



English Language Arts

Resource Guide

PART I. STRATEGIES

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NOTE: This document is a work in progress. Parts II and III, in particular, are in need of further development, and we invite the submission of additional learning experiences and local performance tasks for these sections. Inquiries regarding submission of materials should be directed to: English Language Arts Resource Guide, Room 681 EBA, New York State Education Department, Albany, NY 12234 (tel. 518-474-5922).

THE KWL STRATEGY MAP

BEFORE READING

What do I know for sure about the topic?

BEFORE AND DURING READING

What do I want to learn or need to learn about this topic?

AFTER READING

Write about one of the following:

- 1) What have I learned about this topic?**
- 2) How can I use what I learned about this topic?**
- 3) What is my reaction to what I learned?**

Adapted from *Literature: A Foundation for Curriculum and Values Education*, P.S.31X, Community School District 7, Board of Education, City of New York.

How to Gather Information on a Familiar Topic

1. Make a list of things you know how to do, or areas of knowledge you feel you know something about.
2. Discuss the list with another person or with a small group, listening to the voices as they work with the information.
3. Choose a topic from the list and make a web. Talk about the web.
4. Focus on an aspect of the web or work to expand the web if it is needed. Or start a new web if the choice was not a good one.
5. Formulate questions about the part of the web you have chosen.
6. Find some reading material about your subject. Make a web from the reading material if that will help.
7. Make notes, either by posting them under the questions you formulated or by keeping them on the same page.
8. Talk about your subject using your notes.
9. Talk about your subject without using your notes.
10. Write a letter to someone explaining your subject. Write rapidly for ten minutes.
11. Read and gather more information, taking notes again, discuss them, and then write another letter about the data.

Adapted from: Graves, Donald. *Investigate Nonfiction*. Heinemann, 1989.

Student Guidelines for Evaluating Informational Books

Content:

- What is this book about?
- Was the information presented clearly?
- Did the title mislead you? (Did you expect to discover information that wasn't there?)
- Did the content of the book give you enough information? If not, what else do you need to know? Will you need to go to other books?

Accuracy:

- Who is the author? Is the author well-qualified to write about this topic? (Check book jacket, title page, introduction, forward, other books.)
- Does the book provide up-to-date information? (Check publishing date. Are there any revised editions? Are there more recent books about the same topic?)
- Does the author let you know when he/she is stating a fact or expressing an opinion? (Look for key words such as, "As far as we know. . .," or, "I think. . .," or, "Perhaps. . .," or, "Scientists believe. . .")

Illustrations:

- Were illustrations used?
- Did the author use diagrams, photographs, maps, charts, graphs, tables?
- If so, did these help you to understand the text better? If labels or captions were used, did they help?

Style:

- Is the author's style clear and direct?
- Was the information well-organized?
- Was the information told straight to you or is it given in story form?
- Does the book make you want to learn more about your topic?

Organization:

- Did you use the TABLE OF CONTENTS or the INDEX?
- Did these help you to find information quickly?
- Did headings and sub-headings help you to "see" what was in the book?

Adapted from: Lancaster Central Schools, *Language Arts K-6 Curriculum*.

Procedures for Semantic Mapping

1. Choose a word central to the topic the class will be studying and write the word on a chalkboard, chart paper, or overhead transparency.
2. Elicit and list words related to the selected key word.
3. Have students work individually for several minutes listing other related words.
4. Have students share their prepared lists orally and add their words to the class list.
5. Have students group words into categories and suggest labels for the categories.
6. Create map showing relationships between categories.
7. Discuss the entries on the semantic map. Encourage students to become aware of the new words, gather new meanings from old words, and determine relationships among the new and old words.
8. After reading, have students add new words and categories to their own copies of the map.
9. Have students summarize information using the semantic map as a guide.
10. Encourage students to ask questions for further research.

Semantic Map (An Illustrative Example)

Construction

handbooks
master carpenters
embellished

Examples

Wentworth-Gardner, NH
Mount Vernon, VA
Red Lion Inn, VA
Governor's Palace, VA

Uses

mansions
churches
civic buildings

GEORGIAN ARCHITECTURE

Influences

reign of George I, II, III
late Renaissance
18th Century

Description

formal
dignified
symmetrical
rectangular
1 1/2 x 2 1/2 storeys
large, bold

Outgrowths

row houses
iron railings
columns
plantation homes

Pre-1750

steeply-pitched roofhipped roof, balustrade, roof deck
small panes, 18-24fewer, larger panes
no entrance pilasters or porticosporticos, columns
rectangular windowsarched, dormer windows

Post-1750

Materials

wood-NE
native stone-NY, PA
brick-South

Related terms

columns
pilasters
pediments
transoms
balustrades
quoins

GENRES FOR REPORT WRITING

- Bound books for the classroom library
- Picture books for younger children
- Textbooks for which each student writes a chapter
- Correspondence between two historical persons
- Journals or diaries
- Oral histories or interviews
- Scripts
- Science fiction
- How-to manuals
- Feature articles
- Field guides
- Class or individual newspapers
- Tourist brochures
- Recipe books
- Calendars
- Games and puzzles

Adapted from: Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1987.

SOME WRITING-TO-LEARN ACTIVITIES

Writing into content:

- K-W-L Write: Students write what they know, want to know, then what they've learned
- Facts, Values Lists: Students write facts in left column, opinions about each one in right column
- First Thoughts: Students write what they already know about a new topic at beginning of unit
- Clusterings: Students put key concept in a circle, then cluster free associations around the circle

Writing through content:

- Problems, Questions: Students write own discussion, study, or exam questions
- Stop-N-Write: Students pause during lesson to write reflections or questions
- Observation Reports: Students record data from science experiments, growth processes, interviews, other events
- Dialectics: Students divide page in half, use left side for notetaking, right side for reactions and questions

Writing beyond content

- Sum-up Write: Students summarize learning, pose remaining questions
- Dialogues: Students write ideas from opposing individuals or points of view

Collaborative writing: Students draft together brief reports, summaries, or responses

- Faction: Students create fiction from facts

Source: Zemelman, Steven and Harvey Daniels. Workshop handout, Illinois Writing Project.

Using a Story Map

Story Maps graphically organize and integrate the concepts and events of a story. Keep in mind the following hints when students complete story maps:

- There is no one right way to map a story. The description of actions and events may vary depending upon individual interpretation.
- Story map labels do not need to be learned by students. More importantly they should be recognized and modeled as an “outline for application” to extract information that is important to the story.
- The term “ending” may have more meaning than “resolution.”
- Actions/events are not always stated. They may need to be inferred from the text or pictures.
- Story mapping strategies can be combined with the skill of predicting. By first establishing a story’s characters, setting, problem and goal, students then can predict what they think will happen next.
- Using story mapping strategies to:
 - aid in organizing story information for understanding
 - promote discussion of the selection
 - allow for shared interpretation of the story and expansion of story information.

The following questions can be used to guide students’ thinking about the selection. The questions focus on the story structure and can be directly related to the specific parts of a story map.

QUESTIONS FOR USE WITH STORY MAPS

A. Causal Inference Schema (What Happened)

1. Most Important Elements:

- When did the story begin? (Setting: Time)
- Where did the story begin? (Setting: Place)
- Who was the story about? (Characters)
- How did the story begin? (Plot: Initiating Event)
- What event started the story action? (Initiating Event)
- How did the story end? (Plot: Resolution)
- What was the final consequence of the story? (Resolution)

2. Supporting Details:

- What did _____ try to do about _____?
(Attempts)
- What happened when _____ did _____?
(Outcomes)

B. Social Inference Schema (Why It Happened)

1. What Important Elements

- What did _____ want? (Goal)
- What did _____ want to accomplish in the story?
(Goal)

2. Supporting Details

- Why did _____ do _____? (Internal Response)
- What did _____ think/feel to cause ?
(Internal Response)
- What did _____ want to do then? (Internal Response)
- What did _____ feel in the end? (Reaction)

3. Character Disposition

- What was _____ like? (Character Traits)
- What did _____ do or say to show what he/she was like? (Character Traits and Behavioral Consequences)

C. Going Beyond the Story Text

- What was the moral of the story? (Implications of Story Text)
- What was the message the author was trying to tell the reader? (Author's Purpose)
- Do you agree or disagree with the author's message? Why or why not? (Reader's Reaction)
- Was the story true to life? Why or why not? (Reader's Reaction)
- How does this story relate to your own experiences? (Reader's Prior Knowledge)

Adapted from: McConaughy, S. "Developmental Changes In Story Comprehension and Levels of Questioning." *Language Arts*, 19: 580-589. Cited in *Literature: A Foundation for Curriculum and Values Education*, P.S.31X, Community School District 7, Board of Education, City of New York.

Questions for Guiding Journal Responses and Discussion

Questions to Use Near the Beginning of the Book

- How does the author get you interested in the beginning chapters of the book?
- How does the author introduce you to the setting; i.e., time and place?
- How does the author introduce you to the characters? What have you found out about the characters so far?
- Do you already know what the main problem is? Tell what it is.
- What does the author use to get the story started? What do you think will happen now?

Questions to Use Near the Middle of the Book

- Was your prediction on target? Explain why or why not.
- What are the most important events that have happened in the story so far?
- How do you think the author will resolve the problem? How will the author end the story?
- What words would you use to describe the main character? How do you learn about him or her? Is it through his or her actions, conversations or does the author tell you? Give examples from the story.
- Have any of the characters changed so far since the beginning of the book? In what ways? What changed them? Did the change seem believable?
- Think about the characters in the story. Do they remind you of other characters you have met in other stories? Who is it? Why is this character necessary?
- Can you see yourself in the character? In what way?
- If you could talk to one of the characters, what would you tell him or her?

Questions to Use at the End of the Book

- Did the story end the way you expected it? Tell why or why not.

- Think of a different ending to the story. How would the rest of the story have to be changed to fit the new ending?
- Did this story remind you of any other story you have read or watched? What do you think is the central idea or theme of the story?
- Why do you think the author wrote the book? What does he want you to think about?
- What were the author's strong points? What were the author's weaknesses? If you could say something to the author, what would you say?
- Did you have any strong feelings as you read the story? What were they? Why did you feel that way?
- How can you relate what has happened to the character to your own life?
- What do you think will happen to the character in the future? What will he or she grow up to be?
- Why would you or wouldn't you want the main character as your best friend?
- What book would you recommend the character read? Why?
- Choose a main character from two books you've read and have them meet. What might they like to do or talk about together?
- Compare this book to other books you have read by this author. Compare the style. What similarities run through the books?
- How is the language of this book similar to or different from other stories recently read?

Adapted from: *Language Arts K-6 Curriculum*, Lancaster Central Schools.

ADVICE ON WRITING FOR LITERARY EXPRESSION

- Always use fresh, unexpected word choices
- Avoid syrupy language
- Find startling images that your reader's mind will react to
- Chisel away unnecessary words
- Use vivid, concrete, sensory details
- Offer powerful, meaningful associations to your reader
- Try to discover the music of each line
- Honor your thoughts with your best effort

Source: Denman, Gregory. *When You've Made It Your Own*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1988.

Reader Response Model

RATIONALE

One major goal of a literature curriculum is to develop independent critical readers. By building on the initial knowledge readers have of how to understand stories, teachers can formalize and make conscious for students a process of literary response and analysis. The process described below is based on two assumptions:

1. Writing is a tool for thinking about literature. It makes concrete the reader's thinking about the text and his/her way(s) of understanding it.
2. Sharing in groups allows students to test and amplify early understanding(s) of the text.

The following procedures are intended to foster engagement with the text, response to the text, analysis of the text, and assimilation of the text.

PROCEDURES

1. Assign students a writing task that will focus attention on an aspect of the text that may be interesting, problematic, and/or significant. Some activities which might be used for this purpose are:
 - free writing or an impromptu speech about a similar experience
 - fictional writing similar in some way to the text to be read. (For example, the students might write a short piece in the first person plural point of view before reading Ayn Rand's short novel, *Anthem*.)
 - jotting a list of words freely associated with the title or theme
 - writing and comparing definitions of history before reading a work of historical fiction
 - small group discussion and recording of existing knowledge of the author or setting of the text
 - writing or orally presenting predictions or speculations of a possible future event suggested by a brief excerpt from the text.
2. Invite students to read to an appropriate point in the text and record personal responses (feelings, ideas, experiences, and questions spurred by the reading).
3. Direct students to consider their initial written response and generate a list of significant questions that are likely to lead to interpretation of the text as a whole.

4. Ask students to share their questions in discussion groups.
5. Provide a teacher-directed activity or problem solving task that demonstrates a critical model appropriate to the text (e.g., a formalist, cultural-historical, psychological, or archetypal approach).
6. Direct students to do a close rereading of the text and identify textual evidence that may support the application of the chosen critical model.
7. Have students apply the critical model in answering the questions identified in Step 3.
8. Ask students to share their solutions to the significant questions with the whole class, defending their solutions with evidence from the text and responding to questions from the group.
9. Ask students to demonstrate an understanding of the work through a resymbolizing activity that challenges students to do, for example, one of the following:
 - demonstrate understanding of the work as a whole through a valid interpretation, using at least one identifiable critical perspective in the interpretation
 - supply imagined dialogue between two characters in a scene
 - add another episode in a story sequence
 - insert a scene that was only alluded to in the original text
 - rewrite a segment from the viewpoint of another character
 - add an epilogue
 - rewrite the conclusion to include a dream scene.

EVALUATION

Students have:

- revealed understanding of the work as a whole through interpretation
- drawn support from specific aspects of the work in the interpretation
- demonstrated the use of at least one identifiable critical method in the interpretation.

Adapted from: *Reading and Literature in the English Language Arts Curriculum K-12*, The New York State Education Department, 1992.

PROBING QUESTIONS

Probing questions require the student to go beyond an initial response. The teacher, keying on the student's first answer, probes the initial response using one or more of the following techniques:

TYPES OF PROBES

1. **Clarification:** Seeking a clearer or more complete answer
 - "What do you mean by that?" (explain)
 - "Can you say it another way?" (rephrase)
 - "Can you tell me more?" (elaborate)
 - "What does that term mean?" (define)

2. **Critical Thinking:** Justifying the response
 - "What are you assuming?"
 - "Why do you think that is so?"
 - "What reasons can you give?"
 - "Is that all there is to it?"
 - "Are we trying to answer more than one question here?"
 - "Is there another point of view?"

3. **Refocus:** Tying responses to related issues
 - "If that's true, then how would it affect. . . ?"
 - "How does John's answer relate to. . . ?"
 - "Can you relate this to. . . ?"
 - "Let's study (analyze) that answer."

4. **Prompt:** Providing hints, clues or a series of leads after a pupil says, "I don't know."
 - "Did you notice anything about. . ."
 - "What about. . . ?"
 - "What might that mean?"
 - "What do we already know?"

5. **Redirect:** Technically not a probing question, but serves to bring together responses from other students and change the interaction pattern.
 - "Megan, do you agree with Jose's answer?"
 - "What can you add to Angela's response, Lisa?"
 - "Has Phil left anything out?"
 - "How else can we say that, Carlos?"
 - "What problem does Dan's answer bring up, Heather?"

Adapted from: *Questioning Skills*, Teacher manual, General Learning Corp., 1969.

Questions to Prompt Evaluation of Student's Own Work

- Tell me about your piece of writing.
- What part do you like the best? Why?
- Do you have enough information?
- Do you have too much information?
- Why did you choose this subject to write about?
- Do you have more than one story?
- What did you learn from this piece of writing?
- What do you intend to do with the next draft?
- What surprised you in the draft?
- How does this draft sound when you read it out loud?
- Why is this important to you?
- How does this piece compare to other pieces you have written? Why?
- What kinds of changes have you made from your last draft?
- What do you think you can do to make this piece better?
- What problems did you have or are you having?
- What is the most important thing you are trying to say?
- What works so well you'd like to try to develop it further?
- How do you feel about your story?
- Are you happy with your beginning and ending?
- Explain how your title fits your story.
- What do you need help on?
- Where is this piece of writing taking you?
- Did you tell about something or did you show us by using examples?
- Can you think of a different way to say this?
- Does the beginning of your piece grab the reader's attention?

Source: Mary Ellen Giacobbe.

THE DIALOGUE JOURNAL

Description: Ann Berthoff, a teacher at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, suggests this procedure for encouraging students to develop habits of reflection and to think critically about their responses to the natural world, their reading, their own ideas and the ideas of others, and “to record that inner dialogue which is thought.” Although Berthoff uses this technique with her college students, she also suggests: “It is a way of writing which can start in kindergarten with the teacher as scribe and continue through graduate school into the professions and the workplace.”

Procedure:

1. On one side of an open notebook, ask students to record notes from class, copy texts from their reading, or record their observations of an experience.
2. On the facing page, ask students to reflect on those responses, “taking notes on their notes, commenting on their comments, and interpreting their interpretations.”
3. Use student responses as “seeds” for later writing, to identify a focus for group discussion about their reading, or to prompt discussion about individual ways of working.

Adapted from: Berthoff, Ann E. *Forming, Thinking, Writing: The Composing Imagination*. Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Book Company, 1978.

DESCRIPTION: This Language Arts Self-Assessment was created by teacher Joseph Quattrini to highlight the *Learning Standards for English Language Arts* for his students. Students were given copies of the commencement-level *Standards* and the profile chart on the next page, asked to evaluate their abilities as language users in light of the standards, and directed to frame new language goals based on that evaluation. The following directions were given to the students to guide their work:

Language Arts Self-Assessment

Complete a language arts self-assessment by using the attached materials, your folder of last year's work, and your recollections of earlier activities in language arts. After reading the instructions and criteria, consider your habitual performance as a language user for each standard, and select a rating that best describes that level of performance. Rate yourself on all twelve standards.

For each rating, write a paragraph or two that explains how you decided on a 1, 2, 3, or 4 for that standard. Include one or more examples of your works or activities that illustrate your typical performance.

Last, set some (3-5) specific language goals for yourself this year:

- Relate each goal to one of standards
- Suggest some activities to help you reach that goal
- Suggest some means of assessing your progress toward each goal.

Source: Joseph Quattrini, Canajoharie Central School District.

STUDENT LANGUAGE PROFILE

Student _____

	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	Outstanding
Listening/Speaking for:				
Literary Response and Expression	1	2	3	4
Social Interaction	1	2	3	4
Information & Understanding	1	2	3	4
Critical Analysis & Evaluation	1	2	3	4
Reading for:				
Literary Response and Expression	1	2	3	4
Social Interaction	1	2	3	4
Information & Understanding	1	2	3	4
Critical Analysis & Evaluation	1	2	3	4
Writing for:				
Literary Response and Expression	1	2	3	4
Social Interaction	1	2	3	4
Information & Understanding	1	2	3	4
Critical Analysis & Evaluation	1	2	3	4

DESCRIPTION: At a conference at the State University of New York at Albany, Dr. Lee Odell suggested the following questions for students to use in probing their thinking during literature discussions. The questions are intended to focus students' attention on areas of agreement and disagreement among the views presented.

Protocol for Student Discussion

Recognizing Consonance

1. What areas of agreement do you find between your thinking and the ideas expressed?
2. What areas of agreement do you find between the ideas of this speaker (or writer) and other members of the discussion group?
3. What areas of agreement do you find between the ideas expressed here and other things you have heard or read?

Acknowledging Dissonance

1. What areas of dissonance do you find between your thinking and the ideas expressed? Where do you disagree? What aspects had you not considered before?
2. What internal dissonance do you find in the thinking presented here?
3. What areas of dissonance do you find between the ideas of this presentation and the thinking of the other members of the group? What disagreements? What differences in focus?

Adapted from: Odell, Lee. Conference presentation.

Resources for Obtaining Pen Pals

The following organizations link students for letter writing. Most charge a modest fee for their services.

World Pen Pals
P.O. Box 337
Saugerties, NY 12477
Tel. (914) 246-7828

Student Letter Exchange
630 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Gifted Children's Pen Pals International
c/o Dr. van de Vender
166 East 61st Street
New York, NY 10021-8509

Friends Forever Pen Pals
P.O. Box 20103
Park West Station
New York, NY 10025

American Greetings to the World
P.O. Box 20118
Minneapolis, MN 55420-0118

Kids Meeting Kids Can
Make a Difference
380 Riverside Drive, Box 8H
New York, NY 10025

Friends Around the World
P.O. Box 10266
Merriville, IN 46411-0266

**Language for Information and Understanding
Language for Literary Response and Expression
Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation
Language for Social Interaction**

Suggestions for Helping Children Learn Language Conventions

“Every act of putting marks on the page is an act of convention.”

-Frank Smith

- Talk about how the use of conventions can help both the writer and the reader understand what the writer is trying to say
- Celebrate the conventions children already use in their writing and help them to keep a cumulative list as they learn new conventions
- Teach brief, specific lessons in response to patterns observed in student work
- Model your use of conventions and talk about how they function in your own writing
- Offer mini-lessons in which children predict where conventions need to be placed in a text
- Encourage children to notice conventions in their reading and to talk about how they clarify the writer’s meaning
- Display correct uses of a specific convention and ask children to formulate a rule for correct usage
- Interview children frequently to discover if they have used any new conventions
- Underline specific conventions in a text, then ask children to find the same conventions in their own writing
- Ask individual children to conduct mini-lessons on conventions they know.

Adapted from: Graves, Donald. *A Fresh Look at Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994.

**ELA
Standard**

Language for Information and Understanding

1

Learning Strategy

ELEMENTARY

Language for Information and Understanding

**ELA
Standard**

1

Learning Strategy

ELEMENTARY

**ELA
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Language for Information and Understanding

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Learning Strategy

ELEMENTARY