

# **Lamoille Union Middle School Language Arts Syllabus**

## **Creating Parent Partnerships**

LUMS students are expected to successfully complete the tasks outlined in this syllabus by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In an effort to help families support their children in this endeavor, the Language Arts department offers some ideas that follow. Be assured that you do not need to be experts in reading and writing to interact with your children around these subjects. If we all work together, children will have better opportunity for success!

### **READING**

#### **How parents can help**

1. Weave reading into your daily family life. Create a family reading time, without distraction, where everybody reads for at least 20 minutes. Spend time discussing what you read. This can be done at any time that works for your family: breakfast, dinner, or bedtime.  
How this might look in your home: share the newspaper or a magazine with your child, read the same book as your child, have your child read to younger siblings, read aloud to your child, and/or visit the local library.
2. Ask what books your child is reading at school.  
How this might look in your home: have a conversation about reading on the way to school or a game. Here are some possible discussion starters:
  - a. What did the main character in your book do?
  - b. Did you learn any new words? What do they mean?
  - c. What is your character learning in your book? (theme)
  - d. What is the book about? (plot)
  - e. How would you change the book to make it better? (author's style)
  - f. Why did the author write the book?
  - g. Does the book remind you of books or movies you've seen? (textual connections)
  - h. Do you like it? Why or why not?
3. What new words you have learned in the book?  
How might this look in your home: look up the word online, look up the word in a dictionary

#### **Teacher Purposes and Goals:**

- Students will fluently read grade appropriate text including books, magazines, newspapers, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and plays. Grade appropriate texts can be found at <http://www.luhs18.org/LUMS/Text/2010%20updated%20book%20list.pdf>
- Students will be able to identify and understand new vocabulary in these texts.

- Students will recognize and follow 20 directive words. Directive words help students understand what directions are asking. These include: analyze, compare, contrast, critique, define, describe, discuss, enumerate, evaluate, explain, illustrate, justify, list, outline, prove, state, summarize.
- Students will read to comprehend at grade level and participate in class discussions based on this reading. You can find a reading list at <http://www.luhs18.org/LUMS/Text/2010%20updated%20book%20list.pdf>
- Students will identify the role literary elements play in texts. The literary elements are: theme, author's style (foreshadowing, flashback, hyperbole, symbolism, personification, alliteration, dialogue, imagery) characterization, setting, plot (exposition, rising action, climax/turning point, falling action, resolution) conflict, metaphoric language, point of view, and personification.
- Students will identify and know when to appropriately use the nine strategies of reading. The nine strategies of reading are: imagining; making connections; analyzing structure; word recognition; inferring; asking questions; determining themes; evaluating, summarizing, synthesizing; and rereading & adjusting.
- Students will read 25 minutes per day, every day. Students will choose books at their level and read on their own.

## **WRITING**

### **How parents can help:**

1. Encourage written communication and responsibility by sharing texts with your child, emailing him or her, and having your child take clearly written phone messages using complete words, sentences, and details. These forms of written communication are great ways to keep the lines of communication open with your emerging teenager.  

How this might look like in your home: keep a paper and pencil by the phone, write letters to family, send postcards on vacation, visit your child's social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter) and have conversations about what they write on them.
2. Provide a journal for your child and encourage them to practice writing in a variety of places. Discover fun writing topics together that interest them. This is the best starting place for developing a love of writing. Encourage your child to write about what they know and read some of their ideas aloud to you.

### **Teacher Purposes and Goals:**

- Students will write effectively using the writing process: Prewriting (clustering, graphic organizers, brainstorming, discussion, outlining, and note taking), drafting, editing, revising (multiple drafts, uses teacher and peer feedback, changes incorporated into additional draft(s)), publishing.

- Students will be able to use the qualities of writing applicable to all portfolio pieces: purpose (thesis statement), organization (topic sentences, transitions, introduction, body and conclusion) voice/tone (word choice, knowledge of audience), details (statistics, anecdotes, quotes, explanation, description, opinion), and conventions.
- Students will use the writing process to complete the following portfolio pieces: procedure (how-to), narrative (short story), personal essay (reflective), response to literature, report (research), persuasive essay (taking a stance), and poetry. The link below will take you to writing benchmarks for each genre writing:  
[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_curriculum/literacy/writing/benchmarks.html#benchmarks](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_curriculum/literacy/writing/benchmarks.html#benchmarks)