If students are

familiar with this list and use these symbols consistently, they will be able to better understand the feedback they receive from their peers and from the teacher.

Editing involves checking, at the sentence level, for clarity of expression and meaning; for example, checking sentence structure and punctuation. Proofreading involves word-level "polishing" for errors in capitalization, spelling, and usage.

Check It Out

Atwell, Nancie, *Lessons That Change Writers* (Heinemann, 2002).

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell, *Guiding Readers and Writers (Grades 3–6)* (Heinemann, 2001).

Focus of Writing Workshop

The focus of a writing workshop should be determined by the needs of the students. This means that, at times, the instructional focus will be appropriate for the whole group and at other times it will be relevant only for small groups or individuals. When planning instruction and the focus of Writing Workshop, consider the following:

- What are the curriculum outcomes?
- What is the focus of instruction in the areas of reading and viewing, and listening and speaking? Are there logical connections to make with writing?
- Are there cross-curricular connections that can be made?
- Has there been a particular area with a strong focus of instruction in previous years?
- What are my students' strengths?
- What are my students' needs?
- Will I focus my instruction on the traits of writing?
- How deep will I go with instruction in a particular area?

Assessing Writing and Other Ways of Representing

Check It Out

Culham, Ruth, *6+1 Traits of Writing* (Scholastic, 2003).

Gilmore, Barry, *Is It Done Yet?: Teaching Adolescents the Art of Revision* (Heinemann, 2007)

Lane, Barry, *After the End: Teaching and Learning Creative Revision* (Heinemann, 1992).

Spandel, Vicki, *Creating Writers* (Pearson Allyn and Bacon, 2005).

Assessment of writing might at one time have relied heavily on the assessment of a finished product. While there is no question that examining students' work samples can provide tremendous insight into their achievement of outcomes, it is also important to consider what can be learned from the process they engage in as they write.

Key areas that English language arts teachers must assess include

- understanding of audience and purpose
- appropriate selection of form and structure, given audience and purpose
- organization of ideas
- writing conventions and mechanics
- commitment to a piece of writing
- decision making, revision, and editing
- ability to communicate ideas and information through other forms of representation

Work Samples

You can gather a great deal of information by looking at samples of students' work. Work samples can include a broad range of things from stories, reports, posters, and letters to summaries, journals, multimedia, and poetry. Regardless of the type of work sample students create, there are some common keys to consider:

- Provide students with a task.
- Ensure the task matches the outcome you are trying to assess.
- Ensure the task is clear and students have the instructional support necessary to be successful.
- Know your focus. What are you looking for? What are the criteria for success?
- Share the criteria for success with students before the completion of the task.

The Nova Scotia *Writing Exemplars Project* provides useful examples of student writing at various levels of proficiency. This site can be used by teachers to better understand what effective writing looks like. As well, the site offers teachers suggestions for writing performance tasks in which to engage students. Each task is clearly described and can be used with students in the classroom. Writing samples can then be compared to those posted on the website (nswritingexemplars.EDnet.ns.ca), or rubrics can be used to assess individual strengths and areas of need.

The following are two additional sample tasks with a suggested process and planning sheet, as well as rubrics outlining the criteria for success. You can use these as examples for creating similar tasks.

Task 1: Short Story

Context: Have students write a short story involving a character who is a bully. Students may use a story map or a scene planner (see Appendix I9) to develop their ideas.

Students are to follow the writing processes described on pagess 96–97.

Process:

Prewriting Part 1: Brainstorm with the group common situations that involve bullying and possible solutions to bullying. As students describe their situations, help them chart their ideas using these headings: setting, character, problem, solution (see story organizer in Appendix I3).

Prewriting Part 2: Review the structure of a short story using a familiar story and a plot graph (see Appendix I4).

Prewriting Part 3: Have students complete an outline of their story using both the story organizer and the scene planner (see Appendix I9).

Drafting: Have students complete a first draft of their short story.

Revising: Review with the students the important components of a short story (see Prewriting Parts 2 and 3). Do they have the necessary components? Have students revise their work accordingly.

Editing: Have students edit their work and then complete a peer edit of their writing. Students should be encouraged to use common editing marks (See Appendix I2) and resources such as a dictionary and a thesaurus.

Proofreading: Have students proofread their work to check at the word level for errors in capitalization, spelling, and usage.

Publishing: Have students incorporate any revisions, editing, and proofreading changes in their final copy. Students may choose to publish using a word processor or pencil/pen and paper.

Criteria:

	1	2	3	4
Ideas	• few or simple ideas with little or no connection to the story line • lacks detail	• ideas simple but connected to the story line • some supporting details	• ideas developed and connected to the story line • sufficient use of supporting details	• well developed and interesting ideas advance the story line • interesting details further develop the story line
Organization	• no clear beginning, middle, or end • no paragraph structure	• an attempt at a beginning, middle, and end • an attempt at paragraphs	• a clear beginning, middle, and end • sentences linked together in paragraphs	• has a beginning, followed by rising action, then the climax and a resolution • paragraphs clearly organized with logical flow from one to the next
Communication (voice, sentence fluency, word choice)	• writer's voice not evident • only simple sentences used • vocabulary limited and words may be used incorrectly	• some evidence of voice • types of sentences limited • limited vocabulary used appropriately, but with little effect	• clear evidence of the writer's voice • variety of sentences • wide variety of descriptive vocabulary	• strong voice maintains the reader's interest • wide variety of sentences • extensive vocabulary creates vivid pictures for the reader
Conventions	• correctly uses very few of the conventions taught in class	• correctly uses some of the conventions taught in class	• correctly uses many of the conventions taught in class	• correctly uses most of the conventions taught in class
Presentation (indentation, spacing, font size, margins, neatness)	• poor presentation seriously impedes reading	• poor presentation somewhat impedes reading	• presentation of the text makes it easy to read	• presentation enhances the reading of the story

Task 2: Comparative Essay

Context: Have students write a comparative essay describing how elementary school is different from or similar to junior high. The essay is intended to be shared with students who will be leaving elementary school at the end of this year. Students are to use an essay format and to follow the writing processes described on page 96–97.

Process:

Prewriting Part 1: Have students as a group brainstorm life in elementary school and life in junior high.

Prewriting Part 2: Assist students in identifying common categories that can be used to compare both school experiences (e.g., scheduling, responsibilities, work/courses, social life, extra-curricular activities).

Prewriting Part 3: Provide students with the comparison matrix organizer (see Appendix I5). Have each student complete his or her own organizer.

Prewriting Part 4: As a group, brainstorm words that can be used to indicate similarity and words that indicate difference.

Prewriting Part 5: Share samples of comparative essays with the students. Have students look at the structure of the essay (introduction, body, conclusion), as well as comparison words and transition words. Create a checklist of things to include and do in a comparative essay.

Drafting: Have students complete a first draft of their essay.

Revising: Review with students the checklist for writing a comparative essay (see Prewriting Part 5). Have students revise their work accordingly.

Editing: Have students edit their work and then complete a peer edit of their writing. Students should be encouraged to use common editor's symbols (see Appendix I2) and resources such as a dictionary, and a thesaurus.

Proofreading: Have students proofread their work to check at the word level for errors in capitalization, spelling, and usage.

Publishing: Have students incorporate any revisions, editing, and proofreading changes in their final copy. Students may choose to publish using a word processor or pencil/pen and paper.

Criteria:

	1	2	3	4
Ideas	• few or simple ideas with little or no connection to the topic • lacks examples and details	• ideas simple but connected to the topic • some supporting examples and details	• ideas developed and connected to the topic • sufficient use of examples and supporting details	• well developed and interesting ideas make the comparison clear • interesting examples and details further develop the comparison
Organization	• no introduction, body, or conclusion • no paragraph structure	• attempt at an introduction, body, and conclusion • attempt at paragraphs	• clear introduction, body, and conclusion • sentences linked together in paragraphs	• introduction, followed by statements and supporting details as well as a conclusion • paragraphs clearly organized with a logical flow from one to the next
Communication (voice, sentence fluency, word choice)	• writer's voice not evident • only simple sentences • vocabulary limited and words may be used incorrectly • no use, or improper use, of comparison and transition words	• some evidence of voice • types of sentences limited • limited vocabulary used appropriately, but with little effect • some use of comparison and transition words	• clear evidence of the writer's voice • variety of sentences • wide variety of descriptive vocabulary • comparison and transition words used correctly	• strong voice maintains reader's interest • wide variety of sentences • extensive vocabulary creates vivid pictures for reader • sophisticated use of comparison and transition words
Conventions	• very few of the conventions studied used correctly	• some of the conventions studied used correctly	• most conventions studied used correctly	• all or almost all conventions studied used correctly
Presentation (indentation, spacing, font size, margins, neatness)	• poor presentation seriously impedes reading	• poor presentation somewhat impedes reading	• presentation of text makes it easy to read	• presentation enhances reading of the essay

Check It Out

Carty, Maria, *Exploring Writing in the Content Areas* (Pembroke, 2005).

Davies, Anne, *Making Classroom Assessment Work* (Connections, 2000).

Gregory, Kathleen, Caren Cameron, and Anne Davies. *Setting and Using Criteria* (Connections, 1997).

Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Active Readers, Grades 7–9, Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents* (Province of Nova Scotia, 2005).

Using Rubrics

Rubrics are helpful assessment tools because they provide students and teachers with a written description of various degrees of success. The strength of rubrics is that they clarify the expectations for writing, and they ensure that work samples are being judged based on common criteria. Rubrics also provide students with information and direction for the future.

Rubrics are simply charts that identify criteria for success and describe various degrees of success. The challenge when creating rubrics is to ensure that the criteria reflect what is truly important and that the descriptors are specific enough that when looking at the work you can easily identify the correct one.

One of the greatest strengths of a rubric comes from being created with input from the students prior to the assigned task. This helps to ensure that the students truly understand what the task is and what the expectations are.

Here are some suggestions for creating rubrics:

- Involve the students in the process.
- Try to avoid or limit the use of words such as very, often, sometimes, to a great extent. They are hard to qualify later.
- Limit the number of criteria. It is difficult for students to focus on more than three to five items at once. It may be necessary to reduce this number for individual students in the class.
- Consider the range of descriptors that you will provide. Three is probably a minimum, five a maximum.
- Decide if certain criteria require only two descriptors (this may be necessary if a criterion is simply met or not, with no range in between).
- Decide if some criteria are more important than others. If this is the case, you may want to weight these criteria more heavily, especially if grades are being assigned as a result of the rubric.
- Use student work samples to generate criteria and descriptors. Share three to five samples of student work that range from weakest to strongest. Have students examine them and build the rubric with these in mind.

See Appendix I6 for a sample writing rubric.

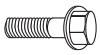
Using Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is an essential part of the learning process. You can ask students to consider two key questions when it comes to their learning:

- What can I say now that I couldn't say before?
- What can I do now that I couldn't do before?

Self-assessments may be very open-ended, or you might prefer to have students zero in on a particular aspect of their writing and their learning. In either case, you will have to provide structure and support for students. Helping students narrow their reflection to something manageable is essential. You can

- provide students with prompts or questions for reflection (see Appendix I7).
- provide students with a copy of a checklist
- give students a rating scale on which to focus their self-assessment
- create rubrics with students to be used as part of a self-assessment.

Nuts and Bolts 

Give students time for lots of free writing. Sometimes students are given a topic; sometimes they write about anything; almost always it is timed.

Five to ten minutes of free writing can result in a lot on the page. Try timing free writes to show how the volume of writing increases over time. Give the students three minutes of free writing and then ask them to count the number of words on the page. Then have students continue writing for another three minutes followed by counting the words. Repeat this once more. Students will probably find that the volume they write has increased each time.

Have students keep an idea bank for writing. This can be a sheet of paper in the front of their binders where they record ideas, questions, or topics about which they can write in the future. A student having difficulty getting started on a piece of writing can refer to the idea bank for inspiration and ideas.

Try keeping some copies of basic graphic organizers on hand. A student having difficulty with organization can use a graphic organizer to help structure writing. Another approach to having photocopies of graphic organizers on hand is to make larger posters of basic organizers and post them around the room. Label each poster with the kind of writing that it supports (descriptive, comparative, procedural, persuasive, etc.).

Post posters around the classroom with each of the traits. Encourage students to refer to the posters as they create pieces of writing.

Check It Out

Gregory, Kathleen, Caren Cameron, and Anne Davies, *Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting* (Connections, 2000).

> *"Trust yourself. Decide that whatever you put on the page will be okay. Give yourself the freedom to write."*
>
> Grade 9 Teacher

> *"Writing is bigger than the details. ... Writing releases pain and often brings hope. Meaning is found. Not answers, but strength to continue."*
>
> Kittle, P., *The Greatest Catch*

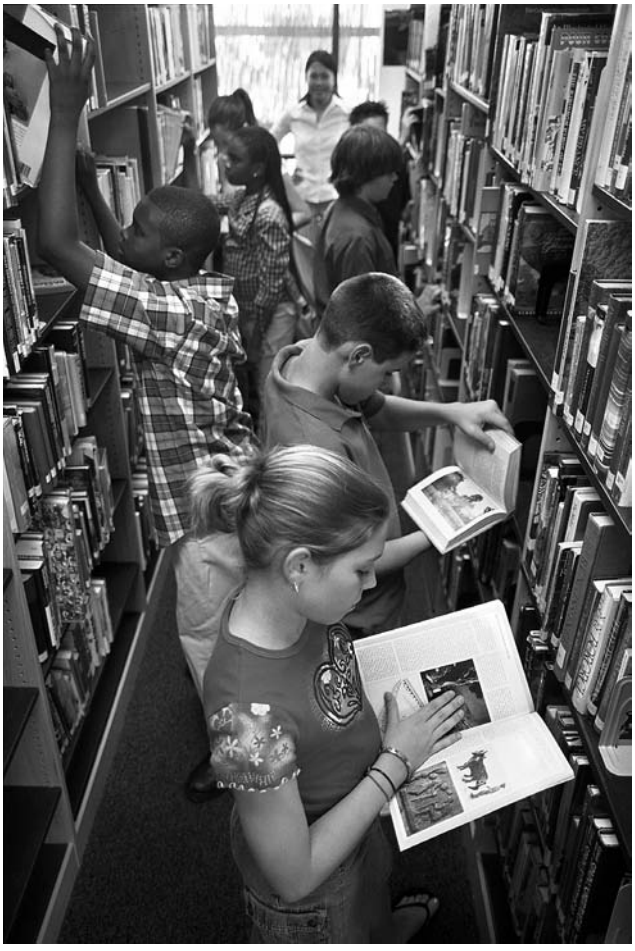
> *"The most effective way I know to improve your writing is to do free writing exercises regularly."*
>
> Elbow, P., *Writing Without Teachers*

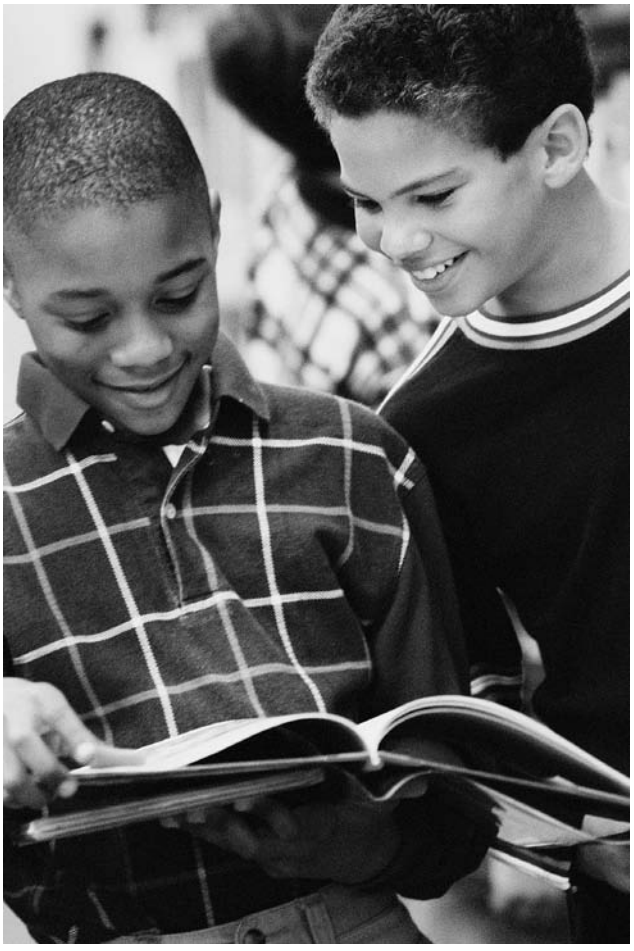
In Action: An Integrated Approach

This section will help you put into action many of the pieces described in previous pages. Here you will find the beginnings of seven inquiry units. Each unit is filled with practical ideas for instruction and assessment that incorporate a number of instructional strategies to achieve a range of outcomes.

Each unit is organized around a central question. Following the inquiry question, are key ideas for the unit. As well, recommended resources and sample learning experiences are suggested**.** Each learning experience is cross-referenced with the specific curriculum outcomes for English language arts (see pages 36–95 of *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 7–9*). This information can be found in brackets preceding the explanation of the activity. While many outcomes can be tied to each learning experience, the one or two most obvious outcomes have been listed.

These units are sample units only. Each unit outlines the key outcomes and questions for exploration. Also provided are suggestions for assessment, as well as a few learning experiences for students. Because these are starting points only, you are encouraged to go beyond these units to create your own opportunities for learning.





Unit 1: Concept

Inquiry Question: *What makes a character interesting?*

Key Ideas:

- Understand that interesting characters are dynamic and changing.
- Understand that interesting characters are multi-dimensional.
- Understand the function(s) that flat characters perform in a story.
- Recognize character traits.
- Recognize techniques the author uses to create and develop a character.
- Develop a character.

Suggestions for Assessment:

- anecdotal observation of small- and large-group work
- checklists for participation in learning experiences
- rubrics and checklists for work samples

Recommended Resources:

- Aker, Don, *Of Things Not Seen* (Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1995).**
- Grant, Vicki, *Quid Pro Quo* (Orca Book Publishers, 2005).*
- Hinton, S.E., *The Outsiders* (Viking Children's Books, 1967).**
- L'Engle, Madeleine, *A Wrinkle in Time* (Yearling, 1973).**
- Spinelli, Jerry, *Stargirl* (Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2002).*
- Trueman, Terry, *Inside Out* (HarperCollins Canada, 2004).

* in Active Readers collection

** Authorized Learning Resource (ALR)

Cross-Reference (links to other *In Action* units):

- Major Text: *Stuck in Neutral* (HarperCollins, 2001)**
- Issue: Accepting Differences

Sample Learning Experiences:

[5.3] As a whole class, begin a Character Trait list by brainstorming a number of character traits and opposing traits. (e.g., confident/unsure, charitable/greedy). Ask students to extend the brainstormed list of character traits; ask them to find examples of characters who exhibit these traits.

[6.2] Explain to students that sometimes there is a disconnect between what characters say about themselves and what they do. Choose a short story or an excerpt from a novel that has such a character. Using the Statement and Evidence chart (page 124), record multiple statements (opinions) about this character and support these statements with evidence from the text.

[10.1] Look at the list of character traits and opposing traits. Many of the opposing traits have the same root word, with a prefix that indicates the word has the opposite meaning. Ask students to create a list of prefixes that result in a word meaning the opposite of the original word.

[4.6, 7.3] Pose the question, What is the purpose of a character in a story? Have students discuss this question in small groups and record their ideas. Then, read aloud three examples of text that show the three purposes of characters (see page 123). Ask students to consider these texts and their earlier notes. Finally, have students identify and discuss the three purposes.

[7.3] Review with students in a large group the techniques authors use to develop character (see page 123). Read aloud and discuss one or two stories and have students create and complete a character-development techniques chart.

[3. 5] Share two or more stories by different authors. Have students read and discuss the stories and how each author develops character. Each group should identify three to five techniques that the author uses (see previous activity). Students can then debate in small groups which author has the most interesting characters.

[8.2] The "In-Character Journal" offers students a place to write about what they have read each day but, from the point of view of one of the characters. (see page 125) Students select one of the characters from the story and write brief notes in a journal that would reflect that character's thoughts throughout the story. Extensions can also be offered where students are prompted to write about topics that are outside the novel (the characters reaction to a school rule, his or her reaction to something that happened in the world, how he or she would react in a particular situation etc.), but still maintaining the integrity of the character.

[5.3, 7.3] Ask the students to consider these questions: Do characters change? How do they change? Share page 126 and ask students to find examples in their own reading of character change.

[6.2, 9.1, 9.3] To show the multiple dimensions of a character, create a six-sided character cube. Each side of the cube should represent some aspect of the character, such as favourite objects, settings where the character is most/least comfortable, and friends. These aspects can be represented visually or in print, and they should be supported with references to chapters or page numbers where events in the story or behaviour illustrate these dimensions of the character. (See page 122 for character cube template.)

[6.2] Invite students to nominate a character for a prestigious award: "Top 25 most interesting characters of (year)." Each student chooses one character and writes a paragraph explaining why this character deserves the award. Students can be invited to share their nominations in a class meeting.

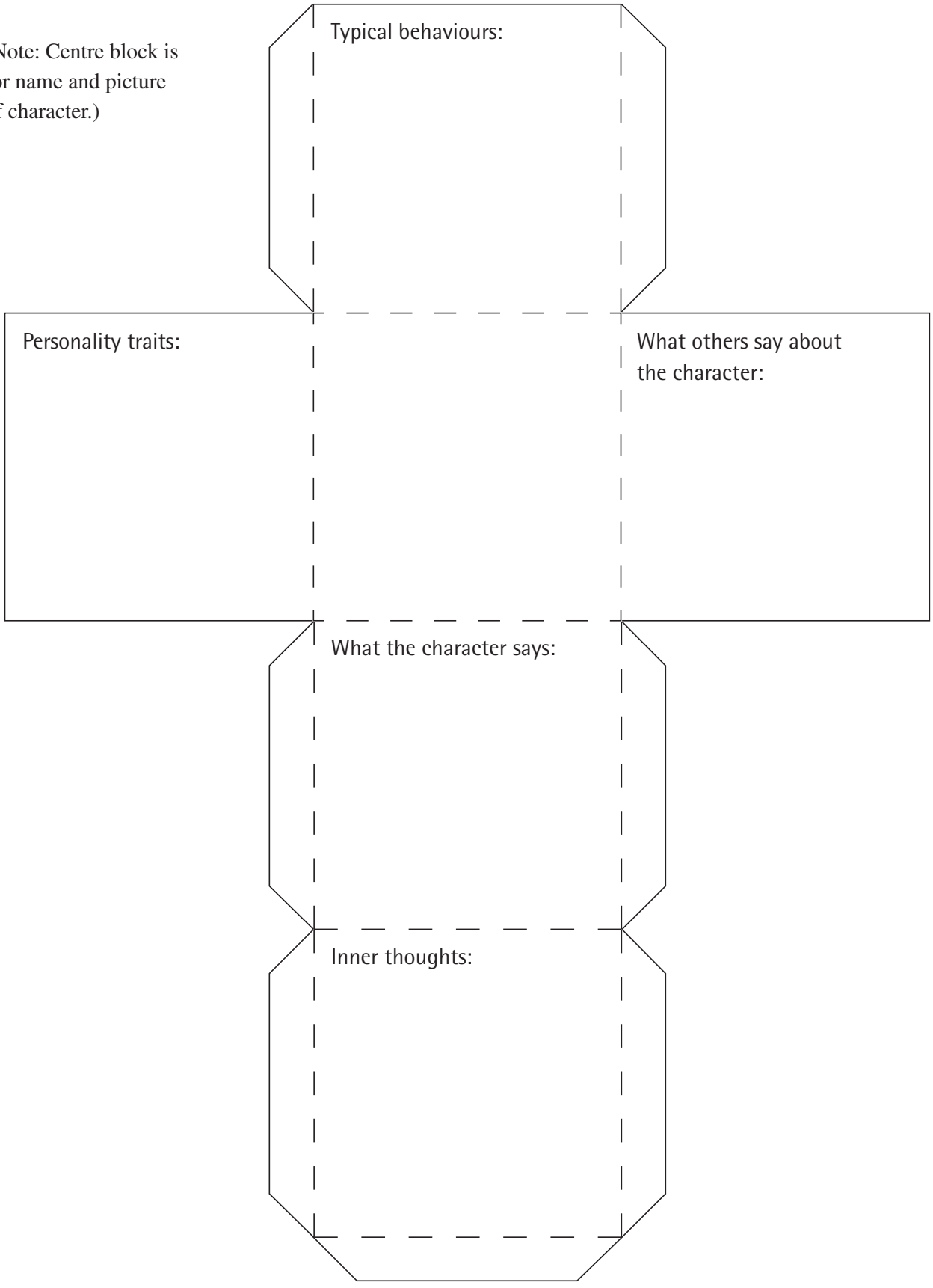
[9.3, 10.5] Invite students to select a piece of music (pop, classical, country, etc.) that they would associate with a particular character. The music and the reason for its selection can be shared with the group.

[6.2, 9.3] Pose this question to the whole group: What is a symbol? After asking students for examples of common symbols ask them to identify various animals and what they might represent (e.g., turtle = slow, owl = wise, bull = strong). Then, after reading a short story, ask students to consider one character and his or her traits. In groups, students can then represent this character by creating a character creature made of at least five different animal parts, each representing a trait of the character.

[8.3, 9.2] Guide students through a process of developing a character, writing a scene, and extending this into a story (see page 126).

Character Cube

(Note: Centre block is for name and picture of character.)



What Do Characters Do?

Every character in a short story or a novel serves a specific purpose. For example, the main character (often called the *protagonist*) faces a problem or struggle (called the *conflict*) and either succeeds or fails in this struggle. However, other characters—even the most minor ones—perform specific functions, too. It they didn't, they wouldn't be in the story. These other characters perform one or more of the following functions:

Function 1: to advance the plot

- A character may *cause* the problem the main character faces (if this is the character's main function, he or she is called the *antagonist*), or
- a character may help the main character *overcome* the problem.

Function 2: to give the reader information about other characters or about the conflict

- A character may give this information *directly* by saying things about others or about the conflict, or
- a character may give this information *indirectly* by interacting with others—for example, the reader will often form impressions and opinions about the main character based on how that character interacts with other characters in the story.

Function 3: to provide comic relief

- A character may say or do humorous things to amuse the reader and keep a serious story from being too grim.

Character Development Techniques

Authors use many techniques to develop interesting characters. Here are some of these techniques:

- a description of the character and his or her appearance
- setting (where the character is seen)
- what the character says
- how the character reacts to others
- what others say about the character
- the character's actions and behaviour
- the character's inner thoughts

Character Detective

While reading, try to find techniques that the author uses. Record these on the following chart.

Technique	Evidence	Page

In-Character Journal

Name	Book	Character
One way to experience a novel is by putting yourself inside a character. This can be done by recording the character's thoughts, worries, emotions, and responses to events and other characters. Each day as we read this novel, write as if you were one of the characters in the book. (Stay with that character throughout the whole book.)		
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Day 7	Day 8	Day 9

Character Changes

Theme is not the same as a lesson or a moral. While some forms of literature such as fairy tales and fables do teach lessons or morals—for example, "The Three Little Pigs" teaches young readers that hard work is the key to success—other kinds of fictional narratives (short stories, novels, plays, films, etc.) do *not* teach lessons or morals. Instead, they show characters involved in conflicts, and the way the characters respond to conflict shows the reader an understanding of life and living, which we call theme.

Nearly all narratives, regardless of genre, contain a change of some sort—something is different at the end of the story than at the beginning. In examining this change, the reader explores what the author is showing about life and living, the author's theme. The change in a story might involve one or more of the following:

- There might be a change in **the main character**. For example, the main character might change his or her opinion or attitude toward something, or the main character might change the way he or she behaves.
- There might be a change in **the main character's situation**. For example, the main character might be in a better—or worse—situation at the end of the story than at the beginning.
- There might be a change in **the way the reader feels about the main character**. For example, the reader might like the main character more—or less—at the end of the story than at the beginning.

Creating a Character

Task: Demonstrate what you have learned about how writers create vivid characters by creating and conveying a strong impression of a character of your own.

Create a character in your mind and give your character a name. (You might want to think of people you know to help you get started.) Spend some time thinking about what that person looks like, how he or she dresses, what he or she likes to do, the place he or she lives, where he or she likes to go, who he or she enjoys spending time with, and so on.

On paper, tell who your character is and write a paragraph describing his or her personality. (Note: If you decide to use a real person, be sure to change the name.)

Create a short scene that will give a reader a strong impression of your character's personality.

Ask someone to read your scene and describe the personality of the character you have created. Add, delete, or change details as necessary to help convey the personality you want your reader to recognize.

Edit your draft for the writing errors we have studied so far this year. Then make a polished copy and proofread carefully.

The following chart shows the criteria that will be used to assess your work. Staple this sheet on top of your first and final drafts.

Note: See pages 127 and 128 for an example of this assignment.

Assessment Criteria	Weak	Fair	Competent	Strong	Outstanding
Your paragraph identifies who your character is and clearly describes his or her personality.	1. 5	2. 5	3. 5	4	5
Your scene includes details that show what your character is like.	5	10	14	17	20
You edited carefully for all the writing errors we have studied to date.	1. 5	2. 5	3. 5	4	5
TOTAL: _____ /30					

Sample Assignment

The following "Creating a Character" assignment was written by Samantha, a grade 8 student. Read the description of her character, Cassidy Jacobs, that she provides at the beginning. Then read the scene she wrote and identify the different kinds of details she uses to *show* this information to the reader.

Description of Character

Cassidy Jacobs is a tall, fourteen-year-old girl who has pale skin that contrasts with her dark blue eyes. Her light brown hair falls evenly around her shoulders. Cassidy is a dreamer whose favourite thing to do is to watch movies. She is horrible at listening to other people, and she can be very sarcastic and opinionated. She is very fashion-conscious and always wears the latest styles. Her best friend is Amy, but she seldom listens to Amy's common sense.

Scene

Cassidy Jacobs twisted her light brown hair around her long pale finger. Slouched in her seat with her chin resting on her hand, she still looked taller than all the other kids in her class.

"Cassidy? Ms. Jacobs? *A-hem*!"

"Huh?" Cassidy looked up to see everyone staring at her.

"No, what is the answer?" the teacher snapped, her cold gray eyes boring holes in the tall girl.

"To what?"

"The question I asked you." The teacher sighed. "I'll repeat it one last time. When were the Hawaiian Islands discovered?"

"1977?" the girl offered helplessly.

The teacher's eyebrows shot upwards and she opened her mouth to—

Continued on following page

BRRIIINNGGGGG!

"Talk about being saved by the bell," Cassidy muttered as she and her best friend, Amy, entered the noisy hallway. "I mean, how was I supposed to know when the Hawaiian Islands were discovered?"

"Well, it *was* last night's reading homework," Amy offered.

"I had better things to do," Cassidy said. "I rented Colin Farrell's latest movie last night. It was fantastic!"

Amy frowned, but Cassidy ignored her. "Besides," Cassidy said, her dark blue eyes flashing, "that teacher gives way too much homework anyway." She smoothed out a crease in her new Tommy Hilfiger blouse. "And do you think she knows what the word 'shopping' means?" she scoffed. "She's worn that same dress every day since the beginning of the year!"

"Cassidy, you just don't like her because you never pay attention in her class," said Amy. "You're always daydreaming. "

"Who *wouldn't* with that battleaxe droning on and on?" She turned on her heel. "C'mon, let's go to my house. There's just enough time to watch that Colin Farrell movie again before I have to take it back to the video store."

Unit 2: Major Text

Inquiry Question: *What impact does "voice" have in the novel* Stuck in Neutral*?*

Key Ideas:

- Point of view is a key element of writing.
- Authors create voice using a variety of techniques.
- Effective readers respond to what they read.
- Reading allows us to enjoy experiences beyond our own personal existence.

Suggestions for Assessment:

- anecdotal observation of small group and whole group discussions
- small group conferences regarding the text
- work samples (e.g., double-entry journal)

Recommended Resources:

- Trueman, Terry, *Cruise Control* (HarperCollins, 2004).
- Trueman, Terry, *Stuck in Neutral* (HarperCollins, 2001).**
- Wurzburg, Geraldine (dir.), *Autism Is a World* [DVD video] (CNN Productions, 2005).

** Authorized Learning Resource (ALR)

Cross-Reference (links to other In Action units):

- Concept: Character
- Theme: Facing Fears
- Issues: Accepting Difference

Learning Experiences:

[1.4] Write the term "voice" on chart paper or the board. Ask students to consider some questions about voice: What does it mean to have a voice? What does it mean to write with voice? Do characters have voice? How does an author create a character with strong voice? Who are some characters with a strong voice? Explain to students that they will have to consider the impact of voice as they read the novel *Stuck in Neutral.*

[2.1, 3.1] Show students the title and cover of the book. Ask them to make predictions about its plot. Record these on a group chart.

[2.1, 4.6] Provide students with the "sort and predict" cards (see page 132). Have students generate sentences that explain their predictions about the book.

[4.6] Read the text aloud to page 11, where the narrator says, "I'm just sort of stuck in neutral." Ask students to revisit their predictions.

[2.1, 4.6] Provide students with the anticipation guide in the form of a Likert scale for *Stuck in Neutral* (see page 131). Have students complete and keep for future reference.

[4.5, 4.6, 6.1, 8.4] Decide on a method for reading the novel (whole-class read-aloud, partner or small-group reading, or independent reading). As students read, ask them to make notes (written or visual) in their reading journals. Explain that these notes should not be a summary of what they read but rather reactions to what they read. Students may choose to use a double-entry diary (see page 135 for a sample) to help them react to the text. The left column offers direct quotes from the novel, as well as suggestions for thinking and discussion. The right column is for the reader's reactions and ideas.

[6.1, 6.2] Ask students to discuss with a partner the idea of voice and the ability to speak. Does Shawn have a strong voice in spite of his inability to speak? Ask students to keep a running list of examples from the text to support their positions on this topic.

[4.6] Near the end, invite students to predict the ending.

[8.2, 9.1, 10.1] After students have completed the novel, invite them to rewrite the ending.

[5.3, 6.2] Revisit the inquiry question, What impact does "voice" have in the novel, *Stuck in Neutral*? Ask students to consider this question and write or respond orally. Encourage them to refer to their double-entry diaries to locate quotes and their responses to those quotes.

Looking Beyond *Stuck in Neutral*

You might want to have students extend their reading of *Stuck in Neutral* by having them look beyond the novel at a variety of other texts that deal with people coping with challenges:

- *Cruise Control*, also by Terry Trueman (Tempest, 2004), tells Shawn's story, but from Paul's point of view. This offers students an interesting comparison of the story and a great opportunity to discuss the importance of point of view.
- In Terry Trueman's subsequent novel, *Inside Out* (HarperCollins, 2003), the main character has schizophrenia and, as in *Stuck in Neutral*, the story is told in the first person. As a result of this viewpoint, the reader comes to understand and appreciate the experience of coping with this illness.
- *Autism Is a World*, a 40-minute documentary produced and directed by Gerardine Wurzburg, was nominated for an Academy Award in 2005. Although the film is narrated by actress Julianna Margulies, the words she speaks were written by Sue Rubin, the autistic woman who is its subject. Viewing the documentary would enable students to hear the words of a person who, like Shawn in *Stuck in Neutral*, is unable to communicate in traditional ways. After viewing the film and hearing Rubin's words spoken by an author, students might consider what effect hearing the words has on Rubin's voice.
- *Stop Pretending: When My Big Sister Went Crazy*, by Sonya Sones, is a book structured as a series of poems narrated by the sister of a teenaged girl who has a complete mental breakdown. Because the poems are told from the sister's point of view, students might choose to extend this format and write a series of poems told from the point of view of one of Shawn's siblings in *Stuck in Neutral*.

Stuck in Neutral: Anticipation Guide

Directions: Read each statement carefully and decide whether you agree or disagree with it. Then circle one of the choices below the statement.

1. It is never right to take another person's life.

   Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly agree*

2. It is a waste of money to spend millions of taxpayers' dollars to educate people who are not able to learn.

   Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly agree*

3. A person unable to communicate with others will have no quality of life.

   Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly agree*

4. People who are not able to communicate with others should be taught in separate, special classes.

   Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly agree*

5. It is possible for a person who is unable to communicate with others to be gifted.

   Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly agree*

6. It would be wonderful to have the gift of total recall (the ability to remember everything you have ever seen or heard or read).

   Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly agree*

7. Being paralyzed and unable to communicate with others would be worse than dying.

   Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly agree*

Stuck in Neutral: Sort and Predict Activity

Below are several words taken from the novel *Stuck in Neutral*, by Terry Trueman.

Working with a partner, do the following:

1. Think about the novel's title, *Stuck in Neutral*. What does the title suggest to you?
2. Cut or tear this sheet so each word is on a separate piece of paper.
3. Sort the words into an order that makes sense to you. (Note: These are isolated words that do *not* form sentences.)
4. Use your order to predict what the novel will be about, and write your prediction in a paragraph.

Shawn	**love**	**useless**	**brother**
poet	**trapped**	**father**	**communicate**
kill	**genius**	**paralyzed**	**seizure**
recall	**sister**	**teacher**	**special**
mother	**vegetable**	**different**	**wheelchair**

Stuck in Neutral: Double-Entry Diary: Chapter 1

Passage	Comment
p. 2: "I have this weird—I don't know what you'd call it—ability? Gift? Power? Whatever name you want to call it, the thing is that I can remember everything I ever hear, perfectly, with total recall. I mean *Everything! Perfectly! Totally!*" • What do you think it might be like to have this ability—would you consider it a gift or a curse? Explain.	
p. 3: "I just happen to have this one talent that I know makes me gifted and special—yuck! I hate that word 'special' when it's applied to people. As in 'he's a very *special* person.' Geez! Who isn't!" • What do you think of whenever you hear someone described as *special*? • Does everyone have a special ability?	
p. 4: "Everyone has negatives about themselves, stuff they wish wasn't a part of them. The bad news about us." • Think about your own "bad news." Why do you consider it "bad"? • Think of a well-known person you don't know, and imagine what that person's "bad news" might be.	

Stuck in Neutral: Double-Entry Diary: Chapter 2

Passage	Comment
p. 6: "The deal is, I have cerebral palsy (C.P.). C.P. is not a disease; it's a condition."	
p. 9: "Like the captain says in *Cool Hand Luke*, 'What we have here is a failure to communicate.'"	
p. 11: "I do sometimes wonder what life would be like if people, even *one* person, knew that I was smart and that there's an actual person hidden inside my useless body: I *am* in here, I'm just sort of stuck in neutral."	

Stuck in Neutral: Double-Entry Diary: _____

Passage	Comment

Unit 3: Author Study

Inquiry Question: *Who is Langston Hughes and how does his poetry impact people, society, and the world?*

Key Ideas:

- The experiences we have shape who we are, as well as our writing.
- Writing can be used to describe a situation and share experience, but it can also be used to advocate and to effect change.
- Writing from the past has relevance today.
- Authors use different techniques to achieve their purposes.
- Symbolism, imagery, and metaphor are techniques that authors use to communicate ideas on multiple levels.

Suggestions for Assessment:

- observation and anecdotal records of participation in small-group and whole-group discussions and experiences
- work samples: students complete a culminating product that depicts their understanding of *Who is Langston Hughes?* (as a person, a writer, an African American man, etc.)
- students research an author of their choice who has impacted the world (students must provide reasoning for their choice)

Recommended Resources:

Please note: The following resources are for teacher reference. Resources may contain language, situations, and/or issues of a sensitive/mature nature.

- Burleigh, Robert, *Langston's Train Ride* (Orchard Books, 2004).
- *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes*, vol. 12 (University of Missouri Press, 2001).
- Cooper, Floyd, *Coming Home: From the Life of Langston Hughes* (Philomel Books, 1994).
- Harper, Akiba Sullivan, *Short Stories of Langston Hughes* (Hill and Wang, 1997).
- Hughes, Langston, *I Wonder as I Wander* (Hill and Wang, 1993).
- Hughes, Langston, *The Langston Hughes Reader* (George Braziller Inc., 1958).
- Hughes, Langston, *The Sweet and Sour Animal Book* (Oxford University Press, 1994).
- Hughes, Langston, *The Voice of Langston Hughes* [audio CD] (Smithsonian Folkways, 1995).
- Rampersad, Arnold (ed.), *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* (Vintage Books, 1994).
- Roessel, David and Arnold Rampersad (eds.), *Poetry for Young People: Langston Hughes* (Sterling Publishing, 1994).
- Williams, Carmaletta, *Langston Hughes in the Classroom* (National Council of Teachers of English, 1994).

Recommended Short Fiction (can be found in the above titles):

- From Hill and Wang (1997), *Short Stories of Langston Hughes*
  - "Why You Reckon?" (p. 66)
  - "One Friday Morning" (p. 153)
  - "Thank You, Ma'am" (p. 223)
  - "Early Autumn" (p. 237)
  - "Fine Accommodations" (p. 239)
  - "Mary Winosky" (p. 275)
- From George Brazillier, Inc., *The Langston Hughes Reader: The Selected Writings of Langston Hughes*
  - "Seeing Double" (p. 187)
  - "Two Sides Are Not Enough" (p.219)

Recommended Poetry:

- from Rampersad, *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*
  - "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"(p. 23)
  - "Dreams" (p. 32)
  - "The White Ones" (p. 37)
  - "The Minstrel Man" (p. 61)
  - "NAACP" (p. 230)
  - "Ballad of the Seven Songs" (p. 343)
  - "Catch" (p. 375)
  - "Old Walt" (p. 446) Note: This might be effective to have students examine in light of Walt Whitman's influence on Hughes's writing.
- from Roessel, David, and Arnold Rampersad (eds.), *Poetry for Young People*
  - "Mother to Son" (p. 14)
  - "I, Too" (p. 22) Note the strength of the poem.

Cross-Reference (links to other *In Action* units):

- Issues: Accepting Difference

Learning Experiences:

Introduction

[1.4, 4.6, 6.1] Provide students with a number of quotes by Langston Hughes (e.g., "For poems are like rainbows: they escape you quickly"), and ask them:

- What do you think the quote means?
- What do you think the quote says about Hughes as a person (or as a writer)?

Then, give students the texts from which the quotes were taken, and have students respond to them. At the end of the study, students could reflect on these quotes again and comment on what they have learned about Langston Hughes that they did not know before. (Note: See the section called "Children and Poetry" in *The Langston Hughes Reader*, pp. 145–148, in which Hughes talks about the writing of poetry. You might find several passages you can use as quotes for your students to explore.)

[8.2, 8.4, 9.1] Encourage students to keep journals or logs where they collect ideas, information, and insight into Hughes as a person and a writer. Throughout the unit, encourage students to reflect on earlier notes and to make revisions, additions, or deletions as they expand their understanding. Students will use these notes to complete their culminating activity.

Multi-Genre Instructional Focus Surrounding the Poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers":

[4.6, 5.2] Share the following quote with students and ask them to identify as much information about Langston Hughes as they can from this one excerpt. These notes should be added to their journals.

> "Traveling to see his father in 1920, as he listened to the sounds of the train—metal on metal, wheels on rails—Hughes's imagination took flight. On that ride, he was inspired to write his first famous poem, 'The Negro Speaks of Rivers.'"

Ask students to add to their logs a list of questions or things they would like to know about Langston Hughes.

- Finally, read aloud the picture book *Langston's Train Ride* (Burleigh, 2004). Then ask students to go back to their earlier notes and make revisions and additions. The poem can also be shared in audio form. The CD *The Voice of Langston Hughes* (Smithsonian Folkways, 1995), features Hughes reading this and other poems.

[7.3] "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (p. 23 of *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*) is Hughes's first published poem, which makes it important for study. The metaphor of the river might be viewed as significant in terms of the overarching effect of the work of Langston Hughes. Brainstorm with students qualities/characteristics of a river and discuss how these might relate to Hughes' writing. These ideas should be added to their ongoing collection of notes. Connections might include the following:

- The river is always moving (Hughes travelled).
- It is fed by the waters of streams and other rivers (Hughes draws on his life experiences in his writing).
- Rivers have the ability to generate power, the capacity to flood, etc. (Hughes's writing deals with powerful themes).
- Rivers continually erode soil (Hughes's writing illuminates the suffering of African Americans).
- Rivers build up soil on the other end in the form of deltas (his work is inspiring other writers of various cultures to extend his vision of the world that is and could be, and to envision their own realities).

[7.6, 9.1, 10.3] Share the illustration of Langston Hughes looking at his reflection in the train window of *Langston's Train Ride*. Ask students to consider their own "reflections." How do they see themselves versus how others see them? This could be developed as a multimedia presentation.

[4.2] Explain to students that an autobiography can help us better understand Langston Hughes and his writing. Hughes discusses the writing of the poem "A Negro Speaks of Rivers":

> "I had a whole notebook full of poems by now, and another one full of verses and jingles. I always tried to keep verses and poems apart, although I saw no harm in writing verses if you felt like it, and poetry if you could." (from "I've Known Rivers," in *The Big Sea*, excerpted in *The Langston Hughes Reader*, page 349)

Ask students to discuss with a partner the difference between poetry and verse. Insight into Hughes as a person and a writer can be added to their notes.

Autobiography as Insight

[4.2, 8.1, 8.4] Share the following quotation with students. After reading it, ask students to add to their list of things they know about Langston Hughes.

Something rather less amusing happened at St. Louis. The train pulled into the station on a blazing-hot September afternoon, after a sticky, dusty trip, for there were no air-cooled coaches in those days. I had a short wait between trains. In the center of the station platform there was a news stand and soda fountain where cool drinks were being served. I went up to the counter and asked for an ice cream soda.

> The clerk said: "Are you a Mexican or a Negro?"
>
> I said: "Why?"
>
> "Because if you're a Mexican, I'll serve you," he said.
> "If you're colored, I won't. "
>
> "I'm colored, " I replied. The clerk turned to wait on
> some one else. I knew I was home in the U.S.A.

(from "Back Home," in *The Big Sea,* excerpted in *The Langston Hughes Reader*, page 349)

[5.2, 5.3] Share a third excerpt from Hughes's autobiography:

> "For my best poems were all written when I felt the worst. When I was happy, I didn't write anything." (from "I've Known Rivers," from *The Big Sea*, excerpted in *The Langston Hughes Reader*, page 351)

After asking students to predict what they think might have been happening in Hughes's life, refer to the timeline from *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes, Volume 12*, to see what was happening in his life at that time. Ask students to use this information to add to
their notes.

Exploring Humour

[7. 3] Provide students with copies of the following pieces and have them read and discuss Hughes's use of humor in his writing. Students should continue to add to their notes about Hughes as a person and a writer.

- "Personal Autograph," an excerpt from his autobiography *I Wonder As I Wander*
- "Simple" (Jesse B. Semple) stories; e.g., "Seeing Double" (*The Langston Hughes Reader,* page 187)
- "Two Sides are Not Enough" (*The Langston Hughes Reader,* page 219). Note how even in humorous pieces such as this one, Hughes concludes with powerful statements: "… which is always the problem with the morning after—you have practically nothing left from the night before—except the race problem."

An extension activity would be to have students examine the endings of some of the "Simple" pieces and see how Hughes writes strong endings.

Culmination

[8.1, 9.3, 10.1, 10.4] As a culminating activity, ask students to create a product that represents their understanding of Who is Langston Hughes? Discuss with students the possibilities, as well as the criteria for success. For example, products could include an essay, a photo essay of his life, a collection of poems with responses, or a painting/collage of influences on his life. Criteria for assessment might include accuracy of information, creativity, a minimum of three pieces of evidence from his work as support, and proper referencing.

Looking Beyond

Other possible questions:

- Was Langston Hughes a man of his time?
- How does Hughes's writing reflect both human struggle and hopes and dreams?
- How is Langston Hughes's writing relevant to today's reader?
- What impact does life experience have on a writer?
- How does Langston Hughes use metaphor?
- How does Langston Hughes create images?
- How does Langston Hughes's use of dialect help create vivid impressions of characters?
- Explore Langston Hughes's perceptions of verse and poetry. Read several examples of both, and discuss their similarities and differences.

Besides reflecting the struggle of African-American people, Hughes's work has broader implications. Much of his writing has a universal theme of struggle and hope (and dreams). For more information and poems of Langston Hughes, see *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* (Vintage, 1994).

Each brief poem in the collection contains both positive and negative elements, many of them suggesting an obstacle to be overcome. This might be another way to address the work of Langston Hughes, since he had much to overcome.

Unit 4: Integrated Learning

Inquiry Question: *What was life like for our grandparents and their generation?*

Key Ideas:

- Stories are told through the lives of characters.
- Perspective affects how information is reported and viewed.
- History has to be explored from multiple perspectives.
- Authors and creators must consider their audience and purpose.
- Communication can be achieved through multiple representations.

Suggestions for Assessment:

- observation of student participation in small-group and whole-group experiences
- work samples (story board, historical journal/letter, role-play, etc.)
- culminating project (interview)

Recommended Resource:

- Fitton, Avis, Robert Kenyon, Rick MacDonald, and Larry Parker, *Canadian Identity* (Thomson Nelson, 2006).

Cross-Reference (links to other *In Action* units):

In the experiences outlined below, students will be required to consider ideas about the changes in Canadian life over a number of decades (1920s to present). Using multiple sources of information, students will identify information relevant to a realistic but fictional character that they develop. Students will follow this character through the decades, identifying ways in which the character's life would have changed as a result of history. In essence, students are exploring the period during which their grandparents (or great-grandparents) lived.

This unit is largely based on the grade 8 social studies curriculum and the core text *Canadian Identity*. Although this unit may be taught by the English language arts teacher alone, it would be better done as a collaborative effort by English language arts and social studies teachers. It is important that throughout the unit you have students revisit multiple perspectives in an effort to answer the inquiry question.

Learning Experiences:

Note: Detailed suggestions are offered for the first stage of this unit. Remaining portions of this unit are to be designed by teams of teachers. Some suggestions are provided.

[6.1] Post the headings from chapter 6 in *Canadian Identity* (Prosperity in the 1920s, Lifestyle and Technology, Causes of the Great Depression, and Effects of the Great Depression). Prepare four charts, each labeled with one of the chapter headings. Ask students to add information that they know about each topic to the charts. Ideas should be recorded on sticky notes so they can be revised over time. Keep these charts up throughout the unit.

[4.6, 5.4] Assign pairs of students one of the four charts. Ask students to scan the portion of the chapter for which they are responsible. Have them make statements or record facts about each photo. Also, have students generate questions. Explain that this is one way to preview information text before reading it. Now ask students to read pages 86–88 to confirm or revise their statements and to answer their questions. These notes can also be added to the charts.

[5.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6] Encourage groups of students to compile their information and present it to the larger group. This will enable students to research one section of the book in depth, and to learn from others about the remaining sections.

[1.3, 2.1] [social studies 8.3.1] Based on the information presented about the 1920s, brainstorm with students about the people who were living during this time period. Ask students Who were the people living in Canada in the 1920s? Possible responses could include farmer, merchant/businessman, officer in the navy, aboriginal woman, teacher or nurse, homemaker, or boat builder.

[9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4] [social studies 8.3.1] Using a placemat organizer (see page 144), have students write the name of their character, a physical description, and background information in the centre box. In each of the outer boxes, students should make notes based on the four charts completed previously. Remind students that it is important that the details they record be relevant to their character and show how particular events affected their character. For example, in the 1920s the economy went from a wartime economy to a peacetime economy. Many soldiers returned home and couldn't find work. A student might decide to add to a character's profile that the older brother was now living at home and couldn't get a job, which could cause tension in the home.

[9.1, 9.3] Model for students various examples of photo essays. Also, invite students to bring in examples of baby books, scrapbooks, etc. In many ways, these are examples of a photo essay. Have students generate a list of characteristics of an effective photo essay.

[9.1, 9.3] [social studies 8.3.1] Explain to students that they will each construct a photo essay that depicts what life was like for his/her character during the 1920s. Remind students of the importance of ensuring that the information about their characters is historically accurate.

A similar process of modelling and guiding students through the course of developing a character can be undertaken with the remainder of this social studies unit. Teachers should take care to ensure that students are meeting the social studies outcomes while at the same time meeting outcomes in English language arts related to speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and other ways of representing.

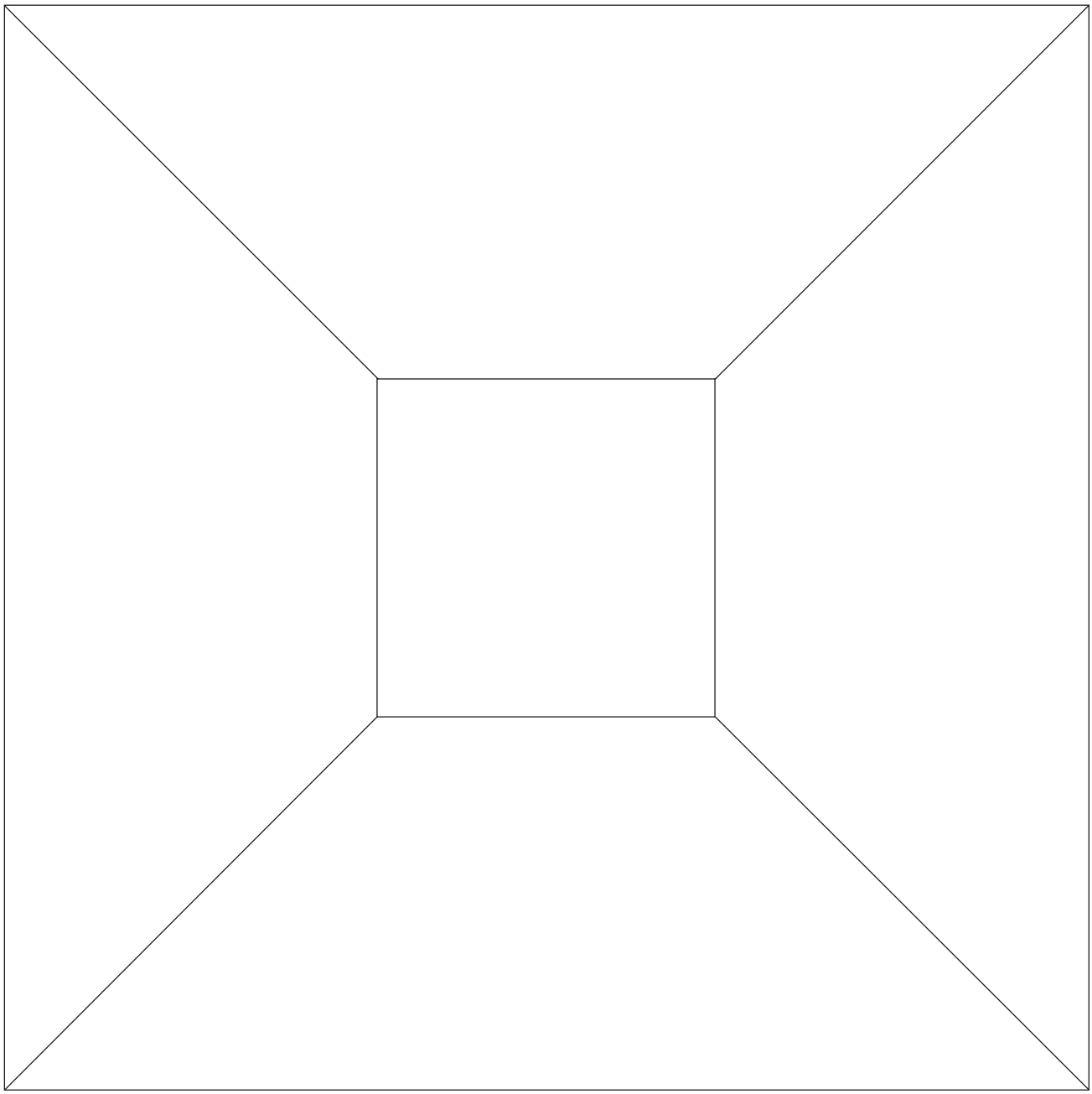
Throughout, you must continue to remind students that they should look at the history through the eyes of their characters. It is also important for students to share from time to time so they are seeing multiple perspectives of this history.

Work samples for future chapters could include:

- wartime: 1939–1945 (social studies outcomes 8.3.2 and 8.3.3): letters and journal writing
- decades of change: 1950s, 1960s, 1970s (social studies outcomes 8.3.5, and 8.3.6): role-play

[3.1, 3.5, 5.4] Culminating project: Students choose a person who has actually lived during at least five or six of these decades to interview about his/her life and experiences. Students should base their questions on what they have learned during the process of investigating their fictional characters, and in the process of studying social studies.

Placemat Organizer



Unit 5: Theme

Inquiry Question: *How do people face their fears?*

Key Ideas:

- Recognize the difference between formal and informal speech.
- Demonstrate qualities of effective speaking and listening.
- Recognize and use the many strategies necessary for making meaning from text.
- Gather information from a variety of sources (including interviews).
- Analyse techniques used by authors.

Suggestions for Assessment:

- observation and anecdotal notes about participation in small-group and whole-group experiences
- checklists and rubrics to assess work samples

Recommended Resources:

- King, Stephen, *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon* (Pocket, 2000)
- King, Stephen, *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon*: A Picture Book (Little Simon, 2004).
- Munch, Edvard, "The Scream" [painting]
- Spender, Stephen, "My Parents Kept Me" [poem]
- Tynes, Maxine, "Reach out and Touch," *Save the World for Me* (Pottersfield, 1990).
- Van Allsburg, Chris, *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* (Houghton Mifflin, 1996).

Cross Reference (links to other *In Action* units):

- Issues: Accepting Difference

Learning Experiences:

[1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 5.3] In small groups or as a whole class, brainstorm possible fears. Have students try to guess or create the technical or scientific name for each fear. Then have them try to confirm the names of these fears, using sources such as the Internet and books.

[1.1, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 8.4] Offer the following words to students for consideration: formal, semiformal, and informal. Ask students to discuss words and situations that help to describe or explain their differences. Next, create a continuum that ranges from informal to formal. Ask students to record speaking situations on sticky notes and place them on the continuum. Finally, ask students to create a sounds-like/looks-like chart for formal, semiformal, and informal speaking and listening (see page 147).

Ask students to develop a checklist for a short oral presentation that is semiformal in nature.

Have students prepare and give brief oral presentations about a fear that they have or someone they know has. Each presentation should last no longer than two minutes and should include the following:

- What is the fear?
- Give an example of a time or situation when you or your acquaintance experienced this fear.
- How did you or the other person first find out you had this fear?
- What might explain the reason or the cause for this fear?
- What impact does this fear have on daily life?

[1.1] Explain that there are degrees of fear and that not all fear is bad. Some amount of fear is healthy, and fear in certain situations keeps us safe. Provide students with a number of situations and ask them to place the situation on a continuum from positive/healthy to negative/unhealthy.

[6.1, 6.2, 7.3] Choose five or six excerpts from short stories, novels, videos, images, etc., that use fear effectively. Have the students analyse the text and consider how the author crafted the piece in order to create the sense of fear. Students should consider word choice, setting, character behaviour and actions, mood, dialogue, music, etc.

[4.8, 7.4] Share with the students images by Harris Burdick, or Edvard Munsch's *The Scream*. Ask students to choose an image. Next, invite students in pairs to share their images with their partners. Each student should orally describe the image selected. Then each student should use that image as a story starter.

[7.3] Share eight to ten leads from short stories or novels with students. Ask students to look at the different leads and discuss the author's craft. Using the stories created above, invite students to share their stories and brainstorm as many leads for their stories as possible.

[2.1, 4.1, 5.2, 8.4] Choose a number of stories or newspaper articles in which fear is an element. Ask students to read the stories and complete the analysis chart (see page 148). Have students, using their completed notes, work in small groups to discuss things that people can do to face their fears. Finally, have students share their lists with the whole group.

[4.5, 6.1, 6.2] Radio call-in show. Provide the students with a short story in which fear is an element or one of the characters has to make a decision and fear could be a factor. Have the students read the short story and consider the situation and decision being faced by the character. Then, acting in character as a radio call-in-show host, ask the "listeners" to "call in" and share their thoughts on the topic. Students can be encouraged to call in as themselves, or in character as famous people. During the call-in, students must be able to express and support their points of view.

Novel Extensions:

- Cooney, Carolyn B., *Driver's Ed* (Mammoth, 1997).
- Duprau, Jeanne, *The City of Ember* (Yearling, 2004).
- Duprau, Jeanne, *The People of Sparks* (Yearling, 2005).
- Hartinger, Brent, *Geography Club,* (HarperCollins Canada, 2004).
- Nolan, Han, *Send Me Down a Miracle* (Harcourt, 2003).
- Winter, Laurel, *Growing Wings* (Firebird, 2002).

Sounds Like/Looks Like

Sounds like	Looks like

Analysis Chart

	Article: Fear:	Article: Fear:	Article: Fear:
Situation			
Actions of those involved			
Result of actions			

Unit 6: Issues

Inquiry Question: *Do people have difficulty accepting differences?*

Key Ideas:

- Recognize factors that contribute to difference.
- Express personal viewpoints.
- Support a viewpoint.
- Contribute positively to group discussions.
- Show sensitivity and respect toward others.
- Listen to others and consider their ideas.
- Read and respond to text.
- Detect bias in text.
- Make connections between text and self, other texts, the world.
- Create various representations.

Suggestions for Assessment:

- observation of student participation in small-group and whole-group experiences
- work samples (e.g., survey)

Recommended Resources:

- *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* [DVD video] (Columbia Tristar, 2001).
- *Guess Who?* [DVD video] (Columbia Tristar, 2005).
- Sones, Sonya, *Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy* (HarperCollins Canada, 1999).

Cross-Reference (links to other *In Action* Units):

- Theme: Facing Fears

Learning Experiences:

[2.4] Place a continuum on the board with *yes* on one side and *no* on the other. Ask students to place a sticker or symbol on the part of the continuum that best represents their response to the following question, Do you have a hard time accepting differences? This activity is intended to be anonymous, but it is important that the students remember where they placed their symbols so they can revisit the placement at the end of the unit.

[2.4] Read aloud the book *Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy* (Sonya Sones). Ask students to listen for examples of difference and how people react to difference.

[2.1, 3.1, 3.2] Present a series of photographs in which each shows the same object, but in a different situation or with a unique presentation. Using a "talking stick," have a group discussion about the differences and similarities between the photos.

[3.3, 8.4] Discuss the idea that we are all different or unique and we all see the world through different lenses. Brainstorm the various lenses through which we view the world (gender, race, religion, age, sexuality, family structure, cultural background, abilities, disabilities, etc.) Have students complete a lens chart to help them expand and extend their views (see page 151). This chart should also be anonymous, as students might not feel comfortable disclosing personal information. Students who wish to do so may share and compare charts.

[6.2, 8.4] Read a story with strong but very different characters. Have students identify the various lenses for each of the characters in the story. Students could complete a statement and evidence chart to assist them in writing a paragraph describing the lenses of one of the characters. (see page 152)

[2.1, 3.1, 8.4, 9.2] Remind students of group responsibilities and individual responsibilities when working in a group.

Have students work in a small group to complete a double bubble chart (see page 153 for template) comparing two items (e.g., two branches, one from a fir tree, the other from a spruce tree).

Brainstorm various comparison words (e.g., similarly, unlike, whereas).

Provide students with two extra-wide sentence strips each and have them write on the first a statement about a similarity (with evidence) and on the second a statement about a difference (with evidence). Then place students in groups, where they assemble the strips into a group essay. Together, they should add an introduction and a conclusion.

[7.4, 7.6] Have students watch two versions of the same movie (e.g., *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* and *Guess Who?*). Discuss the similarities and differences between them.

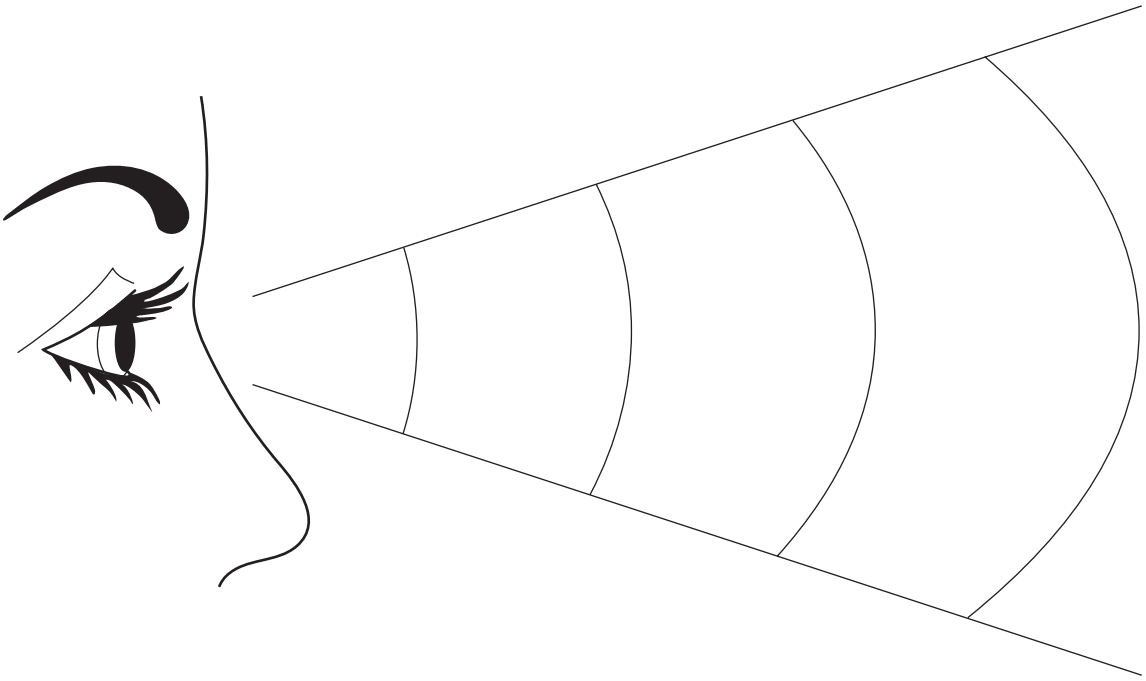
[3.5, 8.4, 9.3] Have students complete a survey project in an effort to determine how tolerant people are of difference. Students should work in groups of four to conduct a random sample of students in the school. Each group could be responsible for surveying 80–100 students (20–25 students per interviewer). On completing the survey, the group should represent the data in visual form (graph) and in written form (report on results and their learning about the results, as well as the process).

Extensions:

- Brooks, Garth, "We Shall Be Free," *Double Live* [CD] (EMI Music Canada, 1998).
- Hinton, S.E., *The Outsiders* (Viking Children's Books, 1967).**
- L'Engle, Madeleine, *A Wrinkle in Time* (Yearling, 1973).**
- Spinelli, Jerry, *Stargirl* (Knopf, 2000).
- Harrar, George, *Not As Crazy as I Seem* (Graphia, 2004).
- Spirit of the West, "Putting Up With the Joneses" *Save This House* [CD] (WEA, 1990).

**ALR

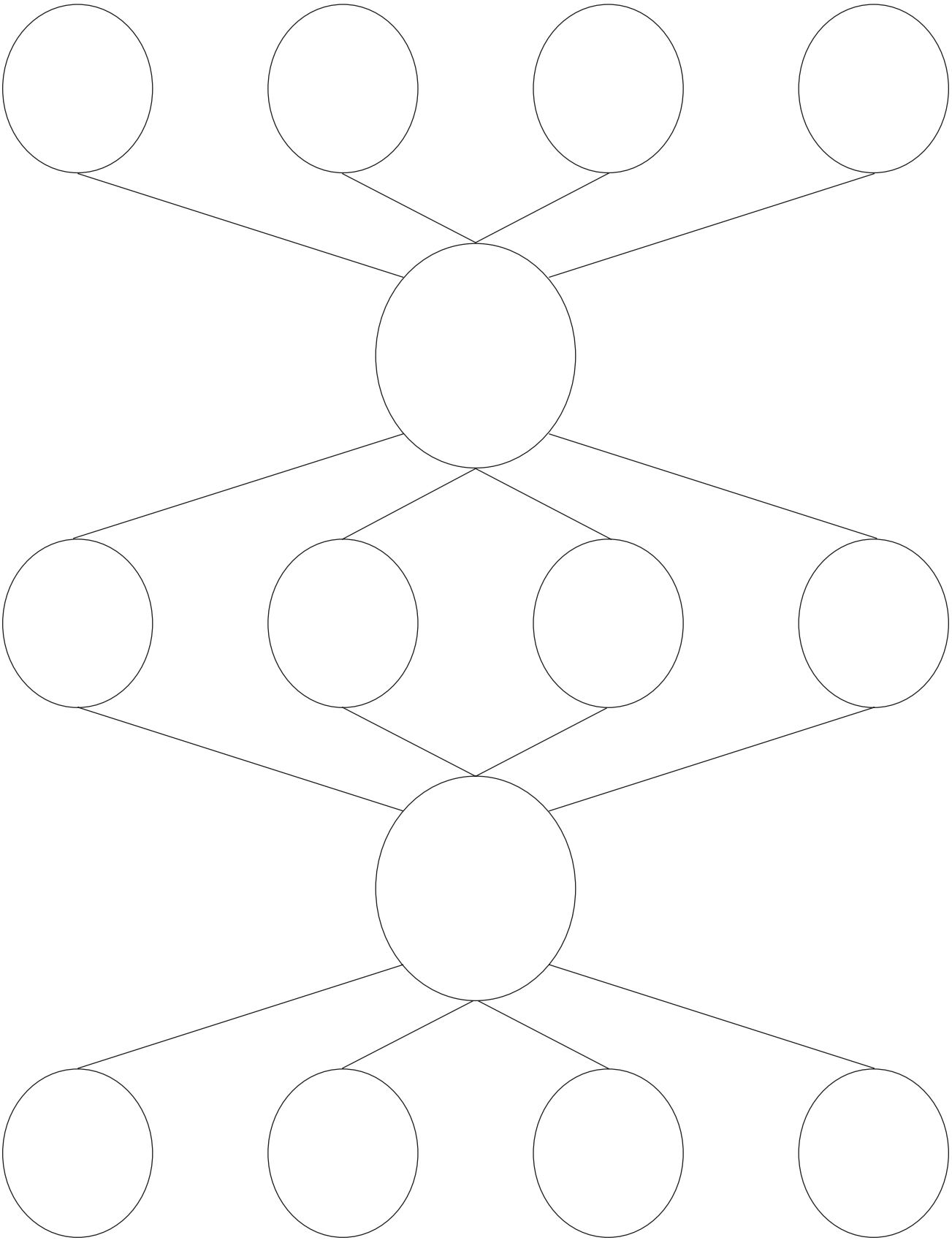
My Lens



Statement and Evidence

Statement	Evidence

Double Bubble



Conducting a Survey

Students will conduct a survey of the school population as part of a research study and represent their findings in visual and written form. This can be done as an interdisciplinary study.

Prior to the unit, alert other teachers in the school to the possibility of interruptions during the week of data collection.

1. Help the class generate possible questions for research. Questions must provide information or insight into the group being studied. It is also important that the questions help answer the inquiry question Do people have a difficult time accepting difference?
   - Have students individually brainstorm as many questions as possible. Then have them work in pairs or small groups to share questions and compile a group list.
   - Possible questions might include the following:
     - Rate your preference of music types. How important is the music preference of your friends?
     - Would you pursue a relationship with someone who enjoys a type of music that you hate?
     - Whom would you be comfortable inviting over for a party? (Show photos of single female, trans-racial couple, heterosexual couple, homosexual couple, single male.)

2. Explain that students will conduct their surveys in groups of three or four. Each group must choose a different question to explore.

3. Once questions are finalized, groups will need to consider the best way to seek responses. They may choose to have selected response (multiple choice) or perhaps use a rating scale (1–5).

4. Each group must clarify and finalize both the wording of their survey question and the possible responses they will receive ("other" may be a useful response for any that do not fall easily into the categories they have identified).

5. Have students devise a way to survey randomly at least 25 percent of the school population.

6. Prepare a data-collection form such as the one on page 156 and give each student a copy.

7. Share with your students effective interviewing skills (introducing oneself to strangers, explaining the purpose of the survey, asking the respondent's permission to interview, etc.), and have students role-play situations where they will interview people they do not know. To verify that they have actually interviewed the people on their list, they will ask each respondent to sign the form.

8. Explain that group members will be assessed in two ways:
   - on **effort**, which will be determined by the number of people they survey
   - on the **interpretation and presentation of their findings**, which will be determined by the criteria you and your students assign for the poster and written portion of the project

Because students might not be able to reach all the students they have been assigned to interview, consider using a scoring rubric similar to the following. Students will receive full value for interviewing fewer than the number of respondents they were assigned, and bonus value for interviewing more than this number. In the following example, students were assigned to interview 20 respondents each, and they received full value if they interviewed 17.

Number of signatures	Points (out of 10)
1–2	1
3–4	2
5–6	3
7–8	4
9–10	5
11–12	6
13–14	8
15–16	9
17–18	10
19	11
20	12

9. Once groups have collected their data, have them analyse, interpret, and present their findings to the rest of the class in a visual manner.

Survey Data Collection Form

Student's Name	Class	Room #	Student Response	Student's Signature

School Survey

Name: _____ **Class:** _____

Group Members:

Our Survey Question:

Possible Responses:

Unit 7: Project

Inquiry Question: *Do the media portray reality?*

Key Ideas:

- Read media text and respond personally and critically.
- Use organizational devices when constructing text.
- Recognize bias.
- Understand that language has, and is, power.
- Gather information from a variety of sources.
- Use various technologies.
- Participate in discussions in a positive manner.
- Show sensitivity and respect.

Suggestions for Assessment:

- observation and anecdotal notes from small-group and whole-group experiences
- checklists and rubrics to assess work sample (e.g., media text)

Recommended Resources:

- newspapers
- popular magazines
- websites

Cross-Reference (links to other *In Action* units):

- Interdisciplinary: *What was life like for our grandparents and their generation?*

Learning Experiences:

This media project works best when preceded with activities aimed at helping students develop skills associated with media literacy.

[2.1, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2] Pose a question to students: What factors shape our realities? Have students discuss this question and generate a list of possible responses (factors might include family, interests, economic status, activities, responsibilities). Then, using these categories, share with students some of the things that make up your reality (e.g., married, two step-children, two biological children, enjoy country music, middle class, live in a rural community, participate in two sports, work full time, coach children's sports teams). Have students use the same categories to brainstorm aspects of their own realities. (See page 160.)

[2.1] Brainstorm various types of media text that might capture the reality of teens today (e.g., TV commercial, TV show, radio commercial, poster, website, newspaper ad, newspaper article, magazine ad, magazine article).

[4.2, 4.5, 6.2] Provide students with a text that shows teen lifestyle and have them read or view the text to see how closely the text reflects their reality. Using the categories identified above, have students discuss how the text reflects or does not reflect them in each of these areas. Students could find examples of how the text "is like me" and "is not like me."

[4.5, 6.1] Ask the students to search out articles in a popular magazine in which they feel the media's portrayal of reality is questionable. Have them present the articles for class discussion and debate.

[4.3, 8.2, 8.4] Assign small groups of students different types of media text. Each group should analyse the kind of media text and complete an essential components chart (see Appendix C2). This chart should outline the essential components of each media type. For example, a news feature article should include a catchy title, lead sentence, body of the article (provides detail, explanation, and examples), a photo, columns of text, larger font for the title, etc. Groups could present their charts to the whole class.

[9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 10.3] Provide students with an outline of the project (for a sample, see page 161). As students work on the project, provide support in terms of conferring, arranging opportunities for peer feedback, time, and resources. Have students share their completed projects with the class.

Reality Factors

Factors	My Reality
Family	
Interests	
Economic Situation	
Responsibilities	
Activities/Hobbies	

Media Project

Scoring of process:

/40

Scoring of final product:

/60

Content: 15 pts.

- Information is accurate.
- Information is relevant to the task.
- Enough detail has been provided.

Media Conventions: 15 pts.

- Key aspects of that media type are appropriately used.

Creativity: 15 pts.

- Work is neat.
- Uses colour.
- Has an effective layout.

Audience and Fit: 10 pts.

- Content, word choice, use of images, etc. are appropriate for the audience.

Print Conventions: 5 pts.

- Spelling is correct.
- Mechanics are correct.
- Grammar is appropriate.

My Task: to create a media text that reflects my reality **My Audience:** My classmates and teachers in the school	**Date Assigned:** **Due Date** (for final product):
The type of media text I am going to create is …	
Content: (what I want my audience to know about my reality)	**Components:** (how I am going to show my reality using the type of media chosen)

Process: Record dates for the following. Successful completion of each step is worth **5 points** (note: you must resubmit portions until you are successful).

_____ project outline (this page) created and first student/teacher conference to discuss and confirm project outline

_____ outline or sketch or storyboard developed for the media text

_____ first peer conference with feedback on media text outline or sketch or storyboard (two things I like, one area to improve)

_____ first draft created

_____ second student/teacher conference to discuss first draft

_____ second peer conference to give feedback on first draft (checklist)

_____ revisions and edit done

_____ self-reflection

Appendices

Appendix A: Planning Chart

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Essential Questions or Focus			
Essential Terms and Vocabulary			
Content			
Skills			

Planning Chart *continued*

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Assessment			
Learning Experiences			
Notes for Differentiation			
Resources			

Appendix B: Key Terms, Grades 7–9

Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9

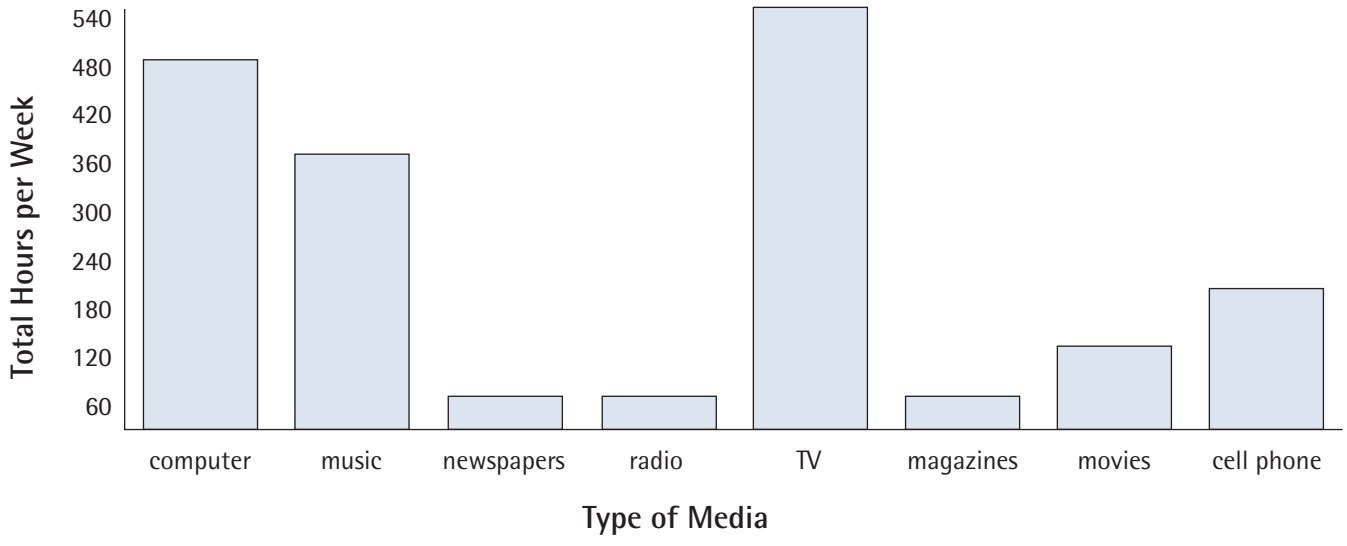
Appendix C1: Media Survey

Name: _____

Complete the chart on the following page to create a profile of your interactions with media over a one-week period. Each day, record the number of minutes that best represents your daily interaction with each type of media. Calculate the total minutes spent on each activity for the week, and create a graph that shows the amount of time spent on each.

Sample

Type of Media	Daily Interaction							
	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	TOTAL
computer Internet/web page games e-mail chat/messaging	60 mins	60 mins	60 mins	60 mins	120 mins	60 mins	60 mins	480 mins
music audio video					60 mins	180 mins	120 mins	360 mins
newspapers	30 mins			30 mins				60 mins
radio		30 mins	30 mins					60 mins
TV	60 mins	60 mins	60 mins	60 mins	60 mins	120 mins	120 mins	540 mins
magazines		30 mins	30 mins					60 mins
movies						120 mins		120 mins
cell phone	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	30 mins	60 mins	60 mins	210 mins



Media Survey *continued*

Name: _____

Type of Media	Daily Interaction							
	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	TOTAL
computer Internet/web page games e-mail chat/messaging								
music audio video								
newspapers								
radio								
TV								
magazines								
movies								

Create a bar graph to show your results:

Appendix C2: Media Fact Sheet

Type of Media	Purpose	Required Elements	Example
TV show (sitcom)			
TV show (soap opera)			
TV show (drama)			
TV show (reality program)			
radio			
music video			
newspaper			
magazine			
print ad			
web page			

Appendix C3: Advertising Techniques

Advertisers use many techniques to try to convince you to buy their products or to buy into their ideas. See if you can find examples of the techniques listed below.

Testimonials:
Reports and reviews are given by people who have used the product.

Star Power:
The product or idea is associated with someone famous.

Facts and Figures:
Included in the ad are all kinds of technical facts and numbers.

The Expert:
Researchers, scientists, and experts are quoted to give the product credibility.

Weasel Words:
Ads include words such as almost, virtually, most, may, without a doubt.

Dream World:
Advertisers make their products or ideas look better than reality.

Fun Factor:
The ad tries to show how much fun you would have with this new product.

Sex Appeal:
Ads show men and women in sexy clothing, or are sexually suggestive.

Fear Factor:
Advertisers take advantage of your fears to convince you that something bad might happen if you don't "buy" in.

Join the Group:
The ad makes you feel as if everyone else is "doing" or "buying" it, so you should too.

Contrast:
The ad negatively portrays what it would be like without the product.

Appendix C4: Advertisement Self-Assessment Target

Here are several suggested targets of which four have been used in the following sample:

Task: The directions for the task have been followed.

Audience and Fit: The pitch used is appropriate for the audience.

Impact: The ad has the desired impact on the reader.

Product: The product is clearly identified.

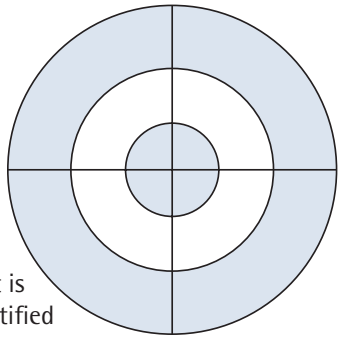
Neatness: The work is neat and creative.

Layout: The layout makes it easy to read and draws your focus to the most important parts.

Accuracy: Spelling, punctuation, and writing conventions are correct.

Sample

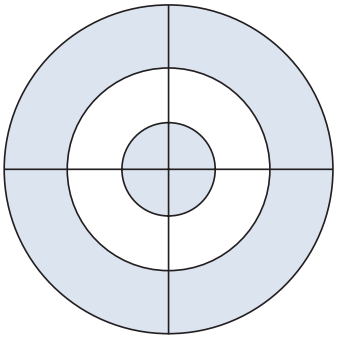
neatness:
the work
is neat and
creative

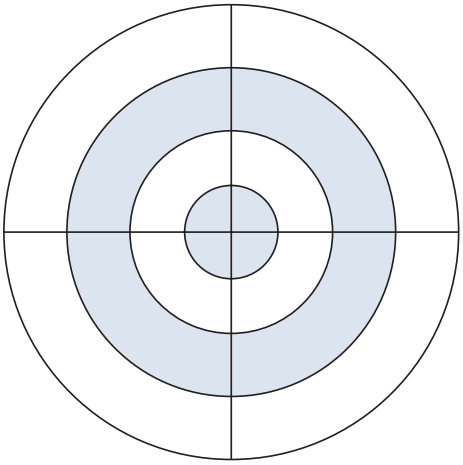


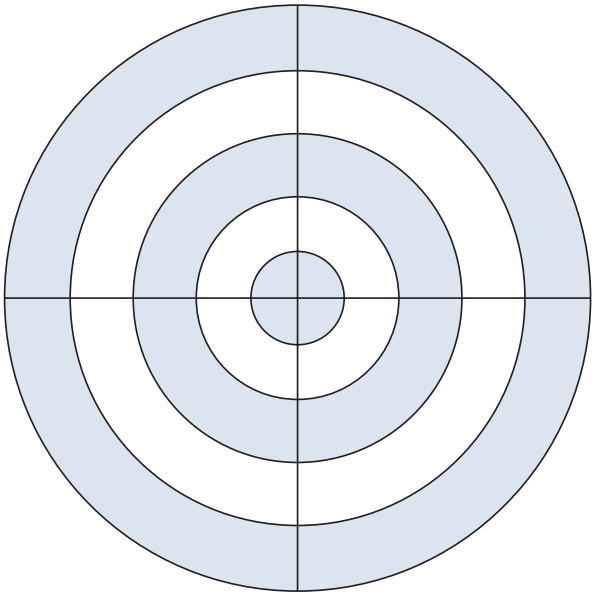
audience and fit:
the pitch used is
appropriate for
the audience

product:
the product is
clearly identified

layout:
the layout makes it
easy to read and draws
your focus to the most
important parts







Appendix C5: Media Text Rubric

Name: _____

Type of Media Text:

☐ TV: comedy ☐ TV: drama ☐ TV: reality ☐ newspaper ☐ music video
☐ radio ☐ magazine ☐ web page ☐ print ad ☐ other _____

Purpose (What is the media text supposed to accomplish?):

_____

_____

_____

Target Audience (Who is it for?):

_____

_____

_____

	1	3	5
Purpose and Text Type	text created does not suit the purpose	text created somewhat effective but there may have been a better choice	text is effective given its purpose
Content	content minimal and may be inaccurate	content accurate and gives sufficient information	content detailed and accurate
Media Conventions	text does not resemble other media texts of the same type	some features of this type of media used but not always effectively	text effectively incorporates many features of this kind of media text
Creativity	media text not visually appealing	effort has been made with appearance	media text visually appealing
Audience and Fit	not clear who this is intended for	some awareness of audience is evident	text appropriate for its intended audience
Print Conventions	text has many errors	text has some errors	text largely free of errors

Appendix D1:
Words and Phrases That are Neutral or with Power

Neutral

Power

Appendix D2: Critical Literacy Questions

Reading critically means asking questions about the text and how it is constructed. Use the questions below to think critically about a piece of text.

Who constructed this (age/nationality/gender/race)?

What are the writer's beliefs?

With whom did you share the text?

How/where was the text shared?

For what purpose could the text be used?

What is the topic?

How is the topic presented?

How else could the topic have been presented?

What has been included?

What has been omitted?

Whose voice is being expressed?

Whose voice is not expressed?

Appendix D3: Website Evaluation—Start with the Clues

Name: _____

Website being evaluated: _____

Search engine used: _____

Choose a website to evaluate. Look at the website and ask yourself the questions in the second column. Write your comments in the third column.

Focus	Questions	Notes
Look at the web address (URL). What does it tell us?	What kind of domain does it have? (.com, .org, .edu, .gov, .net, .mil, .int, .ca, .uk, .au)	
	What does the domain mean? • edu = higher education college or university • gov = government agency or organization • com = commercial organization • net = network provider • org = nonprofit organization • int = international organization • mil = military • ca = Canada • uk = United Kingdom • au = Australia	
Try to determine who has published the site. Is it an individual, a company? Who is it?	What does the home page tell us? (Everything between the http:// and the subsequent /.)	
	Look for a name, organization, and e-mail address. Sometimes there is a "contact us" page. The author and webmaster might be different people.	
How current is the information and the site?	When was the site originally created?	
	When was the site last updated?	
Who supports this site?	Who are the sponsors? What do they promote?	
	Do the sponsors affect the information on the site?	
Who is connected to this site?	Who links to the site?	
	Does the site have an agenda?	

Appendix D4: Website Evaluation—A Deeper Look

Name: _____

Website being evaluated: _____

Choose a website to evaluate. Look at the website and ask yourself one or two of the questions in the second column. Score each category and write some comments in the third column.

Areas to Look At	Questions to Ask	Score and Notes
Authority Who says? Know the author.	• Who created this information? • Is the information from a well-known organization (school, business, company, organization etc.)?	1 2 3 4 5 low ◄——————————► high **Explanation:**
Purpose Why was the site created?	• What is the purpose of the information resource: to inform, instruct, persuade, sell? Does this matter? • What is the motive? • Could the information be meant as humorous, a parody, or satire?	1 2 3 4 5 low ◄——————————► high **Explanation:**
Objectivity Is the information biased? Think about perspective.	• Is the information fact or opinion? • Does it reflect bias? How? • How does sponsorship affect the perspective of the information? • Are other perspectives represented?	1 2 3 4 5 low ◄——————————► high **Explanation:**

Website Evaluation—A Deeper Look *continued*

Areas to Look At	Questions to Ask	Score and Notes
Reliability/ Authenticity Is this information accurate? Consider the origin of the information.	• Is this a primary source or secondary information? • Who is sponsoring this publication? • Are sources cited? • Is there a bibliography?	1 2 3 4 5 low ⟷ high **Explanation:**
Timeliness Is the information current? Consider the currency and timeliness of the information.	• How current are the sources or links? • Does currency of information matter with your particular topic?	1 2 3 4 5 low ⟷ high **Explanation:**
Relevance Is the information helpful? Think about whether you need this information.	• Is the information in a useful form such as words, pictures, charts, sounds, or video? • Does this information add to your knowledge of the subject?	1 2 3 4 5 low ⟷ high **Explanation:**
Efficiency Is this information worth the effort? Think about the organization and speed of information access.	• Is the information well-organized, including a table of contents, menu, and other easy-to-follow tools for navigation? • Is the information presented in a way that is easy to use (via fonts, graphics, headings, paragraphing, etc.)? • What is the reading level (easy, just right, challenging)?	1 2 3 4 5 low ⟷ high **Explanation:**

Appendix E1: Visual Fact Sheet (With Definitions)

Type of Visual	Purpose	Required Elements	Example
photo	the exact image of an object or place	image	
illustration	an artist's reproduction of an object or place	image	
diagram	explains or shows how something works	title labels often has arrows or directions	
cross-section	shows the inside of the object in question	title labels	
map	shows the geography of a specific area	title legend compass rose	
table	organizes and presents information in a condensed manner	title columns and rows headings	
bar graph	shows the quantity or number of identified items; can be used for comparison	title x-axis y-axis labels colour and legend	
line graph	shows change over time	title x-axis y-axis labels	
circle graph	shows proportions relative to the whole	title colour and legend or labels	
time line	shows the order or chronology of events	title years	

Appendix E2: Visual Fact Sheet (Blank)

Type of Visual	Purpose	Required Elements	Example
photo			
illustration			
diagram			
cross section			
map			
table			
bar graph			
line graph			
circle graph			
timeline			

Appendix E3: Visual Checklist

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

- ☐ I have included a title (if necessary).
- ☐ I have checked my information and it is accurate.
- ☐ I have included all the necessary information.
- ☐ I have carefully chosen colour or used black and white for a reason.
- ☐ I have used the available space and not crammed information in one area.
- ☐ I have done my best and neatest work.
- ☐ I have checked my work for spelling, punctuation, usage, and grammar errors.
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

- ☐ I have included a title (if necessary).
- ☐ I have checked my information and it is accurate.
- ☐ I have included all the necessary information.
- ☐ I have carefully chosen colour or used black and white for a reason.
- ☐ I have used the available space and not crammed information in one area.
- ☐ I have done my best and neatest work.
- ☐ I have checked my work for spelling, punctuation, usage, and grammar errors.
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Appendix F1: Navigating the Web—Observation Rubric

Tasks:

Student: Using the Virtual Museum of Canada, find the exhibit on Bishop Isaac Stringer. Explain how he got his nickname.

Teacher: Make observations as the student completes the task. Record observations using the rubrics provided.

Rubric 1: Internet Navigation: Locating a Website

Student Researcher: _____ **Teacher Observer:** _____

Skill	1	3	5
Identifying a search engine	• identifies a browser (Firefox or Internet Explorer) once prompted or shown how to activate it	• identifies a browser (Firefox or Internet Explorer) in a short time (1–2 minutes) and activates it	• identifies a browser (Firefox or Internet Explorer) immediately and activates it
Using a search engine	• searches key words and phrases once prompted • is not able to use advanced search methods (e.g., quotation marks, + and -, using advance search)	• searches key words and phrases • uses some advanced search methods (e.g., quotation marks, + and -, using advance search) with some success	• searches key words and phrases using advanced search methods (e.g., quotation marks, + and -, using advanced search) effectively and confidently
Search results	• has difficulty scanning abstracts for key words • does not recognize the domain of the website address (e.g., .org, .ca, .com) • does not demonstrate a knowledge of other search engine tools (depending on the search engine)	• somewhat able to scan abstracts for key words • recognizes some domains of the website address (e.g., .org, .ca, .com) • somewhat demonstrates a knowledge of other search engine tools (depending on the search engine)	• scans abstracts for key words • recognize the domain of the website address (e.g., .org, .ca, .com) • demonstrates a knowledge of other search engine tools (depending on the search engine)

Observation notes:

Rubric 2: Website Navigation: Locating Information on a Website

Student Researcher: _____ **Teacher Observer:** _____

Skill	1	3	5
Uses the navigation menu, table of contents, or search bar	• does not recognize and use the menu or table of contents located on the web page • does not demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the search bar	• recognizes and uses the menu or table of contents located on the web page with some success • demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the search bar located on most web pages	• recognizes and uses the menu or table of contents located on the web page • demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of the search bar located on most web pages
Uses headings and sub-headings	• does not read or acknowledge headings and subheadings found on the web page	• somewhat reads or acknowledges headings and subheadings found on the web page	• reads and acknowledges headings and subheadings found on the web page
Uses visual supports	• does not identify or acknowledge visual support on a web page (pictures, links, graphs, tables, etc.)	• somewhat identifies and acknowledges visual support on a web page (selected pictures, links, graphs, tables, etc.)	• identifies and acknowledges visual support on a web page (pictures, links, graphs, tables, etc.)
Determines relevant versus non-relevant information	• not able to identify or observe relevant information • is attracted by irrelevant information (ads, pop-ups, page counter, links)	• identifies some relevant information • may dismiss irrelevant information (ads, pop-ups, page counter, links)	• identifies and observes relevant information and dismisses irrelevant information (ads, pop-ups, page counter, links)
Reads body of text	• not able to identify and read the body of text, which outlines the information needed • needs guidance to attain to the reading material	• identifies and reads the body of text, which outlines the information needed, with some success	• identifies and reads the body of text, which outlines the information needed
Cross-checks visual text with print text	• does not demonstrate skills in reading text or cross-checking information with visual supports • not able to synthesize information and convert it into his or her own words	• demonstrates some skill in reading text while cross-checking information with visual supports • somewhat able to synthesize information and convert it into his or her own words	• demonstrates skills in reading text while cross-checking information with visual supports • synthesizes all information and converts it into his or her own words

Observation notes:

Appendix F2: Note-Making Grid

Research Topic: _____

Source	Notes	Direct Quotes

Source	Notes	Direct Quotes

Source	Notes	Direct Quotes

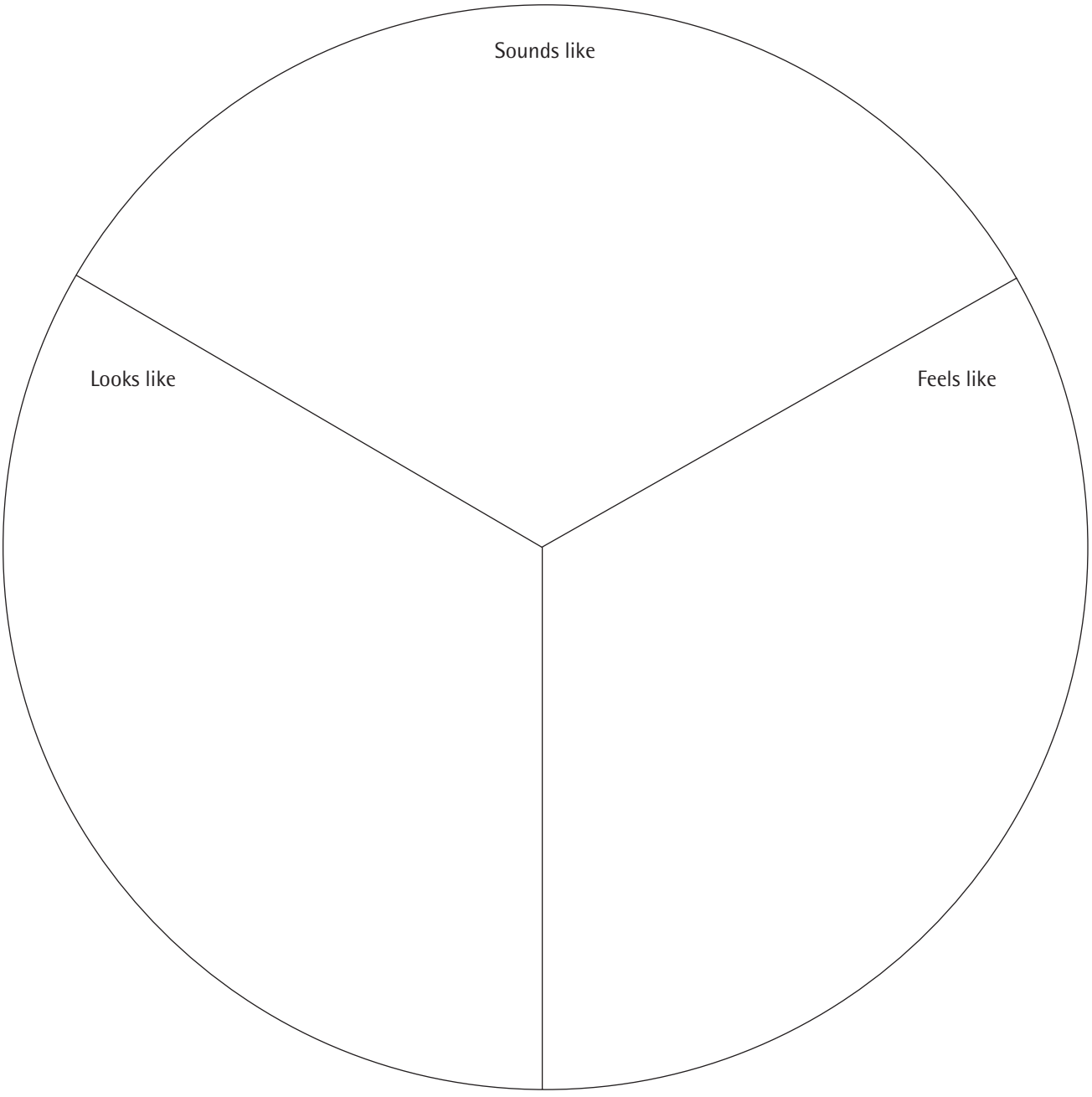
Appendix G1: Norms for Group Work, T-chart

Effective Group Work

Effective group work sounds like ...	Effective group work looks like ...

Appendix G2: Group Norms—Peace Chart

Effective Group Work



Appendix G3: Appointment Book

Appointment Book

9:00 _____

10:00 _____

11:00 _____

12:00 _____

1:00 _____

2:00 _____

3:00 _____

4:00 _____

Appointment Book

9:00 _____

10:00 _____

11:00 _____

12:00 _____

1:00 _____

2:00 _____

3:00 _____

4:00 _____

Appointment Book

9:00 _____

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4:00 _____

Appointment Book

9:00 _____

10:00 _____

11:00 _____

12:00 _____

1:00 _____

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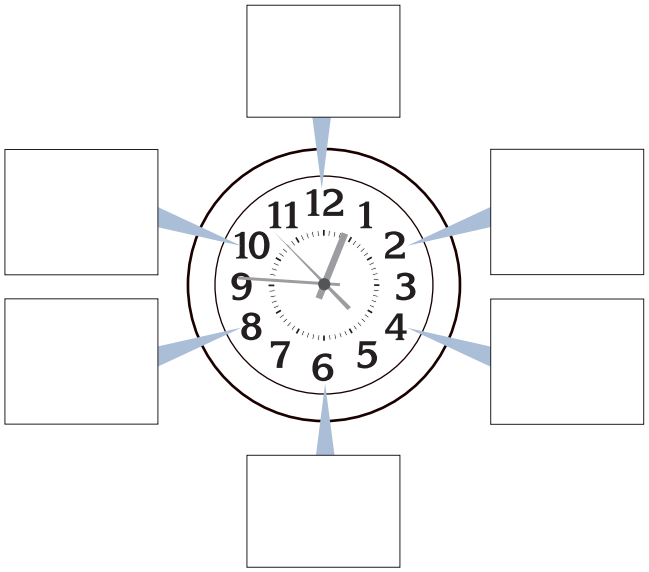
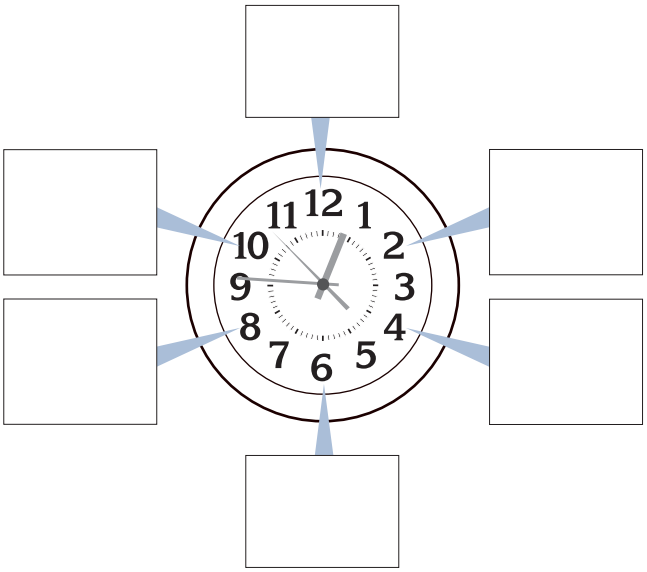
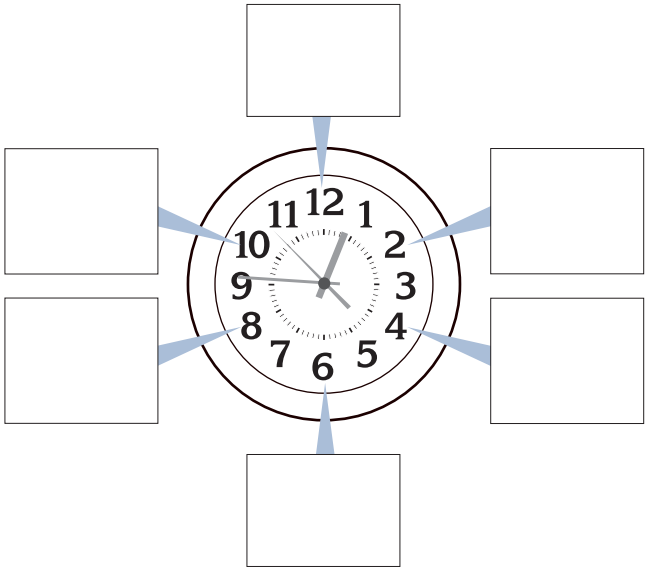
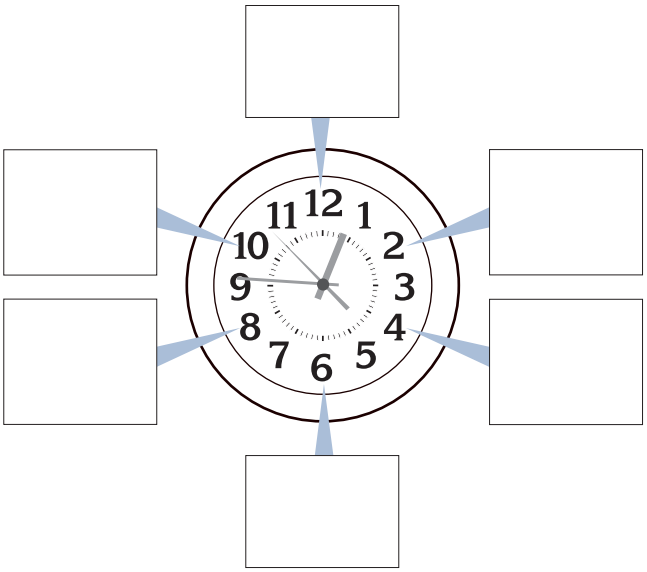
4:00 _____

Appendix G4: Clock Calendar

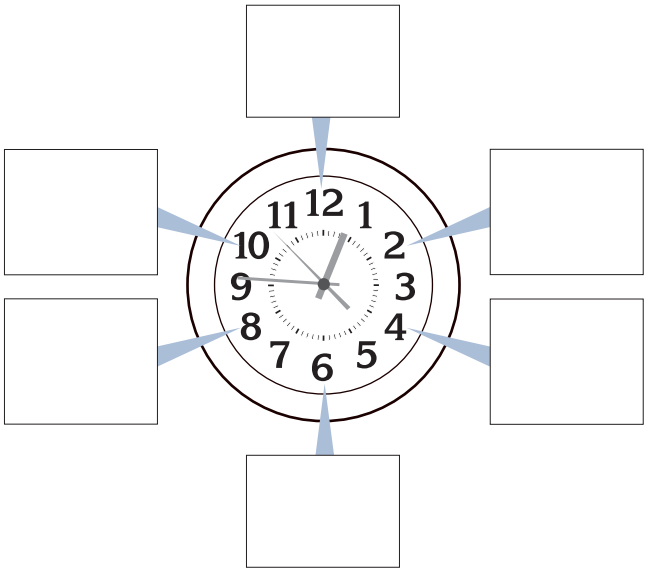


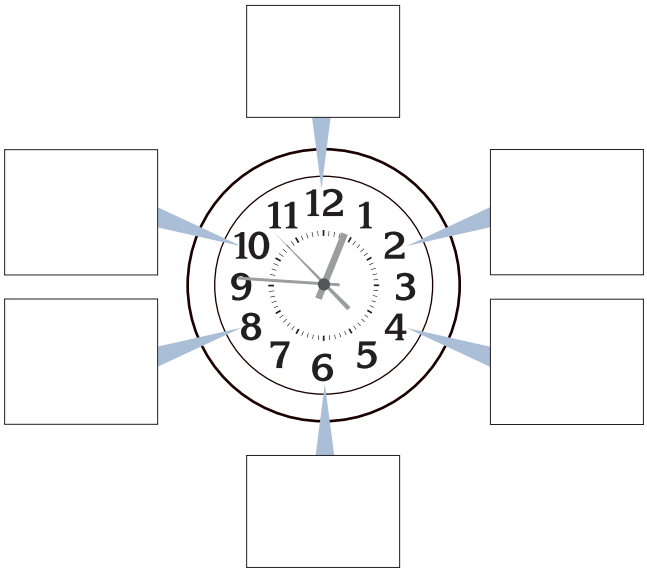


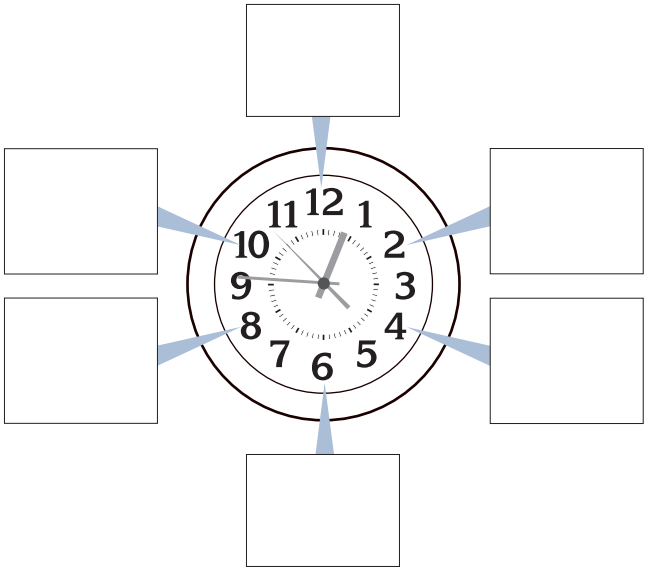


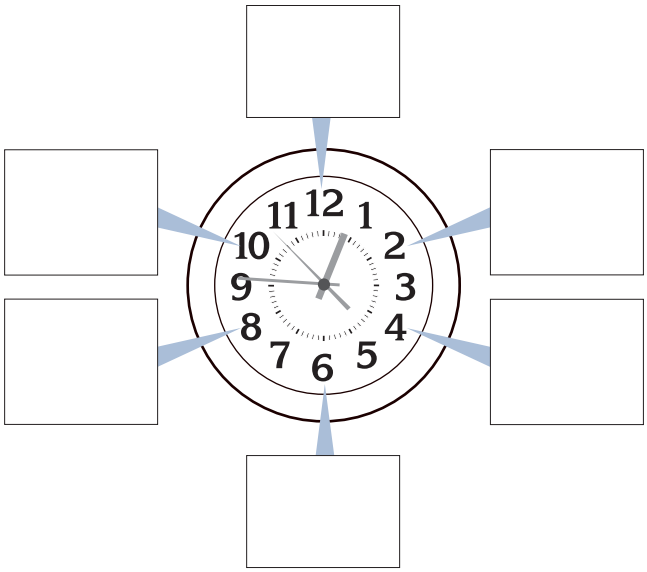


Clock Calendar *continued*









Appendix G5: Conversation Calendar

Name: _____ Class: _____

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Appendix G6: Speaking and Listening Checklist

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

- ☐ I invite others to participate in the discussion.
- ☐ I ask questions when I don't understand.
- ☐ I look at the people I am talking to and those who are talking to me.
- ☐ I take turns during a conversation.
- ☐ I explain things a different way if people don't understand.
- ☐ I can summarize what others have said.
- ☐ I respect other people's ideas and opinions even if they are different from my own.
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

- ☐ I invite others to participate in the discussion.
- ☐ I ask questions when I don't understand.
- ☐ I look at the people I am talking to and those who are talking to me.
- ☐ I take turns during a conversation.
- ☐ I explain things a different way if people don't understand.
- ☐ I can summarize what others have said.
- ☐ I respect other people's ideas and opinions even if they are different from my own.
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Appendix G7: The Magic of Three

Class: _____ Term: _____

Name	Takes turns			Invites others to participate			Clearly states ideas			Asks for clarification					

Appendix G8: What and When

Name: _____ Date: _____

	Takes turns	Invites others to participate	Clearly states ideas	Asks for clarification	
Class discussion (class expectations: 09/15)					
Class discussion (character: 10/22)					
Planning (media project: 11/09)					

	Takes turns	Invites others to participate	Clearly states ideas	Asks for clarification	
Class discussion (class expectations: 09/15)					
Class discussion (character: 10/22)					
Planning (media project: 11/09)					

Appendix G9: Speaking and Listening Assessment Rubric

1	2	3	4
rarely takes turns speaking	sometimes takes turns speaking	frequently takes turns speaking	always takes turns speaking
rarely invites others to participate	sometimes invites others to participate	frequently invites others to participate	always invites others to participate
rarely aware of the needs of the listening audience	sometimes aware of the needs of the listening audience	frequently aware of the needs of the listening audience	always aware of the needs of the listening audience
rarely displays culturally appropriate body language (eye contact, nodding, etc.)	sometimes displays appropriate body language (eye contact, nodding, etc.)	frequently displays appropriate body language (eye contact, nodding, etc.)	always displays appropriate body language (eye contact, nodding, etc.)
rarely asks for clarification	sometimes asks for clarification	regularly asks for clarification	frequently asks for clarification

1	2	3	4
rarely takes turns speaking	sometimes takes turns speaking	frequently takes turns speaking	always takes turns speaking
rarely invites others to participate	sometimes invites others to participate	frequently invites others to participate	always invites others to participate
rarely aware of the needs of the listening audience	sometimes aware of the needs of the listening audience	frequently aware of the needs of the listening audience	always aware of the needs of the listening audience
rarely displays culturally appropriate body language (eye contact, nodding, etc.)	sometimes displays appropriate body language (eye contact, nodding, etc.)	frequently displays appropriate body language (eye contact, nodding, etc.)	always displays appropriate body language (eye contact, nodding, etc.)
rarely asks for clarification	sometimes asks for clarification	regularly asks for clarification	frequently asks for clarification

Appendix G10: Speaking and Listening Rating Scale

Rating Scale

Student: ____________________ Peer: ____________________ Teacher: ____________________

	low			high
Takes turns	1	2	3	4
Invites others to participate	1	2	3	4
Clearly states ideas	1	2	3	4
Asks for clarification	1	2	3	4

Rating Scale

Student: ____________________ Peer: ____________________ Teacher: ____________________

	low			high
Takes turns	1	2	3	4
Invites others to participate	1	2	3	4
Clearly states ideas	1	2	3	4
Asks for clarification	1	2	3	4

Rating Scale

Student: ____________________ Peer: ____________________ Teacher: ____________________

	low			high
Takes turns	1	2	3	4
Invites others to participate	1	2	3	4
Clearly states ideas	1	2	3	4
Asks for clarification	1	2	3	4

Appendix G11: Where Am I?

Sample

Name: _____ Date: _____

	Need a lot of work	Getting started	Almost there	You've got it
Take turns				
Invite others to participate				
Clearly state ideas				
Ask for clarification				

Name: _____ Date: _____

	Need a lot of work	Getting started	Almost there	You've got it
Take turns				
Invite others to participate				
Clearly state ideas				
Ask for clarification				

G12: Self-Assessment, Groupwork

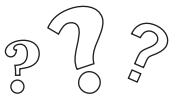
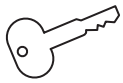
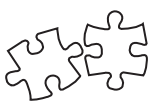
Listened to group members	1	2	3	4	5
Shared my own ideas without dominating	1	2	3	4	5
Completed an equal share of the work	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraged others and provided positive feedback	1	2	3	4	5
1 = rarely/never		**3 = sometimes**		**5 = often/always**	

Listened to group members	1	2	3	4	5
Shared my own ideas without dominating	1	2	3	4	5
Completed an equal share of the work	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraged others and provided positive feedback	1	2	3	4	5
1 = rarely/never		**3 = sometimes**		**5 = often/always**	

Listened to group members	1	2	3	4	5
Shared my own ideas without dominating	1	2	3	4	5
Completed an equal share of the work	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraged others and provided positive feedback	1	2	3	4	5
1 = rarely/never		**3 = sometimes**		**5 = often/always**	

Listened to group members	1	2	3	4	5
Shared my own ideas without dominating	1	2	3	4	5
Completed an equal share of the work	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraged others and provided positive feedback	1	2	3	4	5
1 = rarely/never		**3 = sometimes**		**5 = often/always**	

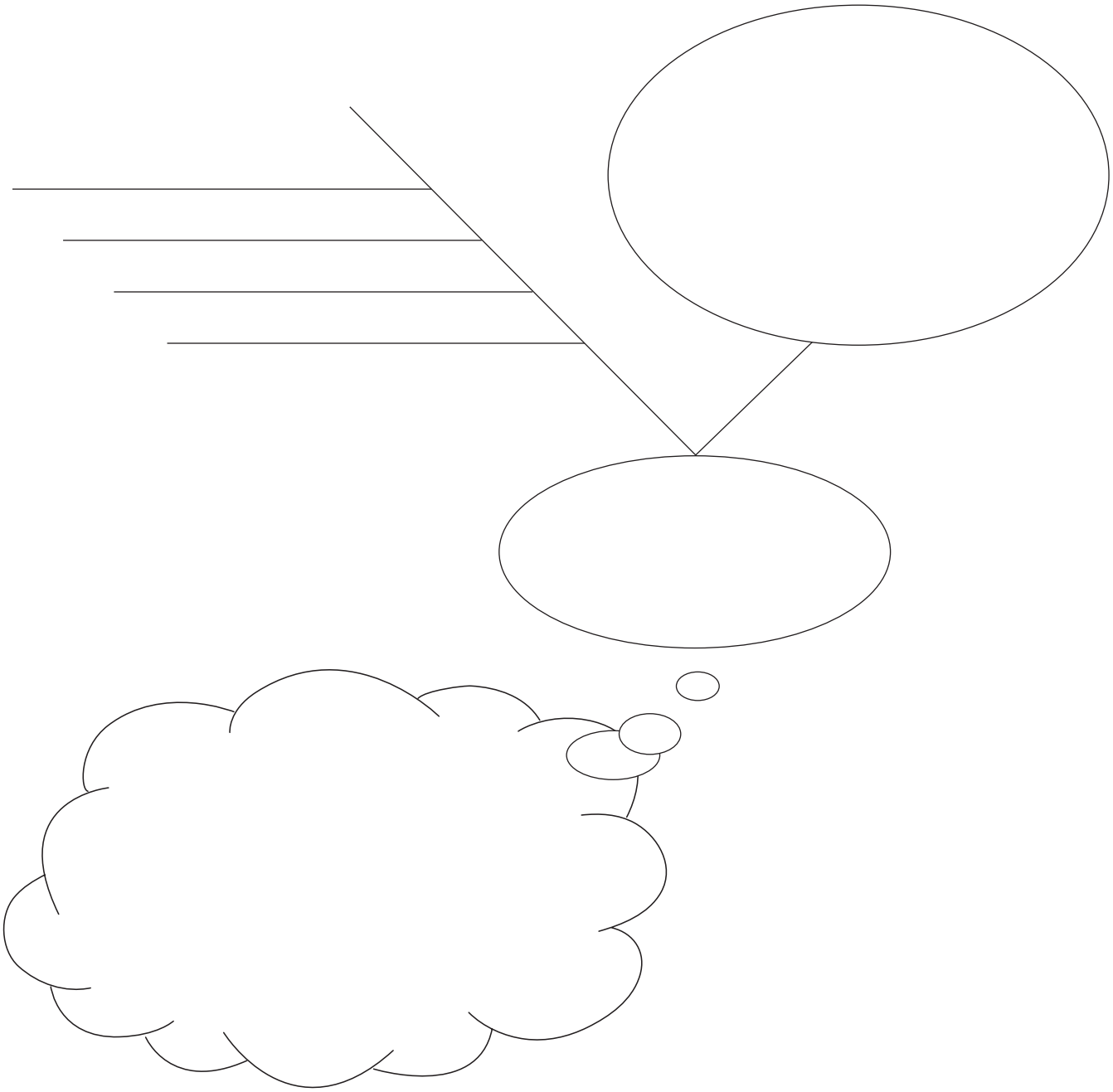
Appendix H1: Reading Comprehension Strategies

Strategy		Sounds Like ...
Connecting 	linking what is being read with personal experience, with what was previously read, and with a knowledge of the world to better understand what is being read	• This reminds me of a time when ... • Oh. This part explains the part on page ...
Questioning 	asking questions about the text or the topic in order to better understand what is being read	• Before I started to read, I wondered ... • I am confused because the visuals seem to say something different than the text. • This part makes me wonder about ... • This doesn't seem to make sense. I wonder if there is a mistake.
Inferring 	interpreting "clues" left by the author and combining this with prior knowledge to create meaning	• Based on what I am reading, I think the word means ... • I think ... because it says ...
Visualizing 	picturing ideas and images based on the language and description used by the author	• I can picture the part where it says ... • I can imagine what it must be like to ... • I like the way the author describes ...
Determining Importance 	knowing what is important and being able to identify key ideas	• This is about ... • This is important because ... • This information is interesting but it isn't part of the main idea. • This word is in bold so it must be important. • I can use headings and subheadings to help me find the information I am looking for.
Analysing 	examining parts or all of a of text in terms of its content, its structure, and its meaning	• I notice the author used this technique/word choice: ... • I think the author tried to ... • This doesn't fit with what I know. • This would have been better if ...
Synthesizing 	building a new understanding by combining what is already known with what was read	• Now that I have read this I am beginning to think differently about ... • For me this is about ...

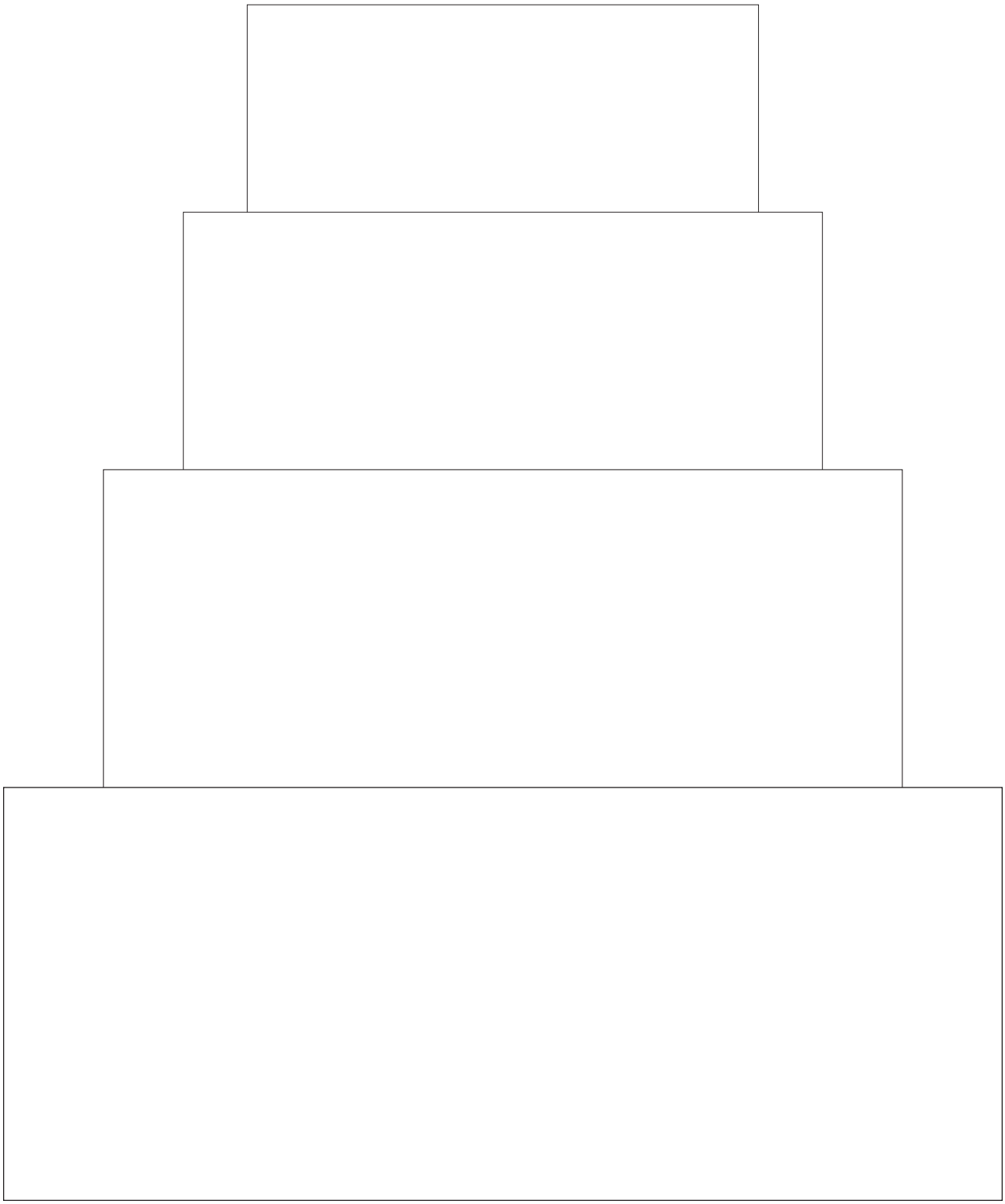
Appendix H2: Vocabulary Box Template

Term	Related/Similar Words
Explanation/Notes	Diagram/Visual

Appendix H3: Vocabulary Spider Template



Appendix H4: Vocabulary Pyramid Template



Appendix H5: Vocabulary Notes Template

Term: _____

Describe: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Draw:

Additional Information

Subject:

Term: _____

Describe: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Draw:

Additional Information

Subject:

Appendix H6: Reading Log

Name: _____ **Term:** _____

This term I am going to read for _____ minutes each week.

Date	Title	Author	Type/Genre

A: adventure
E: electronic text
F: fantasy
HF: historical fiction
M: mystery
Mg: magazine
NF: non-fiction
NP: newspaper
P: poetry
RF: realistic fiction
S: script

Appendix H7: Double-Entry Diary

Appendix H8: Conference Log

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Focus of the conference (what I want to see or learn from this conference):

- ☐ oral reading fluency
- ☐ accuracy
- ☐ word-solving strategies
- ☐ overall comprehension
- ☐ comprehension strategies used
- ☐ appropriate selection of text

Title of book: _____

General observations:

Retelling observations:

Narrative	Information
• summarizes the main idea • includes main characters in retelling • uses a logical sequence when retelling • identifies the conflict and the resolution as part of the retelling • makes connections • asks questions • makes inferences • assesses the overall effectiveness of the story	• is able to identify the topic • summarizes main idea • includes key vocabulary in the retelling • uses a logical sequence when retelling • refers to and correctly interprets charts, diagrams, maps, graphs, visuals, etc. • makes connections • asks questions • makes inferences • draws conclusions

Goals and recommendations for future reading:

Appendix H9: Reading Interest Inventory

Name: _____

Record your reading interests by checking the level of agreement/disagreement that is closest to your feelings about each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Reading is an activity I enjoy.					
I like to choose my own books to read.					
I read only when I have to.					
I read mainly for enjoyment.					
I read mainly to get information.					
I like to go to the library (school or community).					
Reading in school is harder than reading at home.					
I'd rather read the book than watch the movie.					
I find talking about books helps me understand them better.					
I enjoy being read to.					

Record the kind of reading that you enjoy the most (number in order, with 1 as your favourite).

_____ novels or chapter books

_____ information books

_____ newspapers

_____ magazines

_____ comic or cartoon books

_____ poetry

The book I am reading right now is

_____

My favourite book ever is

_____

Appendix H10:
Suggested List of Concepts/Vocabulary: Grades 4–6

abbreviation
action verb
actor
adjective
adverb
advertisement
affix
animation
antonym
apology
apostrophe
appendix
asking permission
atlas
author's purpose
autobiography
audience
audiotape
bibliography
biography
body of the text
bold
brainstorm
business letter
card catalogue
cause and effect
CD-ROM
central idea
character trait
chart
checklist
children's literature
chronological order
climax
closing sentence
colon
chapter title
comma
command
commercial
common noun
compare and contrast
complete sentence
concluding statement
conclusion
connection
construct meaning
content area vocabulary
context clue
contraction
contrast
cue
current affairs
cursive
custom
decode
definition
description
descriptive language
detail
diagram
diary
direct quote
directions
director
discussion leader
double negative
draft
drama
e-mail
edit
encyclopedia
ending
essay
example
exclamation mark
explanation
expression
eye contact
fable
facial expression
fantasy
first person
form
friendly letter
genre
glossary
grammar
graphic organizer
graphics
greeting
guide words
heading
headline
homonym
how question
humour
illustration
imagery
indentation
index
inference
Internet
interrogative sentence
introduction
investigate
invitation
irregular plural noun
italics
journal
key word
learning log
legend
letter of request
linking verb
listening comprehension
literature
logs
meaning clue
media

memory aid
minor character
miscue
mood
motive
multimedia presentation
musical
multiple drafts
multiple sources
mystery
myth
narrative
negative
news
news broadcast
news bulletin
newspaper section
notes
noun
novel
numerical adjective
object
opinion
oral presentation
oral report
organization
outline
pamphlet
paragraph
passage
past tense / present tense
peer review
pen pal
personal letter
personal pronoun
persuasive writing
phone directory
phonetic analysis
phrase
plot
plot development
point of view
posing a question
possessive noun
possessive pronoun
posture
predicate
preface
prefix
preposition
prepositional phrase
preview
prior knowledge
pronoun
pronunciation
proofread
prop
proper noun
publication date
punctuation
question mark
quotation
quotation marks
radio program
rating
reading strategy
reading vocabulary
regular plural noun
regular verb
report
request
revise
rhyming dictionary
role-play
root word
rules of conversation
scan
science fiction
second person
self-correction
sensory image
sentence structure
sequential order
setting
short story
signature
singular noun
skim
skip
slang
sound effect
source
special effect
spoken text
stay on topic
story element
story map
story structure
subject
subject-verb agreement
suffix
summarize
summary
summary sentence
supporting detail
suspense
syllable
symbolism
synonym
table
tall tale
tense
text
theme
theme music
thesaurus
third person
time line
tone
topic sentence
typeface
usage
verb
voice
volume
website
when question
where question
why question
word choice
word search
written directions
written exchange

Appendix H11: Reading Strategy Bookmark

Reading? Try ...	
Connecting 	• This reminds me of a time when ... • Oh. This part explains the part on page ...
Questioning 	• Before I started to read, I wondered ... • I am confused because the visuals seem to say something different than the text. • This part makes me wonder about ... • This doesn't seem to make sense. I wonder if there is a mistake.
Inferring 	• Based on what I am reading, I think the word means ... • I think ... because it says ...
Visualizing 	• I can picture the part where it says ... • I can imagine what it must be like to ... • I like the way the author describes ...
Determining Importance 	• This is about ... • This is important because ... • This information is interesting but it isn't part of the main idea. • This word is in bold so it must be important. • I can use headings and subheadings to help me find the information I am looking for.
Analysing 	• I notice the author used this technique/word choice: ... • I think the author tried to ... • This doesn't fit with what I know ... • This would have been better if ...
Synthesizing 	• Now that I have read this I am beginning to think differently about ... • For me this is about ...

Reading? Try ...	
Connecting 	• This reminds me of a time when ... • Oh. This part explains the part on page ...
Questioning 	• Before I started to read, I wondered ... • I am confused because the visuals seem to say something different than the text. • This part makes me wonder about ... • This doesn't seem to make sense. I wonder if there is a mistake.
Inferring 	• Based on what I am reading, I think the word means ... • I think ... because it says ...
Visualizing 	• I can picture the part where it says ... • I can imagine what it must be like to ... • I like the way the author describes ...
Determining Importance 	• This is about ... • This is important because ... • This information is interesting but it isn't part of the main idea. • This word is in bold so it must be important. • I can use headings and subheadings to help me find the information I am looking for.
Analysing 	• I notice the author used this technique/word choice: ... • I think the author tried to ... • This doesn't fit with what I know ... • This would have been better if ...
Synthesizing 	• Now that I have read this I am beginning to think differently about ... • For me this is about ...

Appendix I1: Questions for Revision

Name: _____

Revising is about making changes to improve the substance of what you have written. Revising is about making a piece of writing clearer or more focussed.

The following questions point out qualities that you should look for in a first draft. When you are ready to revise a piece, read your draft with these questions in mind. Then make any changes that will improve your draft.

Questions about Titles:

- Does my title catch a reader's interest?
- Does my title focus on the main idea of my writing?
- Does my title give away too much information?

Questions about Organization:

- Does my piece have a definite beginning, middle, and end?
- Can a reader easily follow my piece from beginning to end?

Questions about Heads:

- Does my head bring a reader right into the main idea?
- Where does my piece really get going? Could I start here?

Questions about Enough Information:

- Have I told what, where, when, why, how, and with whom this is happening?
- Have I given enough details to help explain my point?
- Have I clearly explained what I mean? Is there any part that might be confusing for a reader?
- Have I described the situation and people well enough so a reader can see them clearly?
- Have I used examples and details that *show* what I mean instead of just telling?
- What is the most interesting or important part of the piece? Have I given enough detail in this part to make it really stand out?

Questions about Too Much Information:

Are there any parts that aren't directly about my topic or story? Can I cross them out?

Are there any parts that are not needed, and if I leave them out the writing is still clear?

Questions about Endings:

Does my ending go on and on? Could I have ended earlier?

What do I want a reader to feel and know at the end? Does my ending do this?

In non-fiction, does my ending summarize or restate the main idea in an interesting way?

Appendix I2: Editing and Proofreading Marks

Editors' Marks

¶ or par	new paragraph
	insert (i.e., more information)
	delete
om	omitted word
sp	spelling error
p	punctuation error
	capital letter (triple underline)
/	lower case
var	lack in variety in sentence structure
w	wordy
awk	awkward
#	insert space
	close up space
num	error in use of numbers

Appendix I3: Story Organizer

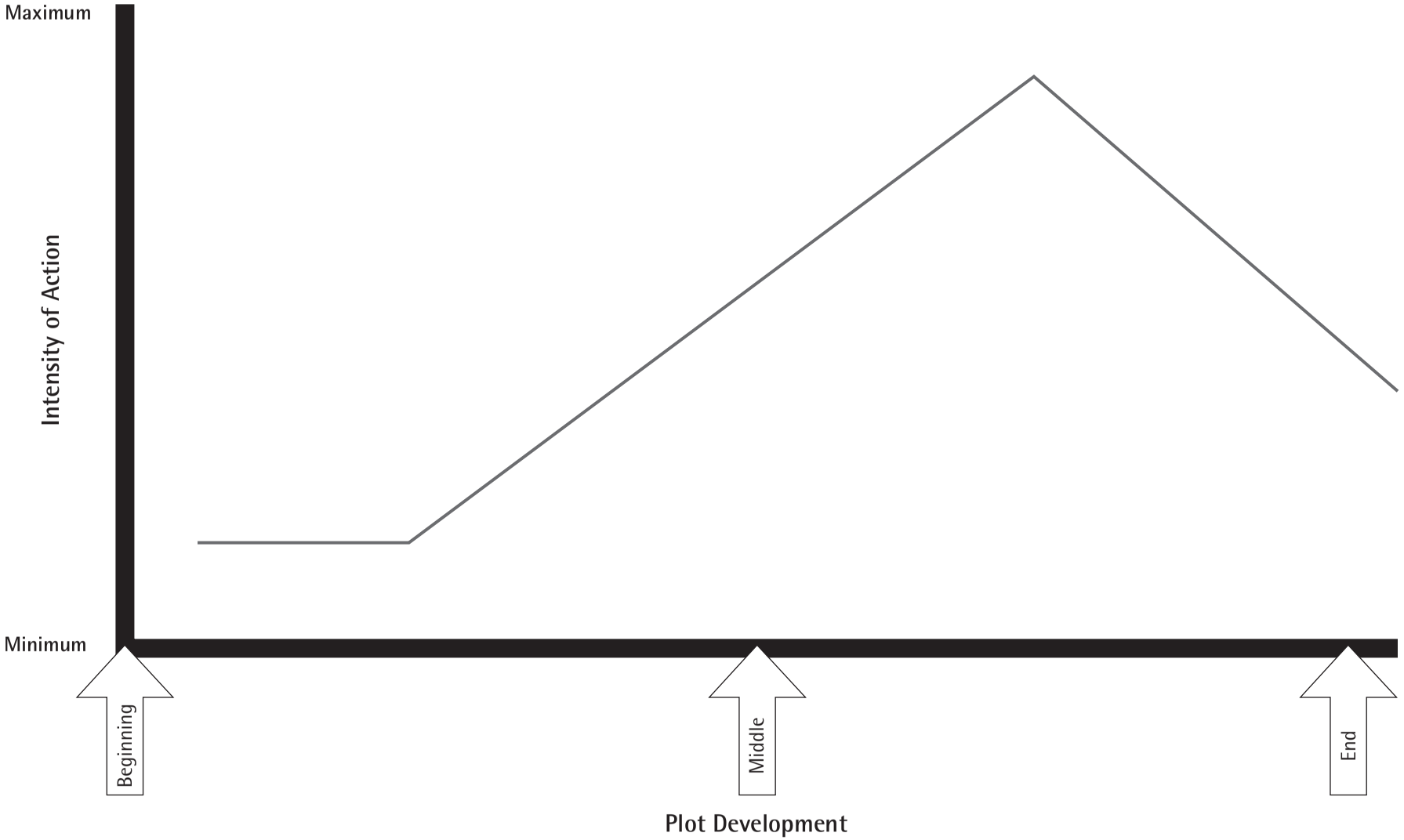
Make notes about the four elements of your story in the boxes below.

Setting	Character

Problem	Solution

Appendix I4: Plot Graph

Think of the events that take place in the story. Record your ideas on the graph. Remember that the action should build up as the story goes along. Near the end is the climax (high point) and then the resolution.



Appendix I5: Comparison Matrix

Using the Comparison Matrix

1. Identify a research question.
2. Select ideas for comparison. Record these along the top row in cells 2, 3, 4.
3. Decide on criteria for comparison. Record in the first column in cells 5, 9, 13.
4. Record factual information in each of cells 6, 7, 8; 10, 11, 12; 14, 15, 16.
5. Record a summary statement in cell 17.
6. Use the outline to transform the information into a series of cohesive paragraphs. Each horizontal row becomes a paragraph.

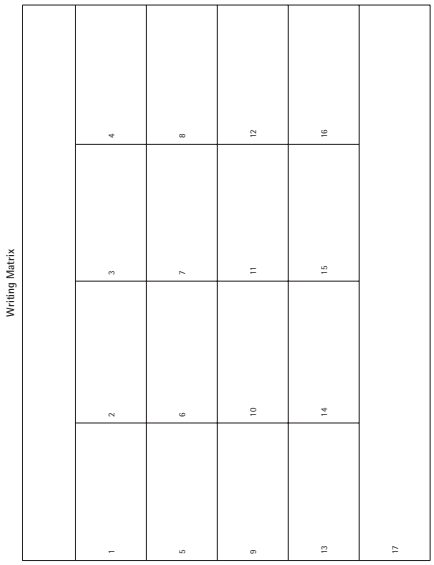
   Paragraph 1: Introduction
   - lead sentence: cell 1
   - paragraph sentences: cells 5, 9, 13.

   Paragraph 2: First Criterion
   - lead sentence: cell 5
   - paragraph sentences: cells 6, 7, 8

   Paragraph 3: Second Criterion
   - lead sentence: cell 9
   - paragraph sentences: cells 10, 11, 12

   Paragraph 4: Third Criterion
   - lead sentence: cell 13
   - paragraph sentences: cells 14, 15, 16

   Paragraph 5: Conclusion
   - cell 17



See the following page for a full-size template.

Comparison Matrix (continued)

Writing Matrix

	4	8	12	16	
	3	7	11	15	
	2	6	10	14	
	1	5	9	13	17

Appendix I6: Writing Rubric

Sample Rubric

	1	2	3	4
Organization • sequence • focus • cohesion	• Unclear or difficult to follow.	• Lacks a clear introduction therefore the purpose is unclear. • Organization is not clear and paragraphing is weak. • Sequence of ideas needs work.	• Purpose is evident and efforts are made to organize the writing accordingly. • Transitions between paragraphs is attempted but may lack effectiveness or creativity.	• Structure suits and achieves the purpose. • Writing has a clear organization. • There is effective flow from one paragraph to the next.
Ideas • accurate • detailed	• Many factual errors. • Writing is vague and not complete.	• Some inconsistencies. • Lacks the necessary detail.	• Information is accurate. • More details may be required in order to support the main ideas.	• All information is accurate. • Level of detail effectively supports the main ideas.
Engagement • voice • word choice • variety • creativity	• Writing lacks interest and engagement. • Does not sound like an original piece of work.	• Voice needs to be added to the writing. • More creativity and careful selection of word choice would improve the piece.	• Writing is effective in capturing the reader's attention.	• Writing is creative and uses interesting and effective choice of words. • Captures the reader's attention and won't let go.
Conventions • spelling • punctuation • grammar • sentence structure	• Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar are distracting or make reading difficult. • Incomplete or ineffective sentence structure.	• Editing is still required. • There are errors in some basic spelling, punctuation, and grammar. • There is little variety in sentence structure.	• Basic spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct. • A variety of sentences are used.	• Very few or minor errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. • Sophisticated sentence structures are used.
Visual Supports • charts • diagrams • maps • photos	• Includes no visuals.	• Visuals are included but provide minimal detail or support.	• Visuals are used to support the text but may not extend the meaning of the text.	• Detailed visuals are appropriately placed and help to support and extend the meaning of the text.

Appendix I7: Writing Reflection Prompts

Choose one of the prompts and locate a piece of writing that best reflects the prompt.

Choose a piece of writing and consider the prompts provided. How would you respond based on the prompt?

The best thing about this piece of writing is ...	One area that I would like to improve is ...	A technique that I tried to incorporate was ... I was satisfied/not satisfied with the results because ...
This piece has a strong character. To develop this character I ...	The ideas I have incorporated are all necessary. The main idea is ...	Strong word choice is evident in my writing. Examples include ...

Appendix I8: Writing Checklist

Checklist for Informational Writing

Re-read your informational report and check off the criteria that you have met:

- ☐ Begins with a general statement that identifies the topic.
- ☐ Each paragraph describes one of the subtopics.
- ☐ Ideas are presented factually.
- ☐ Language is neutral and impersonal.
- ☐ Ends with a conclusion that summarizes the topic.
- ☐ Spelling is conventional.
- ☐ Punctuation is used correctly.
- ☐ Writing is easy to read.
- ☐ Information presented is accurate.
- ☐ Sources are cited.
- ☐ Accomplishes the purpose of the assignment.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Writing Checklist *continued*

Checklist for Persuasive Writing

Re-read your persuasive writing and check off the criteria that you have met:

- ☐ Begins by stating the topic and position.
- ☐ Ideas or opinions are then supported with evidence or a convincing argument.
- ☐ Often includes statistics and reasoning.
- ☐ May include possible counter-arguments and the rationale for their ineffectiveness.
- ☐ Powerful and emotional language is used.
- ☐ Concludes by reiterating the initial argument and position.
- ☐ Spelling is conventional.
- ☐ Punctuation is used correctly.
- ☐ Writing is easy to read.
- ☐ Information presented is accurate.
- ☐ Sources are cited.
- ☐ Accomplishes the purpose of the assignment.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Writing Checklist *continued*

Checklist for Procedural Writing

Re-read your procedural writing and check off the criteria that you have met:

- ☐ Begins with a goal or purpose.
- ☐ Is sequential or linear in nature, explaining the steps or process involved.
- ☐ Each step or part of the process is easily identified and clearly explains the event or task.
- ☐ Sequential language is used (first, next, finally, etc.).
- ☐ A numbered list is used.
- ☐ May include a diagram or flow chart to support explanation.
- ☐ Spelling is conventional.
- ☐ Punctuation is used correctly.
- ☐ Writing is easy to read.
- ☐ Information presented is accurate.
- ☐ Accomplishes the purpose of the assignment.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Writing Checklist *continued*

Checklist for Comparative Writing

Re-read your comparative writing and check off the criteria that you have met:

- ☐ Begins by identifying the items to be compared, and possibly the criteria for comparison.
- ☐ Describes the qualities or characteristics of the individual items, and explains their similarities and differences.
- ☐ Ends with a conclusion that restates the comparison.
- ☐ Uses comparative language (similarly, rather than, unlike, etc.).
- ☐ Spelling is conventional.
- ☐ Punctuation is used correctly.
- ☐ Writing is easy to read.
- ☐ Information presented is accurate.
- ☐ Sources are cited.
- ☐ Accomplishes the purpose of the assignment.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Appendix I9: Scene Planner

Lead (the first few lines that draw the reader into the story)

Scene 1:
Scene 2:
Scene 3:

Ending (the last few lines where the reader learns what changes)

Glossary

Active Readers: A Nova Scotia Department of Education literacy initiative that focusses on reading instruction at the grades 7–9 level. Emphasis is on effective assessment and instruction in reading across all content areas.

Active Young Readers: A Nova Scotia Department of Education literacy initiative that focusses on reading instruction at the primary to grade 6 level. Emphasis is on explicit reading instruction and comprehension.

assessment: The systematic process of gathering information on student learning.

background knowledge: Knowledge that a student brings to the learning situation.

Classroom Writing Centres: A collection of reference materials for use in writing. Includes dictionaries, rhyming dictionaries, content specific dictionaries, thesaurus, posters, etc.

conventions: Common practices with regard to writing (spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.)

critical literacy: Involves questioning assumptions and looking at how language is used to construct particular historical, social, cultural, political, and economic realities. Also involves looking at how language and power are related. It is a goal of critical literacy to address issues of social justice and equity in an effort to facilitate positive change.

curriculum map: A framework that outlines the key outcomes, concepts, and topics that make up the curriculum for a particular grade and subject area. Curriculum maps that show how the curriculum builds from one year to the next are helpful in ensuring balance.

differentiation: The practice of using a range of instruction and assessment practices that meet the specific needs of the learner and reflect his/her learning style needs/preferences. May include establishing different expectations for different learners.

editing: Making changes to ensure the correctness of the writing.

embedded instruction: Instruction and student learning that occurs as a result of the design of the learning opportunities.

evaluation: The process of analysing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information, and making judgments or decisions based on the information collected.

explicit instruction: Teaching something very specifically and overtly rather than embedding the concepts within the overall learning experience.

form: How the writing is presented (e.g., book, pamphlet, article).

General Curriculum Outcomes (GCOs): Overall expectations of learning from primary through grade 12. GCOs for English language arts are organized into three categories: Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing and Other Ways of Representing.

genre: The type or kind of writing (e.g., mystery, autobiography, memoir, informational).

guided reading: Identifying a specific focus for reading instruction and working with a small group of students. Discussing and establishing a purpose for reading, followed by the students reading the text, and another discussion as follow up. Generally the teacher listens to each student read aloud for a brief period of time and may give feedback to the student.

ideas: The substance of what the writing is about.

independent reading: Students read and do reading-related activities (e.g., selecting text, responding to text, discussing text) on their own with text that is at their independent or instructional level.

informational literacy: Having the necessary skills to effectively access, interpret, evaluate organize, select, produce, and communicate information that is available through books, CD-ROM, the Internet, electronic bulletin boards, etc.

just right text: A text that a student can read independently without difficulty and with a high degree of comprehension.

lecture: Oral directions or explanation about a topic or concept.

lifting text: The teacher chooses a short piece of text or an excerpt that is shared with the whole class (e.g., showing it on an overhead, or on chart paper). Often the teacher talks through the piece or models a particular reading strategy.

media literacy: Looking critically at how popular culture and lifestyle—as portrayed by mass media (television, radio, film, magazines, Internet, etc.)—are affected by us and we are affected by them. Developing the skills necessary to analyse and evaluate what we view, read, and hear.

organization: How text is arranged (sequence, form, structure) to effectively communicate ideas and information.

photo essay: A series of photographs that tells a story or evokes an emotional response from the viewer. Often accompanied by a written text, which may range from simple captions to a formal essay.

presentation: How the text is arranged on the page. Includes the use of colour, white space, layout, etc.

proofreading: Checking (word level) for and marking typographical errors and formatting errors in a proof or document that is in its final form for publishing. The final stage before publication.

read-aloud: Oral presentation of a text, often by the teacher, modelling effective reading (e.g., expression, phrasing, rate of reading).

reading strategies: The things readers do when reading in order to make meaning from print. Includes strategies such as making predictions, questioning, visualizing, making inferences, monitoring reading, re-reading for understanding, etc.

revision: The process of making content, organization, and language changes that affect the substance of a piece of writing. This could include adding to, omitting, or changing information. The emphasis of revision is on improving the clarity of the message.

scaffold: A temporary but necessary support without which a task cannot be accomplished.

sentence fluency: The use and arrangement of a variety of sentences, both in type and length, to create a piece of writing that is clear and pleasing to the ear.

shared reading: Teacher and students reading a text together. The teacher may take the lead but the students participate where possible.

Specific Curriculum Outcome (SCO): A specific expectation for learning at a particular grade level in a given discipline. Together SCOs reflect a continuum of learning.

text: Includes anything that can be read, interpreted, or created in order to convey meaning. Includes print text such as books, magazines, articles, newspapers, etc., as well as media texts such as radio broadcasts, TV, video, or visual texts such as ads, posters, charts, graphs, maps, diagrams, etc.

visual: A representation of meaning predominately through the use of pictures, colour, and symbols rather than words.

visual literacy: The ability to respond to a visual image. Includes understanding any information and ideas conveyed by the visual image, how the author/artist created the image, and how the reader/viewer felt about the image.

voice: The aspect of writing that makes the piece sound like the person who created it.

web-based research: The gathering of information from the Internet.

word choice: The selection of words that convey as precisely and effectively as possible the author's intended ideas.

Writers in Action: A Nova Scotia Department of Education literacy initiative that focusses on writing instruction at the grade 4 to grade 10 levels. Focusses on effective assessment and instruction in writing across all genres and in all content areas.

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