

Mount Laurel Language Arts Curriculum  
Grade 7

**Writing Unit: Argument Essay**

**Stage 1: Determine the Desired Results**

**Enduring Understanding(s):**

A writer suspends judgment to weigh the reasons and evidence offered for each of the different sides.

Writers use analysis of the evidence to help readers follow the path of their evidence. Writers need to state a claim, give reasons to back up that claim, and give evidence to support each reason.

Researchers gather and critique information from different sources for specific purposes.

**Essential Question(s):**

How does a student respond when asked to choose sides in an existing argument?

How do writers strengthen their position when analyzing a side in an argument?

Why conduct research?

**New Jersey Students Learning Standards**

**Students will be able to:**

**Text Types and Purposes**

NJSLSA.W1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**Production and Distribution of Writing**

NJSLSA.W4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

NJSLSA.W6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

NJSLSA.W7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

NJSLSA.W8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

NJSLSA.W9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Range of Writing**

NJSLSA.W10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and

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shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Note on range and content in student writing**

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students need to learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events. They learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose. They develop the capacity to build knowledge on a subject through research projects and to respond analytically to literary and informational sources. To meet these goals,

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**Progress Indicators for Writing**

**Text Types and Purposes**

W.7.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

1. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
2. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
3. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
4. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.
5. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

1. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia)
2. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
3. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
4. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
5. Establish and maintain a formal style academic style, approach, and form.
6. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

**Production and Distribution of Writing**

W.7.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.7.5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience

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have been addressed.

W.7.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

W.7.7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

W.7.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

W.7.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Range of Writing**

W.7.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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**Progress Indicators for Reading Literature**

**Key Ideas and Details**

RL.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.7.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.7.3. Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

**Craft and Structure**

RL.7.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

RL.7.5. Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

RL.7.6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in

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a text.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

RL.7.7. Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).

RL.7.8. (Not applicable to literature)

**Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening Comprehension and Collaboration**

NJSLSA.SL1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

NJSLSA.SL2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

NJSLSA.SL3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

**Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

NJSLSA.SL4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.SL5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

NJSLSA.SL6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

**Note on range and content of student speaking and listening**

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must have ample opportunities to take part in a variety of rich, structured conversations—as part of a whole class, in small groups, and with a partner. Being productive members of these conversations requires that students contribute accurate, relevant information; respond to and develop what others have said; make comparisons and contrasts; and analyze and synthesize a multitude of ideas in various domains.

New technologies have broadened and expanded the role that speaking and listening play in acquiring and sharing knowledge and have tightened their link to other forms of communication. Digital texts confront students with the potential for continually updated content and dynamically changing combinations of words, graphics, images, hyperlinks, and embedded video and audio.

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**Progress Indicators for Speaking and Listening**

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**Comprehension and Collaboration**

SL.7.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

1. 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.
2. Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
3. 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.
4. Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

SL.7.2. Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

SL.7.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

**Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

SL.7.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SL.7.5. Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

SL.7.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

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**Anchor Standards for Language**

**Conventions of Standard English**

NJSLSA.L1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

NJSLSA.L2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

**Knowledge of Language**

NJSLSA.L3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

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**Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

NJSLSA L4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

NJSLSA L5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

NJSLSA L6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

**Note on range and content of student language use**

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, shadings 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.

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**Progress Indicators for Language**

**Conventions of Standard English**

L.7.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- A. Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences.
- B. Choose among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas.
- C. Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.\*

L.7.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- A. Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., *It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie* but not *He wore an old[,] green shirt*).
- B. Spell correctly.

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**Knowledge of Language**

L.7.3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

A. Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.\*

**Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

L.7.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 7 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

1. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
2. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *belligerent, bellicose, rebel*).
3. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
4. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.7.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, biblical, and mythological allusions) in context.

B. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words.

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C. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending*).

L.7.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

**8.1 Educational Technology: Interdisciplinary Connection**

All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.

**Integration of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Themes and Skills:**

- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
- CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
- CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

**Stage 2: Assessment Evidence**

**Required Performance Task:**

Conduct short research projects that build

**Other Forms of Assessment:**

Pre-assessment of argument writing essay

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<p>knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.</p> <p>Recall relevant information from research and/or gather appropriate information from print and digital sources to construct a well-thought out and considered position in order to develop a cohesive argument essay.</p> <p>Your essay needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marshal/assemble the facts</li> <li>• go into depth on the topic</li> <li>• present logic</li> <li>• be persuasive</li> </ul>	<p>Multiple drafts of the argument writing essay (pre-writing, rough draft, revising, etc.)</p> <p>Mini-lesson application and accountability: Student is able to effectively apply the mini-lesson concept to his/her writing</p> <p>Prewriting/planning check-in: Student is able to narrow in on a particular topic, then brainstorm and develop that topic</p> <p>Productivity: Student writes independently without needing teacher support, is able to revise and edit his/her work for clarity of thought and logical progression of ideas</p> <p>Mechanics: Student can spell high frequency words accurately and use his/her knowledge of our sound/symbol system (the alphabet) to spell unfamiliar words; is able to use punctuation successfully; and can look back over his/her final product to edit the final draft for clarity, cohesion, and logical expression of ideas</p> <p>Teacher’s anecdotal records</p>
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**Stage 3: Learning Plan**

**The Components of a Minilesson**

A writing minilesson is a short lesson focused on a specific principle or procedure (Calkins 1986, 1994). A minilesson’s components are: Connection, Teaching, Active Engagement, and Link. Each minilesson follows the same architecture.

**Connection:** Students learn why today’s instruction is important and how it relates to the prior work. They hear the teaching point that crystallizes the lesson.

**Teaching:** The teacher shows students how writers go about doing whatever is being taught. Usually this involves a demonstration, which the teacher sets up and explains.

**Active Engagement:** Students are given a chance to practice (for a minute) what has just been taught. The teacher scaffolds their work so they can be successful.

**Link:** The teacher crystallizes what has been taught, adding it to student’s growing repertoire. Students are reminded that today’s lesson pertains not only to today, but to every day. The teacher often summarizes the conditions under which a student is able to reach for this new knowledge.

**The Architecture of a Conference**

Each conference is unique; however, they nevertheless do have a predictable structure.



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**Research:** Observe and interview to understand what the student is trying to do as a writer. Probe to glean more about the student's intentions. Name what the student has already accomplished as a writer and remind the student to do this in future writing.

**Decide:** Weigh whether you want to accept or alter the student's current plans and processes. Decide what you will teach and how you will teach it. Although there may be several teaching decisions, think about the one teaching point that is apt to make the biggest difference in the student's writing. Plan the way in which you will provide the student with guided practice.

**Teach:** Instruct the student on critical writing strategies, i.e., adding details, creating a more effective hook, removing information that does not support the topic, or selecting a topic that the student may not know.

**Link:** Name what the student has accomplished as a writer and remind the student to do this often in the future.

### UNIT 3

#### **The Art of Argument: Research-Based Essays**

##### **Starter Resource Set**

[Competitive Sports Text Set](#)

##### **Text Set Bibliographies**

[Additional Texts on Competitive Sports](#)

[Bottled Water](#)

[Child Labor](#)

[Eco Carbon Footprint](#)

[Green Energy](#)

[Pets in the Classroom](#)

[Whaling](#)

#### **BEND I: Establishing and Supporting Positions**

##### **Session 1 — Weighing Evidence to Form Considered Positions**

[Sample Teacher Essay: "Get Off That Couch and Play!"](#)

[Competitive Sports Text Set](#)

[Anchor chart: How to Write an Argument](#)

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**Session 2 — Take Your Argument into a Scrimmage: Debating to Test and Strengthen a Position**

[Competitive Sports Text Set](#)

[Anchor chart: How to Write an Argument](#)

**Session 3 — Bam! Bolstering Positions by Adding Relevant Evidence**

[Chart: How to Write a Literary Essay about Character](#)

[Argument Writing Checklist, Grades 6 and 7](#)

[Chart: When Ranking & Choosing Evidence, Writers Ask...](#)

[Anchor chart: How to Write an Argument](#)

[Chart: Make Quotes Work](#)

[Chart: Guidelines for Source Citations and References](#)

**Session 4 — Stay with Me Now: Balancing Evidence with Analysis**

[Chart: Guidelines for Source Citations and References](#)

[Chart: Ways to Analyze Evidence and Get Others to Follow Your Argument](#)

[Anchor chart: How to Write an Argument](#)

[FIG. 4-3 chart: Transitions to Analyze Quotes](#)

**Session 5 — Taking Stock**

[Argument Writing Checklist, Grade 7](#)

[Link: Examples of Punctuation Changing Meaning](#)

**BEND II: Composing More Focused and Nuanced Arguments**

**Session 6 — Forming Coalition Groups**

[Competitive Sports Text Set](#)

[Additional Texts on Competitive Sports](#)

[Alternate Version of Session 6](#)

**Session 7 — Bringing a Critical Perspective to Your Research**

[Chart: Questions to Ask the Text When Reading with a Critical Eye](#)

[Additional Texts on Competitive Sports](#)

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[Graph: Total Female Emergency Room Visits by Sport](#)

[Anchor chart: How to Write an Argument](#)

[Links: "Flavored Milk" video and quantitative data resources](#)

**Session 8 — Debating to Prepare to Draft**

[Chart: Let's Argue About Texts](#)

**Session 9 — Introducing and Writing Your Argument**

[Chart: Ways to Introduce an Argument](#)

[Example of an introduction](#)

[Chart: Checklist for Creating Body Paragraphs](#)

[Samples of three conclusions](#)

[Chart: Ways to Conclude Argument Writing](#)

[Chart: Techniques for Powerful Conclusions](#)

[Anchor chart: How to Write an Argument](#)

**Session 10 — Self-Assessment with an Eye Toward Counterargument**

[Argument Writing Checklist, Grade 7](#)

[Mentor essay: Argument](#)

[Anchor chart: How to Write an Argument](#)

[Learning Progression for Argument Writing](#)

[Chart: Phrases to Use to Acknowledge and Rebut Counterclaims](#)

**Session 11 — Studying Author's Craft, Including Rhetorical Devices**

[Chart: Argument Writers Aim Toward Goals Such As...](#)

[Chart: Argument Writers Use Techniques Such As...](#)

[URL for Dan Pink's TED talk, "The Puzzle of Motivation"](#)

[Argument Writing Checklist, Grades 7 and 8](#)

[Chart: Team Policy Debate Format](#)

[Chart: Panel Format](#)

**Session 12 — When Company Comes: Knowing When and How to Maintain a Formal Tone**

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[Examples of Formal and Informal Writing](#)

[Anchor chart: How to Write an Argument](#)

[Argument Writing Checklist, Grades 7 and 8](#)

**Session 13 — Celebration: Symposium**

[Argument Writing Checklist, Grades 7 and 8](#)

[FIG. 13-1 Jillian's essay arguing against competitive sports](#)

[FIG. 13-2 Gracie's essay on the risks of competitive sports](#)

**BEND III: Taking Arguments to a Global Audience**

**Session 14 — Taking Opportunities to Stand and Be Counted**

[Text Set: Bottled Water](#)

[Text Set: Child Labor](#)

[Text Set: Eco Carbon Footprint](#)

[Text Set: Green Energy](#)

[Text Set: Pets in the Classroom](#)

[Text Set: Whaling](#)

[Chart: Steps Activists Take to Make a Difference](#)

[Anchor chart: How to Write an Argument](#)

**Session 15 — Revising by Qualifying Your Claim**

[Argument Writing Checklist, Grades 7 and 8](#)

**Session 16 — Revising with Logical Fallacies in Mind: Evaluating Evidence**

[Chart: Some Common Logical Fallacies](#)

[Anchor chart: How to Write an Argument](#)

**Session 17 — Cyberactivism**

[Learning Progression for Argument Writing](#)

[FIG. 17-1 Hayley's final essay on childhood obesity](#)

[FIG. 17-2 Emma's final essay on libraries](#)

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[FIG. 17-3 Ryan's final essay on libraries or the Internet](#)

[FIG. 17-4 E'najeona's final essay on reality TV](#)

**Modifications**

**Special Education:**

- Use Research, Decide, Teach, Link methodology during conferring with students
- Teacher models own writing
- Show additional number of samples/examples
- Provide additional opportunities to practice
- Use individual teacher/student conferences to address student's needs
- Use small group table conferences to address needs
- Chunk mini-lessons over a number of days
- Develop target vocabulary
- Scaffold comprehension when reading is used to promote reader response
- Chunk reading material
- Use graphic organizers to develop key concepts/ideas
- Teach key aspects of a topic. Eliminate nonessential information
- Provide individual copies of the student's writing checklists
- Use sentence frames to promote student's thinking and writing (this is found in Lucy's Units)

**English Language Learners (ELLs):**

- Model Thinking Aloud
- Encourage Partner Talk
- Repeat and Clarify
- Provide a Sequence
- Encourage self-selection of topics
- Target vocabulary
- Scaffold comprehension when reading is used to promote reader response
- Scaffold content-literacy reading
- Allow products to demonstrate student's learning
- Provide on-going feedback

**Students at Risk of School Failure:**

- Utilize TIME Mentor Program

**Gifted Students:**

- Use Flexible grouping

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Build a relationship</li><li>● Allow flexible due dates</li><li>● Employ strategies from Classroom Instruction that Works</li><li>● Create the Opportunity to Learn strategies</li><li>● Build lessons around student interests</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Give Independent projects</li><li>● Differentiate product assignments</li><li>● Offer student choice</li><li>● Use multiple intelligence options</li><li>● Provide opportunities to research (Individual/Group)</li><li>● Focus on Habits of Mind</li><li>● Focus on Webb's Depth of Knowledge - Emphasis on Level 4</li></ul> |
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**Core Instructional Materials:**

- *Calkins Units of Study in Writing* Program 2014 edition
- Newsela.com for leveled texts
- Technology/Equipment: ACTIV Board, LCD projector, sound system , CDs, DVDs, videos, internet, iPod