

Grade Six

Sixth graders enter middle school filled with a mixture of excitement and fear, anticipating and dreading the changes that middle school brings. Physical and emotional maturity varies more widely in sixth grade than in any other grade. Sixth graders continue to develop an appreciation of written and spoken language. Students use oral language, written language, and media and technology for expressive, informational, argumentative, critical, and literary purposes.

As readers, sixth graders begin to experience more sophisticated pieces of literature for study and analysis, which leads them to choose more complex literature to read for enjoyment. Sixth graders often gravitate towards one series or genre, or they read extensively on a topic of personal interest.

By the end of their sixth grade ELA experience, students analyze and edit their own writing to include acceptable use of basic conventions; and they also continue to develop their individual voices and styles. Throughout sixth grade, students develop the ability to critique constructively their own and others' work. Because the degree to which a student observes writing conventions is often proportionate to that individual's reading prowess, a natural increase in writing, editing, and proofreading skills results.

In assignments related to oral communications or performances, sixth graders are eager to give their opinions or role-play; they work to apply specific guidelines to their speaking assignments. Viewing and listening skills vary widely and are dependent on an individual's maturity.

Reading and Literature

In reading a text closely, the student works carefully to discern the author's perspective and the particular facts and details that support it. The student reads thoughtfully and purposefully, constantly checking for understanding of the author's intent and meaning so that the interpretation will be sound.

ELA6R1 The student demonstrates comprehension and shows evidence of a warranted and responsible explanation of a variety of literary and informational texts.

For literary texts, the student identifies the characteristics of various genres and produces evidence of reading that:

- a. Identifies and analyzes sensory details and figurative language.
- b. Identifies and analyzes the author's use of dialogue and description.
- c. Relates a literary work to historical events of the period.
- d. Applies knowledge of the concept that theme refers to the message about life and the world that the author wants us to understand whether implied or stated.
- e. Identifies and analyzes the elements of setting, characterization, plot, and the resolution of the conflict of a story or play:
 - i. internal/external conflicts
 - ii. character conflicts, characters vs. nature, characters vs. society
 - iii. antagonist/protagonist.
- f. Identifies the speaker and recognizes the difference between first- and third-person narration.
- g. Defines and explains how tone is conveyed in literature through word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, rhythm, repetition, and rhyme.
- h. Responds to and explains the effects of sound, figurative language, and graphics in order to uncover meaning in literature:
 - i. Sound (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme scheme)
 - ii. Figurative language (i.e., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification)
 - iii. Graphics (i.e., capital letters, line length, bold face print, italics).
- i. Compares traditional literature and mythology from different cultures.
- j. Identifies and analyzes similarities and differences in mythologies from different cultures.

For informational texts, the student reads and comprehends in order to develop understanding and expertise and produces evidence of reading that:

- a. Applies knowledge of common textual features (e.g., paragraphs, topic sentences, concluding sentences, glossary, index).
- b. Applies knowledge of common graphic features (i.e., graphic organizers, diagrams, captions, illustrations, charts, tables, graphs).
- c. Applies knowledge of common organizational structures and patterns (e.g., transitions, logical order, cause and effect, classification schemes).
- d. Identifies and analyzes main ideas, supporting ideas, and supporting details.

e. Follows multi-step instructions to complete or create a simple product.

ELA6R2 The student understands and acquires new vocabulary and uses it correctly in reading and writing. The student

- a. Determines the meaning of unfamiliar words by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues.
- b. Uses knowledge of Greek and Latin affixes to understand unfamiliar vocabulary.
- c. Identifies and interprets words with multiple meanings.
- d. Uses reference skills to determine pronunciations, meanings, alternate word choices, and parts of speech of words.

ELA6R3 The student reads aloud, accurately (in the range of 95%), familiar material in a variety of genres, in a way that makes meaning clear to listeners. The student

- a. Uses letter-sound knowledge to decode written English and uses a range of cueing systems (e.g., phonics and context clues) to determine pronunciation and meaning.
- b. Uses self-correction when subsequent reading indicates an earlier miscue (self-monitoring and self-correcting strategies).
- c. Reads with a rhythm, flow, and meter that sounds like everyday speech (prosody).

Reading Across the Curriculum

After the elementary years, students are seriously engaged in reading for learning. This process sweeps across all disciplinary domains, extending even to the area of personal learning. Students encounter a variety of informational and fictional texts, and they read texts in all genres and modes of discourse. In the study of various disciplines of learning (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies), students must learn, through reading, the communities of discourse of those disciplines.

Each subject has its own specific vocabulary; and for students to excel in all subjects, they must learn the specific vocabulary of all subject areas *in context*. In the middle grades, students self-select reading materials based on personal interests established through classroom learning. Students become curious about science, mathematics, history, and literature as they form contexts for those subjects related to their personal and classroom experiences. As students explore academic areas through reading, they develop favorite subjects and become confident in their verbal discourse about those subjects.

Reading across the curriculum develops students' academic and personal interests in different subjects, as well as their understanding and expertise across subject areas. As students read, they develop both content and contextual vocabulary. They also build good habits for reading, researching, and learning.

The Reading Across the Curriculum standards focus on the academic and personal skills students acquire as they read in all areas of learning.

ELA6RC1 The student reads a minimum of 25 grade-level appropriate books or book equivalents (approximately 1,000,000 words) per year from a variety of subject disciplines. The student reads both informational and fictional texts in a variety of genres and modes of discourse, including technical texts related to various subject areas.

ELA6RC2 The student participates in discussions related to curricular learning in all subject areas. The student

- a. Identifies messages and themes from books in all subject areas.
- b. Responds to a variety of texts in multiple modes of discourse.
- c. Relates messages and themes from one subject area to those in another area.
- d. Evaluates the merits of texts in every subject discipline.
- e. Examines the author's purpose in writing.
- f. Recognizes and uses the features of disciplinary texts (e.g., charts, graphs, photos, maps, highlighted vocabulary).

ELA6RC3 The student acquires new vocabulary in each content area and uses it correctly. The student

- a. Demonstrates an understanding of contextual vocabulary in various subjects.
- b. Uses content vocabulary in writing and speaking.
- c. Explores understanding of new words found in subject area texts.

ELA6RC4 The student establishes a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas. The student

- a. Explores life experiences related to subject area content.
- b. Discusses in both writing and speaking how certain words and concepts relate to multiple subjects.
- c. Determines strategies for finding content and contextual meaning for unfamiliar words or concepts.

Writing

The student writes clear, coherent text that develops a central idea or tells a story. The writing shows consideration of the audience and purpose. The student progresses through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing successive versions).

ELA6W1 The student produces writing that establishes an appropriate organizational structure, sets a context and engages the reader, maintains a coherent focus throughout, and provides a satisfying closure. The student

- a. Selects a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view based on purpose, genre expectations, audience, length, and format requirements.
- b. Writes texts of a length appropriate to address the topic or tell the story.
- c. Uses traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).
- d. Uses appropriate structures to ensure coherence (e.g., transition elements).

ELA6W2 The student demonstrates competence in a variety of genres.

The student produces a narrative (fictional, personal) that:

- a. Engages readers by establishing and developing a plot, setting, and point of view that are appropriate to the story (e.g., varied beginnings, standard plot line, cohesive devices).
- b. Creates an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.
- c. Includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot, setting, and character (e.g., vivid verbs, descriptive adjectives, and varied sentence structures).
- d. Uses a range of strategies (e.g., suspense, figurative language, dialogue, expanded vocabulary, movement, gestures, expressions).
- e. Excludes extraneous details and inconsistencies.
- f. Provides a sense of closure appropriate to the writing.

The student produces writing (multi-paragraph expository composition such as description, explanation, comparison and contrast, or problem and solution) that:

- a. Engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a speaker's voice, and otherwise developing reader interest.
- b. Establishes a statement as the main idea or topic sentence.
- c. Develops a controlling idea that conveys a perspective on the subject.
- d. Creates an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.
- e. Develops the topic with supporting details.
- f. Excludes extraneous and inappropriate information.
- g. Follows an organizational pattern appropriate to the type of composition.
- h. Concludes with a detailed summary linked to the purpose of the composition.

The student produces technical writing (friendly letters, thank-you notes, formula poems, instructions) that:

- a. Creates or follows an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.
- b. Excludes extraneous and inappropriate information.
- c. Follows an organizational pattern appropriate to the type of composition.
- d. Applies rules of Standard English.

The student produces a response to literature that:

- a. Engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a speaker's voice, and otherwise developing reader interest.
- b. Demonstrates an understanding of the literary work.
- c. Advances a judgment that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective.
- d. Organizes an interpretation around several clear ideas, premises, or images.
- e. Supports a judgment through references to the text.
- f. Provides a sense of closure to the writing.

The student produces a multi-paragraph persuasive essay that:

- a. Engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a speaker's voice, and otherwise developing reader interest.
- b. States a clear position of a proposition or proposal.
- c. Supports the position with organized and relevant evidence.
- d. Excludes information and arguments that are irrelevant.
- e. Creates an organizing structure appropriate to a specific purpose, audience, and context.
- f. Anticipates and addresses readers' concerns and counter-arguments.
- g. Provides a sense of closure to the writing.

ELA6W3 The student uses research and technology to support writing. The student

- a. Uses organizational features of electronic text (e.g., bulletin boards, databases, keyword searches, e-mail addresses) to locate relevant information.
- b. Includes researched information in different types of products (e.g., compositions, multimedia presentations, graphic organizers, projects, etc.).
- c. Cites references.

ELA6W4 The student consistently uses the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing. The student

- a. Plans and drafts independently and resourcefully.
- b. Revises manuscripts to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs.
- c. Edits to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, etc.

Conventions

Conventions are essential for reading, writing, and speaking. Instruction in language conventions will, therefore, occur within the context of reading, writing, and speaking, rather than in isolation. The student writes to make connections with the larger world. A student's ideas are more likely to be taken seriously when the words are spelled accurately and the sentences are grammatically correct. Use of Standard English conventions helps readers understand and follow the student's meaning, while errors can be distracting and confusing. Standard English conventions are the "good manners" of writing and speaking that make communication fluid.

ELA6C1 The student demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats. The student

- a. Identifies and uses the eight basic parts of speech and demonstrates that words can be different parts of speech within a sentence.
 - i. Identifies and uses nouns – abstract, common, collective, plural, and possessive.
 - ii. Identifies and uses pronouns – personal, possessive, interrogative, demonstrative, reflexive, and indefinite.
 - iii. Identifies and uses adjectives – common, proper, and demonstrative.
 - iv. Identifies and uses verbs – action (transitive/intransitive), linking, and state-of-being.
 - v. Identifies and uses verb phrases – main verbs and helping verbs.
 - vi. Identifies and uses adverbs.
 - vii. Identifies and uses prepositional phrases (preposition, object of the preposition, and any of its modifiers).
 - viii. Identifies and uses conjunctions – coordinating, correlative, and common subordinating.
 - ix. Identifies and uses interjections.
- b. Recognizes basic parts of a sentence (subject, verb, direct object, indirect object, predicate noun, predicate adjective).
- c. Identifies and writes simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, avoiding fragments and run-ons.
- d. Demonstrates appropriate comma and semicolon usage (compound and complex sentences, appositives, words in direct address).
- e. Uses common spelling rules, applies common spelling patterns, and develops and masters words that are commonly misspelled.
- f. Produces final drafts that demonstrate accurate spelling and the correct use of punctuation and capitalization.

Listening/Speaking/Viewing

The student demonstrates an understanding of listening, speaking, and viewing skills for a variety of purposes. The student listens critically and responds appropriately to oral communication in a variety of genres and media. The student speaks in a manner that guides the listener to understand important ideas.

ELA6LSV1 The student participates in student-to-teacher, student-to-student, and group verbal interactions. The student

- a. Initiates new topics in addition to responding to adult-initiated topics.
- b. Asks relevant questions.
- c. Responds to questions with appropriate information.
- d. Confirms understanding by paraphrasing the adult's directions or suggestions.

- e. Displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors.
- f. Actively solicits another person's comments or opinions.
- g. Offers own opinion forcefully without being domineering.
- h. Responds appropriately to comments and questions.
- i. Volunteers contributions and responds when directly solicited by teacher or discussion leader.
- j. Gives reasons in support of opinions expressed.
- k. Clarifies, illustrates, or expands on a response when asked to do so.
- l. Employs a group decision-making technique such as brainstorming or a problem-solving sequence (e.g., recognizes problem, defines problem, identifies possible solutions, selects optimal solution, implements solution, evaluates solution).
- m. Writes a response to/reflection of interactions with others.

ELA6LSV2 The student listens to and views various forms of text and media in order to gather and share information, persuade others, and express and understand ideas. The student will select and critically analyze messages using rubrics as assessment tools.

When responding to visual and oral texts and media (e.g., television, radio, film productions, and electronic media), the student:

- a. Identifies persuasive and propaganda techniques used in media and identifies false and misleading information.
- b. Identifies the tone, mood, and emotion conveyed in the oral communication.

When delivering or responding to presentations, the student:

- a. Gives oral presentations or dramatic interpretations for various purposes.
- b. Shows appropriate changes in delivery (e.g., gestures, vocabulary, pace, visuals).
- c. Uses language for dramatic effect.
- d. Uses rubrics as assessment tools.
- e. Uses electronic media for presentations.

