

Writing Across the Curriculum Grade 8 - 2007

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Writing Across the Curriculum is designed to assist students in enhancing their writing skills in every subject area. It is necessary for students to see the connection writing provides among the other disciplines. This course will provide students with a workshop atmosphere to help them write to discover about themselves and their world. The goal is to facilitate formulating, organizing, evaluating, and expressing ideas in written form.

The Writing Across the Curriculum course will explore the many different forms of writing and purposes for writing. It will challenge the student writer to write for a variety of audiences and master the conventions of our language. The goal for Writing Across the Curriculum is to have students become self-motivated learners who can clearly communicate their ideas through the written word.

Building on the process instruction from the 6th grade curriculum, and the process and product instruction from the 7th grade, the focus for 8th grade instruction is to further enhance the development of products for a variety of purposes and for specific audiences. The work produced should be worthy of publication in both content and presentation.

CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS:

Standard 3.2 (Writing): All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.

Standard 8.1 (Computer and Information Literacy): All students will use computer applications to gather and organize information and to solve problems.

Standard 8.2 (Technology Education): All students will develop an understanding of the nature and impact of technology, engineering, technological design, and the designed world as they relate to the individual, society, and the environment.

CUMULATIVE PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Standard 3.2 Writing:

A. Writing as a Process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, post-writing)

1. Write stories or scripts with well-developed characters, setting, dialogue, clear conflict and resolution, and sufficient descriptive detail.
2. Write multi-paragraph compositions that have clear topic development, logical organization, effective use of detail, and variety in sentence structure.
3. Generate and narrow topics by considering purpose, audience, and form with a variety of strategies (e.g., graphic organizers, brainstorming, technology-assisted processes).
4. Revise and edit drafts by rereading for content and organization, usage, sentence construction, mechanics, and word choice.
5. Utilize the New Jersey Registered Holistic scoring rubric to improve and evaluate their writing and the writing of peers.
6. Compose, revise, edit, and publish writing using appropriate word processing software.
7. Reflect on own writing, noting strengths and setting goals for improvement.

B. Writing as a Product (resulting in a formal product or publication)

1. Extend knowledge of specific characteristics, structures, and appropriate voice and tone of selected genres and use this knowledge in creating written work, considering the purpose, audience, and context of the writing.
2. Write various types of prose, such as short stories, biographies, autobiographies, or memoirs that contain narrative elements.
3. Write reports and subject-appropriate nonfiction pieces across the curriculum based on research and including citations, quotations, and a works cited page.
4. Write a range of essays, including persuasive, speculative (picture prompt), descriptive, personal, or issue-based.

C. Mechanics, Spelling, and Handwriting

1. Use Standard English conventions in all writing, such as sentence structure, grammar and usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling.
2. Use a variety of sentence types correctly, including combinations of independent and dependent clauses, prepositional and adverbial phrases, and varied sentence openings to develop a lively and effective personal style.
3. Understand and use parallelism, including similar grammatical forms, to present items in a series or to organize ideas for emphasis.
4. Refine the use of subordination, coordination, apposition, and other devices to indicate relationships between ideas.
5. Use transition words to reinforce a logical progression of ideas.
6. Edit writing for correct grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
7. Use a variety of reference materials, such as a dictionary, thesaurus, grammar reference, and/or internet/software resources to edit written work.
8. Write legibly in manuscript or cursive to meet district standards.

D. Writing Forms, Audiences, and Purposes (exploring a variety of forms)

1. Gather, select, and organize the most effective information appropriate to a topic, task, and audience.
2. Apply knowledge and strategies for composing pieces in a variety of genres (e.g., narrative, expository, persuasive, poetic, and everyday/ workplace or technical writing).
3. Write responses to literature and develop insights into interpretations by connecting to personal experiences and referring to textual information.
4. Write personal narratives, short stories, memoirs, poetry, and persuasive and expository text that relate clear, coherent events, or situations through the use of specific details.
5. Use narrative and descriptive writing techniques that show compositional risks (e.g., dialogue, literary devices sensory words and phrases, background information, thoughts and feelings of characters, comparison and contrast of characters.)
6. Use a variety of primary and secondary sources to understand the value of each when writing a research report.
7. Write reports based on research and include citations, quotations, and works cited page.
8. Explore the central idea or theme of an informational reading and support analysis with details from the article and personal experiences.
9. Demonstrate writing clarity and supportive evidence when answering open-ended and essay questions across the curriculum.

10. State a position clearly and convincingly in a persuasive essay by stating the issue, giving facts, examples, and details to support the position, and citing sources when appropriate.
11. Present evidence when writing persuasive essays, examples, and justification to support arguments.
12. Choose an appropriate organizing strategy such as cause/effect, pro and con, parody, to effectively present a topic, point of view, or argument.
13. Use of a personal style and voice effectively to support the purpose and engage the audience of a piece of writing.
14. Maintain a collection of writing (e.g., a literacy folder, or a literacy portfolio).
15. Review scoring criteria of relevant rubrics.

Standard 8.1 Computer and Information Literacy:

A. Basic Computer Skills and Tools

1. Use appropriate technology vocabulary.
2. Use common features of an operating system (e.g., creating and organizing files and folders).
3. Demonstrate effective input of text and data, using touch keyboarding with proper technique.
4. Input and access data and text efficiently and accurately through proficient use of other input devices, such as the mouse.
5. Create documents with advanced text-formatting and graphics using word processing.
6. Create a file containing customized information by merging documents.
8. Design and produce a basic multimedia project.
10. Use network resources for storing and retrieving data.
11. Choose appropriate electronic graphic organizers to create, construct, or design a document.
12. Create, organize and manipulate shortcuts.

B. Application of Productivity Tools

Social Aspects

2. Exhibit legal and ethical behaviors when using information and technology, and discuss consequences of misuse.
4. Describe and practice "etiquette" when using the Internet and electronic mail.

Information Access and Research

6. Choose appropriate tools and information resources to support research and solve real world problems, including but not limited to: a) On-line resources and databases and b) Search engines and subject directories.
7. Evaluate the accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness of print and non-print electronic information sources.

Standard 8.2 Technology Education:

B. Design Process and Impact Assessment

5. Select and safely use appropriate tools and materials in analyzing, designing, modeling or making a technological product, system or environment.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES THAT ADDRESS THESE STANDARDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

1. Short-story: Write a complete story that includes character development, setting, dialogue, conflict, resolution, well-developed details, and the elements of plot. Utilize the writing process (prewriting, rough, 1st draft, self and peer editing) and complete the story using word processing software.
2. Picture prompts: View a series of pictures and write well-developed speculative responses to each. The responses should contain narrative elements.
3. Current events: Read a variety of newspaper articles and extrapolate the 5Ws to generate an informational news article. Where possible, articles will be chosen to reflect topics and themes studied in science and social studies classes.
4. Technical writing:
 - a) Write essays that contain detailed, first-hand observations that include hypotheses, and may include detailed procedures to test those hypotheses. Topics may include:
 1. Light
 2. Motion
 3. Sound
 4. Heat
 5. Energy
 - b) Write essays that contain concise, step-by-step instructions for completing a task or experiment. Essays may contain exact numbers, directional words, precise measurements, and accurate jargon. Topics may include how to:
 1. build an item (a wheel)
 2. fix something (brakes on a car)
 3. travel from one point to another
 4. design a product (an amusement park ride)
 5. create a recipe
5. Historical/sociological essays:
 - a) Write biographical sketches of characters from literature or social studies.
 - b) Choose an important historical event and take on the persona of a character or figure from the particular time period. Using first person point of view, write reflective essays that relate events in chronological order, describe the setting in detail, discuss other historical figures, and describe major and minor events.
6. Persuasive Writing: Produce a variety of persuasive products intended for specific audiences and for specific purposes:
 - a) Debate scripts: Working in groups, choose topical issues and produce well-informed scripts for timed debates.

- b) Letters to newspaper editors: Choose newsworthy topics of interest and write responses to the issues in well-developed letters calling for public action.
 - c) Letters to Congress: Produce, based on research, a well-developed letter to Congress calling for action on a topical issue affecting the environment, public health, international/national policy, etc.
 - d) Advertising campaigns: Research a product or develop one and produce a print ad campaign persuading viewers to buy the product. Television, radio, and/or web campaigns may be developed if resources are available.
7. Personal narratives: Write a series of autobiographical essays that contain narrative elements and that include specific details that relate events and emotions. Reflection on the world at large and how the students view that world is encouraged.
8. Movie reviews: View films in a variety of genre and write full-length critiques, as well as shorter “capsules,” reflecting on the plot, acting, music, cinematography, etc., to write a well-informed piece.
9. Research papers: Write a fully-researched paper using a variety of sources and including a correctly formatted works cited page. The goal is to understand the note-taking process, extrapolate necessary information, and synthesize that information in an informative, engaging paper.
10. Poetry: Write poems in a variety of forms, from traditional to free verse. Topics may be culled from literature, science, social studies, math, and the world around us. It is encouraged that outlets for the publication of poems be sought.
11. Vocabulary: Complete a variety of vocabulary exercises per the prescribed program, in order to enhance the understanding of language and expand the repertoire of words and meanings. Students should be encouraged to incorporate new vocabulary words into their writing assignments, where possible.
12. Grammar: Building on the grammar program for 6th and 7th grades, instruction will be given on a variety of topics in order to enhance the writing process. Topics should include, but are not limited, to the following:
- a) Transitions
 - b) Varying sentence structure: compound, complex, compound/complex sentences
 - c) Active vs. passive voice
 - d) Prepositional and adverbial phrases
 - e) Parallelism
 - f) Review (as needed) of independent and dependent clauses,

capitalization and punctuation, varying sentence openings, and pronoun references and antecedents.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:

1. Student/teacher writing conferences
2. Student/student writing conferences
3. Collaborative/group work
4. Peer and self-editing
5. Tiering
6. Modeling
7. Interdisciplinary Units
8. Differentiated instruction
9. Use of artifacts (photos, art, objects) to generate topics for writing.
10. Instruction on the 5Ws
11. Instruction on the elements of a critique
12. Group newspapers
13. Debates
14. Instruction on the elements of plot
15. Grammar instruction
16. Daily oral language
17. Poetry “slams”
18. Vocabulary exercises
19. Note-taking strategies
20. Review of citations
21. PowerPoint Presentations
22. Web Quests
23. Independent internet research
24. Print and broadcast advertising campaigns

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS:

1. Student/teacher conferences
2. Self and peer-editing
3. Whole class oral presentations
4. NJ Holistic Scoring Rubric
5. Teacher-created rubrics and checklists
6. Teacher-graded essays
7. Teacher-graded products
8. Observations
9. Writing logs
10. Tests

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT OF CURRICULUM:

This course of study will be evaluated/assessed by instructional staff during the first year of implementation for the purpose of necessary revision at the end of the first

year. In addition, this course of study will be reviewed according to the Five-Year Curriculum Review schedule (see attached).

RESOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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Getting Ready for the New Jersey Language Arts GEPA; Review and Practice Book. Massachusetts: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005

Graham, Louise Hall, and Young, Miriam Kleiner. *Writing Power*. New York: Globe Book Company, Inc., 1980

Hetzel, June, and McIntire, Deborah. *Developing Writing Fluency*. California: Creative Teaching Press, Inc., 2000

Motivating Writing in Middle School. Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1996

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Shostak, Jerome. *Vocabulary Workshop Level C*. New York: Sadlier/Oxford, Inc., 2005

Strunk, William, Jr., and White, E.B. *The Elements of Style*. Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon, 2000

Vurnakes, Claudia. *Vocabulary Development Using Roots and Riddles – Middle and High School*. Michigan: McGraw-Hill Children's Publishing, 1996

Whitney, Elizabeth, Ph.D. *A Year Full of Writing Projects for Middle School*. California: Teacher Created Materials, Inc., 2003

Appendix A –
New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric

In Scoring, consider the grid of written language Score	Inadequate Command 1	Limited Command 2	Partial Command 3	Adequate Command 4	Strong Command 5	Superior Command 6
Content & Organization (see below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lack opening and/or closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lack opening and/or closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lack opening and/or closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally has opening and/or closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening and closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening and closing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal response to topic; uncertain focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to focus • May drift or shift focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually has single focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single focus • Sense of unity and coherence • Key ideas developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single, distinct focus • Unified and coherent • Well-developed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No planning evident; disorganized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts organization • Few, if any, transitions between ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some lapses or flaws in organization • May lack some transitions between ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas loosely connected • Transition evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical progression of ideas • Moderately fluent • Attempts compositional risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical progression of ideas • Fluent, cohesive • Compositional risks successful
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details random, inappropriate, or barely apparent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details lack elaboration, i.e., highlight paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitious details • Several unelaborated details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven development of details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details appropriate and varied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details effective, vivid, explicit, and/or pertinent
Usage (see below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No apparent control • Severe/numerous errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors/patterns of errors may be evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some errors that do not interfere with meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few, if any, errors

Sentence Construction (see below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assortment of incomplete and/or incorrect sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive monotony/same structure Numerous errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little variety in syntax Some errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some errors that do not interfere with meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very few, if any, errors
Mechanics (see below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors so severe they detract from meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous serious errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patterns of errors evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No consistent pattern of errors Some errors that do not interfere with meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very few, if any, errors

Non-Scorable Responses	NR = No Response	Student wrote too little to allow reliable judgment of his/her writing.
	OT = Off Topic/ Off Task	Student did not write on the assigned topic/task, or the student attempted to copy the prompt.
	NE = Not English	Student wrote in a language other than English.
	WF = Wrong Format	Student refused to write on the topic, or the writing task folder was blank.

Content & Organization	Usage	Sentence Construction	Mechanics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates intended message to intended audience Relates to topic Opening and closing Focused Logical progression of ideas Transitions Appropriate details and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tense formation Subject-verb agreement Pronouns usage/agreement Word choice/meaning Proper modifiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of type, structure, and length Correct construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling Capitalization Punctuation

Appendix B –
New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric
Used for the "Writing to Speculate" (Picture Prompt) and Persuasive Writing Items

	Inadequate Command	Limited Command	Partial Command	Adequate Command	Strong Command	Superior Command
Score:	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Content and Organization</u>	May lack opening and/ or closing	May lack opening and/ or closing	May lack opening and/ or closing	Generally has opening and/or closing	Opening and closing	Opening and closing
	Minimal response to topic; uncertain focus	Attempts to focus May drift or shift focus	Usually has single focus	Single focus	Single focus Sense of unity and coherence Key ideas developed	Single, distinct focus Unified and coherent Well- developed
	No planning evident; disorganized	Attempts organization Few, if any, transitions between ideas	Some lapses or flaws in organization May lack some transitions between ideas	Ideas loosely connected Transitions evident	Logical progression of ideas Moderately fluent Attempts compositional risks	Logical progression of ideas Fluent, cohesive Compositional risks successful
<u>Usage</u>	Details random, inappropriate, or barely apparent	Details lack elaboration, i. e., highlight paper	Repetitious details Several unelaborated details	Uneven development of details	Details appropriate and varied	Details effective, vivid, explicit, and/ or pertinent
	No apparent control Severe/ numerous errors	Numerous errors	Errors/ patterns of errors may be evident	Some errors that do not interfere with meaning	Few errors	Very few, if any, errors
<u>Sentence Construction</u>	Assortment of incomplete and/ or incorrect sentences	Excessive monotony/ same structure Numerous errors	Little variety in syntax Some errors	Some variety Generally correct	Variety in syntax appropriate and effective Few errors	Precision and/ or sophistication Very few, if any, errors
<u>Mechanics</u>	Errors so severe they detract from meaning	Numerous serious errors	Patterns of errors evident	No consistent pattern of errors Some errors that do not interfere with meaning	Few errors	Very few, if any, errors
Non-Scorable Responses	NR	No Response	Student wrote too little to allow a reliable judgement of his/her writing.			
	OT	Off Topic/Off Task	Student did not write on the assigned topic/ task, or the student attempted to copy the prompt.			
	NE	Not English	Student wrote in a language other than English.			
	WF	Wrong Format	Student refused to write on the topic, or the writing task folder was blank.			

Content/ Organization	Usage	Sentence Construction	Mechanics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates intended message to intended audience • Relates to topic • Opening and closing • Focused • Logical progression of ideas • Transitions • Appropriate details and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tense formation • Subject- verb agreement • Pronouns usage/ agreement • Word choice/ meaning • Proper Modifiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of type, structure, and length • Correct construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling • Capitalization • Punctuation