

6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Language Arts  
Teaching Tutorials

# 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Teaching Tutorials

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# OPTIMAL LEARNING MODEL ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Below is a teaching and learning model that can serve as a reminder of how to plan lessons and units that will move students from dependent learners to independent learners.

<b>DEPENDENT LEARNER</b>		<b>INDEPENDENT LEARNER</b>		
<b>To Learners</b>	<b>With Learners</b>		<b>By Learners</b>	
<b>Demonstration</b>	<b>Shared Demonstration</b>	<b>Hand Over of Responsibility</b>	<b>Guided Practice</b>	<b>Independent Practice</b>
<b>TEACHER</b>	<b>TEACHER</b>		<b>STUDENT</b>	<b>STUDENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiates</li> <li>• Models</li> <li>• Explains</li> <li>• Thinks aloud</li> <li>• Shows how to “do it”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates</li> <li>• Leads</li> <li>• Negotiates</li> <li>• Suggests</li> <li>• Supports</li> <li>• Explains</li> <li>• Responds</li> <li>• Acknowledges</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies learning</li> <li>• Takes charge</li> <li>• Practices</li> <li>• Problem solves</li> <li>• Approximates</li> <li>• Self-corrects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiates</li> <li>• Self-monitors</li> <li>• Self-directs</li> <li>• Applies learning</li> <li>• Problem solves</li> <li>• Confirms</li> <li>• Self-evaluates</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENT</b>	<b>STUDENT</b>		<b>TEACHER</b>	<b>TEACHER</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens</li> <li>• Observes</li> <li>• May participate on a limited basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens</li> <li>• Interacts</li> <li>• Collaborates</li> <li>• Responds</li> <li>• Approximates</li> <li>• Participates as best he can</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scaffolds</li> <li>• Validates</li> <li>• Teaches as necessary</li> <li>• Evaluates</li> <li>• Observes</li> <li>• Encourages</li> <li>• Clarifies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affirms</li> <li>• Assists as needed</li> <li>• Responds</li> <li>• Acknowledges</li> <li>• Evaluates</li> <li>• Sets goals</li> </ul>
<b>INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT</b>		<b>INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading and writing aloud</li> <li>• Shared read aloud</li> <li>• Direct explanation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared reading and writing</li> <li>• Interactive reading</li> <li>• Shared read aloud</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided (silent) reading</li> <li>• Reciprocal teaching</li> <li>• Literature</li> <li>• Conversations</li> <li>• Partner reading</li> <li>• Guided writing experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent reading and writing</li> <li>• Informal conferences</li> <li>• Partner reading</li> <li>• Homework and assignments</li> </ul>

*Adapted from “Reading Essentials” by Regie Routman (Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH); @2003*

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## *Components of Balanced Literacy*

Reading	Writing	Word Study
<p><b><u>Read Aloud</u></b> Teacher fluently reads aloud to the class. May include discussion of the text.</p> <p><b><u>Shared Reading</u></b> Teacher and students read text together.</p> <p><b><u>Independent Reading</u></b> Readers choose books of interest at their independent reading level and read independently.</p> <p><b><u>Guided Reading</u></b> A small group of students reads a text at their instructional level while the teacher supports and evaluates.</p> <p><b><u>Partner Reading</u></b> Students take turns reading the same text.</p> <p><b><u>Literature Circles</u></b> A small group of students reads and discusses a common text.</p>	<p><b><u>Shared Writing</u></b> Teacher and students compose text together. The teacher writes while gathering students' ideas.</p> <p><b><u>Interactive Writing</u></b> A form of shared writing in which students write letters and words they know and the teacher writes the rest.</p> <p><b><u>Guided Writing</u></b> Small groups of students write while the teacher guides the process.</p> <p><b><u>Independent Writing</u></b> Students write independently on self-selected topics.</p>	<p><b><u>Phonemic &amp; Phonological Awareness</u></b> Awareness of the fact that sounds make up spoken words</p> <p><b><u>Phonics</u></b> Matching sounds with letters</p> <p><b><u>Spelling</u></b> The ability to recognize the correct sequence of letters in words</p> <p><b><u>Vocabulary</u></b> Acquisition of words and their meanings</p> <p><b><u>Grammar &amp; Word Structure</u></b> The study of how words and their component parts form sentences</p>

Components of the Reader's Workshop in Grade 6				
MINI-LESSON 10-15 minutes	READING TIME 25-30 minutes			SHARING TIME 5-10 minutes
	Independent Reading			
<p>The teacher delivers instruction on comprehension strategies and reading skills in a whole group setting. Concepts are taught within the context of authentic <i>grade-level</i> literature and are drawn from the needs of the students as well as from the Language Arts Frameworks. Mini-lessons generally fall into one of the following categories: workshop management, reading strategies and skills, literary elements and literary techniques, and comprehension strategies. The teacher models reading and the students engage in shared and interactive reading.</p>	<p>Students read a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts of their choice at their <i>independent reading level</i> (a "<i>just right</i>" text) during an uninterrupted block of time every day. As they read, students utilize the skills and strategies they have acquired during instruction. Students usually read alone but may also read in partners. During this time, students will also occasionally be engaged in one of the activities below.</p>			<p>Students gather together to share and reflect upon what they learned during the reader's workshop, collaboratively problem solve areas of concern and celebrate successes in a whole group setting.</p>
	<p><b>Individual Reading Conferences</b></p>	<p><b>Guided Reading</b></p>	<p><b>Literature Circles</b></p>	
	<p>Individual students meet with the teacher on a regular basis – at least once every two weeks, but more often with struggling readers. The teacher confers with each student for 3-5 minutes to provide individualized instruction and gather data. As the teacher listens to each student read a "<i>just right</i>" text, s/he assesses and monitors progress, evaluates fluency, and nudges the student to the next level of understanding. The teacher records strengths/weaknesses, and provides a written teaching point for the student to work on during independent reading time. Independent reading time drives instruction and fosters the development of students as readers.</p>	<p>Students work with the teacher in a small group comprised of 3-7 students with similar needs. The teacher chooses a leveled text at the students' <i>instructional level</i> and guides them through it while addressing a particular strategy or skill. Areas of emphasis are derived from the students' current reading needs and from the Language Arts Frameworks. Guided reading groups are flexible and membership changes based on student needs.</p>	<p>Literature circles are small discussion groups whose members have chosen to read the same text within the same time frame. Students determine the group's reading schedule, make notes about their thinking as they read, and hold periodic group discussions as they make their way through the book. Upon completion of the book, students may share highlights with the class and then move into a new cycle of literature circles.</p>	
<p><i>Whole Group</i></p>	<p><i>Individual</i></p>	<p><i>Small Group</i></p>	<p><i>Small Group</i></p>	<p><i>Whole Group</i></p>

## Overview of Comprehension Strategies

<b>MAKING CONNECTIONS</b>	<b>Good readers make connections to their prior knowledge before, during and after reading to enhance their understanding of what they're reading. (Text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world)</b>
	<i>Possible questions to ask your students: Is there a part of this text that reminds you of something in your own life, something you have read in another text, or something that has happened in the world?</i>
<b>QUESTIONING</b>	<b>Good readers generate questions before, during and after reading to clarify meaning, make predictions and focus their attention on what is important.</b>
	<i>Possible questions to ask your students: Can you show me a part of the text where you have a question? What were you wondering about as you read this part?</i>
<b>VISUALIZING</b>	<b>Good readers create a wide range of visual, auditory and other sensory images as they read, and they become emotionally involved with what they read.</b>
	<i>Possible questions to ask your student: Were there places in the text where you made a picture in your mind? What images or pictures did you see? What specific word helped you create that picture in your mind?</i>
<b>INFERRING</b>	<b>Good readers use their prior knowledge and information from what they read to make predictions, seek answers to questions, draw conclusions and create interpretations that deepen their understanding of the text.</b>
	<i>Possible questions to ask your students: What do you predict will happen in this piece? Can you show me a place in the text where you found yourself making an inference? What do you think were the big ideas in the story?</i>
<b>DETERMINING IMPORTANCE IN TEXT</b>	<b>Good readers identify key ideas or themes as they read, and they can distinguish between important and unimportant information.</b>
	<i>Possible questions to ask your students: What is this story or piece mostly about? Can you tell me about some of the important ideas that struck you? Did you notice any important themes? What do you think is most important to remember about this story or topic?</i>
<b>SYNTHESIZING INFORMATION</b>	<b>Good readers track their thinking as it evolves during reading, in order to get the overall meaning of what they have read.</b>
	<i>Possible questions to ask your students: Can you tell me what the piece is about in just a few sentences? Can you show me a place in the piece where your thinking changed? Do you have some new ideas or information?</i>
<b>USING "FIX-UP" STRATEGIES</b>	<b>Good readers are aware of when they understand and when they don't. If they have trouble understanding specific words, phrases or longer passages, they use a wide range of problem-solving strategies including skipping ahead, rereading, asking questions, using a dictionary and reading the passage aloud.</b>

## Components of Word Study in Grade 6

“The purpose of word study...is to examine words in order to reveal consistencies within our written language system and to help students master the recognition, spelling, and meaning of specific words.” *Donald Bear*

“Word recognition and word solving must become rapid and automatic so that children’s attention is freed to think about the more complex meaning of the texts they are reading.” *Fountas & Pinnell*

**PHONEMIC & PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS:**

*The awareness that sounds make up spoken words*

Hear, speak, identify, and manipulate individual sounds

**PHONICS:**

*Matching sounds with letters*

Sound-symbol relationship, whole words, onsets & rimes, consonant & vowel patterns, phonemes, clusters, blends, digraphs, syllables...

**SPELLING:**

*Recognizing the correct sequence of letters in words*

High-frequency words, word families, spelling patterns, phonograms, irregular words...

**VOCABULARY:**

*Acquisition of words and their meanings*

Descriptive words, antonyms, synonyms, prefixes, suffixes, multiple-meaning words, homonyms, root words, derivations, idioms, word structure...

**GRAMMAR & WORD STRUCTURE:**

*The study of how words and their component parts form sentences*

Punctuation, nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, subject-verb agreement, compound words, plurals, complete sentences, syllables, blends, contractions, homophones, verb tense, prepositions, possessives...

## Components of the Writer's Workshop in Grade 6

MINI-LESSON: 10-15 minutes	WRITING TIME: 25-30 minutes		SHARING TIME: 5-10 minutes
	<b>Independent Writing</b>		
<p>A mini-lesson in the writer's workshop is "a short, focused lesson, often at the beginning of the workshop, designed to address an issue relevant to the community of writers in the classroom." (R. Fletcher, <i>Writing Workshop</i>, p. 150.) The teacher delivers instruction on writing skills in a whole group setting. Concepts are taught within the context of authentic literature and are drawn from the needs of the students as well as the Language Arts Frameworks. The teacher models writing and the students engage in shared and interactive writing.</p>	<p>Students independently work on self-selected writing topics within a particular genre during an uninterrupted block of time. As they write, students utilize the skills and strategies they have acquired during instruction. During this time, students will also occasionally be engaged in one of the activities below.</p>		<p>Students gather together to share and reflect upon what they learned during the writer's workshop, collaboratively problem solve areas of concern and celebrate successes in a whole group setting.</p>
	<b>Individual Writing Conferences</b>	<b>Guided Writing</b>	
	<p>Individual students meet with the teacher on a regular basis, as determined by student needs. The teacher confers with each student to provide individualized instruction and gather data. After reading the student's writing, the teacher converses with the student, makes suggestions, affirms and redirects the writing based on each student's need. Independent writing time drives instruction and fosters the development of students as writers.</p>	<p>Students work with the teacher in a small group comprised of 3-7 students with similar needs. Students work on writing skills and the components of the writing process. Areas of emphasis are derived from the students' current writing needs and from the Language Arts Frameworks. Guided writing groups are flexible and membership changes based on student needs.</p>	
<i>Whole Group</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Small Group</i>	<i>Whole Group</i>



# THE 6 TRAITS OF WRITING

## IDEAS

**Stimulating Ideas:** Effective writing presents interesting and valuable information about a specific subject. It has a clear message or purpose. The ideas are thoroughly developed and hold the reader's attention.

## ORGANIZATION

**Logical Organization:** In terms of basic structure, good writing has a clearly developed beginning, middle, and ending. Within the text, each main point is developed with examples, explanations, definitions, specific details, and so on.

## WORD CHOICE

**Original Word Choice:** Simply put, good writing contains good words. Nouns and verbs are specific; modifiers are colorful; and the overall level of language helps communicate a particular message or tone.

## FLUENCY

**Smooth-Reading Sentences:** Effective writing flows smoothly and clearly from one sentence to the next. But it isn't, by any means, predictable. Sentences will vary in length, and they won't all begin in the same way. Sentence smoothness, or fluency, gives writing rhythm, which helps make it enjoyable to read.

## VOICE

**Engaging Voice:** In the best writing, you can hear the writer's voice – his or her special way of expressing ideas and emotions. Voice gives writing personality; it shows that the writer sincerely cares about his or her subject and audience.

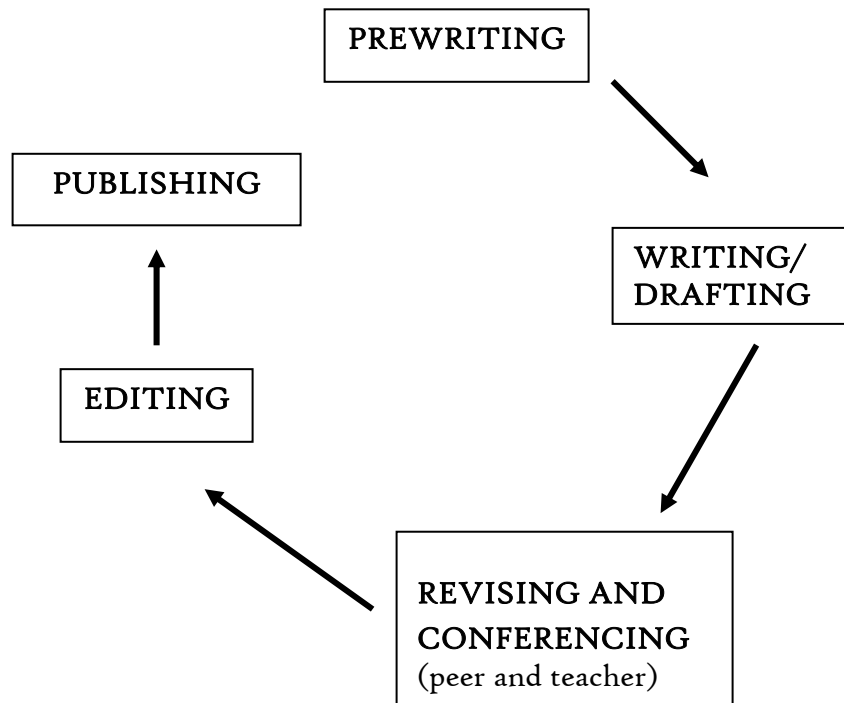
## CONVENTIONS

**Correct, Accurate Copy:** Good writing follows the basic standards of punctuation, mechanics, usage, and spelling. It is edited with care to ensure that the work is accurate and easy to follow.

*Adapted from Write Source materials.*

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# THE WRITING PROCESS



**Prewriting:** *At the start of a project, writers explore possible subjects before selecting one to develop. Then they collect details about their subjects and plan how to use these details in their writing.*

**Writing/Drafting:** *Writers then complete a first draft using their plan as a general guide. This draft is a writer's first look at an emerging writing idea. (A writer may find it necessary to write more than one early draft if his or her thoughts about the subject are still forming.)*

**Revising and Conferencing:** *After reviewing the first draft, writers change any parts that are not clear or complete. They may ask a writing peer to review the draft as well.*




**Editing:** *Writers then check their revised writing for style and accuracy before preparing a neat final copy of their work. The final copy is then proofread for errors before publication.*

**Publishing:** *This is the final step in the writing process. Publishing is to a writer what an exhibit is to an artist – an opportunity to share his or her work with others.*

## K-6 Writing Genre Definitions

**Personal:** Writing that reflects upon the writer's own experiences or expresses their ideas. This may include personal narratives, letters, journal writing, etc.

Personal writing should . . .





-  Focus on one experience or event.
-  Have a chronological sequence of events.
-  Include specific details.

Sample prompts:

- Write about your last birthday.
- Write about a (favorite) place you enjoy visiting.
- Write about something exciting that has happened to you.
- Write about your favorite things to do in school. Use words and pictures to tell about what it is you like to do and why it is your favorite.

**Subject:** Writing that shares information about a topic.

Subject writing should . . .




-  Focus on a specific informational subject.
-  Thoroughly inform readers with specific facts, examples, etc., about the subject.
-  Be presented in an organized manner.
-  Explain or define any unfamiliar terms.

Sample prompts:

- Write about a favorite trip.
- Write about a time when you were hurt. Be sure to tell what you were doing before you got hurt, when you got hurt, and what happened after you got hurt.
- Write about your favorite person. Use words and pictures to tell what this person is like and why he/she is your favorite.

**Descriptive:** Writing that uses details to help readers clearly imagine a specific person, place, thing, or idea.

Descriptive writing should . . .

-  Have sufficient sensory details.
-  Use vivid verbs and adjectives.
-  Use logical organization.




Sample prompts:

- Describe your favorite place in the world.
- Describe your dream playground.
- Describe a really fun day. What would you do?
- Write a description of yourself for someone who has never met you.

## K-6 Writing Genre Definitions (continued)

**Narrative:** Writing that tells a story or what happened. In *personal narratives*, the writer retells events that she/he has experienced. In *imaginative narratives*, the writer composes a fictional story that revolves around a particular event. In all narrative writing, elaboration of the sequence of events and/or descriptions of the people and places are crucial.

Narrative writing should . . .




-  Have a sequence of actions with a clear beginning, middle, and end.
-  Elaborate upon the events and/or descriptions of people and places involved.
-  Include colorful details.

Sample prompts:

- You find an egg. Imagine what will hatch from it. What will it look like? What will it do? How will you feel about it?
- You are the teacher of your class for one day. Write a story describing your whole school day. What rules would you ask your students to follow? What activities would you do with your class?
- Write about a time when you felt scared about something.

**Clarification:** Writing that focuses on a subject and states the writer's position on the subject. It provides information that explains *why* the writer feels that way. Clarification writing may also be referred to as persuasive or explanatory writing.

Clarification writing should . . .




-  Answer the inherent question, "Why?"
-  Contain specific reasons that support the writer's position.
-  Use logical organization.

Sample prompts:

- Think about an animal you would like to be for one day. Write about this animal and tell why you would like to be this animal for a day. Tell what you would do during the day as this animal and why.
- You are going on a trip to the moon. Think about three things you would like to take with you and tell why you would like to take these three things.
- A dress code is being considered for our school. It would require all students to wear uniforms. Write whether you think this is a good policy or not. Support your answer.

**Problem/Solution:** Writing that describes a problem solution and offers suggestions and/or a plan of action to solve that problem.

Problem/Solution writing should . . .

-  Clearly state the perceived problem (usually in the topic sentence).
-  Include specific details that offer a solution to the problem.
-  Be presented in a logical manner.

Sample prompts:

- The students in your school think there is a problem at recess. Write a letter to your principal stating the problem and suggesting ways to solve it.
- A classmate is being picked on during recess. Describe the problem. What could you do to help him/her solve it?