

BNS Middle School Language Arts Curriculum 2025-2026

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The Individual in Conflict with Society

Introduction

The middle school language arts curriculum allows students to explore multiple genres and authors through the integrated study of literature, critical writing, creative writing, and grammar. Students will read selections from and write responses to a variety of authors, works, and genres. This curriculum correlates with the current World Studies curriculum, which surveys civics and government this year. Thus, many of the books and themes discussed in language arts will be loosely tied to how governments impact the daily life of people. The contemporary literature selections will help students better appreciate these same topics in their World Studies curriculum. All instruction, materials, and assignments will be based on the strengths and needs of the class and individual students. The curriculum will incorporate student interests while meeting Virginia SOLs and BNS objectives. Grammar and vocabulary lessons will be derived from Sadlier-Oxford *Vocabulary Workshop* and a grammar program loosely based on the *Easy Grammar: Plus* model of instruction. Spelling lessons will be derived individually from student mistakes.

Reading

A variety of literary genres will be covered this year, including short stories, poetry, drama, modern and classical fiction, science fiction, and nonfiction. While topics correlate with themes explored in social studies, works have been chosen based on depth of themes, perceived student interest, language complexity, and purposeful exposure to a variety of writing styles, both classical and modern. Aside from readings assigned for class, students will be further expected to select books for independent reading. Time will also be set aside for sustained silent reading. Students will be asked to respond to literature in various ways, in particular through questioning, connecting literature to previous experiences, creating images, making predictions, and exploring themes, literary devices, and word choice. Student comprehension and use of inference will be encouraged through active discussion, questioning, reflection, and critical thinking.

Writing

Students will likewise be asked to respond to literature by writing in a variety of ways, both creatively and technically. Each unit allows students to produce creative and technical products, and a variety of formal and informal response forms will be studied. Through response journals students will informally respond to reading throughout the curriculum. Writing will be further enhanced with regular assignments requiring students to master a variety of styles, to write for a variety of audiences, and to explore their own

experiences through writing. Emphasis will be placed on form in writing, including proper sentence formation, paragraph formation, and composition organization. Students will experience the full complexities of the writing process by regularly engaging in brainstorming, composing, revising, proofreading, and publishing. Content, organization, voice, fluency, grammar, and word choice will be emphasized throughout the writing process. Students will work on retaining their cursive skills through monthly practice assignments. All students will participate in the school-wide celebration of writing at the end of the year by producing, revising, proofreading, and presenting a short writing project for Authors' Tea.

Grammar and Vocabulary

Grammatical conventions will be studied regularly in the form of regular lessons as part of a 3-year program. Grammar will also be emphasized throughout the course of student writing. Writers' workshops will enhance exploration of the conventions of writing styles and purposes. Students will be expected to use studied grammar and spelling rules in all formal writing assignments and to revise assignments so that they contain no grammatical mistakes. In addition, there will be a focus on vocabulary enhancement, especially words they encounter frequently in high school reading.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening will be integrated throughout the curriculum through regular oral presentation, small group discussions, literature circles, sharing of writing, debate, and drama. All students are expected to contribute to group discussions and to listen attentively to others in the classroom. Students will work to develop confidence in their own speaking abilities as well as to show respect toward the work and opinions of others.

Assessment

Students will be assessed both formally and informally throughout the year. Ideally, each student will be able to use his or her own strengths and interests to display knowledge. A variety of assessment opportunities will be given, including quizzes, informal response journals, short term assignments, long-term assignments, essays, homework completion, portfolios, creative pieces, and participation in a variety of in-class assignments, including whole-class, group, and individual. The grading policy will include the following:

Quizzes and short-term assignments:	15%
Long-term assignments, including major creative assignments and essays	40%
Class preparation and homework completion, including response journals	25%
Class work, notebook organization, and appropriate participation in discussion	20%

Curriculum Overview:

Dates Projects	Unit of Study	Literary Works	Writing
August / September	<u>Poetry</u> - Sonnets	6 th /7 th /8 th Shakespeare's Sonnets	- Book Reviews - Poems
October/ November	<u>Introduction to Literature</u> - Short Stories	6 th - "The Three Questions," "Chivalry," "Charles," "A Sound of Thunder" 7 th - "Secret Life of Walter Mitty," "Gator," We Can Get Them For You Wholesale," "There Will Come Soft Rains" 8 th – "Celebrated Jumping Frog," "Cop and the Anthem," "The Lottery," "Owl Creek"	- Short Story Prompts - Start Compare/ Contrast Essay - Thesis Statement workshop
November/ December	<u>Russia</u> - Novels (Fiction)	6 th /7 th /8 th <u>Animal Farm</u>	
January / February	<u>China</u> - Novels (Nonfiction)	6 th /7 th – <u>Snow Falling in Spring</u> 8 th – <u>Red Scarf Girl</u>	- Vocab Story
February / March	<u>Novels</u> (Fiction)	6 th / 7 th - <u>Weedflower</u> 8 th – <u>1984</u>	- Authors' Tea Projects: - 6 th - Dialogue - 7 th - Vignettes - 8 th – Inner Monologue
April / May	<u>Shakespeare</u> - Drama	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>	- Authors' Tea Performance - Play Performance