

6th Grade Literacy - Harding Middle School

Instructor, Bethany Heath - bethany.heath@dmschools.org (preferred)
or 242-8445 (after 2:30pm)

Course Expectations

Collaborative: Students will be expected to work together. Students will interact respectfully and positively with one another and work together to keep our classroom safe, clean, and productive.

Professional: Students will do a lot of reading and writing during class. They are expected to bring a pencil, a free reading book, and their binder to class every day. Make sure you are on time to class. Please do not bring unneeded items to class.

Respectful: Treat everyone (staff and peers) well and respect every person in the room. Show your teacher respect by putting away electronics, using appropriate voice levels, and following directions. Respect materials by using them appropriately and not wasting supplies.

Course Description

In 6th Grade Language Arts class, students will receive ample exposure to both fiction and nonfiction texts. During units focused on fiction, students will develop their ability to think abstractly by analyzing a character's point of view, making inferences, and identifying the theme in a piece of literature. During units focused on nonfiction, students will work on citing evidence from a text when defending their work and identifying the central idea of an author. Students focus on writing all year round, in every unit. They will also refine their writing skills by learning appropriate grammar and mechanics rules and learning to write complete narratives. In addition to these skills, teachers will push students to achieve greater comprehension and fluency through direct fluency instruction lessons and will help students learn to independently decipher unfamiliar vocabulary through context clue strategies.

The 6th grade literacy team believes that students learn best when their everyday experiences and values are incorporated in their learning. Students will explore topics related to bullying and tolerance, American history, immigration, faith, and family throughout the year.

Year Long Standards

Mastering Vocabulary	
4	In addition to 3.0 performance, students demonstrate they have the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone in a text, including analogies or allusions to other textsDistinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) in a text
3	Students demonstrate they have the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Use context as a clue to determine the meaning of words or phrases as they are used in a text, including technical meanings
2	Students demonstrate they have developed the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify specific words that have an impact on meaning and tone in a text Demonstrate the use of context clues in structured sentences in isolation
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1	Student's performance reflects insufficient progress towards foundational skills and knowledge
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Comprehending Text	
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4	Student demonstrates they have the ability to read and comprehend text at the 1140+ Lexile Level
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3.5	Student demonstrates they have the ability to read and comprehend text at the 1048-1139 Lexile Level
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3	Student demonstrates they have the ability to read and comprehend text at the 955-1047 Lexile Level
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2.5	Student demonstrates they have the ability to read and comprehend text at the 873-954 Lexile Level
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2	Student demonstrates they have the ability to read and comprehend text at the 790-872 Lexile Level
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1.5	Student demonstrates they have the ability to read and comprehend text at the 395-789 Lexile Level
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1	Student demonstrates they have the ability to read and comprehend text at the BR-394 Lexile Level
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Constructing Writing	
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4	In addition to 3.0 performance, student demonstrates a command of voice and style that rises above formulaic writing
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3	Students demonstrate they have the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience (for informative/explanatory, narrative, and research writing) Strengthen writing by planning, revising, and editing
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2	Students demonstrate they have developed the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the task, purpose, and audience for a given writing task Describe how to modify samples of writing for a specific task, purpose, and audience Plan writing using a template or graphic organizer
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1	Student's performance reflects insufficient progress towards foundational skills and knowledge
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Applying Grammar and Mechanics	
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4	Students demonstrate they have command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage when writing or speaking to:
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Explain the function of subjects, predicates, phrases, and clauses in general and their function in particular sentences · Recognize and correct inappropriate subject-verb agreement and verb usage · Appropriately use commas to separate coordinate adjectives
3	<p>Students demonstrate they have command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage when writing or speaking to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Explain the function of subjects, predicates, phrases, and clauses in general and their function in particular sentences · Recognize and correct inappropriate pronoun usage · Appropriately use punctuation to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements · Appropriately use quotation marks to indicate dialogue=
2	<p>Students demonstrate they have developed the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their function in particular sentences · Use grammar and usage in isolation · Use conventions in isolation · Use capitalization conventions, including proper nouns and proper adjectives
1	Student's performance reflects insufficient progress towards foundational skills and knowledge
Collaborating in Discussions	
4	<p>Students engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion · Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed · Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views
3	<p>Students engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion · Probe and respond to specific questions with elaboration and details by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion
2	<p>Students demonstrate they have developed the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed · Participate actively in discussions in a thoughtful and appropriate manner · Prepare for participation in a discussion
1	Student's performance reflects insufficient progress towards foundational skills and knowledge

Unit Breakdown

Unit 1: Exploring Evidence

The primary skills emphasized in this unit are making inferences and analyzing character point of view. Students will learn to support their answers by citing evidence from the text.

Possible Texts Used: *Crash, ACES Phone, The House, Eleven*

Possible Major Writing Assignments: *Crash and Penn in the Future Narrative*

Part 1: Analyzing Story Elements and Text Evidence (Inferring)

Level 4	In addition to scoring a 3 performance, the student demonstrates knowledge and applications that go beyond the learning goal.
Level 3	The student can A. Cite textual evidence to support inferences drawn from the text B. Support analysis with explicit evidence paraphrased or cited from the text Learning Goal
Level 2	Student demonstrates they have the ability to A. Recognize or recall specific vocabulary such as cite, explicit, inference, paraphrase, and textual evidence B. Describe what the text says explicitly
Level 1	Student is not showing significant progress towards the learning goal.

Part 2: Analyzing Character Point of View (Understanding Characters)

Level 4	In addition to scoring a 3 performance, the student demonstrates knowledge and applications that go beyond the learning goal.
Level 3	Students demonstrate they have the ability to explain how an author develops the point of view of a character in a text.
Level 2	Student demonstrates they have developed the ability to A. Recognize or recall specific vocabulary such as develop, narrator, perspective, and point of view B. Describe the point of view of a character in a text
Level 1	Student does not show sufficient progress towards basic skills and knowledge.

Unit 2: Matters of Fact

The primary skills in this unit are finding the central idea in a piece of nonfiction, summarizing, and understanding how and why authors organize texts in various ways.

Possible Texts Used: *Vikings, Pompeii: Bodies from the Ash, Knots on my Yoyo String, biographies and autobiographies, Witness*

Possible Major Writing Assignments: Vikings RAFT, Dog Breeds Brochure Project

Part 1: Determining Central Idea

Level 4	In addition to scoring a 3 performance, the student demonstrates in depth inferences or applications that go beyond the learning goal.
Level 3	Students demonstrate they have the ability to: A. Summarize a text objectively by identifying a central idea and important supporting details B. Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the central idea
Level 2	Students demonstrate they have developed the ability to: A. Recognize or recall specific vocabulary such as: central idea, develop, text structure, objective, summarize B. Determine the central idea of a text C. Identify particular details that convey the given central idea of a text D. Identify the text structure used in a text
Level 1	Student’s performance reflects insufficient progress towards foundational skills and knowledge.

Part 2: Comparing Non-Fiction Texts

Level 4	In addition to scoring 3.0 performance the student demonstrates in depth inferences and applications that go beyond the learning goal.
Level 3	Students demonstrate they have the ability to compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another author.
Level 2	Students demonstrate they have the ability to recognize or recall specific vocabulary such as “compare” and “contrast”. Students can Identify key events provided by two authors on the same topic.
Level 1	Student performance reflects insufficient progress towards the goal.

Unit 3: Meaning and Stories

This is the primary literature unit in the course. Students will need to know the elements of a story and will learn to identify a story’s theme, using evidence from the story.

Possible Tests Used: Where the Red Fern Grows, La Linea

Possible Major Writing Assignments: Superhero Story, District Writing Assessment (narrative)

Part 1: Story Elements

Level 4	In addition to scoring a 3 performance, the student demonstrated in depth inferences and applications that go beyond the learning goal.
Level 3	<p>Students demonstrate they have the ability to:</p> <p>A. Analyze how a particular sentence, event, or episode contributes to the development of the setting or plot</p> <p>B. Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes</p> <p>C. Describe how the characters in a story respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution</p>
Level 2	<p>Students demonstrate they have developed the ability to:</p> <p>A. Recognize or recall specific vocabulary such as: conflict, episode, plot, resolution, setting, trait</p> <p>B. Describe the plot (setting, conflict, and resolution) of a story</p> <p>C. List the episodes/events of a story in the order in which they occur</p> <p>D. Identify character traits of major characters in a story or drama</p>
Level 1	Student's performance reflects insufficient progress towards foundational skills and knowledge.

Part 2: Analyzing Themes Across Genres

Level 4	In addition to scoring a 3 performance, the student demonstrated in depth inferences and applications that go beyond the learning goal.
Level 3	<p>Analyze how details contribute to the development of a particular theme.</p> <p>Compare and contrast how the same theme is portrayed in different genres or by different authors.</p>
Level 2	<p>Students will recognize and recall specific vocabulary such as compare, contrast, genre, and theme.</p> <p>Students will determine the theme of a fiction texts.</p> <p>Identify details that support the given theme or topic of the text.</p>
Level 1	Students performance reflects insufficient progress towards foundational skills and knowledge.

Unit 4: Opinion and Argument

This unit is a brief introduction to the topics of argument that will recur throughout middle school. Students will be given at least one opportunity to craft an argument of their own and support it with evidence. They will be able to explain the difference between a fact and an opinion, as well as identify author bias.

Possible Texts Used: *Junior Scholastic Magazine, Scholastic News*, various news articles

Possible Major Writing Assignments: Opinion Essay

Evaluating Arguments and Purpose

Level 4	In addition to scoring a 3 performance the student demonstrates in depth inferences and applications that go beyond the learning goal.
Level 3	Students demonstrate they have the ability to A. Explain how an author’s point of view is conveyed in a text. B. Explain how an author’s purpose is conveyed in a text C. Evaluate the argument and specific claims in the text. D. Distinguish claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
Level 2	Students demonstrate they have the ability to A. Recognize or recall specific vocabulary such as argument, bias, claim, opinion, author’s point of view, purpose, relevance, and support. B. Identify an author’s point of view in a text C. Identify an author’s purpose in a text D. Trace the argument and specific claims in a text. E. Identify examples of opinions in a text and the words that signal an opinion.
Level 1	Student shows insufficient progress towards the learning goal.