**Curriculum**

**6th Grade English**

**Course Overview**

In 6th Grade English, students will develop their ability to understand and appreciate literature and make connections among literature, language, the students’ own lives, and other academic disciplines. They will improve their ability to read closely, comprehend, analyze and think critically about literature by reading various genres as well as their ability to communicate understanding and ideas articulately and effectively in a variety of written and oral forms. They will also expand and strengthen their vocabularies and knowledge of the standard conventions of the English language in both speaking and writing to enhance their ability to understand and communicate.

**Department Standards**

Students will:  
1. develop critical thinking skills that will encourage them to make connections between literature and both their own lives and other academic disciplines;  
2. develop an appreciation for literature through the comprehension and analysis of various genres;  
3. communicate their understanding and ideas effectively in a variety of written forms;  
4. articulate organized ideas through a variety of oral activities;  
5. expand and strengthen their vocabularies to enhance their ability to understand and communicate;  
6. and learn and apply the standard conventions of the English language in both speaking and writing.

**Benchmarks**:

Sixth grade students will:

1. develop critical thinking skills through literature, discussion, and expository writing. (1)

2. review and identify basic literary terms. (2)

3. develop an appreciation for classic literature, including poems and a variety of fiction and nonfiction. (2)

4. demonstrate writing and research skills. (3)

5. enhance their ability to speak and listen to others. (4)

6. expand their vocabulary. (5)

7. develop an understanding of basic grammar and its usage in literature and writing. (6)

**Performance Indicators**

1. Literature
   1. In class discussions, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the literary elements, including plot, characterization, setting, theme, tone, structure and point of view
   2. Students will be able to describe the cultural and historical aspects of the text including background and setting.
2. Reading Fluency
   1. Students will work towards reading from a variety of different genres with accuracy, immediate recognition and expression.
3. Comprehension
   1. Students will predict text content using prior knowledge and text features, confirm predictions for accuracy, generate clarifying questions while reading, connect information and events in the text in order to relate both personally and topically to related texts and sources, and use reading strategies to interpret text.
   2. Students will analyze plot development to determine how plots are resolved, identify and compare themes across works, describe a character based on actions, thoughts, and deeds, contrast points of view, analyze the elements of setting to the mood and tone of the text, and draw conclusions about the style, mood and meaning of the text based on the author’s word choice.
4. Writing / Oral Expression
   1. Students will be able to use effective content (use clear focused ideas and details to support the topic), organization (a clear introduction, body and end which is appropriate to the style of writing), voice (a strong sense of audience and identity), word choice (accurate, specific and powerful words), sentence fluency (varied sentences that flow and sound natural/appropriate), and convention (correct mechanics including capitals, commas, spelling, grammar, usage and paragraph breaks) in their writing (Six Writing Traits).
   2. Students will use a writing process, which includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.
   3. Students will write a paragraph with a clear topic sentence, relevant supporting details and a strong conclusion.
   4. Students will write a minimum of ten poems of different types and styles demonstrating and understanding of poetic devices (image, metaphor, simile, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, etc.). At least one poem will address a theme relevant to the literature that the class in reading.
   5. Students will write a book report on a book of their choosing and demonstrate an understanding of protagonist, antagonist, setting, genre, conflicts, theme and basic analysis/critique.
   6. Students will create a project based on the summer reading (Hatchet and/or Julie of the Wolves) and share it with the class with attention to the details that illustrate a clear understanding of the text.
5. Language
   1. Students will be able to determine the meaning of vocabulary using linguistic roots and affixes, use context to identify the intended meaning of the unfamiliar words, use context to identify the meaning of words with multiple meanings.
   2. Students will be able to determine the meaning of figurative language including simile, metaphor, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, personification, image, oxymoron, plot, setting, theme, conflicts, genre, allusion and characterization.
   3. Students will learn to recognize and correct grammatical and mechanical errors in their writing by using a variety of editing and revising techniques.

**Assessments**

1. Persuasive Essay, Short Story, and Research Paper Writing Rubrics.
2. Two Tests on *The Children’s Homer* (One for *The Iliad*, one for *The Odyssey*).
3. Two Tests on the 8 Parts of Speech.
4. In-class Projects on the Summer Reading Books
5. Group Presentation on *The Giver* with an Oral Presentation Rubric
6. Reading Comprehension Quizzes
7. Vocabulary Quizzes
8. Grammar Exercises
9. Nightly Reading and Active Reading Worksheets
10. In-class Worksheets and Writing Assignments

We use tests, writing rubrics, performance rubrics, quizzes, in-class assignments and homework assignments to assess student learning. Each graded assessment is worth a certain number of points, depending on how much material the assessment covers and how much of the students’ time was devoted to the units.

**Core Topics**

**FIRST QUARTER CORE TOPICS:**

1. Getting Acquainted and Class Rules

2. Studied the Summer Reading: Percy Jackson & The Lightening Thieft and City of Ember

3. Studied the First Four Parts of Speech: Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Prepositions

4. Studied with Rodman Philbrick's Freak the Mighty

**SECOND QUARTER CORE TOPICS:**

1. Studied the Last Four Parts of Speech: Verbs, Adverbs, Conjunctions, Interjections

2. Studied the building of a Perfect Society

3. Studied with Lois Lowry’s The Giver

**THIRD QUARTER CORE TOPICS**:

1. Studied with Lois Lowry’s The Giver

2. Wrote a Persuasive Essay

3. Learned the art of revision/revision

4. Studied with Realms of Gold: A Core Knowledge Reader

**FOURTH QUARTER CORE TOPICS:**

1. Studied with Realms of Gold: A Core Knowledge Reader

2. Wrote a Short Story

3. Wrote a Research Essay / Informative Speech

4. Wrote Poetry

**Specific Content**

During the first few days of the first quarter, the students will get acquainted with each other, as well as learn specific classroom procedures. Then, they will complete a project on the summer reading books they were required to finish over the summer. A grammar unit on the first four parts of speech – nouns, pronouns, adjectives and prepositions – will follow, before getting into our first literature based unit of the year with Rodman Philbrick's novel, Freak the Mighty. The students will be exposed to literary devices such as the hero cycle described by Joseph Campbell and foreshadowing, and also take a closer look at character motivations and analysis.

Throughout the first quarter and indeed, the school year, we will also have weekly vocabulary quizzes, and reading comprehension quizzes from the literature we are studying. The vocabulary lessons focus exclusively on the grammatical parts of speech, using these words in a contextual sentence to show that they understand the meaning of the word. The reading comprehension quizzes will assess their active reading skills by interpreting and summarizing the content of the previous nights homework assignment.

Our continuing second quarter study of grammar sees the students learn the last four parts of speech – verbs, adverbs, conjunctions and interjections. Then, our attention will then shift to the perfect society, where the students will be asked to design and create their own version of a utopian community, before beginning Lois Lowry’s, The Giver.

Our continuing third quarter study of The Giver will include learning about the problems associated with a utopian society, the importance of memory, and an in-depth look at the philosophical questions raised in the text concerning the nature of love, choice, accountability and change. The students will then be required to write a persuasive essay delineating their thoughts on one of these questions, which will include an entire unit on outlining, writing electronically, and the art of editing/revising. We then switch our focus to short stories and creative writing; studying authors like Mark Twain, Saki, and O. Henry in Realms of Gold: A Core Knowledge Reader. Additional authors we will study are Roald Dahl, Barbara Kingsolver, Tim Winton and Oliver Smithfield.

In fact, throughout the year the students will have writing lessons and assignments due at various times. Numerous literary terms, sayings, phrases, and spelling will also be covered in these lessons. Before beginning any writing assignment, the students will have a rubric that is used to grade the assignment, and the due dates for any outlines, drafts, and final versions of it as well. Students will also have opportunities to engage in peer and self-editing during the year, and will learn how to write, edit, and submit their written work electronically using their Google Chrome Books. In addition, the students will also keep a daily journal they will write in at the start of every class. These journal entries will always include a writing prompt, and will occasionally be shared with the class.

Our fourth quarter study of short stories and poetry from Realms of Gold: A Core Knowledge Reader will include a comprehensive sampling from writers such as William Shakespeare, Maya Angelou, William Wordsworth and Roald Dahl. The students will also write a research paper, which they will read out loud in class as part of our speech unit. These papers will then be used to recognize the best speakers in the Sixth Grade for the Middle School Speech Competition in the spring. We will finish the year with a unit on poetry, where the students will study some famous poems, before spending time writing their own.

**Resources**

*Freak the Mighty*

*The Giver*

*Realms of Gold:* (Volume 1)

*Write Source 2000*

Membean Vocabulary Online Program

Alternative poems and short stories

*Wordly Wise* (Course 6)