



Language Arts Benchmarks

6

Dear Parents,

This document was produced in an effort to give you a preview of the skills and concepts introduced at this grade level. Teachers seek an active partnership with parents. Please make opportunities to reinforce the skills developed in grade six in your home. Each teacher combines individual creativity with a school philosophy of education to teach students. Different strategies will be used to approach the instruction of these skills and concepts. These benchmarks represent the skills and strategies sixth graders must know and be able to do independently by the end of the year. We invite you to meet with your child's teacher so that you will understand how you can reinforce what is taught in your child's classroom.

Reading & Responding:

In the area of reading, your sixth grade students will be able to:

- q Determine the meaning of words using prefixes (e.g., en, equi, extra, macro, magni) and suffixes (e.g., fication, fy, ism, ize, ization)
- q Infer word meanings through knowledge of word relationships. (e.g., analogies: tool to used, action to object, cause to effect, object to characteristics)
- q Use analogies and metaphors to infer meaning of phrases in literary texts.
- q Identify the denotation (the explicit meaning) and connotation (a suggested meaning) of new words.

- q **Identify and use synonyms, antonyms, homophones, and homographs in context to determine word meanings and write sentences.**
- q Read at least 10 pieces of literature appropriate for their independent reading level and read for a variety of purposes. (e.g., literary experience, to gain information, to perform a task for enjoyment)
- q **Read independently in class for a minimum of 75 minutes weekly between LA I and II classes.**
- q Read prose, poems, or dramatic dialogues aloud with fluency, using clear diction, tempo, volume and phrasing.
- q Identify similar themes expressed in multiple literary works.
- q Identify story elements (e.g., plot, character, climax) and analyze how they lead to the resolution of the conflict.
- q Use a visual representation to summarize the text using knowledge of story elements. (e.g., diorama, graphic organizers)
- q Summarize text in a manner that reflects the main ideas, significant details, and underlying meaning.
- q Connect information and concepts to prior knowledge.
- q Identify main ideas and explore their relationship to other sources, related topics, or prior experiences.
- q Identify use of the text structure (e.g., to gain information on a selected topic, complete a process)
- q Identify an author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective in a text (e.g., author's purpose)
- q **Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about the text and support them with textual evidence and experience.**
- q Generate literal, inferential, interpretative, and evaluative questions before, during, and after reading.
- q Utilize a variety of focusing, monitoring, and assessing strategies during reading. (e.g., rereading, adjusting reading rate)
- q Predicts outcomes and actions in text based on contextual clues and prior knowledge and evaluate the accuracy of the prediction.
- q Identify characterization through thoughts, words, speech patterns, and deeds.
- q Identify effects of literary elements (e.g., simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, symbolism, imagery, hyperbole)
- q Identify a universal theme (e.g., good and evil) and provide textual support.
- q Write a summary and check its accuracy.
- q Compare and contrast information from two or more articles that address the same topic.
- q Identify the purpose of text.

Producing Texts (e.g., Writing):

In the area of writing, your sixth grade students will be able to:

- q Write independently for an extended period of time to produce first drafts and final products.
- q Write independently to produce texts in a variety of forms yearly. (e.g., expository, narrative, letter writing, response to literature, persuasive)
- q Write formally and/or informally in class for a minimum of 75 minutes weekly between LA I and II.
- q Determine the purpose of writing and select a form, point of view, and style (formal vs. informal) that is appropriate for the purpose and audience.
- q Write a multi-paragraph draft/composition using transitional words among sentences and descriptions to present a clear message or theme.
- q Use parallel structures (e.g., the same verb tense, word choice and/or phrases) to reinforce main ideas and coherence within a sentence and/or paragraph.
- q Use precise language with colorful modifiers and action verbs.
- q Recognize the active voice rather than passive voice.
- q Support all statements and claims with relevant anecdotes, descriptions, facts, statistics, and/or specific information from personal experience and/or text.
- q Write to express personal ideas in a variety of ways (e.g., plays, biographies, short stories, autobiographies, and other writings) about an event, situation, or story. Use well-chosen details, reveal the writer's attitude about the subject, and begin to use rhetorical elements such as figurative language and description. (e.g., write a journal entry that relates a clear coherent event revealing the writer's attitude about the event and including some rhetorical element.) **(Primarily LA I)**
- q Write letters that address audience needs, stated purpose, context, adheres to stated purposes, and follows the conventional style for the type (e.g., letter) using appropriate technical terms. **(Primarily LA II)**
- q *Informational texts:* Write essays of comparison/contrast and problem/solution for an intended audience and purpose that state the purpose of the paper, and begins to develop a thesis, follows an organizational pattern or form, and offer accurate evidence in the form of facts and details **(Primarily LA II)**
- q Write pieces and/or reports for an intended audience and purpose that convey a clear and accurate perspective on the subject,

support the main ideas with facts, details, examples, and explanations, and pose relevant questions about the topic.

- q *Persuasive texts*: Write to persuade an audience by selecting an appropriate form that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment, support arguments with detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning. **(Primarily LA II)**
- q Identify topics to address and/or develop multiple research questions.
- q Address and/or develop questions for research.
- q Read and use in writing the organizational features of printed texts such as citations, bibliographic references, and appendices to locate relevant information and to take notes.
- q Use electronic information and computerized library catalogs (when available) to research and take notes on information for specific purposes.
- q Create a bibliography using consistent and sanctioned format and methodology for citations.
- q Give credit for both quoted and paraphrased information in the body of the piece using consistent and format methodology for citations.
- q Use a variety of prewriting techniques to generate and record ideas (e.g., brainstorming, outlining, constructing graphic organizers, keeping notes on ideas.)
- q Provide an oral or written explanation of decisions about organizational patterns (e.g., form, purpose, audience, and topic) and sentence structure. (Peer, group, and/or teacher conferencing)
- q Self-edit and revise writing using Standard English conventions of language and appropriate print and non-print resources (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, spell-check software).
- q Publish at least two pieces of text in different forms throughout the year. (One piece from LA I and II)
- q Improve the logic of ideas, word choice, and transitions among paragraphs and passages by revising writing based on given or self-generated criteria. (rubric) (e.g., when writing for personal experience, develop a clear beginning, middle, and ending, write with an identifiable voice, and use similes and metaphors.)
- q Prepare writing for publication (e.g., final draft) using consistent format and principles of design (e.g., headings, margins, spacing, columns, page orientation) using electronic resources (when available) to enhance final product.
- q Print and/or write in cursive neatly and legibly.

Applying Standard English:

In the area of oral and written communication your sixth grade student will be able to:

- q Identify the part of speech of any word in any sentence: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.
- q Maintain noun-pronoun and subject-verb agreement (including when there is a phrase between the subject and verb) in writing. (CMT)
- q Use regular and irregular noun plurals with correct spelling and verb agreement. (CMT)
- q Use comparative and superlative adjectives to make writing more precise. (CMT)
- q Identify and use the past perfect tense of verbs appropriately in sentences. (CMT)
- q Distinguish among simple sentences (one independent clauses), and complex compound sentences. (one independent clause and one dependent clause)
- q Determine the most effectively expressed revision of a group of sentences in need of combining. (CMT)
- q Put a comma after an introductory dependent clause or phrase, including introductory participial phrases. (CMT)
- q Capitalize titles of respect, (e.g., military, religious, governmental) when followed by the person's name. (e.g., General Lee, Reverend King, Senator Humphrey)
- q Identify suffixes that make words adjectives (e.g., ful, ish, ous, ic), nouns (e.g., ship, ment, tion, hood), and verbs (e.g., ize, fy) and spell the words correctly.
- q Use a hyphen in spelling compound hyphenated words. (e.g., grown-up)
- q Spell a wide range of grade-level words, including commonly misspelled words, in his or her writing.
- q Spell words related to concepts being learned in other subject fields.
- q Use specific nouns and verbs in writing. (e.g., generality vs. specificity)
- q Revise for redundancy.
- q Identify words and expressions that have been absorbed into American culture from a variety of foreign languages.
- q Identify words and expressions in fiction selections and poetry that are not currently used in everyday language.
- q Identify the origins of a variety of English words.
- q Apply listening skills in large and small group settings, using note taking to assist listening when appropriate.

- q Apply listening skills in large and small group settings, constructing appropriate questions and response to the speaker's message.
- q Speak and respond clearly in various roles (e.g., leader, recorder, time keeper) in discussion groups.
- q Select and use verbal and non-verbal techniques to enhance communication to solve problems.
- q Use correct grammar when speaking in formal situations.
- q Gather and convey information from listening to support an idea.
- q Present a short dramatic presentation and/or reading.
- q Make inferences based on tone of voice.
- q Explain how the effects of repetition contribute to meaning.
- q Identify memory techniques that can be used for learning specific tasks.
- q Create visual aide, using technology (when available) to support presentations.
- q Support a position and acknowledge opposing views.
- q Speak in a variety of situations choosing an organizational pattern appropriate to the audience and purpose.
- q Generate with teacher criteria to evaluate oral presentations and discussions.

Exploring & Responding to Literature:

In the area of literature, your sixth grade students will be able to:

- q Identify and analyze characteristics of literature such as character, plot, setting, and literary devices from diverse cultures and authors. (e.g., similes, metaphor, figurative language, personification, hyperbole, oxymoron)
- q Identify characteristics of poetry from diverse cultures and authors. (e.g., rhyme, scheme, couplets, stanza) **(Primarily LA I)**
- q Define a novel as a long fictional and/or nonfiction narrative with a complex plot and multiple themes and characters in which the main character usually develops through a series of experiences.
- q Define a short story as a short piece of fiction written to produce a single effect.
- q Identify the mood(s) of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections (the overall kind of feeling that the reader gets) and explain how the mood contributes the overall effect of the selections.
- q Define dialect and identify the use of dialect in fiction, nonfiction, and poetic selections.
- q Identify the refrain in poems.
- q Define myth as a traditional story that explains the natural world or the customs of a people, usually based on the lives and feats of gods, goddesses, and heroes.
- q Identify and analyze the characteristics of a variety of nonfiction texts (e.g., biography, historical writing, journalistic writing, magazines, newspapers). **(Primarily LA II)**
- q Analyze the culture and ethnicity of literary texts.
- q Compare and contrast the motivations and reactions of characters and individuals including authors from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- q Compare and contrast the representations of other cultures in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama selections. (e.g. customs, themes, characters', people and author's experiences)
- q Explain the literal meaning of a text and give reasons to support one's explanation.
- q Identify the author's view of human experience and character.
- q Judge the overall merit and aesthetic attributes of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections, based on standards supplied by the teacher or discussed in a group (e.g., based on the effectiveness of the plot, characterization, theme, organization, point of view, author's writing style).
- q Evaluate the effectiveness of the point of view (i.e., first person, second person, third person) in which given selections are written.

- q Analyze elements of classic novels
- q Analyze elements of contemporary novels representing a variety of cultures.
- q Analyze elements of classic and contemporary short stories representing a variety of cultures.
- q Analyze elements of classic and contemporary poetry representing a variety of cultures.
- q Read, analyze, and respond to a variety of nonfiction selections (e.g., textbooks, magazines and newspaper articles, technical writing, biographies).
- q Describe the writing styles used by authors of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections (e.g., descriptive, colorful language; long complex sentences; use of first person) and discuss what the style contributes to the overall effect of the selections.
- q Analyze the contribution of figurative language to fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections.
- q Discuss the impact of the historical period, culture, and personal experiences of various authors on the fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, and/or plays they wrote.
- q Analyze persuasive techniques used in fiction and nonfiction selections.