

**English Language Arts
Review and
Recommendations at
Piedmont Middle School**

Core Philosophy

- Reading and writing are important skills that are built on earlier foundations and improve with study, practice, and maturity
- Scaffolding instruction to direct these skills to a new level of analytical and critical thinking
 - Development of theme and analytical essay
 - Thesis-based report writing

Curriculum Guides

- In 2009-10 Core 6 and Core 7 teachers began their work around the ELA review.
- They developed curriculum guides to specify which core concepts would be taught throughout the school year and to provide links between the concepts and curriculum to the CA state standards.
- 8th grade English teachers reviewed and modified current curriculum guides based on input from the department, curricular challenges, and results from assessment.

Professional Development/ Rubric System

- Core 6 and Core 7 teachers worked with Anne Beninghof to create a rubric system to begin the process of evaluating students' writing performances and with Brenda Wallace on writing strategies and the persuasive essay.
- 8th grade English teachers worked with Brenda Wallace to refine approaches to gathering evidence of theme, the editing process, and the writing assessment process.
- As a result, specific performance criteria were developed that allowed teachers to analyze and respond to the various writing needs of their individual students

2010-2011 ELA Goals

1. Look at English Language Arts content cluster information from STAR results and identify skill areas that could be improved. Core 6 teachers are looking at writing strategies, particularly in the areas of ideas and organization, voice, word choice, and sentence fluency. Core 7 teachers are looking at writing conclusions, and English teachers are focusing on word analysis and vocabulary development. At each grade level, teachers will develop strategies to integrate into the program to raise content clusters.
2. Collect baseline data from grade level writing assessments to analyze overall strengths and weaknesses and identify effective/ineffective instructional strategies to refine the writing program and raise overall performance.

Core 6 ELA

Actions Taken in 2010-2011

- Examined ELA content cluster info from STAR
 - Added more emphasis on reading comprehension & analysis
 - Continued to teach six traits of writing as identified on rubric
- Administered common writing assessment during second quarter & collected baseline data
- Graded other class's papers, calibrating writing levels according to the rubric
- Gathered resources for teachers about writing instruction

Surplus Food Supply

agriculture

farming

food storage

irrigation

plows

farm tools

crops

livestock

domesticated animals

Possible Opening Sentence For Food Supply:

The people of _____
were able to farm, raise animals,
and store food for everybody.

Next, you should add examples of techniques & tools people used in farming, examples of animals they domesticated and how they were used, and where they stored their food. Try to:

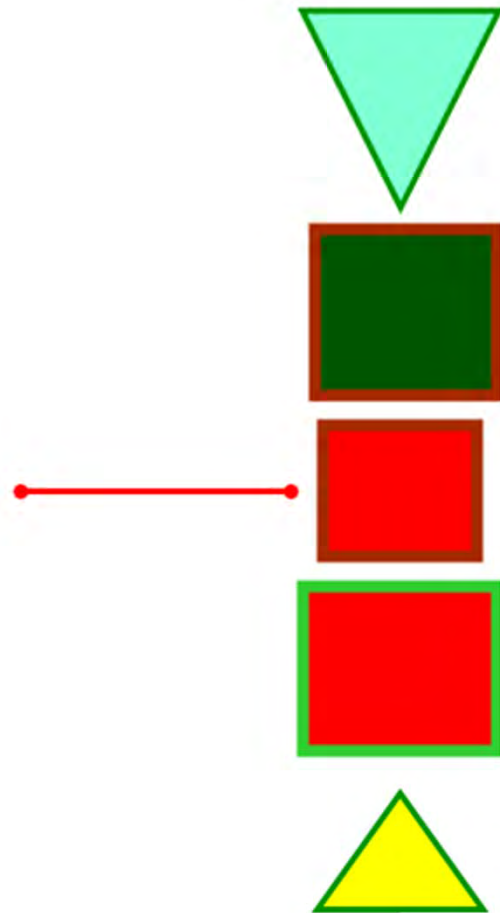
EXPAND ON IDEAS

and connect them with **TRANSITIONS.**



Starting Second Body Paragraph

New Goal: Link this to the previous paragraph.



Sample Topic Sentence

Because _____ had a stable food supply, they were able to have people doing other jobs.

CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

So what?

Start
with a
specific comment

about how great your
civilization was. Then talk

about some of its legacies. What
did those people leave behind that

the modern world still uses and/or appreciates?

In this final paragraph, make it clear why the existence
of this amazing civilization really matters.

	Below Grade Level Expectations (2 Points)	Meets Grade Level Expectations (4 Points)	Far Exceeds Grade Level Expectations (6 Points)
Organization	Ideas, details, or events seem loosely strung together, might lack topic sentence, supporting details and/or concluding statement.	The organizational structure (topic sentence, supporting details and concluding statement) allows the reader to move through the text without undue confusion. Some use of basic transitions.	The order, presentation, or internal structure of the writing is compelling, and guides the reader purposefully through the text. Sophisticated use of transitions.
Content / Ideas	Sketchy information forces the reader to make inferences, and the paper includes an unclear topic and limited or unrelated details.	The writing has clear ideas with adequate support. Avoids extraneous information.	The text is clear, well-supported, and developed, enhanced by the quality and quantity of detail that keeps readers interested.
Voice	The text lacks life, spirit, or energy. The writer seems distanced from the audience, topic, or both.	The writing seems sincere and willing to communicate with the reader on a functional level. The writer seems aware of audience.	Energy and passion for the subject drive the writing, making it unique, expressive and/or engaging. Appropriate for the purpose and audience.
Word Choice	Limited, vague, or redundant vocabulary, and clichéd or incorrectly used words or phrases impair the writing's effectiveness.	The language communicates in a workable manner and gets the job done. Attempts to use descriptive language.	Precise, vivid, and natural language paints a clear and complete picture in the reader's mind. High level vocabulary and lively verbs are used.
Sentence Fluency	Reading the text is difficult as run-ons, fragments, and other sentence problems impair meaning.	The text moves along with complete sentences that do not distract from the ideas presented. Occasional variety in sentence structure and length.	The complete sentences flow with a rhythm that makes this text easy and enjoyable to read. Some variety in sentence structure and length.
Conventions	Grammatical errors and lapses in standard writing conventions distract the reader's ability to focus on ideas or organization.	The writer shows adequate control over standard writing conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization and syntax) making the paper easily readable.	The writer shows excellent control over a wide range of standard writing conventions and uses them with accuracy.

Core 6 ELA Recommendations

- Administer second common assessment in June 2011
- Score to look for student growth
 - Informs teachers about effectiveness of instructional strategies
- Look for evidence of patterns and trends in student writing (i.e. difficulty with writing conclusions, transitions, etc.)
- Re-evaluate effectiveness of rubric
- Evaluate prompts and decide how to change them for 2011-2012
- Discuss how results of second assessment might inform future instructional methods
- Continue administering two assessments per year for the purpose of collecting baseline data and evaluating instructional effectiveness
- Receive training to allow input of writing assessment scores into Data Director

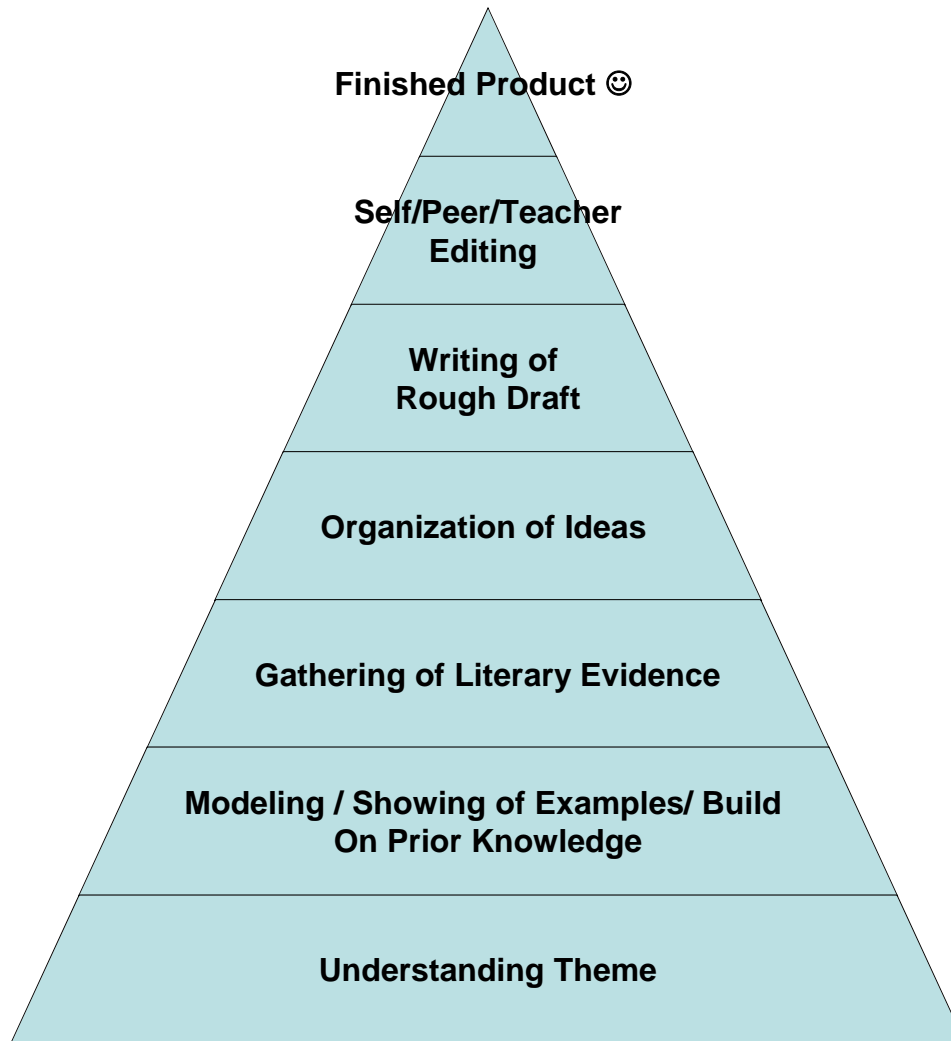
Core 7
PIEDMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
CURRICULUM REVIEW
AS RELATED TO SCHOOL GOALS FOR
IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
2010-2011

Core 7 ELA

Actions Taken in 2010-11

- Examined STAR test results and content clusters to identify skill areas to be improved
 - Literary response and analysis
 - Writing conventions
- Refined Beowulf and Dragonwings assessments and created common rubric
- Administered common writing assessments
- Collected baseline data from results of Beowulf literary analysis
- Collected comparative data from results of Dragonwings literary analysis
- Analyzed overall strengths and areas for improvement



Beowulf
By Robert Nye

The character of Beowulf has been described as an epic hero. Write down notes as we explore this definition, and then, in the boxes below, gather information as you read that illustrates this description. *Use your other quote sheet to help you.*

- ① Dictionary definition of epic hero: *a mythological or legendary figure, admired for their great strength, achievements, and qualities.*
- ② What are some other characteristics that you think make up an epic hero?

<u>Context</u> : a brief summary about what is happening. This is in your own words.	<u>Quote</u> : include quotation marks and page number in parenthesis.	<u>Connection</u> : In your own words clearly explain how your quote shows Beowulf as an epic hero.

**BEOWULF PARAGRAPH RUBRIC:
1ST SEMESTER 7TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS COMMON ASSESSMENT**

CRITERIA	POINTS
1. Topic sentence clearly states that Beowulf is an epic hero and explains why.	3=meets criteria 2=does not meet <u>all</u> criteria 1=does <u>not</u> meet criteria
2. Context of example is clearly stated. Uses enough context to move effectively into the quote.	3=meets criteria 2= does not meet <u>all</u> criteria 1=does <u>not</u> meet criteria
3. The quote clearly illustrates the topic and is well-integrated.	3=meets criteria 2= does not meet <u>all</u> criteria 1=does <u>not</u> meet criteria
4. The quote is clearly explained, and the explanation proves that Beowulf is an epic hero.	3=meets criteria 2= does not meet <u>all</u> criteria 1=does <u>not</u> meet criteria
5. Transition words/ phrases are used effectively.	3=meets criteria 2= does not meet <u>all</u> criteria 1=does <u>not</u> meet criteria
6. Conclusion relates to, and does not stray from, the topic sentence.	3=meets criteria 2= does not meet <u>all</u> criteria 1=does <u>not</u> meet criteria

TOTAL POINTS: _____

NAME: _____

DRAGONWINGS ESSAY

I.	THESIS: introduction	4	_____
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear, effective description of family and love and how it helps characters get through difficult times• Title, author, setting• Area of focus clear with introduction of characters and their relationships/plan for development Clear thesis statement		
II.	BODY: Development of ideas with clear support of main thesis.		
A.	Paragraph #1	5	_____
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence clearly introduces characters, their relationship, and impact of love• Context of incident clearly developed• Quote clearly illustrates idea and is well integrated Explanation with elaboration on main idea Transitions used effectively Paragraph is well organized		
B.	Paragraph #2	5	_____
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence clearly introduces characters, their relationship, and impact of love• Context of incident clearly developed• Quote clearly illustrates idea and is well integrated Explanation with elaboration on main idea Transitions used effectively Paragraph is well organized		
C.	Paragraph #3	5	_____
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence clearly introduces characters, their relationship, and impact of love• Context of incident clearly developed• Quote clearly illustrates idea and is well integrated Explanation with elaboration on main idea Transitions used effectively Paragraph is well organized		
III.	CONCLUSION: Analysis	3	_____
	Restatement of thesis Connection of examples to thesis Personal connection/broader context		
IV.	ORGANIZATION/STYLE	5	_____
	Completely organized and unified Excellent use of vocabulary/varied sentence style		
V.	MECHANICS/GRAMMAR	3	_____
	Free of grammar and mechanics errors MLA form		
	TOTAL: 30		_____

7th grade English/ Language Arts Recommendations

- Evaluate *Dragonwings* prompts and decide how to change them for 2011-2012. Possibly allow greater room for flexibility around the theme of the prompt
- Re-evaluate and refine *Dragonwings* rubric
- Discuss how our assessments might inform future teaching
- Continue to give two assessments per year to collect baseline data and evaluate teacher effectiveness and student growth
- Continue to meet as a Core, and to develop and refine writing strategies that help all students become more proficient in expository writing

**ENGLISH 8
PIEDMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
CURRICULUM REVIEW
AS RELATED TO SCHOOL GOALS FOR
IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
2010-2011



FOCUS AREA: WRITING STRATEGIES AND ASSESSMENT

- **Understanding Theme**
- **Gathering Data**
- **Scaffolding – structure, approach, modeling**
- **Editing**
- **Rubric Evaluation**

ACTIONS TAKEN

- **Added theme worksheets before reading to facilitate comprehension and the gathering of evidence for essay.**
- **Refined Data Gathering worksheets.**
- **Refined scaffolding worksheets to better assist in paragraph construction, content, and development of theme throughout the essay.**
- **Continued editing strategies per paragraph.**
- **Refined The Pearl Assessment Rubric (Oppression Essay) to mirror 7th grade rubric and final 8th grade Courage essay rubric.**

OPPRESSION ESSAY DATA SHEET

List the characteristics of a bully (What are they like and how do they act?):

List the characteristics of a victim (What are they like and how do they act?)

What is the relationship between a bully and the victim? How does the bully maintain power?

In what ways are victims powerless?

Define **status**:

How do the characteristics of a bully and a victim relate to **status**?

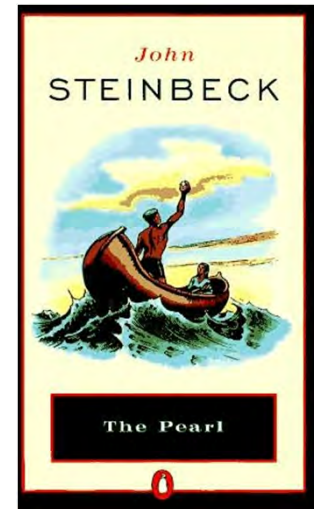
Define oppressor:

In what ways are oppressors bullies?

Define oppressed:

In what ways are the oppressed victims?

Who presses down on whom and how do they get away with it?



GATHERING DATA:

Context: What's going on in the story that directly leads into the quote?	Quote and page number	Explanation and connection: In your own words, explain how this example shows the oppression of Kino?

From the above examples, choose the one that best illustrates the oppression of Kino. Answer the following questions about that one chosen example:

How does the character's status in society help him to oppress Kino?

Give specific examples of how this character's actions oppress Kino?

How does Kino's inferior status within society convince Kino that the above character(s) must be telling the truth?

BODY: Use the **GATHERING DATA** sheets in your Pearl packet as a source to help you complete the following planning sheet.

DOCTOR

Topic Sentence: The doctor uses

_____ to oppress Kino.

Context: Explain specifically what the doctor does.

Transition: Lead from the explanation into the quote that illustrates the doctor's actions.

_____.

Quote with page number at the end:

Explanation of the quote.

Analysis: Explain what the quote is showing and how it ties into the method of oppression introduced in your topic sentence.

NAME: _____

PERIOD: ____

OPPRESSION ESSAY

I.	THESIS: introduction	4	___
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear, effective definition of OPPRESSION• Title, author , setting• Area of focus clear with introduction• of three characters or group/plan for development• Clear thesis statement		
II.	BODY: Development of ideas with clear support of main thesis.	15	___
A.	Paragraph #1	5	___
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence clearly introduces character/group• Context of incident clearly developed• Quote clearly illustrates idea and is well integrated• Explanation with elaboration on main idea• Transitions used effectively• Paragraph is well organized		
B.	Paragraph #2	5	___
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence clearly introduces character/group• Context of incident clearly developed• Quote clearly illustrates idea and is well integrated• Explanation with elaboration on main idea• Transitions used effectively• Paragraph is well organized		
C.	Paragraph #3	5	___
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence clearly introduces character/group• Context of incident clearly developed• Quote clearly illustrates idea and is well integrated• Explanation with elaboration on main idea• Transitions used effectively• Paragraph is well organized		
III.	CONCLUSION: Analysis	3	___
	Restatement of Thesis Connection of examples to thesis Broader context		
IV.	ORGANIZATION/STYLE	5	___
	Completely organized and unified Excellent use of vocabulary/varied sentence style		
V.	MECHANICS/GRAMMAR	3	___
	Free of grammar and mechanics errors MLA form		
	TOTAL:	30	___
	PROCESS POINTS: Planning sheets/ rough drafts	10	___

BODY PARAGRAPHS:

EDITING: Using colored pencils, students underline the following parts of each paragraph, first editing their own paper and then a partner's paper:

TOPIC SENTENCE AND INTRODUCTION OF COURAGEOUS ACT

CONTEXT: ENOUGH SUMMARY TO EXPLAIN THE COURAGEOUS ACT AND THE CONTEXT IN THE STORY.

QUOTE AND EXPLANATION OF THE QUOTE

ANALYSIS: WHY IS THIS ACT COURAGEOUS AND HOW DOES IT FIT INTO YOUR DEFINITION OF COURAGE OUTLINED IN THE INTRODUCTION?

Malone
Sorenson
Ch 8, Per. 1
1/11

Love 1

Topic Sentence -
Context -
Quote -
Analysis - Lowe 5

Courage in TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

Mrs. Dubose, a sick woman who lives down the street shows a large amount of courage.
But the courage she showed wasn't something against the community's thoughts. The courage that Mrs. Dubose showed was personal courage. Jem and Scout didn't like her, and they found her a bit nasty. Mrs. Dubose was very old, and she spent most of her days either in bed, or in a wheelchair. She also lived alone except for an African American girl, who was constantly seen. Jem and Scout hated her so much, especially when she was insulting Atticus, because they loved their father, and went with everything he did. When Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose wasn't yelling about how what Atticus was doing was wrong, she was yelling at Scout and Jem. "We could do nothing to please her. If I said... 'Hey, Mrs. Dubose,' I would receive... 'don't you say hey to me, you ugly girl..." (99). Mrs. Dubose was rude to kids even though she had no reason to hate them. Jem and Scout especially hated her, because they supported their father when he defended Tom Robinson, unlike most of the town, including Mrs. Dubose. She disapproved of the trial, because she thought whites should stay higher than blacks, because that's how it should always be. Eventually, Jem got so angry at Mrs. Dubose that he hits off all the heads of her camellias. As a consequence, Jem has to read to Mrs. Dubose for a while, every day, to distract her from pain that she is expected to receive. This pain came from a choice that Mrs. Dubose made, so it was definitely an act of courage that she achieved. "You rarely win, but you sometimes do. Mrs. Dubose won all ninety-eight pounds of her. According to her views, she died beholden to nothing and nobody. She was the bravest person I ever knew" (112). Mrs. Dubose had taken morphine as a pain killer for a very long time, and eventually, she was addicted. The morphine that the doctor prescribed was taken every single day, mostly more than once a day and she depended on it. It stopped the pain from hurting her which was what the doctor had intended. But

NAME: _____
PER. ____

COURAGE ESSAY

I	THESIS: introduction	4	___
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear, effective definition of courage• Title ,author, setting• Area of focus clear with introduction of three characters/plan for development		
II	BODY: Development of ideas with clear support of main thesis.	15	___
A.	Paragraph #1	5	___
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence clearly introduces character• Context of incident clearly developed• Quote clearly illustrates idea and is well integrated with explanation of quoteAdequate analysis of incident and how it illustrates themeTransitions used effectivelyParagraph is well organized		
B.	Paragraph #2	5	___
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence clearly introduces character• Context of incident clearly developed• Quote clearly illustrates idea and is well integrated with explanation of quoteAdequate analysis of incident and how it illustrates themeTransitions used effectivelyParagraph is well organized		
C.	Paragraph #3	5	___
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence clearly introduces character• Context of incident clearly developed• Quote clearly illustrates idea and is well integrated with explanation of quoteAdequate analysis of incident and how it illustrates themeTransitions used effectivelyParagraph is well organized		
III	CONCLUSION: Analysis	3	___
	Restatement of Thesis Connection of examples to thesis Broader context		
IV	ORGANIZATION/STYLE	5	___
	Completely organized and unified Excellent use of vocabulary/varied sentence style		
V	MECHANICS/GRAMMAR	3	___
	Free of grammar and mechanics errors MLA form		
	TOTAL: 30	30	___
	PROCESS POINTS: Planning sheets/ rough drafts	10	___

FUTURE FOCUS

- RECEIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT INSTRUCTION AND TIME TO INPUT EIGHTH GRADE STANDARDS ASSESSMENT SCORES INTO DATA DIRECTOR.
- CONTINUE TO REFINE AND DEVELOP WRITING STRATEGIES TO HELP ALL STUDENTS BECOME MORE PROFICIENT IN ANALYTICAL WRITING.
- CONTINUE TO DEVELOP WORD ANALYSIS WORKSHEETS TO GO ALONG WITH STORIES AND NOVELS