

Fourth and Fifth Grade Language Arts

Fourth and fifth grade language arts provide the students with challenging activities that encourage not only the love of reading and writing, but also the development of skills to make them successful readers and writers. The program focuses on quality literature, writing, vocabulary development, spelling, and grammar study. Students apply these skills in all subject areas.

Literature

Students will read a variety of pieces, both fiction and non-fiction throughout the year. In school, the reading anthology, *Treasures*, is the core for instruction. The literature reading is done at home and the discussions and activities take place at school.

Literary elements

Through these pieces of literature, students will recognize point of view, theme, protagonists and antagonists, conflict, and the author's purpose.

Reading skills

Students will demonstrate setting a purpose for reading, visualizing, determining main idea and supporting details, predicting, analyzing character development, understanding setting and the role it plays in plot development, summarizing, determining cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, using context clues to inference, determining fact and opinion, and drawing conclusions.

Yearly literature selections are based on the needs and interests of the students

Grade 4-examples of books read:

Because of Winn Dixie

by Kate DiCamillo

Bud, Not Buddy-Watsons

by Christopher Paul Curtis

In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson

by Bette Bao Lord

Balto

by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel

Grade 5-examples of books read:

Island of the Blue Dolphins

by Scott O'Dell

Go to Birmingham

by Christopher Paul Curtis

Snow Treasures

by Maire McSwigan

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH

by Robert O'Brien

Comparative Literature

In Comparative Literature, students in grades four and five are regrouped within each grade according to their needs. These groups all investigate the same topic and will meet with different teachers as they explore these topics. Topics include Native American tales and legends (relating to Social Studies), an author study, poetry (both reading and writing), and others.

Additional literature experiences

Students with an accelerated reading ability who have completed the assigned book read another self-selected book with the same theme.

Various Readers' Theater scripts are read and performed.

Students also read non-fiction pieces from "Time for Kids" as well as current events.

Parents are asked to read two books to their children in both fourth and fifth grades: *Abel's Island* by William Steig and *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Patterson in fourth grade and *Loser* by Jerry Spinelli and *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt in fifth grade. Teachers hold parent and child book discussions in school.

Vocabulary

Students work in the Sadlier-Oxford Vocabulary Workshop written by Jerome Shostak. There are two levels: grade

level and above grade level. The students create vocabulary cards, complete the related unit, and are then required to display mastery of the words. They also study the weekly root and associated words. Meaningful vocabulary is taken from the literature readings.

Grammar

Students use Daily Language Review student practice book to learn the grammar concepts. Through mini-lessons from the 6+1 Writing Traits, the students apply those concepts that they have learned.

Spelling

The Rebecca Sitton Spelling program is used in both grades four and five. Every week, each child receives a personalized list of words to learn; those words have been taken from assessments as well as from their own writing. They also complete a variety of appropriate activities designed to create competent spellers. The F.A.S.T. concepts are used to reinforce the development of spelling skills.

Writing

Students write everyday throughout the year. In fourth grade, the emphasis is on sentence fluency, word choice, organization, and proper mechanics. In fifth grade, the focus is on paragraph development using all of the components of 6+1 writing traits: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation. The students not only free write in their Writer's Notebook, they also write narratives, poetry, fictional pieces, journal entries, descriptive paragraphs, letters, and non-fiction reports. All of the 6+1 strategies are practiced. Each semester, the students submit a piece of work that has come to final publication having used the entire process: talking about the piece, using an organizer to put thoughts together, drafting, revising, and editing. Several class books are written, usually based on field trips.

Oral Presentations

Oral presentations are woven into all aspects of language arts and other content areas. The children give poetry recitations, lead Book Chats during Literature Circles, express their opinions and generate meaningful questions during Socratic Circles, and present factual information after completing research (particularly before leaving on their trips to Upper Michigan and Washington, D.C.)