



Language Arts Curriculum

The curriculum is expressed as essential questions and enduring understandings. This format serves to remind us to imagine ourselves in the place of the learner. It is our intention to be awake to the wonder and joy of learning; this overview attempts to express that.

The Reading Curriculum

FOCUS: PURPOSE			
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Grade Levels	Examples of skills, activities, program
People read for many purposes, but especially for information, understanding and enjoyment.	Why do people read?	N, K, 1	Teacher modeling; taking dictation; read-aloud.
Writing (or printed text) is the symbolic representation of speech.	What is writing? What is printed text?	N, K	
People communicate through printed text.	How can I give a message to someone without talking to them?	N, K, 1	

FOCUS: CONCEPTS OF PRINT			
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Grade Levels	Examples of skills, activities, program
Books have standard features (front, back, title page, left-to-right progression, words, sentences, etc.) which helps to simplify the task of reading them.	In what ways are books similar? Why is that?	N,K,1,	Read-aloud; guided reading
Text is presented in various formats. Recognizing features of the format (index, headings, sub-headings, headline, etc.) makes it easier to locate information, skim, etc.	In what ways is text similar? Why is that?	4,5,6	

FOCUS: MY RESOURCES IN READING TEXT			
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Grade Levels	Examples of skills, activities, program
Different letter combinations can be relied on to represent certain sounds.	What do I know about the sounds these letter combinations make? Are the letters in a certain pattern that can help me to read?	1,2	Phonics skills; word study; spelling
Words have fixed spellings, which can be learned by sight.	What words do I already have memorized?	K,1	Using word wall; learning sight words
The more often I see a word, the easier it is to remember it. Other strategies, like tracing and saying the word aloud, can help me remember new words.	What helps me to remember new words so that I can recognize them by sight?	K,1,2	practicing with a word ring; VATK practice
Punctuation serves as helpful markers for interpreting text	As I'm reading, what is the punctuation telling me? How will I change my voice to reflect the punctuation?	K,1,2,3	Teacher modeling; reader's theater; writing workshop
My own desire to understand helps me to make sense of text. I can use all the available clues to decode and at the same time stay aware of whether or not what I'm reading makes sense to me.	What is this about? Did what I read make sense? Did I understand that?	N,K,1,2,3	Read-aloud; guided reading; IRT
I can use strategies to decode unfamiliar words.	What strategies do I have to help me figure out this word? What strategy do I usually use? What else could I try?	1,2,3,4,5,6	Teacher modeling; guided reading; IRT
Visual tools such as graphic organizers or outlines can help me map out my thinking. I can begin to develop my own ways to organize information visually to better help me analyze what I've read.	How is this helping me think about text? What types of graphic organizers have I used? Which have been most helpful? What might I begin to do independently to clarify my thinking?	3,4,5,6	Analyzing story elements, cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, etc.; literature circles; research skills

FOCUS: COMPREHENSION			
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Grade Levels	Examples of skills, activities, program
Habits such as pausing to reflect, asking questions and making predictions, help me be a better reader.	What habits have I developed that help me understand what I'm reading and engage with the text? What new habit might I develop to help me be a better reader?	3,4,5,6	Teacher modeling; guided reading; reading journals; self-reflection
My understanding of new vocabulary deepens the more often I encounter a word and grapple with its meaning. I can reflect on how well I understand a word. Drawing a picture or other strategy may help me remember the meaning.	What does this word mean? How well do I understand it? What can I do to help myself remember it?	3,4,5,6	Word study; 5-point scale for self-reflection on depth of understanding; semantic mapping; read-aloud; lit groups; metacognitive skills
My understanding of what I read builds on the background knowledge I already possess. If my background knowledge is limited, I can scaffold my understanding by reading a simpler text first.	What does this remind me of? Where have I encountered this before? What do I already know about this subject? What can I do to help myself understand this?	4,5,6	Text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world connections; metacognitive skills; literature circles; group and individual research projects

FOCUS: CRITICAL THINKING			
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Grade Levels	Examples of skills, activities, program
I can have opinions about what I read and form opinions based on what I've read. I can write about, or discuss these with others. Other people may or may not agree with me. I can deepen my understanding through discussing my thoughts with others.	What's my opinion about what I've read? Has what I've read helped me form an opinion? What do other people think? In discussing this with others, has my opinion changed?	3,4,5,6	Metacognitive skills; literature circles; research projects; read-aloud; class discussions
I recognize that people have varying perspectives and that this can be expressed in writing. I can read multiple texts on the same topic and observe differing perspectives.	What is this author saying and why? How does this writer's perspective differ from another writer's perspective on the same subject? Whose perspective is missing?	4,5,6	Current events; research projects; literature circles; class discussions

FOCUS: MAKING IT MY OWN			
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Grade Levels	Examples of skills, activities, program
What I've read can be retold to someone else through talking or writing. I can make choices about how I retell what I've read.	What do I want to share? What form shall I choose? Shall I summarize or give a full retelling?	N,K,1,2, 3,4,5,6	Discussion; imaginary play; writing workshop; social studies themes; research projects
What I read can be illustrated in a visual form: a picture, diagram, chart, map, model, etc.	What do I want to convey? What form will I use in my illustration? What elements, details, data must be included? Does what I've created convey clearly what I intended?	N,K,1,2, 3,4,5,6	Response to literature or nonfiction; thematic work; research projects; self-reflection
I can take one aspect of what I've read and use it to create something new.	What interests me the most in this text? How shall I illustrate, interpret or re-imagine this?	3,4,5,6	Read-aloud; literature or nonfiction response; research project; class or individual project
I can integrate information from various print and digital sources to increase my knowledge of a subject	How do these texts speak to one another? How will I organize the information from multiple sources? What have I learned through this process?	3,4,5,6	Research projects; personal projects
I can have strong feelings of connection with certain books, authors, and subjects. This helps me know more about what I like and what's important to me. I can share my favorites with others and I may find other people who feel the same way.	What are my favorite books, authors, subjects? Why am I drawn to these? Who else is drawn to these?	3,4,5,6	Reading response; literature circles; IRT; personal projects; research projects; author study; class discussion

The Writing Curriculum

FOCUS: PURPOSE OF WRITING			
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Grade Levels	Examples of skills listed in the Miquon Writing Curriculum
What I think or say can be written down. What I write can be read and understood by someone else. People communicate through writing.	Can you write what I say? Can what I write be read?	N,K,1	N-K Dictates to teacher Makes marks, scribbles, and letters on paper K-1 Writes or dictates a message for someone far away Asks others to read their writing
People write for many purposes.	Why do people write? Why do people read?	N,K,1	N Labels things in classroom K Makes a shopping list 1 Records rules for a game
I can tell a story by dictating, drawing or writing.	How do I tell a story? What story will I tell?	N,K,1,2	N-K Draws picture and tells a story about it Knows text must match the picture K-2 Recognizes personal experiences that can become written stories Understands that a story has a beginning, middle and end
Creative writing allows me to express to others what I observe, feel and imagine. I can write creatively in different forms (story, poetry, lyrics, etc.)	What do I want to express? What form shall I use to express myself? How can I gain skill in this form?	3,4,5,6	3-4 Writes personal narrative Sharpens the focus of a story 5-6 Develops idea to create picture book for younger buddy Uses feedback from others to improve creative writing
I can convey information by dictating, drawing or writing.	How can I share what I know?	N,K,1,2	N-K Dictates information after observing monarch butterflies Uses a picture to share information 1-2 Writes down things learned on a field trip Draws and labels a map of museum
Expository writing allows me to convey information, directions, ideas, opinions, etc.	What do I want to say? What format shall I use?	3,4,5,6	3-4 Finds a topic that's relevant Includes supporting details and examples 5-6 Uses headings and subheadings to organize information Reveals a subject through a narrator

FOCUS: CLEAR WRITING			
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Grade Levels	Examples of skills, activities, program
Clear writing leads to clear understanding. I can develop skills that let people clearly understand my writing.	Why should I write clearly? How can I gain skill in making my writing clear?	1,2,3,4,5,6,	1-6 Recognizes the value of clear writing Edits writing for clarity 5-6 Knows own strengths and weaknesses. Is proactive about getting help where needed
Using standard spelling is important because it makes my writing clear to others and me.	Why must I use standard spelling? How can I gain skill in spelling? Which words am I responsible for spelling correctly? What resources may I use to improve my spelling?	1,2,3,4,5,6	1-6 Edits for spelling 1 Learns words 1-25 on high frequency list, Uses word wall to find standard spelling 5-6 Correctly spells 800-1000 high frequency words Knows and uses alternate strategies for arriving at correct spelling
Using standard punctuation is important because it makes my writing clear to me and others	Why is punctuation important? How can I improve my use of punctuation? How are various types of punctuation used?	1,2,3,4,5,6	N-K Sees ending punctuation modeled 1-2 Uses period, exclamation point, question mark 5-6 Begins to recognize and fix run-on sentences independently
Word choice is important because it makes my writing clear and engaging.	Why is important to choose my words with care? How can I improve my vocabulary? What literary devices can I use? What techniques or resources can I use as I write and edit?	N,K,1,2,3,4,5,6	N-K With teacher guidance learns new words by acting out their meaning 3-4 Incorporates similes and metaphors in writing 5-6 Uses print or electronic thesaurus to find alternative words
Neat handwriting allows my writing to be read and understood by others and by me.	Why is handwriting important? What helps me write neatly?	K,1,2,3,4,5,6	K Prints uppercase letters 1-2 Prints upper and lower case letters 3-4 Learns cursive writing 5 Is aware of own facility with printing and cursive, and chooses handwriting style that is most clear and fluent
Keyboarding skill lets me write efficiently.	Why do I need to learn keyboarding? How can I gain skill and speed? What is my speed goal?	3,4,5,6	3 Begins to receive instruction and practice keyboarding 6 Keyboarding speed goal: 35 wpm

FOCUS: PLANNING AND ORGANIZING			
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Grade Levels	Examples of skills, activities, program
Writers use strategies to develop and organize their thinking when writing non-fiction text.	<p>What strategies help writers to develop and organize their thinking?</p> <p>What strategies for planning and organizing writing work best for me?</p> <p>Which strategy will I use before I write today?</p>	K,1,2,3,4,5,6	<p>K</p> <p>With teacher’s guidance, reviews recent classroom events to choose a topic for writing</p> <p>3-4</p> <p>Independently brainstorms topic ideas</p> <p>Has access to and makes use of graphic organizers to plan writing</p> <p>5-6</p> <p>Develops and organizes thinking to draft a speech for graduation</p>
Writers use strategies to plan and develop the stories they write.	<p>What strategies do writers use to plan and develop stories?</p> <p>What strategies can help me plan and develop a story?</p> <p>What strategy will I use today?</p>	K,1,2,3,4,5,6	<p>K</p> <p>Learns how an author planned and developed a story</p> <p>1-2</p> <p>Uses graphic organizers to plan stories that have a beginning, middle and end</p> <p>3-4</p> <p>Learns about story elements in literature.</p> <p>Plans stories that include all elements</p> <p>5-6</p> <p>Writes to a favorite author and inquires about the author’s methods in planning and developing stories</p>

FOCUS: CRAFT			
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Grade Levels	Examples of skills, activities, program
Writers craft their writing to make it engaging and memorable	<p>How did this writer craft his/her writing?</p> <p>What is an element of writing craft (such as flashback) seen in a particular text?</p> <p>How can I use this in my own writing?</p>	N,K,1,2,3,4,5,6	<p>N-K</p> <p>Enjoys and recognizes pattern in stories, such as The Very Hungry Caterpillar, and creates class book based on the pattern</p> <p>1-2</p> <p>Writes a How-To book after studying various mentor texts</p> <p>3-4</p> <p>After identifying elements (physical attributes, likes, dislikes, etc.) in the descriptions of favorite characters from literature, describes someone they know using the same elements</p> <p>5-6</p> <p>Identifies point of view in literature group selections and read-alouds.</p> <p>Chooses a point of view from which to create a story for younger buddy</p>