

Washington Township High School



English Language Arts Department
Framework and Guidelines
for Teaching Staff and Administration

Grades 9-12

Revised June 2019

Washington Township High School English Language Arts Department Framework for Instruction

The English Department of Washington Township High School strives to prepare students to be successful in college and their careers. Through intentional curriculum design and deliberate focus on the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts, our students will be challenged to demonstrate mastery of critical skills to be effective readers, writers, speakers, and collaborative citizens.

The following English Department goals inform instructional decisions that lead to purposeful teaching and learning with student success as the intended outcome.

English Department Long Term Goals

Goal 1 - To teach students to analyze, reflect, and draw relevance from literary works.

Goal 2 - To equip students with skills and strategies to lead literate lives.

Goal 3 - To engage students in diverse learning experiences that give them voice, choice, and purpose.

The following framework for instruction includes:

- **Grading Categories and Percentages** – *Students achieve mastery of skills through repeated practice, consistent feedback, and multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency. The English Department strives to balance these experiences while accurately measuring progress through activities that are graded as well as not graded.*
- **Components of an English Class** – *While every class period may not easily be compartmentalized into rigid timeframes and activities, it is essential that certain segments are included and fall within certain time ranges.*
- **Sample Day** – *An English class experience that contains clear learning targets, observable activities that match learning targets, opportunities for student choice, and assessment of learning.*
- **Vocabulary Instruction** – *An integrated approach to language development.*
- **Independent Reading** – *A framework for cultivating independent reading habits, structures for in class and at home reading, and supportive activities.*
- **Assessment** – *Formative and summative assessment activities provide teachers and students with usable information to track progress, target instruction, and reflect on goals achieved and/or still working towards.*

Note to Teachers:

The English Department Framework for Instruction should be referenced regularly, along with the curriculum and teacher resources share drive, as you design lessons and activities using the essential and secondary standards for each unit. The components of an English class are intended to help focus your planning towards specific standards that will become your learning targets for instruction. While students will be reading, writing, speaking, listening, and using language every day, it is imperative to have an emphasis that leads your instruction and prepares students for supported practice and ultimately, mastery of skills and standards.

Honors, College Prep, and Resource ELA
Grading Categories and Percentages

Category	Summative Assessments	Formative Assessments	Supportive Assessments
Weight or Points	35% 50 points	40% 25 points	25% 10 points
Assignment Types	Tests (skills based) Projects Published Writing Performance Based Assessments Vocabulary Unit Assessments Independent Reading	Quizzes Process Writing/Writing in Stages Independent Reading Student Self Reflections Classwork	Homework Conferences Collaborative Work Quick write Journal Entries Reader Response Journals Independent Reading
# of Graded Assignments Per Marking Period	3-5	8-10	12-15

AP English
Grading Categories and Percentages

Category	Summative Assessments	Formative Assessments	Supportive Assessments
Weight	50%	30%	20%
Assignment Types	Tests Culminating essays Timed writing prompts Culminating test prep	Quizzes Socratic discussions Process writing Practice writing prompts Practice test prep Recitations	Homework Prep for Socratic discussions Classwork Abstracts Reading checks Quick writes AP online self-check
# of graded Assignments per marking period	3-5	6-10	8-15

Components of an English Class

Segment	Purpose	Length of Time	Observable Behaviors
Introduction (Communicating the What? Why? How?)	To communicate the learning target(s) for the day, establish relevance, and provide examples of how students will notice their progress towards achieving the target(s). (Clarity Notes and Examples)	3-5 minutes	Teacher communicates: What? Why? How? Explanation of the learning target, relevance, and ways to track progress. This should be clearly written and orally discussed at the beginning of each class period.
Teacher Model/Targeted Instruction	Targeted lesson on specific ELA skill/strategy with effective modeling and resources/scaffolds provided.	10-15 minutes	Teacher models/provides mini lesson on focus learning target. Teacher read aloud/think aloud, student note taking, non-linguistic representation, teacher modeling of writing, use of mentor texts. <i>(Whole group or small group)</i>
Supported Student Practice	Students are engaged in authentic practice activities towards mastery of grade level standards.	25 minutes	Student-facilitated learning/teacher monitored practice. Small group activities, guided group lessons, independent reading/conferencing, independent writing/conferencing.
Assessment of Learning	Teachers and students reflect and summarize the target learning goal with students providing evidence of current level of understanding.	Ongoing	Teacher gathers evidence of learning/skill acquisition. Ex. Conferencing notes, exit ticket, digital poll, post-it wall, turn and share, journal reflection, O365 Class Notebook entry.

Note to teachers/administrators: number of minutes for each segment may vary: Ex. introduction of new unit, skill, strategy, vocabulary, etc.

Note to teachers/administrators: segments may vary sequence depending on the learning target and/or observable needs to be addressed.

A Sample Day

Target Standard: W 9.9

Unit: Literary Analysis Essay

Lesson Segment: Introduction –

Observable Behaviors: *Teacher explains the What? Why? How?*

What? *I can connect evidence from the text with insightful elaboration to support and enhance my analysis.*

Why? *When proving a point, it is essential to take evidence and do some thinking about it. This shows that you have made meaning and are able to convey it to others.*

How? *Peers will notice and comment on your combination of evidence and elaboration. You notice yourself stopping and reflecting more often as you attempt to draw meaning as you write. During conferences, you will look to get feedback on your ability to avoid “quote plopping”.*

Lesson Segment: Mini Lesson – “Bring your insight!”

Observable Behaviors: *Teacher will conduct a lesson on effective ways to infuse insightful elaboration when providing text evidence. (Focus: How to avoid “quote plopping” by following up a quote from the text with elaborative insight and explanation.) Teacher will then use mentor text or own writing to model skill.*

Lesson Segment: Independent Practice –

Observable Behaviors: *Students will work on their literary analysis essay to practice this skill. While writing, teacher will circulate the room to conference with individual students and provide support. Students may be working with a peer to provide feedback, meeting for a small group mini lesson, marking up their writing to identify key components, or completing interactive rubrics.*

Lesson Segment: Assessment of Learning-

Observable Behaviors: *Teacher will ask 2 students to share out an example of insightful elaboration they added to their writing piece. Also call on another student to explain how these details have improved the writing pieces. Teacher will keep a log of anecdotal notes as she confers with students on their strengths and teaching moment. Formative assessment in stages will also inform on progress.*

Grammar Instruction

Philosophy

Grammar is a foundational skill that supports effective writing and reading because it allows for close reading of nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. Understanding and applying the conventions of standard English allow students to communicate ideas and develop voice.

According to the NJSLS Anchor Standards for Language:

“To build a foundation for college and career readiness in language, students must gain control over many conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics as well as learn other ways to use language to convey meaning effectively. They must also be able to determine or clarify the meaning of grade-appropriate words encountered through listening, reading, and media use; come to appreciate that words have nonliteral meanings, shades of meaning, and relationships to other words; and expand their vocabulary in the course of studying content. The inclusion of Language standards in their own strand should not be taken as an indication that skills related to conventions, effective language use, and vocabulary are unimportant to reading, writing, speaking, and listening; indeed, they are inseparable from such contexts.”

Grammar Implementation

While grammar is an essential literacy skill, isolated instruction should be limited and purposeful. Grammar should be incorporated into writing instruction in the form of mini lessons, modeling/conferencing, and practice activities. Several traditional and online resources are available to support effective implementation of grammar instruction. While instruction can take many paths, teachers must ensure that students have learned the foundational grammar skills that are outlined in each grade-level course of study.

[Secondary ELA Grammar Guide](#)

Suggested Activities and Resources:

- **Diagramming sentences (examples from both student writing and mentor texts)**
- **[Ten Basic Diagramming Patterns](#) (can also be found in the English Dept WTHS Group Folder)**
- **Close Reading Activities (identifying grammatical patterns)**
- **Study Sync (Skills lessons, preferably linked to reading/writing)**
- **No Red Ink (adaptive exercises and actionable data)**
- **Turnitin.com (Formative data from student writing)**
- **[Quill.org](#) (online writing tools that enable students to build writing, grammar, and proofreading skills)**

Note to teachers: Grammar instruction in isolation should be limited to an as needed basis to introduce skills, address the standards, and respond to formative assessment data.

Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary continues to stand as one of the five major components of reading. Unlocking words and their meanings is the pathway to improving reading comprehension as well as writing.

Vocabulary instruction should be infused throughout all units of instruction. Acquisition of new terminology requires routine, integrated exposure to words as students are immersed in learning. Best practice has shown that effective vocabulary instruction is a balance of introduction to words, independent practice, and regular checks/assessments for acquisition. The amount of instructional time and the frequency and types of independent practice should be limited to fit within any segment of the class period and within the district's homework policy.

An approach for vocabulary acquisition may incorporate a combination of direct instruction and word-learning strategies. By initially presenting unknown, acquainted, or established words in context, teachers allow students to determine meanings for unknown words and recognize familiar ones. The utilization of context clues allows students to understand word meanings and usage as well as parts of speech.

Optional resources include:

- McGraw-Hill Study Sync
- American Heritage 100 Words Series
- Teacher-created lists
- Works from grade level courses of study
- Independent reading selections

Independent Reading

Philosophy

Independent reading is an essential component of the English Language Arts curriculum. Extensive studies have indicated that students who begin reading independently during the school day are more likely to continue reading at home. This type of reading involves student's self-selecting their reading material, at an appropriate level, based on their interests. When we dedicate time in the school day for independent reading and invite students to dive into texts they choose, reading success will follow! Students develop reading stamina, improve comprehension skills, and work towards mastery of reading skills and strategies through reading texts where they can see themselves and others. Students should be expected to read independently both during class and at home.

As English Language Arts teachers, our ultimate goal is to empower our students as readers and ignite their passion for reading now and in the future. We can empower them through:

- Choice
- Establishing goals
- Regular opportunities to discuss reading with peers and teachers
- Meaningful, relevant work and self-reflection

Independent Reading Expectation

A **minimum of 45 minutes per week in class and 45 minutes per week at home.**

Goals for Independent Reading in Class

Students will be reading a minimum of 45 minutes per week in class. This sacred time is set aside with clearly set expectations established to ensure every student has the opportunity to get into their reading flow.

Teachers may be seen...

- Observing active independent reading
- Conferring with students to discuss their reading and/or talk about strategies
- Tracking student progress using anecdotal notes
- Providing students with feedback and independent reading goals
- Helping students find the "just right book" which connects with their interests
- Being a model reader!

Students may be seen...

- Engaging in silent independent reading and developing an uninterrupted reading flow
- Interacting with text (post-its, jotting journal thoughts, marking up text, etc.)
- Responding to reading (reader response journal entry, partner chat, exit slip, etc.)
- Conferring with the teacher or peers
- Setting independent reading goals or tracking goals that have been accomplished
- Lost in books, developing their passion for reading!

Sample In-Class Independent Reading Schedule

Monday

- Independent Reading **15 min.**
- 2 teacher conferences with individual students

Wednesday

- Independent Reading **30 min.**
- Padlet post/reflection
- 2 small group conferences

Goals for Independent Reading at Home

Students should read a minimum of 45 minutes per week outside of class. By focusing on a weekly rather than nightly goal, we acknowledge and value the diversity of our student's lives outside of the traditional school day. Some are involved in extra-curricular activities or other obligations that limit their time. We want students to understand that reading is not something to treat as an assignment, but rather a habit worth developing that will mold them into critical thinkers and empowered citizens. Students should read meaningful texts in a variety of genres and materials including, but not limited to, books (*novels, short stories, narrative non-fiction, graphic novels, etc.*), articles, notable publications, etc.

There are a variety of ways to hold students accountable for their independent reading, if accountability were the main purpose for reading; however, it is not. Contagious enthusiasm for reading, meaningful connections to text, and the ability to thinking deeply about themselves, others, and society are the purpose we are striving towards.

Progress towards developing a habit of reading can be monitored through various reflection and assessment opportunities, including (but not limited to):

- Choice boards
- One-Pagers/End of Book Reflection sheets
- Video Reflections using tools like Flip Grid and Recap
- Digital Posters
- Good Reads/Amazon Reviews

Classroom Library Usage & Independent Reading Suggestions

Ways to manage the flow of books, suggested reading, and tracking of materials:

- Consider how to organize titles and let students know this is how their classroom library is set up (genre, lexile, topics, alphabetical, etc.).
- Maintain a check out system (using Book Source Classroom Organizer or another system).
- Feature and display various books to pique student interest.
- Encourage students to place post-its inside book covers with brief statements to recommend titles.

Ways to avoid independent reading pitfalls...

- Allow students to choose books, without restraints.
- Focus less on quantity of books and more on quantity of pages and time.
- Allow (at times-encourage) students to abandon books.
- Remind students that there are other places to find great reading material.
- Resist the urge to track nightly reading. Logs do not create avid, enthusiastic readers. Accountability should not be a major goal of independent reading.
- Maintain up-to-date anecdotal logs to keep track of: how often you are meeting with who, the teaching points, the celebration points, student progress, who is reading what, etc... (*see O365 Share Drive for sample logs/note sheets*)

Assessment for Teaching and of Learning

Assessment is an ongoing process - one that can shine a light to guide instructional decision making as well as one that measures the progress students have made towards achieving a learning goal. To ensure that students are on track to developing 21st Century Skills, it is imperative that we measure progress in a deliberate, continual manner and make meaningful use of what this data reveals. The English Department is committed to knowing where students are, meeting them there, and taking them to where they need to be – using data along every step of the way.

The assessment types utilized in the WTHS English Department include Supportive, Formative, Summative, and Benchmark Assessments.

SUPPORTIVE ASSESSMENT: Supportive assessment involves the ongoing observations, tasks/activities, and collaborative conversations that happen during and outside of class that inform on student progress. Supportive work may or may not be graded, with minimal point values when applicable. The purpose of supportive assessment is to provide checkpoints, redirection (when needed), and a road map for the remainder of each unit's instructional journey.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: Formative assessment is a process that occurs during instruction using activities that range from a performance task, to a thoughtful and thorough (though not necessarily long) shared writing session. It is this form of ongoing assessment that more precisely measures progress and is also utilized to guide instruction and help students track their own progress/set goals.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT: Summative assessments provide culminating data regarding specific content understanding and skills achievement. While they may be administered at any point in a unit of study, these assessments are typically given at the end of an instructional unit. Teachers are encouraged to use this data to note areas in need of further study/modeling as well as opportunities for re-do/re-submit.

BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT: Benchmark assessments are standards-based assessments that provide immediate feedback on students' acquisition of specific grade level standards. Benchmarks do not indicate the culminating mastery of any particular skill, rather they indicate the current progress for each student as they work towards mastery of skills.

**Note: STAR Reading will be administered in the fall, winter, and spring. Data will be analyzed and utilized for whole group lesson design and targeted small group instruction. This benchmark assessment will not be calculated in the student's academic grade.*

