

# A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction

*Grades 4 to 6*



## VOLUME THREE Planning and Classroom Management

## **A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4 to 6**

### **Volume One: Foundations of Literacy Instruction for the Junior Learner**

1. The Junior Learner
2. Knowledge and Skills Required for Literacy
3. Principles of Effective Literacy Instruction

### **Volume Two: Assessment**

### **Volume Three: Planning and Classroom Management**

1. Planning
2. Classroom Environment and Resources

The subsequent volumes in the series will cover a range of topics, including instructional approaches in oral communication, reading, writing, and media literacy, and technology as it supports instruction and learning.

# **A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4 to 6**

*A Multivolume Resource from the Ministry of Education*

VOLUME THREE

Planning and Classroom Management



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# INTRODUCTION

*A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4 to 6* is organized into several volumes. The first three volumes provide the foundation for effective literacy instruction and literacy learning in the junior grades. Subsequent volumes go more deeply into what to teach – and how – in order to help all students experience success.

Volume 3, “Planning and Classroom Management”, focuses on planning for literacy instruction and on the classroom environment and resources. Chapter 1 describes planning approaches and types of plans, and provides a detailed discussion of the processes and tools that can be used in long-range, short-term, and lesson planning. Chapter 2 describes how the classroom environment can be organized to make the most of the resources available, examines various types of texts appropriate for different aspects of literacy instruction, and discusses considerations involved in selecting texts for students with different backgrounds, abilities, and interests.

In each volume in this series, teachers are reminded of the key messages, listed in the chart on page 2, that are intended to help them address the goals of the junior literacy program. The key messages are fundamental ideas that underlie all of the approaches, strategies, and tools described in this guide. They answer the question, “Why am I teaching this material, in this way, to this group of students, at this time?” Teachers can use these key messages to guide their practice.

## **Diversity and Effective Instruction**

### **A Vision for Equity in Ontario Classrooms**

School classrooms represent the world in miniature; they mirror our larger society. The diversity that exists in our classrooms has helped to shape our vision for education in Ontario today. All children, regardless of their background and/or ability, deserve opportunities to learn and to grow, both cognitively and socially. *The challenge is to reach more children more effectively. To do this, we need to create a vision for learning that makes every child feel included.*

To develop the right learning conditions for each individual child, we must allow for a variety of cultural experiences and multiple perspectives, so that all children feel valued in the classroom.

## Key Messages for Teachers and Students

Effective literacy teachers in Grades 4 to 6 understand that:		Successful students in Grades 4 to 6 understand that:
Literacy instruction must be driven by equitable ongoing assessment.	→	Assessments are a way for the teacher and for me to understand how well I am learning.
Literacy instruction must be explicit and relevant to students' lives.	→	I learn best when I am reading and writing for a real purpose.
Literacy instruction must be differentiated, inclusive, and respectful of all students.	→	Some tasks will be difficult, but I can learn the strategies that I need to succeed.
Students' unique identities and diverse experiences can contribute greatly to a rich learning environment.	→	I have valuable knowledge and experiences that I can share with my classmates.
Talk is the foundation for literacy.	→	Accountable talk helps me to improve my reading, writing, and thinking.
Reading, writing, talking, listening, thinking, viewing, and representing are reciprocal literacy processes.	→	Reading will make me a better writer, and writing will make me a better reader. Talking, listening, and thinking will make me a better reader and writer.
Students need to become proficient in "multiliteracies", involving texts of all types.	→	I need to use my literacy skills to work with texts of all types.
Students need to learn that their literacy skills are transferable to all content areas.	→	I can apply the strategies and skills that I learn in Language to all subjects.
Students learn best when they are motivated and actively engaged in their learning.	→	If I am actively involved in making meaning when I read and write, I will improve my learning.
Explicit feedback given immediately after assessment leads to improved levels of student achievement.	→	The teacher's feedback will help me to improve my learning.
By gradually releasing responsibility for learning to students, teachers help students improve their learning and develop a greater level of independence.	→	The strategies I am learning will help me become a proficient and independent reader, writer, and communicator.
When students are encouraged to assess their own work and set their own goals, they take ownership of their learning.	→	I need to think about my learning and set goals for my learning.
Authentic literacy experiences help students develop skills and attitudes that will serve them throughout their lives and improve the quality of their lives.	→	Knowing how to read, write, and communicate effectively will help me be successful during my school years and throughout my future.
Metacognitive skills give students a growing awareness of themselves as learners and a greater degree of independence.	→	Thinking about my thinking will help me understand what I have learned, make decisions about my learning, and become a more independent learner.
Critical-thinking and critical-literacy skills are the tools students need in order to develop into active, responsible participants in the global community.	→	I need to think critically about all the texts I encounter, and ask myself questions about the accuracy and fairness of the stories or information in these texts.
Professional collaboration and ongoing learning help teachers develop a deeper, broader, more reflective understanding of effective instruction.	→	Working with others gives me new ideas and helps me to reflect on and expand my own thinking and learning.



## Diversity, Equity, and Student Achievement

Effective learning environments are those that consistently foster student achievement. The performance of all students is strengthened when the diversity of the class is recognized and valued.

Acknowledging students' different backgrounds and experiences is best accomplished by weaving appropriate examples throughout lessons in all subject areas. Learning occurs when students are exposed to the unfamiliar. Discussing viewpoints and sharing aspects of different cultures, customs, and languages are powerful tools for learning.

Being committed to inclusion means empowering students to use their voices and experiences in building their knowledge and understanding. The diversity of students' voices must be reflected in learning materials, discussions, problem solving, and learning applications. Teachers who recognize and build on the diversity of their students adopt flexible approaches, maintain high standards, and bring concepts alive by presenting them in contexts that students perceive to be real and meaningful.

For instance, in developing a social studies unit on early settlers in Upper Canada (Grade 3), or a history unit on the development of Western Canada (Grade 8), teachers need to ensure that stories of pioneers who established Black communities, such as Dresden and Buxton in Ontario, or Breton, Wildwood, Maidstone, and Campsie in Alberta and Saskatchewan, are included in the readings and pictures they choose for students. Similarly, in science programs, the achievements of scientists and inventors who are women or who come from Aboriginal, Black, or other minority backgrounds must be celebrated. Pictures and examples should illustrate the accomplishments of all members of society, so that children will see themselves in the curriculum.

Being open to students' diverse experiences and points of view increases opportunities for teachers to seize teachable moments that support effective learning.

“Literacy is closely linked to culture. The texts that children see, use, and create in the junior grades send a strong message about the culture of learning in their school and in Ontario. Students who see themselves reflected and affirmed in classroom texts and in instruction (that is, those who experience language, culture, and identity *engagement*) come to appreciate that reading and writing are genuinely *for* them and *about* them. In addition to having their own identity affirmed in this way, junior students learn about the cultures and identities of others in the classroom and in the community, and begin to appreciate the richness and diversity of Canadian society. From this firm foundation, students learn to live with respect and intellectual vigour in a multicultural world, and they build the higher-order thinking and critical-literacy skills they need for responsible citizenship and lifelong learning in the twenty-first century.”

*(Literacy for Learning, 2004, p. 6)*

## Supporting Diverse Learning Styles

Student self-esteem is fostered through the creation of competencies. Helping students to develop competencies empowers them and creates an *intrinsic* motivation to learn.

Success in supporting student learning depends, in part, on taking into account the diversity of learning styles among students in the classroom. There are many different theories about learning styles that highlight the restrictions of conventional thinking about learning and that help teachers respond more effectively to the diverse learning styles of their students. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is one example. "Multiple intelligences", as identified by Gardner, reflect the following ways of demonstrating intellectual ability: Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Verbal/Linguistic, Logical/Mathematical, Musical/Rhythmic, Visual/Spatial, Bodily/Kinesthetic, and Naturalist. When teachers take these intelligences into account in their lesson design and their assessment of student achievement, they can focus on a range of student strengths that reflects the varied abilities of the class as a whole.

## Creating an Environment Conducive to Learning

An environment that helps promote learning is critical to engaging students in schoolwork and class activities. Learning is a social activity. However, the ways in which students respond to the social environment in the classroom may vary considerably. For some students, the environment may be as integral to learning as the actual learning activities in which they participate. When students are comfortable and feel secure in their learning environment, their true potential will be reflected in their performance. Recognizing and valuing diversity strengthens students' capacity to work both independently and within a collaborative setting.

## Recognizing Diversity in Its Many Forms

Diversity takes many forms and exists in all Ontario communities. In addition to cultural diversity, classrooms will have students of different gender, intellectual and physical ability, religious and social background, and sexual orientation.

Children will experience diversity throughout their lives. Their capacity to develop awareness and empathy early on will influence their future actions considerably.

"Aboriginal communities in Ontario are seeking to preserve and develop their languages through community-based literacy learning. As well, Ontario has a long tradition of growth through immigration, with many people from around the world bringing their language, culture, and experiences to this country. With increasing globalization and the shift to an information economy, the diverse backgrounds and experiences of all people become a resource base that can enrich life and benefit all Ontarians."

*(Literacy for Learning, 2004, p. 7)*

## “Diversity Lenses”: Bringing Equity Into Focus

Success in engaging all students in their learning ultimately depends on teaching lessons from multiple perspectives. By wearing “diversity lenses” when planning lessons and during class discussions, teachers create a vision for equity in education that permeates the classroom, leaving an indelible imprint on young minds. When as much of society as possible is represented in that vision, teachers succeed in dismantling feelings of alienation and exclusion and instead build feelings of respect and acceptance.

The checklist on the following pages will assist teachers as they reflect on and prepare lessons. Not every item may be applicable to every classroom. The checklist represents a “lens” through which teachers can view their own instructional strategies and approaches, ensuring that diverse realities are reflected in their students’ experiences in the classroom.

### CHECKLIST FOR AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

Be sure to take the following considerations into account in planning classroom instruction and assessment.

#### ATMOSPHERE

- Create an atmosphere where all aspects of the classroom honour equity and inclusion and respect gender differences; diverse ethnocultural and faith communities, family structures, student abilities and needs; and differences in socioeconomic status.
- Take care that all students feel accepted and gain a sense of belonging.
- Convey your belief that all students can learn and succeed.
- Provide, for each student, a balance of challenge and support to scaffold new learning.
- Convey openness and warmth and encourage students to interact with others in the same way.
- Emphasize and model values of fairness, empathy, acceptance, kindness, respect, and responsibility to and for other people.
- Create an atmosphere of respect for the school community and foster positive connections between the school and students’ home and community cultures.
- Recognize and value student improvement and celebrate success for each individual – e.g., best work of all students is displayed; new learning, improvement, and success are celebrated inside and outside the classroom; commitment, perseverance, helpfulness, and intrinsic motivation are recognized and valued.
- Challenge any and all stereotypical comments and jokes and inappropriate behaviours.

#### ENVIRONMENT

- Provide images and visual displays in the classroom that are gender balanced and reflect the diversity of the community and the world outside the classroom.
- Provide texts, resources, and learning materials in the classroom that reflect diversity of culture, ethnicity, faith, and language, and differences in socioeconomic status, physical ability, and family structure.
- Establish classroom routines that are sensitive to the individual needs and cultural norms of students.

*(continued)*

## CHECKLIST FOR AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY – CONTINUED

- Take care that assignments of classroom responsibilities are inclusive, gender balanced, and not stereotyped.
- Give all students opportunities to display their best work.

### COMMUNITY

- Value and celebrate diversity in the community by encouraging activities such as family literacy events, visits to classrooms, and storytelling and games from various cultures.
- Create and plan literacy events using culturally diverse texts and learning materials.
- Use storytelling, games, and performing arts to engage students and their families in the enjoyment of learning together.
- Invite community involvement in displays of books and materials appropriate for junior learners.
- Take care that all parents/guardians receive invitations in their own language as needed.
- Invite parents to share their insights, experiences, and concerns within the context of the classroom curriculum.
- Invite guest speakers from various organizations, arts groups, etc. who represent the diversity of the local community and of the larger community in Ontario.

### RESOURCES

- Use resources that value and reflect diversity – e.g., poems, rhymes, songs, dance, and music from a variety of cultures; audio-taped books in a variety of first languages.
- Provide resources that appeal to both boys and girls.
- Use resources that reflect the interests and perspectives of both genders and present characters from a variety of different cultures and backgrounds in non-stereotypical roles.
- Use a range of resources that reflect the diverse cultures, social backgrounds, and experiences of students in the class – e.g., that include topics of cultural and social relevance.
- Provide resources that accurately reflect the history, culture, and realities of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.
- Use resources that present both local and global images and perspectives.
- Provide dual-language books and books in students' first languages.
- Provide a variety of resources with a range of reading levels for students, including English language learners, at different stages of reading development.
- Take care that financial considerations do not prevent students from participating in class trips and other school-sponsored experiences.

### READING

- Provide opportunities for reading experiences that enable students to build on their own experiences, language, and culture.
- Select texts that show situations, problems, solutions, and experiences in a variety of cultural settings.
- Select texts that show both male and female heroes, role models, and leaders from a variety of backgrounds.

## CHECKLIST FOR AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY – CONTINUED

- Select texts, such as fairytales and fables, that invite comparison of similar plots, storylines, and characters across a variety of cultures.
- Arrange text sets to include universal themes – e.g., hope, struggle, survival, courage, family – presented from a variety of different viewpoints and experiences.
- Arrange text sets of fictional and informational material that address topics of social relevance – e.g., immigration, poverty, homelessness, war, social justice.
- Use texts to create role-play opportunities that enable students to experience the world through the eyes of another.
- Use fictional and informational texts to help students identify stereotypes of individuals, cultures, and social backgrounds.
- Present picture books that enable students to explore images of gender, ethnicity, or physical disability.
- Include a range of texts that present the contributions to society, industry, science and technology, the arts, etc. of people from a variety of ethnocultural backgrounds and from different parts of the world.
- Provide texts by local and international authors from a variety of cultures, social backgrounds, and historical time periods, and written from a variety of viewpoints.
- Use discussion and oral activities to help students make explicit connections between what they read and their own background and experiences.

### WRITING

- Provide opportunities for writing experiences that enable students to build on their own experiences, language, and culture.
- Provide models of writing from culturally diverse sources.
- Provide opportunities to explore oral and written language across a variety of cultures – e.g., oral storytelling, written stories; narrative techniques, language patterns.
- Provide supports for students who are challenged by various aspects of writing and spelling – e.g., graphic organizers, tape recorders, use of a scribe, allowing students to do tasks or make presentations in alternative ways.
- Provide students with the opportunity to compose orally before writing.
- Engage students in an exploration of writing across cultures and time – e.g., alphabets, writing forms and purposes, pictographs, materials, conventions.

### LANGUAGE

- Respect and value the language students bring to school.
- Tap into students' family language and culture as foundations for learning.
- Provide classroom activities that enable students to learn that different language forms and styles and structures are appropriate to different situations – e.g., home, church, business meeting, school council, interview, parent–teacher interview, telephone conversation.
- Give students opportunities to consolidate their ideas verbally prior to writing where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for ESL/ELD students to use their first language to formulate and/or express their thoughts orally and in writing.

*(continued)*

## CHECKLIST FOR AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY – CONTINUED

### MEDIA/POPULAR CULTURE

- Guide students in examining stereotypes and bias in media works from a variety of sources.
- Use media texts to develop students' awareness of diversity (e.g., in beliefs, values, traditions, gender roles, family structures) among cultures, faiths, and people from different social backgrounds.
- Use media texts from different cultures to develop students' awareness of how cultural perspectives influence presentation of the same topics or events.

### TEACHING PRACTICES

- Plan for differentiated instruction based on the different stages that students have reached in the reading process and their individual progress.
- Help each student choose topics of high interest and engagement for independent reading, writing, and inquiry.
- Provide appropriate opportunities to explore issues of bias and stereotyping related to language, culture, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, family structure, age, and physical and cognitive ability.
- Use technology to provide additional visual, oral, aural, and/or physical supports for students who need them.
- Use instructional strategies that reflect diverse learning styles.
- Make strong links to students' prior knowledge and interests.
- Tap into students' family, language, and culture as foundations for learning.
- Group students in ways that are sensitive to students' varying comfort levels with group interaction.
- Respect culturally diverse expectations and practices with regard to group work – e.g., willingness to ask questions, express disagreement, take initiative.
- Use a variety of grouping strategies –e.g., use same-gender or mixed-gender groups; group students with mixed abilities, interests, and backgrounds; with similar reading levels or interests; with the same first language.
- Take care that homework assignments are equitable – e.g., recognize that assignments that require access to technology or use of libraries may result in inequities and create barriers to success for some students.

### ASSESSMENT

- Use assessment methods that reflect the diversity of students' learning styles, language, and culture.
- Use a variety of assessment tasks so that students with different learning styles can achieve success.
- Take into consideration cultural expectations and behaviours that may have an effect on assessment – e.g., shyness in answering questions, expressing opinions.
- Provide accommodations for students who require extra time or additional explanations.
- Provide information about the results of student assessments, classroom events, celebrations, etc. to all parents, including those for whom English is not their first language.
- Use evaluation methods that are equitable and take into account the diversity of students' life experiences and learning needs – e.g., refugee experience, amount of previous schooling.

## Planning Language Programs for Students With Special Education Needs

*Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6, 2005* describes a set of principles, based in research, that should guide all program planning for and assessment of students with special education needs. Teachers planning language programs need to pay particular attention to these principles, which are as follows.

Program planning for students with special education needs:

- is premised on the belief that all students can succeed;
- incorporates evidence-based best practices for effective instruction;
- involves a support team for the classroom teacher that includes the principal, other teachers, and professional resources (families and community agencies should be active contributors);
- incorporates universal design;
- involves differentiating instruction.

The Ontario curriculum offers guidance for the assessment of the achievement of students with special education needs, including those who have not reached the expectations for the grade and those who have exceeded the expectations. In any given classroom, students may demonstrate a wide range of learning styles and needs. Teachers plan programs and assess students in ways that recognize this diversity and give students assessment tasks that respect their particular abilities so that all students can derive the greatest benefits possible from the teaching and learning process.

In planning programs for and assessing students with special education needs, teachers should examine both the curriculum expectations for the appropriate grade level and the needs of the individual student to determine which of the following options is appropriate for the student: no accommodations or modifications, accommodations only, or modified expectations with the possibility of accommodations. All accommodations or modifications must be suited to the individual student's strengths and needs.

If the student requires either accommodations or modified expectations, or both, this information must be recorded in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP also identifies how the student's progress will be assessed and reviewed. For a detailed

### Accommodations

"Accommodations refer to the special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and /or individualized equipment required to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. Accommodations do not alter the provincial curriculum expectations for the grade."

*(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004a, p. 25)*

### Modifications

"Modifications are changes made in the age-appropriate grade-level expectations for a subject in order to meet a student's learning needs. These changes may involve developing expectations that reflect knowledge and skills required in the curriculum for a different grade level and/or increasing or decreasing the number and /or complexity of the regular grade-level curriculum expectations."

*(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004a, pp. 25–26)*

discussion of the ministry's requirements for IEPs, see *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation, 2000*. More detailed information about planning programs for exceptional students can be found in *The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide, 2004*. (Both documents are available at [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca).)

The student's achievement of learning expectations and his or her progress towards meeting the goals identified in the IEP should be monitored and assessed continuously, using a wide variety of methods and techniques. The assessment procedures and strategies normally used may need to be adjusted to give students with special education needs the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the expectations. If a student requires "accommodations only", assessment and evaluation of his or her achievement will be based on the appropriate grade-level curriculum expectations and the achievement levels. If a student requires modified expectations, assessment and evaluation of his or her achievement will be based on the learning expectations identified in the IEP and on the achievement levels. When reporting student achievement on the report card, the teacher should include relevant information on the student's demonstrated learning of the modified expectations as well as next steps for the student's learning in the subject.

Examples of methods and accommodations to use in assessing students with special education needs include the following:

- permitting students to demonstrate learning in ways that may differ from those used by the rest of the class (e.g., using various technologies, using a scribe, giving oral instead of written responses to test questions)
- using open-ended questions and performance tasks that allow for a variety of responses
- administering tests individually or in small groups
- providing a quiet environment in which assessment may take place
- allowing extra time for students to write tests or complete assignments
- simplifying the language used in teaching and the instructions and questions used in assignments and tests
- encouraging students to assess and evaluate their own work and to participate in assessing the work of their peers

(Adapted from Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 14)

For a more detailed description of planning language programs and differentiating assessment for students with special education needs, see *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6, 2005* (pp. 117–122) as well as *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language, 2006* (pp. 24–26).



# 1

# PLANNING

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## INTRODUCTION

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Planning for literacy instruction is an essential part of overall instructional planning. Effective teachers begin with the literacy goals and key messages for learning clearly in mind; they create long-range, short-term, and daily lesson plans aimed at moving students towards those goals; and they create a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. At each step in the planning process, they are mindful of the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of their students, and they relate these to the concepts, skills, and expectations of the curriculum.

“Effective instruction in language, literature, and the content areas begins with thoughtful, artful organization and planning.”

*(Fountas and Pinnell, 2001, p. 13)*

Some planning decisions may need to be made by grade partners or by the entire division or school. For example, the school may have a plan outlining which text forms need to be taught in each grade, or a division may have an overview of which authors and genres students need to be exposed to each year to ensure that by the end of the division students have had rich and varied literary experiences. Grade partners may decide which themes to focus on at certain times of the year, and individual teachers may determine which information skills to teach each term. Teachers work collaboratively with each other, with school administrators, and with teaching support staff to plan literacy learning that is well integrated from subject to subject and grade to grade, and that meets the needs of all students.

Literacy instruction must be explicit and relevant to students’ lives.

## PLANNING FOR LITERACY INSTRUCTION

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Planning requires that teachers think about what they want students to have learned and experienced by the end of the year in order to set clear goals for both students and teacher. Goal setting should focus on the essential concepts, skills, and strategies students need in order to become proficient communicators. In setting goals, teachers need to take into account the expectations outlined in the curriculum document for Language, as well as any information from assessment about students’ strengths and needs. Teachers then plan accordingly in order to reach their goals.

Plan with the end in mind.

A brief survey follows suggesting some approaches to goal setting for the different strands in the Language curriculum. *Teachers should note that the lists and descriptions of “essential learning” related to each strand are suggestions only and are not meant to be definitive or exhaustive.*

## Reading

In setting goals for reading instruction, teachers focus on the concepts, skills, and strategies that enable readers to make meaning. Essential skills and strategies include, among others, the ability to draw on prior knowledge, question, make connections, visualize, infer, and monitor comprehension (Keene and Zimmerman, 1997). Students also need the ability to distinguish what is important in a text and use features such as titles, headings, graphics, and print arrangement to aid in comprehension.

“Effective writing instruction begins with specific goals and thoughtful, detailed plans for the year ahead, as well as a clearly defined structure and organization for each writing day.”

*(Davis and Hill, 2003, p. xx)*

## Writing

In setting goals for writing instruction, teachers focus on the writing skills and knowledge students need to become proficient writers, able to use written language for a variety of purposes and in a variety of forms. Essential learning will be determined in part by the various text forms and genres that are to be taught. Decisions about which writing tools and strategies and which writer’s craft techniques to emphasize will flow from the purpose of the writing and will guide decisions about appropriate cross-curricular applications through which students can practise and consolidate their skills.

Talk is the foundation for literacy.

## Oral Communication

In setting goals for instruction in oral communication, teachers focus on the skills and knowledge students need to become proficient listeners and speakers. Essential learning includes the skills and strategies students need to engage in various forms of talk for a variety of purposes.

## Listening

In listening, essential learning could include strategies for:

- identifying significant ideas and information;
- assessing the speaker’s purpose and credibility;
- understanding the codes of verbal and non-verbal communication in a wide range of contexts;
- listening for a variety of purposes in a variety of situations;
- seeking clarification;
- giving positive feedback;
- responding with respect and courtesy;
- recognizing the validity of different points of view;
- assessing how the speaker influences the audience.

## Speaking

In speaking, essential learning could include strategies for:

- expressing ideas clearly and effectively;
- setting goals and staying on topic;
- speaking for a variety of purposes in formal and informal situations;
- considering and responding to the needs of a variety of audiences;
- avoiding bias and inappropriate language;
- listening and responding respectfully to questions and different views;
- adjusting thinking to accommodate new information;
- building on the ideas of others;
- developing confidence as a speaker.

## Media Literacy

To develop media literacy, students need to develop understanding of certain “core concepts” about media. These include the knowledge that:

- media messages are constructed;
- media messages contain beliefs, values, and points of view;
- each person interprets a media message in his or her own way;
- media have a social, commercial, and/or political purpose;
- each medium has its own language, style, and form.

Teachers need to select media texts and plan instruction so as to further students’ understanding of such core concepts and enable them to interpret and analyse media messages of all types. Essential learning includes the ability to consider the author of the message, the intended audience, the content and purpose of the message, and the format and techniques used to deliver the message and influence the recipient’s thinking. Also important for media literacy is the student’s ability to examine whether and how the message reflects, distorts, or ignores social conditions and the perspectives of various social and cultural groups.

## Language and Word Study

In setting goals for instruction in language and word study, teachers plan for dynamic language activities in the first few weeks of school, during which students are immersed in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Teachers use opportunities provided by these

activities to observe and assess the language strengths and needs of their students, including comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling. During this initial information-gathering period, teachers ask general questions such as the following:

- What do students need to know about how language and words work?
- What do I need to teach in order for students to become independent learners?
- When will I deliberately integrate language and word study into broader literacy instruction and cross-curricular applications?
- What types of cross-curricular applications will provide an authentic context for teaching language and word study and encourage and enable students to practise what they learn?

The answers to these questions will help teachers identify what the essential learning for the year should be. In addition, teachers gather information about individual students' specific needs based on questions such as:

- **Spelling**

Does the student:

- misspell frequently used words?
- spell quickly and automatically?
- demonstrate confusions (e.g., *s*, *es*, *s'*, and *'s*)?
- know when to double consonants?
- recognize and apply patterns in spelling?

- **Vocabulary**

Does the student:

- monitor his or her comprehension?
- know what to do to clarify the meaning of a word?
- use context clues to make meaning?
- deconstruct words to find meaning (e.g., identify root/prefix/suffix)?
- use new vocabulary in different contexts?
- make connections between words, looking for smaller within bigger?
- know how to determine if a word is important to the context within which it is used?
- recognize signal words?
- recognize bias or inappropriate use of language?

- **Reading and Writing for Meaning**

Does the student:

- self-correct?
- self-monitor for errors and meaning/comprehension?
- predict based on context?
- revise and edit for meaning?

### **Collaborating on Planning for Language and Word Study**

Teachers should consider ways to collaborate when setting goals for language and word study. By planning language and word study at the division or school level, teachers help to ensure the systematic coverage of important concepts and the development of a wide range of strategies for word solving, spelling, and vocabulary building. Grade and division teams can address these topics both as discrete areas of study and as components of other units. Their plans should address language concepts rather than the mere memorization of an agreed-upon list of words at each grade level.

For example, in planning a social studies unit on Medieval Times for Grade 4, teachers will likely identify key terms that students should be able to read, spell, and use correctly in context. These words should, however, also lead to a deeper exploration of spelling and vocabulary concepts that students can generalize to other words. The word *knight*, for example, could be used to generate a list of other words beginning with a silent *k*, or various patterns for silent letters at the beginning of words. Strategies for remembering silent letters could also be modelled and practised. A rich language program will combine the formal, planned study of language principles and the informal attention to these throughout the day in various subject areas.

## **PLANNING FOR INTEGRATED LITERACY LEARNING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

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As noted in Volume 1, Chapter 3, “Principles of Effective Literacy Instruction” (p. 104), the language learning that takes place in the junior grades is especially important because the literacy demands in these years increase dramatically in all subjects. Students are expected to understand more complex texts, to undertake more complex learning tasks, and to show more independence in their learning.

Students need to learn that their literacy skills are transferable to all content areas.

Students use language to learn in all subjects. Their language development – including learning and growth in reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing – is essential to and inseparable from their learning in each subject area. Each subject area has its own vocabulary, texts, and ways of making meaning. Teachers help students meet the learning challenges of the junior years by incorporating literacy instruction into all school subjects.

In order to integrate literacy instruction across the curriculum, teachers need to be thoroughly familiar with the curriculum expectations in all subjects. They can then plan ways in which explicit instruction in literacy skills leads to authentic and purposeful applications in other subjects, so that reading, writing, media literacy, and oral language development are combined with content learning. The integration of reading, writing, oral language, and media skills in other curriculum areas also enhances fluency in literacy and supports higher-order thinking. For example, students might learn paragraph skills in language arts and then use those skills to write a biography for social studies or a report for science. Or the teacher might complement a science lesson by reading aloud from a picture book on the science concepts being studied and showing students the illustrations it contains to demonstrate how illustrations and diagrams help readers understand more about those concepts. Students continue to need explicit literacy instruction throughout the junior grades to help them make meaning with increasingly complex concepts and texts.

### Tip for Teachers

Many engaging non-fiction books are available to help students experience language arts through science and social studies, and science and social studies through language arts. For example:

For Grade 4, consider *Washing the Willow Tree Loon*, by Jacqueline Briggs Martin (1995, New York: Simon and Schuster); *Creatures of Earth, Sea, and Sky*, by Georgia Heard (1992, Honesdale, PA: Wordsong); and *The Way Things Work*, by David Macaulay (1988, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin).

For Grade 5, see *Hottest, Coldest, Highest, Deepest*, by Steve Jenkins (1998, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin); *Mummies, Bones, and Body Parts*, by Charlotte Wilcox (2000, New York: Scholastic); and *It's Disgusting and We Ate It! True Food Facts from Around the World and Throughout History*, by James Solheim (1998, New York: Simon and Schuster).

For Grade 6, try *Hana's Suitcase: A True Story*, by Karen Levine (2002, Toronto: Second Story Press); *Star Walk*, by Seymour Simon (1995, New York: Morrow Junior Books); and *Remember: The Journey to School Integration*, by Toni Morrison (2004, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin).



## Tip for Teachers

The following professional resources offer ideas for cross-curricular literacy learning:

*On the Same Page: Shared Reading Beyond the Primary Grades*, by Janet Allen (2002, Portland, ME: Stenhouse)

*When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6–12*, by Kyleene Beers (2002, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann)

*Nonfiction Matters: Reading, Writing and Research in Grades 3–8*, by Stephanie Harvey (1998, Portland, ME: Stenhouse)

*Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*, by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis (2000, Portland, ME: Stenhouse)

*Info-Kids: How to Use Non-Fiction to Turn Reluctant Readers into Enthusiastic Learners*, by Ron Jobe and Mary Dayton-Sakari (2002, Portland, ME: Stenhouse)

## TEAMWORK FOR LITERACY PLANNING

An inspired team of educators working together can accomplish far more for students than any one teacher working alone. Successful teamwork begins with effective planning. Planning with a grade partner or larger team enables teachers to do the following:

- develop common goals
- share student resources and teaching materials
- allocate resources to address the curriculum expectations and the needs of students
- plan joint activities and special programs
- develop consistent approaches to the curriculum expectations, student practice, assessment, and evaluation
- avoid duplication
- engage in team teaching

Team planning sparks creativity and enhances the overall program. It also provides an opportunity for teachers to explore the breadth and depth of the curriculum as it develops through the junior grades. Knowing where students have been and where they need to go provides teachers with a more complete “big picture”.

Teaching support staff – such as those responsible for English as a second language/English literacy development (ESL/ELD), special education, library services, information technology, and curriculum content – bring a wealth of knowledge, strategies, and approaches that can enrich literacy learning to meet the wide-ranging needs and interests of students. By working as a team, classroom teachers and teaching support staff expand the range of options available for instruction and assessment.

Professional collaboration and ongoing learning help teachers develop a deeper, broader, more reflective understanding of effective instruction.

Author Linda Tilton describes two kinds of effective teamwork:

- **collaboration**, where staff members plan together outside the classroom, sharing ideas, resources and expertise; and
- **co-teaching**, where a team of teachers works together in one classroom, assisting and presenting at different times, and using a variety of methods, tasks, and groupings to support all students.

Tilton notes that “collaboration and co-teaching bring positive results and benefit all students in the learning community” (Tilton, 2003, p. 372). The benefits for students include exposure to a wider range of perspectives and expertise in the classroom,

### Collaborating With Colleagues

For more information about collaborating with colleagues, see the Signature Page, “Every Teacher a Leader”, by Michael Fullan, on page 21.

opportunities to see adults modelling effective teamwork in a community of learners, a sense that more than one teacher is “their” teacher, and a lower pupil-teacher ratio. Team planning with ESL/ELD and special education teachers keeps everyone involved and informed about long-term and short-term planning and results in a more coherent effort to improve student learning.

To be successful, collaboration and co-teaching require planning, trust, commitment, communication, a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, and flexibility. Because these take time to establish, teams may need to set incremental goals that help them to move towards their ideal collaboration or co-teaching situation.

It can be difficult to schedule meeting times among teachers and others who have contact with the students at different times during the school day. School administrators can help by making it a priority to schedule common planning times that enable collaborative teams to meet at least weekly. Volunteers and supply teachers can be used to help make this planning time a reality.

# Every Teacher a Leader

Michael Fullan



Michael Fullan is an international leader on educational change. He has developed a number of partnerships designed to bring about major school improvements and is engaged in training, consulting, and evaluation of change projects around the world.

A prolific author, Michael Fullan has published widely on educational change. His books are available in many languages.

In recent years we have learned a great deal more about how to improve the teaching and learning of literacy in schools. It does, of course, depend on the quality of individual teachers; but the way to ensure quality teaching on a large scale is to focus on the collective capacity of the school team to work together.

Collective capacity, or what some people call the professional learning community, develops through an increase in (1) the individual and collective instructional skills of teachers, (2) the resources available, and (3) the shared motivation and commitment to improve learning and achievement for all students.

To increase collective capacity means to engage in continuous professional development in interaction with other teachers, the principal, and others outside the school. The focus is on continually raising the bar and closing the gap of student learning so that all students prosper. Increasing collective capacity means making *moral purpose* a collective responsibility across the school. It includes developing new skills in *assessment for learning*, which is a powerful, high-yield strategy for accessing data on individual student learning, diagnosing what the information means, and linking such diagnosis to corrective action – all on an ongoing basis.

Two things happen when school leaders and all teachers engage in disciplined inquiry: one is that new ideas and knowledge are constantly being sorted out as people converge on best practices; the other is that shared cohesion and commitment are fostered. Best knowledge and shared commitment make a powerful combination.

For all of this to happen within the school, every teacher must feel a responsibility to contribute to the work of other teachers, and teachers as a group must

see the development of every individual teacher as a collective responsibility. The paradox is that for every teacher to be a leader, the group must actively promote individual leadership.

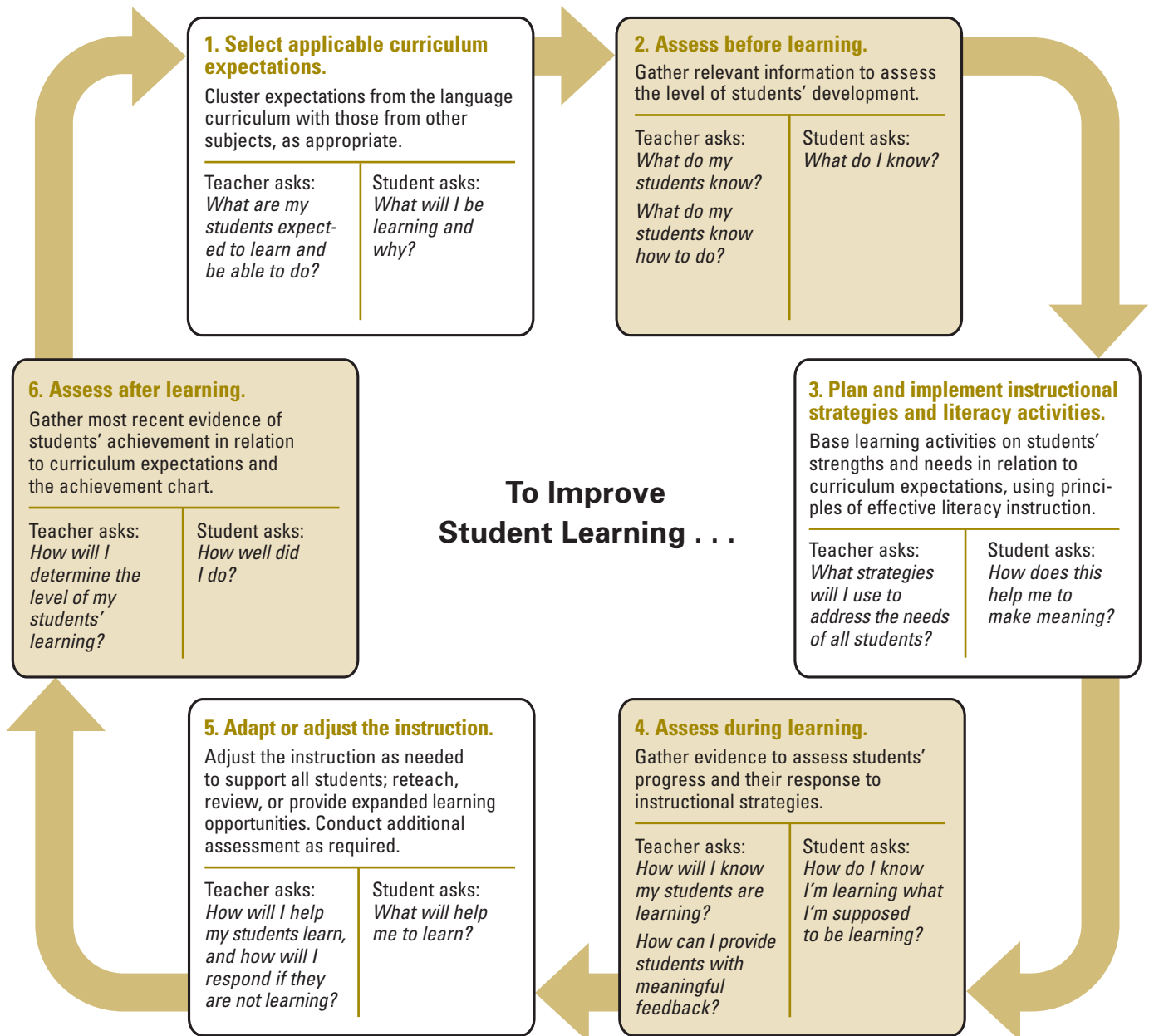
School capacity has an external face as well. Everything I have said about the internal working of the school applies to external connections. Professional learning communities cannot be confined to internal collaboration. In district-wide work, for example, school-to-school learning – in clusters or otherwise – has been a powerful way to widen the knowledge base and enlarge commitment beyond individual schools. Such *lateral capacity building* increases the efficacy of the district as a whole as individuals and schools begin to identify with the success of other schools. Teachers, schools, and the district office have equal responsibilities for improving all schools in the district.

To enlarge the participation pie even further, the development of individual teachers, schools, and districts is enhanced when people working at the local level realize that effective literacy instruction is a province-wide goal and responsibility. Whether one participates in wider networks or uses the resources of the Ministry of Education, chances of overall improvements in the province are greater when involvement both deepens and widens. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, but only when the parts interact to increase each other's capacity.

What is exciting these days is that there are many more opportunities to become involved in learning networks and cultures. As purposeful participation increases, individual and collective capacity progresses hand in hand. When that happens on a large scale, all students in the province are the beneficiaries.

# THE LITERACY ASSESSMENT, PLANNING, AND INSTRUCTION CYCLE

The figure below shows how teachers use planning, instruction, and assessment in combination to continually fine-tune the literacy program to meet the needs of all of their junior students.



## TYPES OF PLANS

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Effective instructional planning involves three stages:

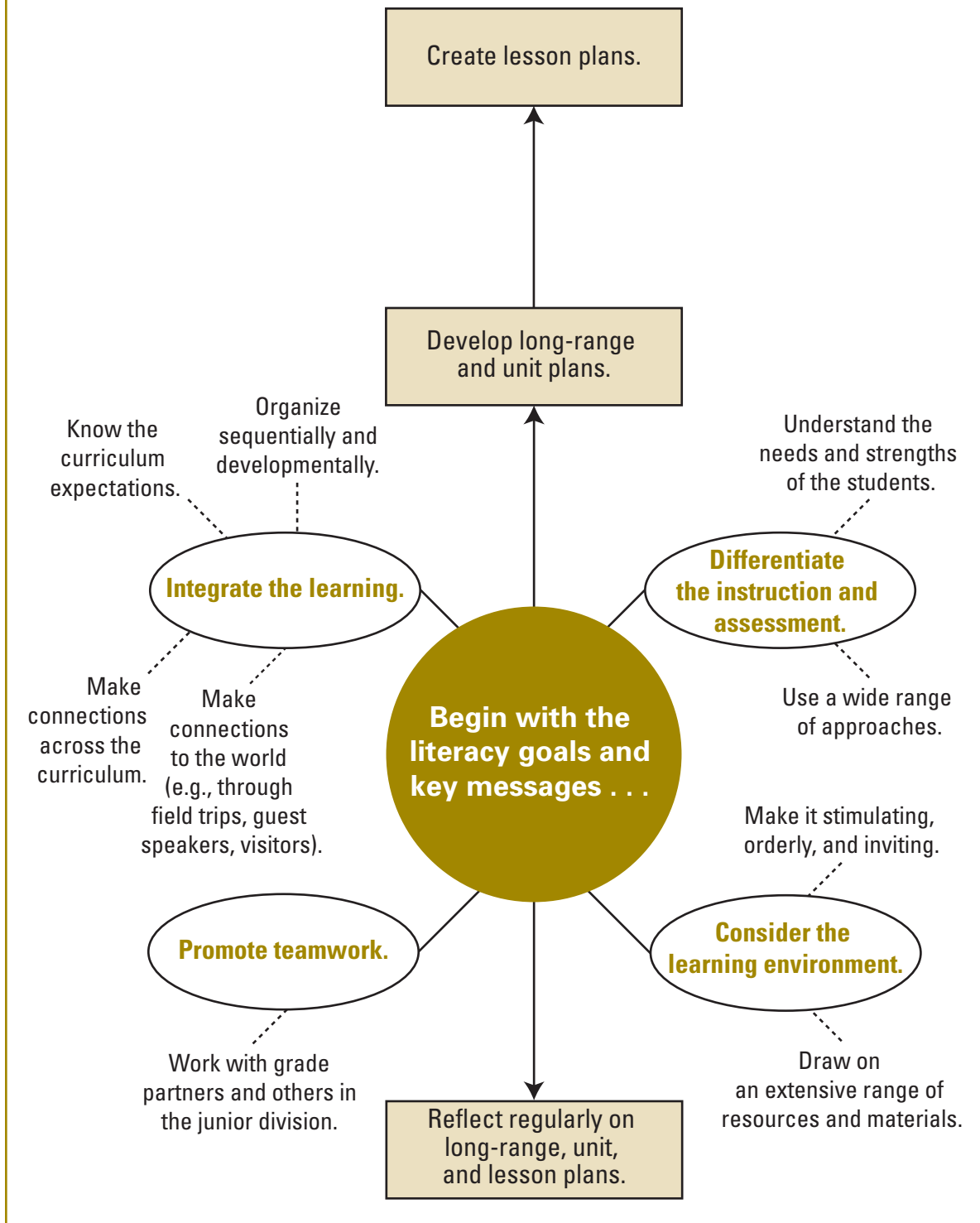
- *Long-range planning* provides a broad overview of learning in every subject area for the whole year.
- *Short-term or unit planning* builds on a long-range plan to identify the learning goals and instructional and assessment approaches for a specific period of time – generally three to four weeks.
- *Daily or weekly lesson planning* builds on the short-term plan to describe related activities for a week or a single day.

At each stage of planning, consider the following questions:

- What are the goals and key messages for literacy learning? How do these relate to the curriculum expectations?
- How can I integrate literacy learning in all subjects and make the learning relevant for all students?
- How will I assess what students already know and can do and determine what they need to learn?
- What instructional approaches will help all students to achieve the expectations?
- How will I know when students have achieved the expectations?
- How will I coordinate the learning environment within and beyond the classroom to enhance learning for all students?
- Have I used a variety of fair and equitable assessment strategies?
- Are my resources varied, inclusive, age appropriate, and relevant?
- How can I ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve the expectations?
- How can I provide differentiated learning experiences to support learners needing additional help and to allow successful learners to extend their learning?

The figure on the following page summarizes some of the essential considerations for effective instructional planning.

## Considerations for Effective Planning



# LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Purposeful long-range planning provides a sequential, “at-a-glance” framework or roadmap for the entire year. It gives teachers a broad sense of what the students will learn, both sequentially and developmentally. Long-range plans enable teachers to see, and make explicit, curriculum links that will be meaningful and relevant for the students, keeping in mind the students’ learning styles, interests, and abilities. They help teachers to work systematically towards the point at year-end where students will be able to demonstrate achievement of the curriculum expectations. Because long-range plans are developed before school starts, they must be goal-oriented but also flexible in nature.

## Steps for Long-Range Planning

To develop their long-range plans, teachers do the following:

1. Consider what proficient communicators need to be able to do, and examine the Language curriculum to become familiar with the content and expectations.
2. Look for ways to cluster and connect expectations across subject areas. This includes identifying the literacy knowledge and skills embedded in every subject area.
3. Determine the overall timing and sequence of instruction by:
  - blocking the year into manageable sections (e.g., terms, major themes, seasons, or months);
  - determining a logical sequence for developing the students’ skills and content knowledge within a subject area (for example, in science, which topic should be taught first so that students can be successful with other topics?);
  - determining the approximate amount of time to spend on each unit of study;
  - considering the schedule for board-wide and province-wide assessments (such as the EQAO assessments for students in Grade 6).
4. Take one subject area and subdivide it into teachable topics, units, skills, concepts, or themes. Repeat this process for other subject areas, making logical, sequential, and developmental connections.

### Long-Range Plans Are Required by Law

The Education Act, Regulation 298, Operation of Schools – General, includes the following duties for teachers and principals:

- **Duties of Teachers** (298 s20f). Prepare for use in the teacher’s class or classes such teaching plans and outlines as are required by the principal and the appropriate supervisory officer, and submit the plans and outlines to the principal or the appropriate supervisory officer, as the case may be, on request.
- **Duties of Principals** (298 s11(3)(c)). Retain on file up-to-date copies of outlines of all courses of study that are taught in the school.

5. Identify authentic learning experiences that will connect students to experts and experiences beyond the classroom (e.g., through museums, art galleries, zoos). Plan for a variety of experiences throughout the year.
6. Identify the resources and materials to be used (e.g., teacher resources, student materials, equipment), and when they will be needed. Include technology tools that can help students to access, manage, and present information.
7. Choose an appropriate planning template and record key information on it so that the plan is visible at a glance. (See “Sample Tools for Long-Range Planning” below.)

Once they have drafted a long-range plan, teachers begin to gather assessment information to determine what the students know and are able to do. Equipped with this information, teachers revisit their long-range plans, make any immediate revisions or modifications, and begin unit planning.

## Sample Tools for Long-Range Planning

Because the goals and strategies for planning are relatively consistent, teachers can save time by developing planning templates, photocopying them for repeated use, and sharing them with other teachers. For sample planning tools, see the following:

- *Planning Checklist for Language and Literacy* identifies a wide range of literacy topics, skills, concepts, tools, and themes. Use it as a brainstorming tool to begin the literacy planning process, and later to support lesson planning. (See Appendix 1-1.)
- *Month-at-a-Glance Long-Range Planning* is a graphic organizer for cross-curricular literacy planning. (See the partially filled-in sample organizer “Month-at-a-Glance Long-Range Planning” on page 27.)
- *Term-at-a-Glance Long-Range Planning* shows an alternative graphic organizer for cross-curricular literacy planning. (See Appendix 1-2.)
- *Year-at-a-Glance Planning by Curriculum Area* offers a third way to organize long-range plans, highlighting the topics, themes, issues, or units of study to be addressed throughout the year in each curriculum area. (See the organizer “Year-at-a-Glance Planning by Curriculum Area” on page 28.)



## Month-at-a-Glance Long-Range Planning – Grade 5, Term 2

	Language Arts	Mathematics	Social Studies	Science	The Arts	Health and Physical Education
December	<p>Read, write, and tell several myths.</p> <p>Analyse and list characteristics of myths.</p> <p>Summarize a myth.</p> <p>Present a myth.</p>	<p><b>Measurement</b></p> <p>Measure perimeter and area.</p> <p>Choose appropriate units of measure.</p>	<p><b>Ancient Civilizations</b></p> <p>Features of society, values and belief system, human needs, government, class structures, technology, impact on modern civilization</p>		<p><b>Drama</b></p> <p>Demonstrate awareness of voice.</p> <p><b>Art</b></p> <p>Examine art prints from ancient times in order to learn about art as storytelling. Create a piece of art that retells a myth.</p>	<p>Apply strategies to deal with threats to personal safety and to prevent injury.</p> <p>Participate regularly in physical activities that maintain or improve fitness (e.g., volleyball).</p>
Cross-curricular Connections	<p>Read-Aloud – e.g., <i>Pegasus, the Flying Horse</i>, by Jane Yolen*</p> <p>Independent Reading – e.g., <i>Sword of Egypt</i>, by Bert Williams</p>	<p>Math Journal Entry – Review procedure writing taught in Term 1. Write a procedure describing how to find the area of a rectangle, using concrete materials.</p>	<p>Language and Word Study related to vocabulary – culture, myth, legend, civilization, technology, democracy</p>		<p>Art – Create a storyboard that retells a myth.</p>	
January	<p>Teach text features of informational text (e.g., index, diagrams, headings).</p> <p>Use text features in a science report.</p>	<p><b>Numeracy</b></p> <p>Use multiples, factors, prime numbers.</p> <p>Apply correct operation to solve multi-step problems.</p> <p><b>Patterning and Algebra</b></p> <p>Determine missing factors in equations involving division.</p> <p>Multiply.</p>		<p><b>Human Organ Systems</b></p>	<p>Drama – Use appropriate tones, voice, gestures, and body movements when speaking as a character.</p>	<p>Analyse information that has an impact on healthy eating practices.</p> <p>Demonstrate the principles of movement while refining movement skills.</p>
Cross-curricular Connections	<p>Read-Aloud – selections from <i>Head to Toe – The Human Body</i>, by Andrea Roy and Michelle Shalton</p>			<p>Teach how to create and read a diagram.</p> <p>Use text features to understand science text.</p>	<p>Engage in Readers’ Theatre to practise effective use of voice.</p>	<p>Make notes while reading, using a three-column note format with the headings Facts, Questions, and Response (FQR).</p>

\* For publication information about sample resources for use with students, see “Student Resources Cited in This Volume” on pages 89–91.

## Year-at-a-Glance Planning by Curriculum Area – Grade 5

Curriculum Area	Topics/ Themes/ Issues/ Units	Timelines	Integration Possibilities	Considerations – real-world connections – resources and materials – human resources
Social Studies	Aspects of Government in Canada	5 weeks	Math – money Drama – role play Lang. – interview a local politician (e.g., head of student council) – debate a school issue – write a newspaper article on a local issue	– field trip to municipal or provincial or federal government site – classroom visits by local politicians – attend a district school board meeting
Science	Weather	5 weeks	Math – read and record data (e.g., graphing) Lang. – write advertisements for the Weather Channel – write a report on a weather phenomenon – identify the techniques used to broadcast weather	– classroom visit by a meteorologist – field trip to local TV station to view a weather broadcast

(Adapted from Schwartz and Pollishuke, 2002, p. 50)

## SHORT-TERM OR UNIT PLANNING

“The teacher’s role is to start teaching from where the child is to widen the range of the child’s understandings and to extend the child’s knowledge.”

(Booth, 2001, p. 13)

In short-term planning, teachers develop an overview of the specific lessons to be taught within a single unit. A unit may vary in length from several days to several weeks and may stand alone or be integrated with other subject areas. Both short-term and daily/weekly plans focus on the learning needs of the students. As teachers conduct ongoing assessments of student learning and reflect on the effectiveness of their instructional practices, they adapt their short-term and daily/weekly lesson plans.

Before beginning any new unit of study, consider the following questions:

- **Assessment for Learning**

- How will I assess my students’ current knowledge, skills, interests, and modes of learning (such as learning styles and multiple intelligences) in order to determine their readiness for the upcoming unit (for example, using reading records, reading conferences, spelling and vocabulary tests, and/or writing tasks)?
- How will my students demonstrate their learning, and how will I assess the results?
- How will I build self-assessment, peer assessment, and reflection into the teaching/learning process?

- Have I included assessment checkpoints and feedback opportunities?
- In what ways will each student benefit from participating in this unit?

- **Curriculum Content**

- What expectations do my students need to achieve by the end of the unit?
- What overall and specific expectations am I targeting in this unit?
- Have I made appropriate connections across the curriculum? (See “Planning for Integrated Literacy Learning Across the Curriculum” on pages 17–19.)
- Have I included higher-order thinking and/or critical-literacy skills? (See “Developing Critical Literacy” on pages 31–32.)
- Have I been explicit about the reciprocal nature of reading, writing, and oral language?
- Have I considered multicultural content, gender preferences, and a range of perspectives?

Reading, writing, talking, listening, thinking, viewing, and representing are reciprocal literacy processes.

- **Instructional Approaches (Processes)**

- Do the students have choices?
- Why am I teaching this to this group of students in this way at this time of year?
- How will I engage and motivate my students?
- What instructional approaches will I use, and why?
- How will I scaffold the learning to ensure a successful outcome for each student?
- What opportunities will I provide for guided and independent practice?
- How will I differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all my students?
- How will I group the students to support their learning and help them to develop as collaborative learners? (See “Organizing Student Groupings” on pages 32–33.)
- What modifications or accommodations are needed for specific students?
- What resources are needed (e.g., print, manipulatives, personnel, and technology tools)?
- Have I considered multiple intelligences when planning learning activities?

Literacy instruction must be differentiated, inclusive, and respectful of all students.

- **Timetabling**

- How many lessons are required and what are the approximate timelines?
- Have I scheduled enough time to immerse students in the topic and provide them with multiple opportunities to discover, talk, read, write, and investigate? (Immersion in a topic gives students the time to develop their social, emotional, and cognitive domains. The intensity of study also provides students with opportunities to learn, practise, apply, and reflect upon their new skills and knowledge. For more information, see “Timetabling for the Junior Classroom” on pages 45–47.)

## Tip for Teachers

When planning a unit of study, think about how to organize the literacy learning to emphasize key ideas and provide specific kinds of practice. For example, consider the following approaches:

- **author study** (e.g., Monica Hughes, Katherine Patterson, Sharon Creech, Avi, Gary Paulsen, Gordon Korman, Carol Matas)
- **themes** (e.g., prejudice, bullying, challenges, heroes, changes, perspectives, inventions, nature’s secrets, human rights, children’s rights, individuals who made a difference, environmental issues, citizenship)
- **skills** (e.g., recognizing points of view, understanding character, drawing inferences, foreshadowing)
- **writing** (e.g., effective leads and endings, writer’s craft, interesting subplots, personification, humour, exaggeration)
- **word study** (e.g., idioms, puns, word play, alliteration)

## Asking Focusing Questions

In each subject area, teachers think of possible focusing questions at the unit level, and then collaboratively develop these questions at the beginning of a unit to encourage students to think critically and metacognitively. Each lesson plays a role in helping students arrive at the larger concepts, principles, and processes that will equip them for lifelong learning.

Focusing questions frame everything else that happens in a unit. All activities should be directed towards answering these questions. Students need to develop the skill of creating their own focusing questions, independently.

Following are some examples:

- **For a unit on Social Justice**
  - What do people mean when they talk about “social justice”?
  - Why do bias and prejudice exist? What forms can they take?
  - What would you do to overcome bias and prejudice?
  - Social justice is everyone’s responsibility. What does this mean in terms of our everyday lives?
  - How can literature affect people’s lives?
  - How can literature help people to make a better world?

- **For a unit on Heroes and Heroines**

- What makes a person a hero or heroine?
- When you think of a hero or heroine, who comes to mind?
- What are the qualities and characteristics that cause you to say this person is a “hero” or a “heroine”?
- How do the heroes and heroines of the past compare with the heroes and heroines of today?
- How will the heroes and heroines of the future compare with the heroes and heroines of today?
- How do the media shape our view of heroes and heroines?
- What are the qualities and characteristics of heroes and heroines portrayed by the media?

## **Developing Critical Literacy**

Effective planning includes a focus on critical-literacy skills. Independent thinking that goes beyond the recall of basic facts enables students to solve problems and apply increasingly complex concepts to achieve deeper levels of understanding. Critical literacy engages communicators in actively analysing and critiquing what they read, write, speak, view, and hear in order to recognize the author’s intent, identify inequities, and take action to promote positive change and social justice.

In *Critical Challenges Across the Curriculum*, Roland Case and colleagues identify five categories of thinking tools students need in order to become critical thinkers:

- *background knowledge*, which refers to information about a topic
- *criteria for judgement*, which refers to considerations for deciding on the most appropriate alternative or action
- *critical-thinking vocabulary*, which refers to concepts and distinctions that are helpful when thinking critically
- *thinking strategies*, which refers to a repertoire of procedures, steps, and strategies that are useful for thinking critically
- *habits of mind*, which refers to the values and attitudes of a careful, conscientious thinker

To ensure that students have opportunities to develop critical literacy, teachers maintain a focus on the learning goals for students and the key messages about language and literacy and use these to guide their decision making about instructional approaches, student activities, and resource materials. The “Literacy Goals for Student Learners” and “Key Messages for Teachers and Students” are outlined in the Introduction to Volume 1, pages 5–9.

(Adapted from Case et al., 2004, p. 92)

Teachers can help students develop the thinking skills, tools, strategies, values, and attitudes they need in order to become independent, conscientious, and critical thinkers. Teachers need to explicitly teach and model critical-thinking skills and the vocabulary with which to discuss ideas, develop or negotiate solutions, and dig deep for meaning. They need to teach various models for problem solving, how to use graphic organizers, and how to consider the views of others before making a decision. As well, habits of mind such as persistence, open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, and independent thinking should be taught in every subject area, since they, too, are essential for conscientious deep thinking.

For more information on higher-order thinking and critical literacy, see Volume 1, Chapter 2 (pp. 55–64) and Chapter 3 (p. 78).

## **Organizing Student Groupings**

Students may be organized to work in large groups, small groups, or individually. Short-term planning should incorporate a variety of student groupings, such as mixed-ability groupings, age groupings, learning buddies, instructional-level groupings, and groupings by topics of interest. Students need to work with a variety of partners in various groupings in order to learn from the ideas of others and to develop collaborative skills. The choice of instructional groupings will depend upon the focus for instruction, the learning task, and the needs of the students. Teachers need to model and demonstrate the skills necessary for successful group work and provide multiple opportunities for students to engage in guided and independent practice.

The skills necessary for successful group work include the ability to:

- listen attentively;
- express thoughts and ideas clearly and concisely;
- take turns;
- encourage the participation of all group members;
- show respect for alternative points of view;
- disagree agreeably;
- synthesize;
- analyse;
- remember significant information;
- identify issues;
- make connections to prior knowledge;
- stay on topic.

For more information about group learning and groups, see “Collaborative Learning” and “Student Groupings” in Volume 1, Chapter 3 (pp. 96–99).

## Sample Tools for Unit Planning

Teachers can save time by developing templates for unit planning, photocopying them for repeated use, and sharing them with other teachers. For samples, see the following:

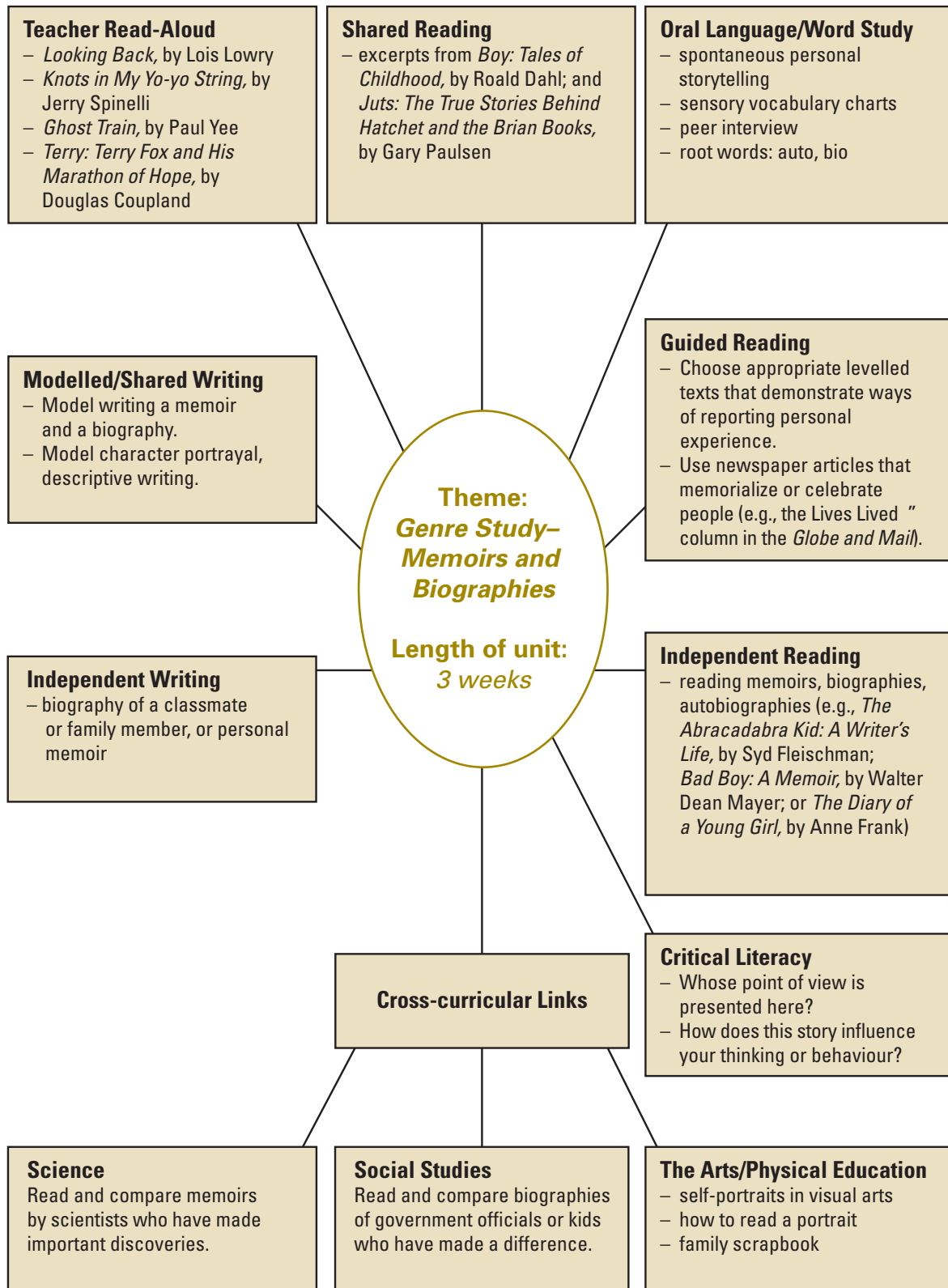
- “Planning Web for an Integrated Unit – Language Focus” (The figure on the following page shows a sample application for Grade 5, and a blank template is provided in Appendix 1-3.)
- “Short-Term Planning Template” (The figure on pages 35–38 shows a sample application for Grade 4, and a blank template is provided in Appendix 1-4.)

A teacher might use a planning web to brainstorm ideas for the unit and then describe the unit plan in more detail using the short-term planning template. Once the unit plan is determined, the teacher moves on to create more detailed lesson plans.

### Tip for Teachers

The Ontario Curriculum Unit Planner (OCUP) is a comprehensive, electronic resource that contains planning templates plus a database of all the Ontario curriculum expectations, a vast array of teaching, learning, and assessment strategies, and teacher tutorials. Check it out at [www.ocup.org](http://www.ocup.org).

## Planning Web for an Integrated Unit – Language Focus for Grade 5



(Adapted from Booth, 2001, p. 88)



## Short-Term Planning Template for Grade 4

**Subject Area(s):** *Social Studies/Language*

**Unit Topic/Theme:** *Medieval Times*

**Unit Length:** *6 weeks*

### **CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS**

*Students will:*

#### **Social Studies: Heritage and Citizenship**

- identify and describe major features of daily life and social organization in medieval European societies from about 500 to 1500 C.E. (Common Era);

#### **Language: Reading**

- read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning;

#### **Language: Writing**

- generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience;

#### **Language: Oral Communication**

- listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes;
- use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes;

#### **Language: Media Literacy**

- identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning;
- create a variety of media texts for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques.

### **CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS**

**Science and Technology: Structures and Mechanisms, Grade 4 – Pulleys and Gears\***

- demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics of pulleys and gears.

### **CONTENT AREA FOCUS**

To help students gain knowledge about the social structure of medieval society.

### **SKILLS FOCUS**

**Social skills:** To help students develop the ability to work with others and respect their efforts, ideas, and points of view.

**Learning skills:** To help students develop skills in questioning and taking point-form notes and begin to develop research skills.

*(continued)*

**\*Note to Teachers:** If the science unit were integrated into this plan, the time frame would need significant adjustment. In addition, the reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy activities would need to reflect the overall and specific expectations of the science unit.

## Short-Term Planning Template for Grade 4 – Continued

### FOCUSING QUESTIONS

1. How has our life today been influenced by medieval society?
2. How did religion influence medieval society?
3. How did the various members of medieval society meet or not meet their needs?

### CULMINATING TASK/PERFORMANCE

A research project incorporating media works, using both primary and secondary sources of information. **Topic:** An innovation that has its origins in medieval society.

### ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

- observation and checklists for vocabulary use and summary writing
- rubric for research project focusing on critical-literacy skills
- peer and teacher assessment opportunities

### UNIT CHECKPOINTS AND FEEDBACK

- graphic organizers and jot notes to gather data
- questions to guide research
- a group mini-project on members of medieval society

### KEY CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

#### Reading

#### *Instructional Approaches:*

##### Read-Aloud

- model fluent reading and visualization
- address language and social studies content (e.g., *Knights of the Kitchen Table*, by Jon Scieszka; *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, by Avi)
- legends and ballads
- non-fiction – aspects of medieval life

##### Shared Reading

- fiction – ballads and legends
- non-fiction – castles and monasteries

##### Guided Reading

A possible selection of reading material might include:

- *Castle Diary*, by Chris Riddell
- *Medieval Days*, Pearson's Inquizitive series, Green level
- *Castle Secrets*, Horwitz Martin's Tristars series
- *Knights in Rusty Armour*, by Pat Hancock

## Short-Term Planning Template for Grade 4 – Continued

### Independent Reading

- *The Door in the Wall*, by Marguerite De Angeli
- *Garth and the Mermaid*, by Barbara Smucker
- trade books, encyclopedias, and Internet on aspects of medieval life

### Critical Literacy/Thinking Skills:

- questions that guide and frame research
- making comparisons
- examining point of view and whose story is untold

### Accommodations/Modifications:

- reading material needs to be within the students' range of reading – use video, print images, informational texts

### Writing

#### Instructional Approaches:

##### Modelled/Shared Writing

- formulate focusing questions
- demonstrate use of graphic organizers, jot notes, text features, subheadings
- demonstrate how to use different media
- model summary writing
- target key vocabulary

##### Independent Writing

- have students summarize aspects of medieval life using jot notes, organizers, and different media
- have students write “in role”
- have students incorporate key vocabulary

### Critical Literacy/Thinking Skills:

- synthesizing information
- questioning, inferring, examining cause and effect

### Accommodations/Modifications:

- provide a scribe
- provide various formats for presenting information
- provide a writing framework

### Language and Word Study

#### Instructional Approaches:

- introduce and deconstruct key vocabulary
- create word walls/word charts/personal dictionary
- have students use vocabulary in the context of reading, writing, and speaking

(continued)

## **Short-Term Planning Template for Grade 4 – Continued**

### ***Critical Literacy/Thinking Skills:***

- have students categorize and compare words
- have students examine word choices of authors
- have students monitor their own word use and spelling patterns
- have students use word study notebooks to record their own patterns in writing
- have students use a word study notebook to reflect on their writing

### ***Accommodations/Modifications:***

- scribe for the student
- model word stretching and word sketching
- work with students in small groups to guide their thinking
- use read-alouds as an instructional strategy to promote and guide student thinking
- place anchor charts in the class to help develop an understanding of word study concepts – for example, spelling activities, spelling features of words, editing thinking

## **Oral Communication and Media Literacy**

### ***Instructional Approaches:***

#### **Oral Communication**

- use subject-specific vocabulary in discussions and during group work
- model expectations for collaborative learning
- model and practise presenting oral summaries
- have students give group presentations of medieval life

#### **Media Literacy**

- model how to incorporate media into research project (labelled illustrations)
- demonstrate the impact of text features to make and convey meaning
- teach how to interpret primary sources of information (e.g., images, documents)

### ***Critical Literacy/Thinking Skills:***

- model the reading and comparing/contrasting of texts similar in content using a Venn diagram
- have students explore and talk about different versions of the same content
- have students examine the techniques used in the writing or presenting of the material and discuss how these techniques shape their interpretations
- have students discuss what values and points of view are represented or omitted from the texts studies and how others' views of the texts may differ from their own
- model reflection for the students

### ***Accommodations/Modifications:***

- allow for peer assistance during group work
- allow for use of visual aids and graphic organizers

## LESSON PLANNING

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Lesson plans are an extension of unit planning. In lesson planning, teachers divide their units into manageable, teachable chunks. Effective teachers know that students are most likely to succeed if the lessons are meaningful, active, and engaging. They plan their literacy teaching around the real needs and strengths of the students in their classrooms, focusing on the learning process and not only on the content. They understand that students need explicit instruction, coupled with practice, feedback, and reflection, in order to make connections, deepen their understanding, articulate their learnings, and apply something they have learned to a new situation. They ensure that students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

“Lesson plans guide your instruction as you approach the task of meeting the needs and interests of your students on a daily basis.”

*(Schwartz and Pollishuke, 2002, p. 60)*

When developing lesson plans, teachers can use the following checklist to ensure that they have incorporated the elements necessary for a successful outcome:

- I have identified the relevant curriculum expectations.
- I know what the students are able to do.
- I have scaffolded instruction on the students’ prior knowledge.
- The task is at an appropriate level of difficulty for the students.
- I have built in time for discussion and teaching to ensure that students see the purpose and sense of the lesson.
- I have included strategies for making and sharing observations of students’ work through formative assessment.

(Adapted from Charlton, 2005, p. 11)

### Sample Tools for Lesson Planning

This chapter includes three lesson-planning templates that teachers can use individually or in combination:

- Lesson Template 1 (see the figure on the following page and Appendix 1-5)
- Lesson Template 2 (see Appendix 1-6)
- Lesson Template 3 (see Appendix 1-7)

Most sample lessons that appear elsewhere in this guide use Lesson Template 1, and so the elements of that template are described in more detail in “Elements of the Lesson Template” on pages 41–45. Templates 2 and 3 are included in the appendices for teachers who might like to explore other approaches to lesson planning.

## Lesson Template 1

**Title of Lesson:****Lifelong Learnings**

*(What major understandings am I trying to build in my students over time?)*

**Teaching Focus/Curriculum Expectations**

*(What specific skills/concepts will I teach? Which expectations will I address?)*

**Assessment**

*(How will I know when my students are successful?)*

**Prior Knowledge**

*(What prior knowledge do my students need in order to be successful with this lesson focus?)*

**Materials/Teacher Preparation**

*(What do I need to know, have, and be able to do before I can begin the lesson?)*

**Modifications and Accommodations**

*(How can I ensure that all my students are learning?)*

**Instruction**

*(Introduction, instruction, and application...)*

**Introduction**

- Explain the purpose of the lesson to students. (Let them know "What's in it" for them.)
- Activate prior knowledge to get their attention.

**Instruction**

- Model/demonstrate/share exemplars.
- Provide opportunities for guided practice.
- Check for understanding.

**Application**

- Provide opportunities for students to respond to and interpret learning materials.
- Have students apply their learning in various contexts and make connections among these contexts.

**Teacher Reflection**

*(Were my students successful? Did my instructional decisions meet the needs of all students? What worked well? What will I do differently in the future? What are my next steps?)*

**Student Reflection**

For the teacher, the closure activity is an opportunity to check student understanding of the content and student development of social skills and learning skills. For the students, it is an opportunity to reflect on their learning process and make connections to things they have already learned.

*(What did I learn? How would I describe my learning to another person? How does this learning connect to other information I have gained? What did I do well? What do I need to improve?)*

## Elements of the Lesson Template

### Lifelong Learnings

Lifelong learnings are the concepts, principles, or understandings that develop over time and support students in future learning endeavours. The curriculum expectations and teaching focus are the building blocks that deepen understanding of the lifelong learnings. Lifelong learnings have lasting value beyond the classroom. To determine what these are, teachers are encouraged to ask “What do I want students to understand and be able to use several years from now, after they’ve forgotten the details?”

### Teaching Focus/Curriculum Expectations

Curriculum expectations are the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn and demonstrate by the end of every grade or course, as outlined in the Ontario curriculum documents for each subject area. These expectations guide all lesson planning.

The number of expectations addressed in one lesson will depend on the time available and the complexity of the task.

Building from the curriculum expectations, a well-balanced literacy lesson usually includes one or at the most two areas of focus – for example, one or two strategies for comprehension or writing. Appendix 1-1, “Planning Checklist for Language and Literacy”, provides a checklist that the teacher can use to identify possible areas of focus, plus some instructional strategies and tools to support the chosen area of focus.

Many of the items listed in Appendix 1-1 are described in more detail elsewhere in this guide. For example:

- For comprehension and writing strategies, see “Strategies to Make Meaning in Reading and Writing” in Volume 1, Chapter 2 (pp. 44–55).
- For levels of questioning, see “Higher-Order Thinking” in Volume 1, Chapter 2 (pp. 55–64).
- For collaborative learning strategies, see “Effective Literacy Instruction Is Collaborative” in Volume 1, Chapter 3 (pp. 92–103).

### Assessment

Teachers must determine what assessment strategies to use before, during, and after learning that will best allow their students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. Assessment strategies should include informal checkpoints during the lesson to enable the teacher to verify that the students are understanding the concepts. Before evaluation of learning occurs, students must have ample opportunity for practice, feedback, and further teaching if it is required.

Strategies and tools that teachers can use to assess student learning include observations, interviews, checklists, rubrics, conferences, portfolios, records of student reading, writing tasks, oral presentations, media presentations, research projects, dramatizations, quizzes, work samples, questionnaires, reflections, and peer- or self-assessments. A number of these are described more fully in “Assessment Strategies and Tools” in Volume 2 (pp. 34–87).

### **Prior Knowledge**

It is important to consider what prior knowledge or experiences the students need in order to understand the lesson. By activating this prior knowledge, teachers set the context for students to learn new concepts, skills, strategies, and general information about the topic. Maximum learning occurs when students are actively engaged in or can make connections to the topic or activities that are planned for them.

Following are some strategies and tools for activating the students’ prior knowledge and experiences. The items marked with an asterisk (\*) are described in more detail in the Appendix to Volume 1:

- agree/disagree (students support a position for or against an idea and give reasons for their position)
- Anticipation Guides\*
- Four Corners\*
- Graffiti\*
- Heads Together/Numbered Heads Together
- KWL\*
- props to illustrate the topic
- role play
- Roundtable\*
- Think/Timed-Pair-Share\*
- interview
- visitors to the classroom

### **Materials/Teacher Preparation**

It is important to gather the best available materials to support optimum learning for all students and to determine the learning strategies or activities that must be prepared ahead of time. Materials could include manipulatives, texts of all types, writing or art supplies, technology tools and equipment, and teacher resources. Preparation might involve gathering or creating directions for a game, anchor charts, word cards, handouts, or other supports for the learning strategies or activities.



## Modifications and Accommodations

Consider what modifications or accommodations students might need in order to understand the concepts, participate in the activities, and demonstrate their learning. Consider ways to provide additional modelling, enrichment, or intervention through small-group or individual support.

## Instruction

This is the body of the lesson. It is here on the template that teachers record their decisions about the instructional strategies they will use, bearing in mind the following considerations:

- the need for an interesting “hook” or introduction
- ties to previous lessons and to the culminating task
- the need for explicit instruction about important concepts of language and literacy
- opportunities for modelled, shared, guided, and independent practice in working with the concepts
- activities that are authentic and meaningful
- opportunities for purposeful talk and collaborative learning in appropriate student groupings
- approaches to higher-order thinking (or levels of questioning) that will help students to use the specified strategies and text forms
- graphic organizers to be used
- assessment to check for understanding during the learning

Following are some instructional strategies and tools that teachers might use during the body of the lesson. The items marked with an asterisk (\*) are described in more detail in the Appendix to Volume 1:

- To **set the context**, try:
  - an interesting quotation
  - an unusual prop or artefact
  - a powerful read-aloud
  - a thought-provoking question
  - a field trip
  - a lively song, poem, or chant
  - a photo, picture, or video

- To **teach the concepts**, try:
  - CD-ROM resources
  - Coding the Text\*
  - demonstration
  - drama
  - field trip
  - guest speaker
  - Jigsaw\*
  - literacy stations or activity centres
  - Questioning the Author\*
  - simulation
  - Somebody Wanted ... But ... So\*
  - Think, Predict, Read, Connect (TPRC)\*
  - video/film
  - read-aloud/modelled writing; shared reading and writing; guided reading and writing
- To **check for understanding**, try:
  - graphic organizers
  - Place Mat\*
  - teacher observation
  - Think/Timed-Pair-Share\* with random selection of responses from students

## Reflection

Allow time for class/student reflection before the lesson concludes. This encourages students to summarize their learning and to think about themselves as learners. Teachers should also plan to spend some time reflecting on how well the lesson went and whether students were able to demonstrate the targeted skill or strategy or understand the concept or ideas presented in the lesson.

Following are some instructional strategies and tools that teachers might use to help students apply and reflect on their own learning. Strategies marked with an asterisk (\*) are described in the Appendix to Volume 1:

- For **practice and application**, try:
  - debate
  - experiment
  - Independent Projects\*
  - independent reading and writing

- Literature Circles\* or Book Talks\*
- Mapping\*
- presentation
- research
- role play
- simulation
- For **reflection**, try:
  - Exit Slips (see Appendix 5 in Volume 2)
  - further questions
  - independent study
  - journalling
  - revisiting an Anticipation Guide\*
  - revisiting a KWL\* exercise
  - revisiting an agree/disagree exercise
  - time to think

## TIMETABLING FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSROOM

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### Time for Literacy

Planning a timetable that will support and enhance literacy learning is as important as considerations about texts, library use, technology support, and good teaching. Time taken by teachers and administrators to design a timetable that optimizes literacy learning for students is time well spent. By working together, teachers and administrators can establish blocks of time where interruptions (such as announcements, telephone calls, and office messages) are minimized.

In an effective learning environment, large blocks of time are designated for literacy instruction and practice. In addition to these large blocks of time, ongoing literacy teaching and learning are embedded throughout the curriculum in all subject areas. While all aspects of literacy are interconnected, at times it may be more effective to teach specific skills and strategies separately during reading and writing workshops. Teachers can explicitly teach these literacy skills using relevant content, and then provide opportunities for students to apply those

“[A]n effective timetable will provide large blocks of time – ideally two hours – for students to develop their literacy skills, explore topics thoughtfully and thoroughly, engage in research and inquiry in all subject areas, and apply their learning in new contexts. These learning blocks give teachers scope to implement the wide-ranging components of an effective literacy program, including ongoing assessment, targeted instruction to address specific learning needs, and open-ended reading and writing activities that promote higher-order thinking.”

*(Literacy for Learning, 2004, p. 29)*

“In classrooms in which [junior]-aged children are transformed into readers and writers, teachers do whatever is in their power to help children make connections. They take whatever time is allocated to them and create a schedule that allows for as much integrated learning as possible.”

*(Cunningham and Allington, 1999, p. 238)*

skills in similar contexts through guided and independent practice. During literacy time it is important that all students are actively engaged in learning and in applying their skills independently. Before, during, and after reading and writing, students must also engage in purposeful talk. This enables them to brainstorm, question, and problem solve to help solidify their ideas and understandings.

Teacher-directed instruction is a critical part of an effective literacy program, but it should not replace the time that students spend practising and refining their literacy skills. Rather, the two go hand in hand, with the student spending proportionally less time observing the teacher and more time applying the literacy skills. For more information, see “Scaffolding and the Gradual Release of Responsibility” in Volume 1, Chapter 3 (pp. 80–81).

As their attention spans increase, junior students benefit from larger blocks of time to practise their literacy skills and explore topics that interest them. With their growing literacy awareness, they are able to participate in developing assessment rubrics, designing literacy lessons, and setting goals. Their varied experiences and personal interests provide important input in the planning process for instruction and assessment.

## **Time for Differentiated Instruction**

Teachers require large blocks of time to address the diverse needs of their junior students. Dedicated time for explicit teaching and assessment can occur in a variety of configurations and can use a variety of strategies, involving the whole class, small groups, or individualized instruction and support. Technology tools, such as text readers and graphic design programs, can help teachers to involve students at their current level of ability and interest and optimize learning for all students. For more on differentiated instruction, see “Effective Literacy Instruction Is Differentiated” in Volume 1, Chapter 3 (pp. 81–92).

## **Daily Schedules**

A daily schedule in the junior division includes 100–120 minutes of literacy instruction per day. Where possible, teachers are encouraged to find large blocks of time. For example, two 60-minute blocks or three 40-minute blocks are possibilities. Teachers plan each block of time to provide a balance of activities that are designed to engage and challenge students who have various learning styles and needs. By establishing routines that are clear and purposeful, teachers help their students to use time efficiently and independently.

Each literacy block should include time for the following:

- explicit teaching through modelled, shared, and guided approaches

- opportunities for practice and application during guided and independent activities
- purposeful talk
- personal reflection

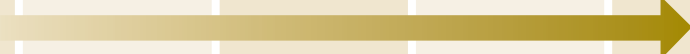
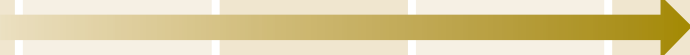



Every minute of instruction counts. When students begin the day efficiently and productively, it sets a positive tone for the rest of the day. As students enter the classroom, establish an engaging routine. For example, students may answer or send mail within the classroom, select reading material for the day, solve a riddle, post a message, or solve a challenge. Building purposeful transitions into the class timetable helps students to remain focused and engaged.

## Sample Timetables

The sample timetables on the following pages show two ways of scheduling literacy instruction in dedicated literacy blocks. In both timetables, literacy blocks, for either a Reading Workshop or a Writing Workshop, are scheduled at regular times throughout the week. Designating a block as a Literacy Workshop, as is done in the second timetable, provides flexibility in allocating time to either reading or writing, as required. The daily literacy workshops might include the following:

- **For the Reading Workshop**
  - Teacher Read-Aloud
  - Shared Reading
  - Guided Reading
  - Independent Reading
  - opportunities for purposeful talk and Language and Word Study, integrated into the approaches listed above
- **For the Writing Workshop**
  - Modelled Writing
  - Shared Writing
  - Guided Writing
  - Independent Writing
  - opportunities for purposeful talk and Language and Word Study, integrated into the approaches above

## Timetable with Dedicated Literacy Blocks (Sample 1)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00	Math				
10:00	Science/ Social Studies	Language (Reading Workshop)	Science/ Social Studies	Language (Reading Workshop)	Science/ Social Studies
10:30	<b>RECESS</b>				
10:45	Language (Reading Workshop)				
11:15	Language (Writing Workshop)				
12:15	<b>LUNCH</b>				
1:15	The Arts (Visual Arts, Drama and Dance, Music)				
1:55	Physical Education/ Healthy Living	Science/ Social Studies	Physical Education/ Healthy Living	Science/ Social Studies	Physical Education/ Healthy Living
2:35	<b>RECESS</b>				
2:50	French				

### Notes:

- The arts, science, and social studies should be integrated with reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy whenever possible.
- The Ministry of Education requires that junior students engage in a minimum 20 minutes of physical activity per day.

## Timetable with Dedicated Literacy Blocks (Sample 2)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>9:00</b>	Music/Drama and Dance	Physical Education/Healthy Living	Music/Drama and Dance	Physical Education/Healthy Living	Physical Education/Healthy Living
<b>9:30</b>	Language (Reading Workshop)	Language (Reading Workshop)	Language (Reading Workshop)	Language (Reading Workshop)	Language (Literacy Workshop)
<b>10:30</b>	<b>RECESS</b>				
<b>10:45</b>	Language (Writing Workshop)	Language (Writing Workshop)	Language (Writing Workshop)	Language (Writing Workshop)	Science/Social Studies
<b>11:40</b>	Physical Education/Healthy Living	Language (Writing Workshop)	Physical Education/Healthy Living	Language (Writing Workshop)	Science/Social Studies
<b>12:00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>				
<b>1:00</b>	Math				
<b>2:00</b>	French				
<b>2:45</b>	<b>RECESS</b>				
<b>3:00</b>	Visual Arts	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Physical Education/Healthy Living

### Notes:

- The arts, science, and social studies should be integrated with reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy whenever possible.
- The Ministry of Education requires that junior students engage in a minimum 20 minutes of physical activity per day.





# APPENDICES

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## Appendix 1-1. Planning Checklist for Language and Literacy

Reading	Writing	Oral Communication	Media Literacy
<p><b>Reading process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Determine a purpose for reading.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preview the text.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select a text.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Activate prior knowledge to make connections.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use various strategies to make meaning.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on and respond to the text.</li> </ul> <p><b>Comprehension strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> making connections</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> determining important information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> questioning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> visualizing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> summarizing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> inferring</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> predicting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> synthesizing – e.g., retelling, sequencing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> evaluating – e.g., identifying bias, perspective, author’s intent</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> monitoring and repairing comprehension</li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Determine purpose and audience.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Generate ideas.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choose a text form.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Organize ideas.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop an outline.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Write a first draft.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Get feedback.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Revise.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Edit.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Publish.</li> </ul> <p><b>Writer’s craft</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> effective vocabulary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> sentence structure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> conventions of language – e.g., punctuation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> voice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> transitions, passage of time</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> use of mentor texts to teach craft</li> </ul> <p><b>Literary techniques and devices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> repetition, rhyme, rhythm, alliteration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> analogy, metaphor, simile</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> exaggeration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> imagery</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> flashback, foreshadowing, symbols</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> dialogue</li> </ul> <p><b>Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> word processing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> inquiry on the Internet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> presentation skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> publishing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategies for listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> showing interest (nodding, leaning forward, listening without interrupting)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> assessing the speaker’s purpose and credibility</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> identifying significant ideas and information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> interpreting the codes of communication for different contexts and people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> asking questions for clarification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> giving positive feedback to the speaker</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> responding to and/or disagreeing with the speaker’s ideas in a respectful and courteous way</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> recognizing the validity of different points of view</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> recognizing questionable and/or unduly manipulative strategies</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategies for speaking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> setting goals and staying on topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> relating purpose, audience, and speaker’s stance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> expressing ideas clearly and effectively</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> avoiding bias and inappropriate language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> listening and responding respectfully to questions and contrary opinions</li> </ul>	<p><i>Identifying:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the author of the message</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the intended audience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the content and purpose of the message</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the format and techniques used to deliver the message</li> </ul> <p><i>Examining:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> whether and how the message reflects, distorts, or ignores social conditions and the perspectives of various social and cultural groups</li> </ul>

**Appendix 1-1. Planning Checklist for Language and Literacy – Continued**

Reading	Writing	Oral Communication	Collaborative Learning
	<p><b>Research and inquiry skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> accessing information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> assessing/evaluating sources and information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> selecting relevant information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> organizing and analysing information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> synthesizing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> presenting</li> </ul> <p><b>Graphic organizers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> anticipation guide</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> concept map</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> double-entry journal</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fishbone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> KWL</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> mind map</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> PMI (plus, minus, interesting)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> plot line</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> story map/grammar</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> T-chart</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Venn diagram</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> adjusting thinking to accommodate new information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> building on the ideas of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> accepting personal responsibility for one’s own and the group’s learning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> establishing a common goal</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> using collaborative skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> interacting with group members and giving positive feedback</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> discussing, describing, and reflecting on group success</li> </ul>

*(continued)*

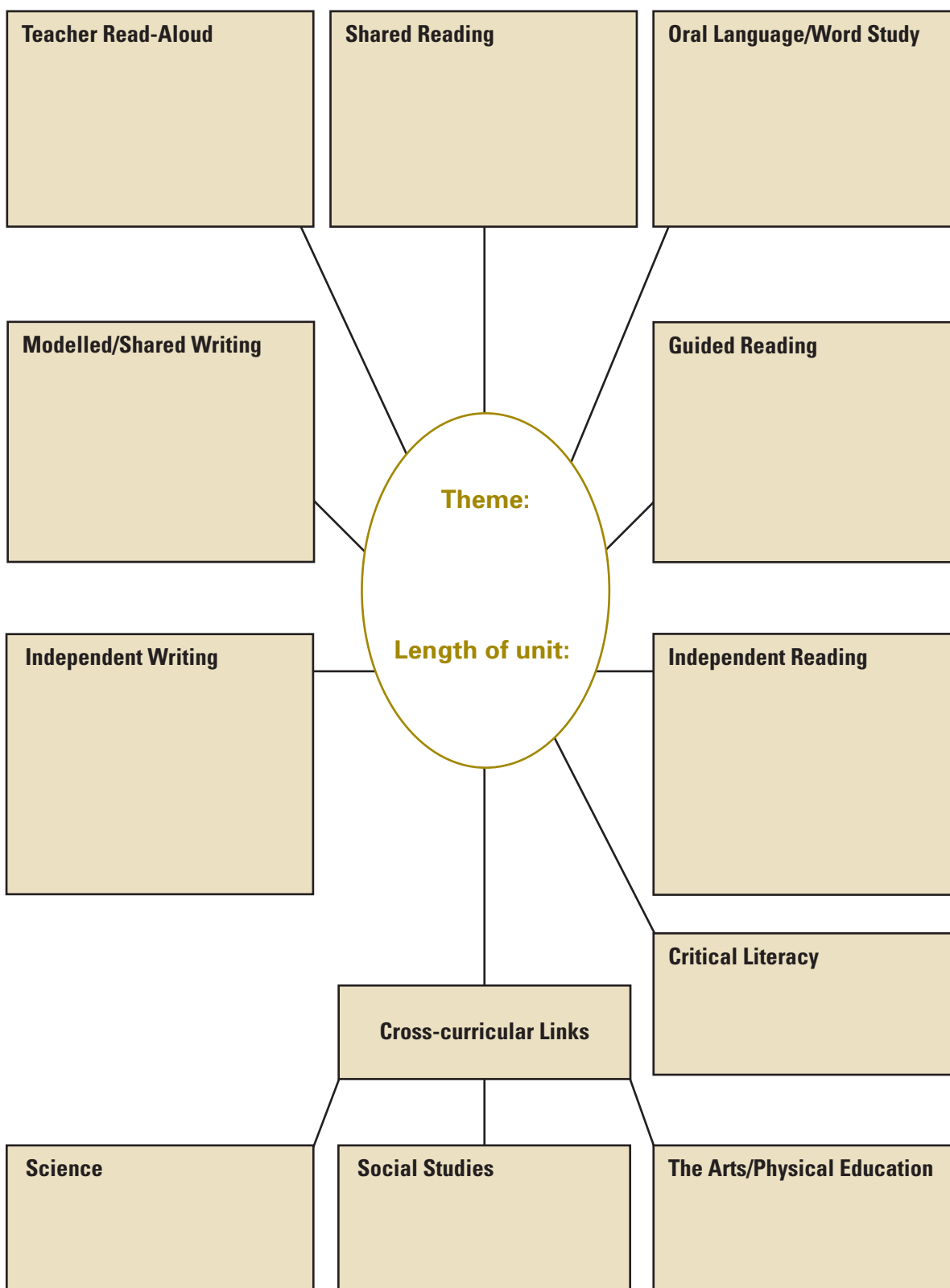
## Appendix 1-1. Planning Checklist for Language and Literacy – Continued

Text Features	Text Forms	Genres	Authors/Titles/Themes
<p><b>Structural elements and navigation aids</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> table of contents</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> index</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> title and topic headings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> preface or foreword</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> epilogue</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> captions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> footnotes and endnotes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> glossary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> bibliography</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> pull-down menus</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> hyperlinks</li> </ul> <p><b>Typographical or design elements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> font or type style</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> bold and italic print</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> colour</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> layout</li> </ul> <p><b>Illustrations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> inlays and cross-sections</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> pull quotes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> sidebars</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> photos</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> graphs and charts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> timelines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> maps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> report – newspaper reports, informational reports, letters, posters</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> exposition – position papers, articles, essays</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> recount – diaries, journals, memoirs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> explanation – textbooks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> procedure – recipes, rule books, instruction manuals, experiments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> narrative – stories told in poetry, novels, short stories, picture books</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> electronic texts – e-mail, blogs, websites</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> functional texts – lists, pamphlets, brochures, flyers, invitations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> adventure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> epic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fable</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fairy tale</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fantasy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> folk tale</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> historical fiction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> horror</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> humour and satire</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> legend</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> mystery</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> myth</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> poetry</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> realistic fiction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> science fiction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> autobiography</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> biography</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> memoir</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> diary or journal</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> travel book</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> atlas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> textbook</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> reference text</li> </ul>	<p><i>Note to teachers:</i> You may use this empty cell to list appropriate authors, titles, and themes that you want to cover in a particular lesson.</p>

# Appendix 1-2. Term-at-a-Glance Long-Range Planning

	Language	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	The Arts	Health and Physical Education
<b>FALL</b>						
<b>WINTER</b>						
<b>SPRING</b>						

## Appendix 1-3. Planning Web for an Integrated Unit – Language Focus



# Appendix 1-4. Short-Term Planning Template

<p>Subject Area(s): _____</p> <p>Unit Topic/Theme: _____</p> <p>Unit Length: _____</p>
<p><b>CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS</b></p>  <p><b>CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS</b></p>
<p><b>CONTENT AREA FOCUS</b></p>
<p><b>SKILLS FOCUS</b></p> <p><i>Social Skills:</i></p>  <p><i>Learning Skills:</i></p>
<p><b>FOCUSING QUESTIONS</b></p>
<p><b>CULMINATING TASK/PERFORMANCE</b></p>
<p><b>ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND STRATEGIES</b></p>    <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p>

## Appendix 1-4. Short-Term Planning Template – Continued

<b>UNIT CHECKPOINTS AND FEEDBACK</b>
<b>KEY CONCEPTS AND SKILLS</b> <b>Reading</b> <i>Instructional Approaches:</i>  <i>Critical Literacy/Thinking Skills:</i>  <i>Accommodations/Modifications:</i>
<b>Writing</b> <i>Instructional Approaches:</i>  <i>Critical Literacy/Thinking Skills:</i>  <i>Accommodations/Modifications:</i>
<b>Language and Word Study</b> <i>Instructional Approaches:</i>  <i>Critical Literacy/Thinking Skills:</i>  <i>Accommodations/Modifications:</i>
<b>Oral Communication and Media Literacy</b> <i>Instructional Approaches:</i>  <i>Critical Literacy/Thinking Skills:</i>  <i>Accommodations/Modifications:</i>



# Appendix 1-5. Lesson Template 1

**Title of Lesson:****Lifelong Learnings**

(What major understandings am I trying to build in my students over time?)

**Teaching Focus/Curriculum Expectations**

(What specific skills/concepts will I teach? Which expectations will I address?)

**Assessment**

(How will I know when my students are successful?)

**Prior Knowledge**

(What prior knowledge do my students need in order to be successful with this lesson focus?)

**Materials/Teacher Preparation**

(What do I need to know, have, and be able to do before I can begin the lesson?)

**Modifications and Accommodations**

(How can I ensure that all my students are learning?)

**Instruction**

(Introduction, instruction, and application . . .)

**Teacher Reflection**

(Were my students successful? Did my instructional decisions meet the needs of all students? What worked well? What will I do differently in the future? What are my next steps?)

**Student Reflection**

(What did I learn? How would I describe my learning to another person? How does this learning connect to other information I have gained? What did I do well? What do I need to improve?)

## Appendix 1-6. Lesson Template 2

<b>Planning the Lesson</b>			
Date: _____		Title of the Lesson: _____	
Curriculum Area: _____		Unit of Study: _____	
<b>Lifelong Learnings:</b> What major understandings am I trying to build in my students over time?			
<b>Curriculum Expectations:</b> What skills, knowledge, attitudes/values do you expect your students to learn?			
<b>Assessment:</b> How will you assess the learning expectations?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning log/journal	<input type="checkbox"/> Audio/video/technological presentation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Anecdotal notes	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Project	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work samples	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer-assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Oral reports	
<input type="checkbox"/> Interview/conference	<input type="checkbox"/> Rubric		
<input type="checkbox"/> Checklist	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation/performance		
<b>Indicators:</b> How will you know that your students have achieved the expectations? What will achievement look like?			
<b>Materials Required:</b> What will you need to prepare in advance?			
Teacher Resources	Human Resources	Student Materials	Equipment
<b>Modifications/Accommodations:</b> How will you change the lesson to meet the needs of individual students?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase time, space, amount	<input type="checkbox"/> Scribe	<input type="checkbox"/> Use manipulatives	
<input type="checkbox"/> Decrease amount	<input type="checkbox"/> Oral explanation	<input type="checkbox"/> Include visuals	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer tutor/partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Extend	
<b>Instruction:</b>			
<b>Personal Notes/Reminders/Homework/Other Considerations:</b>			

(Adapted from Schwartz and Pollishuke, 2002)

## Appendix 1-7. Lesson Template 3

Planning the Lesson					
Timing	Grouping*			Prior Learning/Experiences Required	Materials Required
	W	S	I		
				Setting the Scene:	
				Input/Modelling:	
				Application/Reflection:	

\* Grouping: W = Whole class; S = Small group; I = Independent

(Adapted from Schwartz and Pollishuke, 2002)



# 2

# CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

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# CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

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“The best classrooms are literacy havens where students flourish as readers, writers, and learners as they explore their physical and social world. Learning captures their curiosity and imagination and propels them into a lifelong love affair with it. We cannot predict with certainty what today’s students in grades 3 through 6 will encounter in the twenty-first century, but we do know that their world will be driven by information and those who seek it. For these students, quality of life will depend on their ability to use a wide variety of texts – in both print and nonprint media.”

*(Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, p. 390)*

It takes careful planning to organize a dynamic, inclusive classroom that provides junior students with the structure they need for optimal learning. The atmosphere must be safe, respectful, stimulating, and inviting, so that all students feel comfortable and excited about learning. All stakeholders – teachers, the community, parents, administration, staff, and students – need to be involved in building the classroom environment, to provide a place for learning that recognizes the diversity of life experiences that learners bring to the classroom.

The classroom layout should be well organized and flexible, to accommodate groupings that change according to student needs and the teaching focus. Space allocation needs

to take into account and honour the different learning styles and specific needs of the students in the classroom. Certain students work well in a group, while others might need a sheltered spot, free of noise and other forms of stimulation, that they can retreat to when they feel distracted or want a bit of quiet time.

To provide a setting appropriate for diverse needs and activities, including both collaborative and independent work, the classroom should offer spaces for explicit teaching and for conferences (both formal and informal), meeting areas for large and small groups, an area for individual study, visual display areas, an area for storing and using technological and multimedia resources, and an area devoted to literacy resources (with space for browsing/reading as well as storage).

“As you effectively construct the physical layout of your classroom environment, you will see how the overall set-up can and will invite your students to explore, interact, investigate, and learn.”

*(Schwartz and Pollishuke, 2002, p. 13)*

Resources need to be easily accessible, interesting, reflective of the global nature of Canadian society, and representative of the lived experiences of the students in the classroom. Resources need to change and be updated regularly during the course of the school year. One way to keep the selection current and fresh is to partner with the school's teacher-librarian, the public library, and grade partners.

While the teacher may determine the initial classroom layout and the core of the resource collection, it is important for students to have some say. Classroom layout and resources should be discussed during regular class meetings, and students should be encouraged to give input about what they think might help to improve their learning environment. For example, students might suggest a special browsing area that highlights new materials or specific items of current interest. Or students might request specific magazines for the classroom collection.

To ensure that everyone in the learning community can be comfortable, routines need to be established that students understand and can follow. Anchor charts should be posted to remind students of the behavioural expectations and specific routines for each area. In the junior grades, it is important to involve students in establishing the routines. This collaboration helps students learn to work as a team, provide leadership, and take responsibility for the smooth functioning of their classroom.

## Establishing Meeting Areas

Four clearly defined spaces should be available to accommodate groups receiving differentiated instruction during the literacy block: a central meeting area, a small-group meeting area, an area for independent work, and a conference area.

The **central meeting area** could be an open space where the entire class meets. The teacher could use this area to conduct whole-class instruction, mini-lessons, drama activities, read-alouds, shared reading lessons, shared writing lessons, book talks, debates, “debriefings”, or community circles. This area could include a chart stand or whiteboard with markers and an author's chair.

The **small-group meeting area** could be used to allow a small number of students to meet for a variety of purposes – for example, literature circles, guided reading sessions, guided writing sessions, word study, and book club meetings. It could include a circular table and a chart stand or whiteboard with markers. A teacher working in this area should be able to see the rest of the class.

“To gain a positive attitude towards school and learning, your students must have visual stimulation, organization, space, and a feeling of warmth and security.”

*(Schwartz and Pollishuke, 2002, p. 6)*

Effective literacy teachers create flexible seating arrangements that allow students to engage in collaborative learning activities as well as individual tasks. Throughout the year, students should have ample opportunity to work in both homogeneous (same interests or skill levels) and heterogeneous (varied interests or skill levels) group situations.

The **independent work area** is one in which students work quietly and independently as the need arises. Students may use this area to read, to write, or to study independently.

The **conference area** could be used as a place where the teacher works with individual students. For example, a teacher might wish to assist a student with the editing stage of a writing activity or hold a reading conference with a student. Students could also use the conference area when working in pairs or when reading independently. This area should be situated so that activities in it do not disturb others.

In a productive literacy classroom, all areas are used effectively and efficiently. To ensure the success of the literacy block, both teacher and students need to understand the purpose of each of the areas and their relationship to one another. For example, the teacher may choose to begin the literacy block by conducting a shared reading lesson with the whole class in the central meeting area, focusing on strategies for finding important information in a text. When the lesson is over, some students go to their independent work area to work on the strategies as they read independently, while other students gather for a guided reading session in the small-group meeting area. At the end of the guided reading session, the whole class returns to the central meeting area to discuss what they have learned and read, sharing their thoughts and asking questions.

## **Organizing, Storing, and Displaying Literacy Resources**

The literacy resources in a classroom – their appeal, diversity, accessibility, and organization – have the potential to enhance students’ literacy development and instill positive attitudes about reading and writing. Classroom resources should therefore contain rich texts in a wide variety of genres and forms, including bilingual texts that are reflective of the many first languages of the classroom and at a range of reading levels. Materials should come in a variety of print and electronic formats and should be age appropriate and inclusive in their treatment of information.

Teachers need to be aware of what is current and of interest to their students in order to entice students to engage with the information presented. Teachers should also seek out resources that have substance, present varying points of view, and provide students with opportunities for rich discussions during their search for meaning.



Finally, resources need to be easily accessible and well organized so that students can readily find what they need.

Students develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for the classroom literacy resources when they are involved in selecting and maintaining them, and their interest in exploring the material increases. Teachers can involve students in maintaining the resources by inviting them to:

- create labels for new texts;
- identify the teacher’s organization of the texts and propose a different way of organizing them;
- display new titles prominently;
- nominate choices for class favourites;
- create a “Best Reads” bulletin board or display.

The resources of school libraries enhance those available in individual classrooms, providing students with access to the wide variety of material they need to develop a love of reading and to improve their literacy skills. An effective classroom sign-out system ensures the safe and timely return of all material. Such a system also provides teachers with a snapshot of the material students are reading independently.

“Classroom libraries are a literacy necessity; they are integral to successful teaching and learning and must become a top priority if our students are to become thriving, engaged readers.”

*(Routman, 2003, p. 64)*

### **Sign-Out Systems for Classroom and Borrowed Resources**

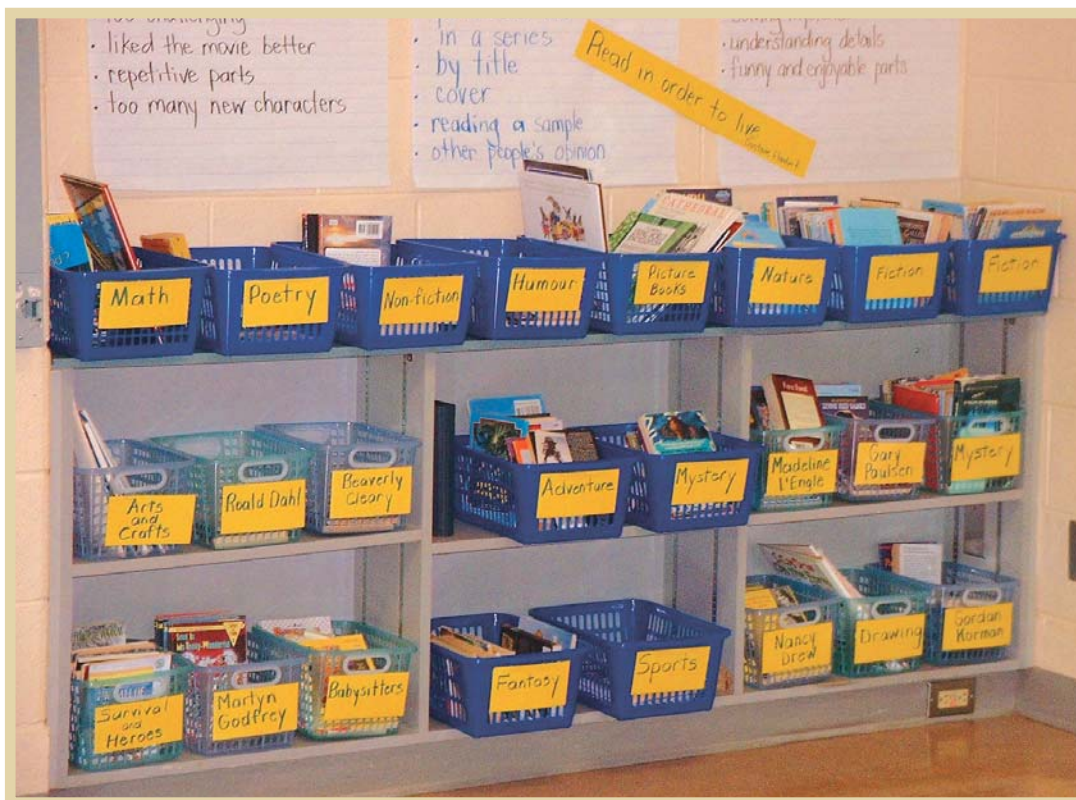
Sign-out systems can be organized in a variety of ways. One way is to place adhesive pockets inside the back cover of each text. A card, labelled with information about the title, author, genre, and so on, is placed inside each pocket. A pocket chart is also developed, with individual pockets labelled with each student’s name. When students sign out a text, they remove the card from the back pocket of the text and put it into their pocket on the pocket chart. With this system, the teacher can easily track which book a particular student is reading.

Another kind of sign-out system uses a card for each student rather than a card for each book. Each pocket on the sign-out chart contains a card labelled with an individual student’s name. Each card contains a three-column chart with the headings “Date”, “Title”, and “Type of Text”. Each time students take a text from the classroom resources area, they remove their personal card from the pocket chart and record on it the date, the title of the text, and the type of text they are taking. (The type could be the text form or genre – e.g., graphic novel, magazine, biography.) This sign-out system allows the teacher to easily track and monitor each student’s independent reading.

## Sorting and Displaying Resources

To be accessible to teacher and students, classroom literacy resources need to be displayed. There are many display options. Teachers can use baskets, bins, and/or rain gutters as inexpensive vehicles for displaying resources. Texts can also be placed in shelving units, on tables, or on the floor. Placing texts in bins with the covers facing out facilitates browsing, as it is easier for students to flip through books placed one behind another in a bin than it is for them to try to read the names of books displayed spine-out on shelves. Resources can be arranged and organized by topic, author, literary genre, text form, or series (see “Suggestions for Sorting and Displaying Classroom Resources”, pp. 70–72). If there are empty bins or baskets on hand, students can be asked to reorganize the resources, creating new “collections”. Changing displays regularly promotes student interest.

All literacy resources for independent reading should be housed in the same area, to help students appreciate the wide variety of reading material available and to help them choose material for independent reading. Each resource should be labelled in a way that makes it easy for students to return it to its proper location. In addition,



charts listing the various categories can be displayed in the literacy resources area for easy reference. Anchor charts that list the features of a particular category (e.g., fiction, non-fiction, narratives, reports) can also help guide students' choices.

**Reference materials** are an important part of literacy resources. Reference materials such as dictionaries of varying complexity and specificity (e.g., a math dictionary), thesauri, atlases, globes, maps, and style guides should be stored together and be easily accessible to students working on various projects. Anchor charts that contain class-specific reference material can be displayed throughout the classroom. It is not enough to have the reference materials available. Teachers must also demonstrate how to use the various materials appropriately and effectively and give students opportunities to practise using these reference materials to enhance their reading and writing in all subjects.

**Personal storage space** for student work is also an important consideration in the junior classroom. Containers such as magazine files enable students to house their independent and guided reading texts and other items such as their reader's notebooks and writing folders. This personal storage space allows students ready access to their current work and related materials, makes it easy for the teacher to locate student work to examine and discuss it in conferences, and reduces the possibility that students' work will be misplaced. In addition, having personal storage space fosters independence and organizational skills in students, and shows them that their work is valued.

## Tip for Teachers

### Communal Resources for Shared and Guided Reading

Texts for shared and guided reading sessions should be shelved separately from the resources intended for independent reading. Some schools keep shared and guided reading material in a separate book room. These resources are borrowed by teachers on a need basis and returned when they are no longer required, so that other classrooms can benefit from using them. This approach offers individual teachers a wider choice of instructional texts than they could have in their own classrooms, and it facilitates the building and maintenance, by all teachers involved, of a collection that is balanced in terms of literary genres, text forms, and levels of difficulty.

## Suggestions for Sorting and Displaying Classroom Resources

Category	Reasons	Examples (where applicable)
<b>Text forms and genres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To show students the variety of reading material available to them, and to allow them to pick the forms that meet their needs</li> <li>To support the teaching of a specific text form (in reading or writing)</li> <li>To help students make connections between reading and writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historical novels, diaries (e.g., <i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i>, by Anne Frank), biographies, horror stories, picture books, poetry, comic books</li> <li>Narrative, exposition, procedure, recount, report, explanation, electronic text, and functional texts</li> <li>Series (the <i>Harry Potter</i> books, by J.K. Rowling; the <i>Adventure.Net Series</i>, by Andrea and David Spalding)</li> <li>Newspapers and magazines</li> <li>Road maps, menus, manuals</li> <li>Graphic novels</li> <li>Video novels</li> </ul>
<b>Topic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To allow students who have become interested in a topic to pursue it, often in a variety of text forms</li> <li>To support topics being studied in the content areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heroes</li> <li>Courage</li> <li>Bullying</li> <li>Unsolved mysteries</li> <li>“Believe it or not” stories</li> </ul>
<b>Author</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage students who have been interested in one book by an author to try other titles by the same author</li> <li>To offer students opportunities to look at an author’s work in depth in order to better understand the writer’s craft</li> <li>To offer students opportunities to try new text forms, if an author writes in other genres or forms</li> <li>To offer students who read at a variety of levels opportunities to read the same author, if the author writes at varying levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authors such as David Bouchard, Kit Pearson, Gordon Korman, Monica Hughes, Isaac Asimov, Seymour Simon, David Suzuki</li> </ul>
<b>Reading level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support guided reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levelled books (i.e., books arranged by level of difficulty by either the teacher or a publisher)</li> </ul>

## Suggestions for Sorting and Displaying Classroom Resources – Continued

Category	Reasons	Examples (where applicable)
<b>Texts related to content areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To enhance students' understanding and enjoyment of other parts of the curriculum by adding human perspectives and by building understanding of the human condition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stories, poems, articles, comics, etc. that have connections to science, social studies, and math (These books would change throughout the year.)</li> <li>Specific examples include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Math Curse</i>, by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith (illustrator);</li> <li>– <i>Punctuation Takes a Vacation</i>, by Robin Pulver and Lynn Rowe Read;</li> <li>– <i>What's Living Inside Your Body?</i>, by Andrew Solway;</li> <li>– <i>The Once Upon a Time Map Book</i>, by Barbara Hennessy and Peter Joyce (illustrator).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Student favourites ("If you liked ..., then try ...")</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage students to read more by offering them more of something with which they are already comfortable</li> <li>To encourage reluctant readers to read more</li> <li>To make students feel that their opinions are valued</li> </ul>	
<b>Award winners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make students aware of the attention paid to good books</li> <li>To expose students to excellence in literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Winners of the Silver Birch, Newberry, Governor General's, Trillium, Mr. Christie's, and Canadian Library Association awards</li> </ul>
<b>"Buddy books"</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To enhance the reading experience by encouraging students to read with a friend (requires two or more copies of each text)</li> </ul>	
<b>Student/Teacher picks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage students to read more by offering them texts recommended by their peers and the teacher (e.g., in book talks) (For each text, the display would identify the person who recommends it and would include a brief description of the text and why the person recommends it.)</li> </ul>	
<b>Previously read texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage students to deepen their understanding of texts used in read-alouds and shared reading lessons by reading on their own</li> </ul>	

(continued)

## Suggestions for Sorting and Displaying Classroom Resources – Continued

Category	Reasons	Examples (where applicable)
<b>Picture and pattern books</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support a lesson or strategy being taught</li> <li>To allow students to explore complex concepts in a comfortable way</li> <li>To help students build fluency, because these books are easy to read</li> <li>To help students with their own writing, where the text offers a pattern to emulate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Books such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Dove Isabeau</i>, by Jane Yolen</li> <li>– <i>One More Border</i>, by William Kaplan and Stephen Taylor (illustrator)</li> <li>– <i>If Sarah Will Take Me</i>, by David Bouchard</li> <li>– <i>Sister Anne’s Hands</i>, by Marybeth Lorbiecki and Wendy Popp (illustrator)</li> <li>– <i>Teammates</i>, by Peter Golenbock</li> <li>– <i>A River Ran Wild</i>, by Lynne Cherry</li> <li>– <i>Fly Away Home</i>, by Eve Bunting and Ronald Himler (illustrator)</li> <li>– <i>Chicken Sunday</i>, by Patricia Polacco</li> <li>– <i>Spyglass</i>, by Paul Evans</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Student-authored texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage students to make connections between their reading and writing programs</li> <li>To give students an authentic audience for their writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poetry collections</li> <li>Fairy tale spinoffs</li> <li>Poetry</li> <li>Myths</li> <li>Autobiographies</li> </ul>
<b>Dual-language texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To accommodate the needs of students whose first language is not English</li> <li>To continue to build upon first-language proficiency that will eventually transfer to English-language proficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widely known legends, fairy tales, myths</li> <li>Some picture books</li> <li>Poetry</li> </ul>

## Creating and Positioning Visual Displays

By incorporating interactive and practical displays into the classroom space, teachers promote literacy and clarify its connections to subjects across the curriculum.

Following are some examples of such displays:

- texts selected from the classroom and/or borrowed resources (see earlier discussion)
- pocket charts (described in more detail on the following page)
- word walls (described in more detail on the following page)
- examples of student work
- anchor charts created during reading and writing workshops and during shared writing (e.g., charts that set out comprehension strategies, explain different forms of writing, set out aspects of the writer’s craft or the writing process)
- examples of various graphic organizers

- images related to topics being studied
- displays that challenge students and support their growing sense of being capable, independent learners (e.g., “Can you find the match?”, “How many homonyms can you think of?”)
- displays that stimulate wonder and promote inquiry (e.g., optical illusions)

Displays have a greater influence on learners when the students participate in creating the items or materials displayed. This personal connection gives students a sense of pride and ownership. It is therefore important that teachers not rely too much on commercially produced materials.

Displays should be kept current, changing as new learning occurs. However, anchor charts that reinforce concepts or strategies learned in class may be displayed in the classroom throughout the year, for reference.

**Pocket charts** can be used in various ways. One use is to help students understand the writing process by tracking their progress through its various stages. Each pocket is labelled with a different stage of the process: pre-writing activities, drafting, rethinking and revising, final editing, publishing (these stages are described in Volume 1, Chapter 2 [pp. 42–43]). Each student is given a “name tag” (a strip of paper with the student’s name written on it), and students place their name tags in the pocket that best represents the stage of the writing process on which they are working. Tracking their progress in this way gives students a sense of independence. The arrangement also allows the teacher to see at a glance which stage of the writing process each student is working on.

Pocket charts are also useful during language and word study, when they can be used to hold words and phrases that students can put together to construct effective sentences and paragraphs.

**Word walls** offer students a highly visible reference in the classroom for words that students use and work with on an ongoing basis. Word walls offer teachers a good way to support links among reading, writing, and vocabulary development, as well as literacy learning across the curriculum. The words selected for display are carefully chosen by the teacher on the basis of student needs and a systematic and integrated approach to language and word study.



The selected words may be posted on a wall, a chalkboard/whiteboard, or a bulletin board. Word walls are usually organized alphabetically. (In multilingual classrooms, students may need to record the word in their first language to support their acquisition and understanding of the term.) A word wall is developed over the course of the school year as students encounter new words in curriculum areas such as science, social studies, and mathematics. In junior classrooms, there may be more than one word wall – for example, one per subject, or one reserved for significant words that appear often in a certain topic or unit of study. Certain words (e.g., those with complex meanings or difficult spellings) are posted for long periods of time, but other words can be removed as students become familiar with them. Teachers alert students to the removal of words from the word wall, to give students an opportunity to add these words to their personal dictionaries.

## Using Technological and Multimedia Resources

“Information and communications technologies (ICT) provide a range of tools that can significantly extend and enrich teachers’ instructional strategies and support students’ learning in language.”

*(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006b, p. 30)*

Modern technology allows students unprecedented opportunities to explore and make connections with the world around them. It also offers them a support for lifelong learning. Effective teachers integrate the use of electronic, digital, and technological tools into their daily lessons, demonstrating the appropriate use of the tools and offering students frequent opportunities to use them (see “Tools and Technologies” in Volume 1, Chapter 2 [p. 65]). Computers, whether in the school computer lab or the classroom, are only one of the many technological resources available. The accompanying chart outlines a variety of these resources and suggests ways they can be used in the junior classroom.

## RESOURCES

Students need to become proficient in “multiliteracies”, involving texts of all types.

A good school library is essential. As well, each literacy classroom should contain a wide-ranging collection of engaging, high-quality texts. Teacher-librarians, with their special knowledge of children’s literature and their unique experience and training, are a vital resource for classroom teachers to consult about selecting suitable texts for the literacy classroom. In addition to being a source of expertise, both teacher-librarians and public librarians can lend classroom teachers texts that will strengthen the classroom collection. Taking advantage of the expertise of these invaluable resource people, and developing strong links with them, helps teachers build a dynamic collection of engaging classroom resources that can change as the need arises and offer all students extensive and varied reading opportunities.

A rich collection of classroom resources reflects the diverse reading levels, interests, and instructional needs of all the students, and offers teachers plentiful and varied opportunities to enhance instruction and to illustrate teaching points. The resources



## Digital, Electronic, and Technological Tools for the Junior Classroom

Device	Classroom Application
Computers with Internet access, e-mail, word-processing and graphics programs, CD-ROMs, and printers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immerse students in information, ideas, and texts of many types</li> <li>• Provide students with tools to create and share their own texts (e.g., on a class website or school network)</li> </ul>
Digital cameras, video cameras, and scanners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage students to enhance their texts</li> <li>• Encourage students to explore other ways to record and communicate ideas and information</li> </ul>
Translation programs and electronic dictionaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help second-language learners scaffold on their first language as they build confidence in the language of instruction</li> </ul>
Assistive technologies, including Ministry of Education-licensed software for voice recognition, co-writing, and graphic organizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students with special needs view, listen to, and process texts, and engage actively in classroom learning</li> </ul>
VCR and DVD players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer students opportunities to obtain ideas and information from visual sources</li> <li>• Enable students to compare a story told in print with the same story told visually</li> <li>• Engage students in reflecting critically on media works</li> </ul>
Audio recorders and players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage students in talking and listening in order to promote their interest in reading and writing</li> </ul>
Overhead and multimedia projectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve large groups of students in shared reading and writing activities</li> </ul>

include fiction and non-fiction in a variety of genres and by a variety of authors, poetry, multimedia resources (e.g., computer access to appropriate and appealing websites, electronic newspapers), posters, magazines, comic books, graphic novels, picture books, audio books, song books, catalogues, recipes, instruction manuals, reports, journals, flyers, brochures, and a wide variety of reference materials such as dictionaries, thesauri, style guides, and word-game material. Classroom collections are often heavily weighted in favour of fiction. As the preceding list shows, to engage all junior students in reading and to equip them to meet the literacy demands of a multicultural, multimedia world, the classroom collection needs to expose them to a broad range of text forms and genres.

### Overall Considerations

In selecting classroom resources, teachers need to consider the following (the first three items are discussed in more detail below):

- the characteristics and interests of the junior learner
- students' cultural backgrounds

- students' reading levels
- the Ministry of Education's policies for resource selection (see *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language, 2006*)
- their own school board's standards or policies for resource selection

Teachers can stay up to date on the literacy resources available for junior students by asking colleagues about resources that have been well received by students and by consulting teacher-librarians and public library staff. Other good sources of current, high-quality resources include the following:

- reviews in professional journals (e.g., *The Reading Teacher*) and on the websites of organizations dedicated to the needs of young readers (e.g., the Canadian Children's Book Centre site, at [www.bookcentre.ca/](http://www.bookcentre.ca/))
- lists of books that are nominated or short-listed for, and that win, awards (e.g., the Governor General's Award for Children's Literature, the Newberry Medal)
- contests, such as the Silver Birch Award contest sponsored each year by the Ontario Library Association, where students in Grades 4 to 6 are asked to vote for their favourite among selected fiction and non-fiction titles

Teachers should also work together within the Junior Division to plan the acquisition of literacy resources, to ensure that students are exposed to a rich continuum of literacy experiences between Grades 4 and 6.

### **Characteristics and Interests of the Junior Learner**

When selecting classroom resources, teachers need to keep in mind the characteristics of the junior learner (described in detail in Volume 1, Chapter 1). As junior students explore their developing sense of identity, they are drawn to stories about heroes and role models. Their ability to empathize with others is increasing, as well as their sense of justice and fairness, and they enjoy texts that address these issues. Junior students also enjoy humorous texts and problem-solving texts such as puzzles, patterns, investigations, and mysteries.

Boys and girls may have different interests and preferences for different kinds of texts. Since some boys of this age may prefer comic books, Internet sites, and instructional manuals to traditional stories, these and other non-traditional texts should be included in the classroom resources.

A reading interest survey is a great tool for discovering students' interests and for informing the selection of classroom resources. In addition, texts recommended in book talks by either the teacher or students are useful additions to the resources, as students may be more motivated to read texts that have been recommended. (Book talks are discussed in the Appendix to Volume 1: see p. 119.) As students' interests

change throughout the year and as book-talk recommendations are made, texts can be added to the classroom resources. Not all of these texts need to be purchased; they can be borrowed from the school library and the local public library. In addition, as mentioned earlier, recommendations from colleagues and librarians, book reviews, books shortlisted for awards, and books identified through book contests are good sources for texts that will interest students.

As mentioned above, one of the best ways of ensuring that students' interests are met is to make them active participants in the process of selecting, organizing, and maintaining the classroom resources. Build in plenty of time for dialogue.

### Students' Cultural Backgrounds

Junior students need to see their own backgrounds, languages, and cultures reflected in the texts available to them in the classroom. "Students who see themselves reflected and affirmed in classroom texts and in instruction (that is, those who experience language, culture, and identity *engagement*) come to appreciate that reading and writing are genuinely *for* them and *about* them" (*Literacy for Learning*, 2004, p. 6). The content of classroom resources must be free from racial, ethnocultural, religious, regional, gender-related, and age-related biases. Non-fiction should include Canadian content and references and use metric measurements. Works by both Canadian and international authors should be included.

### Students' Reading Levels

The chart that follows sets out the three commonly accepted levels of reading difficulty. These levels apply to both fiction and non-fiction texts.

#### The Three Levels of Reading Difficulty

Level of Difficulty	Description	Appropriate for Which Key Instructional Approach
<b>Independent:</b> 95%–100% accuracy rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can recognize 95% or more of the words in the text without any assistance from the teacher.</li> </ul>	Independent reading
<b>Instructional:</b> 90%–94% accuracy rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can recognize 90% to 94% of the words in the text without assistance from the teacher. This is the level of text students should use to practise and apply the reading comprehension strategies they have learned.</li> </ul>	Guided reading
<b>Frustration:</b> less than 90% accuracy rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students recognize fewer than 90% of the words and comprehend less than 50% of the text. At this level, students are too frustrated by the text to learn from it.</li> </ul>	Read-alouds Shared reading

## Categories of Texts (Forms and Genres)

Texts can be categorized in many ways and can appear in many forms. The traditional definitions of text categories and forms are expanding and blurring as authors and illustrators experiment with them and as new technologies are introduced.

As stated in Volume 1, Chapter 2, “Knowledge and Skills Required for Literacy” (p. 38), the term *genre* refers to the style or category of a literary work, whether fiction or non-fiction (e.g., epic, science fiction, biography), and the term *text form* refers to the structure or function/purpose of a literary or non-literary work (e.g., narrative, procedure).

*Text form* can also be used in another sense to mean the format in which text is presented (i.e., print, electronic, or visual/graphic). For example, a text describing a procedure (a text form) could be presented in print form (e.g., a rule book), electronic form (e.g., online instructions for installing a software program), or visual/graphic form (e.g., a map). An adventure story (a literary genre) could be presented in print form (e.g., as a book or a graphic novel) or in electronic (e.g., multimedia) form. As these examples demonstrate, focusing on the terminology can be confusing. As noted in Volume 1, Chapter 2, it is more important for students to understand the *concept* of text forms as a useful way to think about the function or purpose of a text and its intended audience. In the context of the present chapter, the terms provide useful guidelines for identifying the kinds of texts needed in a junior classroom’s collection of literacy resources.

### Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Poetry

One way that texts, particularly traditional books, are differentiated is by assigning them to the categories of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

**Fiction** comprises a variety of narrative genres of prose that describe imaginary events and people – that is, the plots and characters emerge from the author’s imagination and are not necessarily based on fact. The purpose of fiction is usually to give readers pleasure, and perhaps to enlighten them about aspects of the human condition.

### Common genres of fiction include:

**Adventure.** Focuses on the solving of a problem through a series of action events.

**Epic.** Traditional. An extended narrative that recounts the actions, travels, or adventures of a hero, who is usually on a quest or attempting to perform a difficult task.

**Fable.** Traditional. A short story that teaches a moral or lesson. The characters are usually animals with human characteristics, and their interaction reveals general truths about human nature.

**Fairy tale.** Traditional. Involves magical beings, lands, and objects.

**Fantasy.** Features an imaginative setting, often in the past or the future, characters (human and animal) who have adventures, and magic.

**Folk tale.** Traditional. Based on a story from the past that has been passed down orally from generation to generation.

**Historical fiction.** Realistic. Gives an accurate portrayal of life and events during a particular time in history, but usually involves imaginary characters and plots.

**Horror.** Features events or characters that evoke fear in other characters and in the reader.

**Humour.** Uses comedy, wit, fancy, and funny anecdotes to entertain or to lampoon.

**Legend.** Traditional. Based on fact and/or stories passed orally from generation to generation. Often focuses on a national or folk hero, and may include imagined characters, events, and settings.

**Mystery.** Realistic. Focuses on a puzzling question or crime that is solved through investigation and the following of clues.

**Myth.** Traditional. Describes the early history of a people or explains some natural or social phenomenon, and usually involves gods, goddesses, and other supernatural beings.

**Realistic fiction.** Depicts imaginary characters and events in a way that seems true to life.

**Romance.** Depicts love relationships, often in idealized ways.

**Science fiction.** Depicts the potential effect of scientific changes on an imagined future world and the characters in that world.

*Non-fiction* comprises a variety of prose categories that provide information or facts about things, events, people, constructs, concepts, and theories. Its purpose is to communicate accurate, credible information.

### Common genres of non-fiction include:

**Autobiography.** An account of a person's life written by that person from his or her own perspective.

**Biography.** An account of a person's life written by someone else.

**Memoir.** A historical account written by someone with first-hand knowledge of the time and events, usually written in the first person and as a reflection on the past.

The genres listed above form only a small part of the non-fiction texts available. Many non-fiction texts fall into the broad category of **informational texts**, which provide facts and a variety of other information about a wide range of topics, and which can appear in a wide variety of forms (e.g., explanatory, persuasive, procedural, functional, recounts, reports). See the chart “Some Common Text Forms Listed According to Their Purpose” on page 81 for some examples.

The following chart, “General Elements of Fiction and Non-Fiction Texts for Junior Classrooms”, sets out the kinds of elements effective junior literacy teachers look for when selecting fiction and non-fiction texts.

### General Elements of Fiction and Non-Fiction Texts for Junior Classrooms

Fiction	Non-Fiction
<p>Texts that have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• varying lengths</li> <li>• stories that elicit cognitive as well as social and emotional responses</li> <li>• characters that range from straightforward to multifaceted</li> <li>• plots with lots of action that range from easily defined to multilayered and complex</li> <li>• varying layouts (e.g., a variety of font sizes, text placement styles, and areas of white space)</li> <li>• varying amounts of illustration, from those with an illustration on every page to those with few, if any, illustrations</li> <li>• a variety of chapter types, from short, titled chapters to long, untitled chapters</li> <li>• content that is age-appropriate and inclusive, and that is relevant and appealing to junior readers</li> </ul>	<p>Texts that have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• content that is accurate and current</li> <li>• clearly defined formats</li> <li>• a balance of print and illustrations</li> <li>• glossaries that explain technical vocabulary, if any</li> <li>• a varying range of topic coverage, from a two-page spread to an entire chapter</li> <li>• visual features that link directly to the words on the page, that are not so complex as to confuse or overwhelm readers, and that are used in a consistent way throughout the text</li> <li>• attractively designed and clearly delineated titles and subtitles</li> <li>• content that is age-appropriate and inclusive, and that is relevant and appealing to junior readers</li> </ul>

*Poetry* is a genre that comprises a variety of literary compositions written in language that is intense because of the poet’s choice of words, use of verse and/or rhythm, and use of imagery. Poetry can be based on reality or reflect the poet’s imagination, and it often evokes an emotional or sensory response in the reader.

### A Variety of Text Forms

All of the above categories and genres lend themselves to a variety of text forms. Junior students need to be exposed to many and diverse kinds of texts to expand their reading “diet”, to see and learn from examples of good writing in many styles, and to develop the ability to make important connections between reading and writing. Students also need to be exposed, in school as well as in their lives outside of school, to the wide variety of texts that are not traditional books, such as electronic and multimedia texts,

so that they can learn how to assess them critically. Effective teachers of junior literacy programs ensure that their classroom resources include a wide variety of text forms, and they draw students' attention to the various forms on a regular basis.

The first chart below lists some common informational text forms according to their purpose. Teachers will want to consider other forms (e.g., explanatory, persuasive, recounts) for their classroom collections as well. The second chart lists texts in terms of the form of their presentation (i.e., print vs. electronic).

### Some Common Text Forms Listed According to Their Purpose

Procedural Texts		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recipes</li> <li>• rule books</li> <li>• street maps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• instructional manuals</li> <li>• directions for scientific experiments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "how to" books and posters</li> </ul>
Reports		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• magazine and newspaper articles</li> <li>• research reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• critical reviews</li> <li>• essays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• diaries or journals</li> </ul>
Functional Texts		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grocery and other lists</li> <li>• memos and notes</li> <li>• pamphlets</li> <li>• brochures</li> <li>• flyers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advertisements</li> <li>• CD inserts</li> <li>• invitations</li> <li>• announcements</li> <li>• programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• business letters</li> <li>• scripts</li> <li>• minutes of meetings</li> </ul>

### Some Common Texts Listed According to the Form of Their Presentation

Print		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• picture books</li> <li>• chapter books</li> <li>• poetry books</li> <li>• novels</li> <li>• short stories</li> <li>• plays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• biographies</li> <li>• histories</li> <li>• textbooks</li> <li>• nature books</li> <li>• dictionaries, thesauri, atlases, and other reference books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• newspapers</li> <li>• magazines</li> <li>• posters</li> <li>• print advertisements</li> </ul>
Electronic		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• multimedia texts</li> <li>• e-mail and other text messages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• websites</li> <li>• e-zines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• broadcast or multimedia advertisements</li> </ul>

## **Texts for Language and Word Study**

Language and word study exploration is greatly enhanced when students have access to a wide range of reference material. The following types of references are a vital part of a well-rounded collection of classroom resources:

- dictionaries, including picture and multilingual dictionaries
- thesauri
- style guides and other material on the writer’s craft
- references on specific language features, such as:
  - word origins
  - idioms
  - puns, similes, and metaphors
  - Canadianisms
  - jokes and riddles
  - homophones and palindromes
  - words with which many junior readers and writers may be unfamiliar
  - limericks and tongue twisters
  - rhyming dictionaries

## **Texts for Read-Alouds, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, and Independent Reading**

The selection of appropriate texts for read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading is influenced by the purpose for reading, the instructional approach being used, the characteristics and needs of the reader, and the features of the text, as summarized in the chart on the following page.

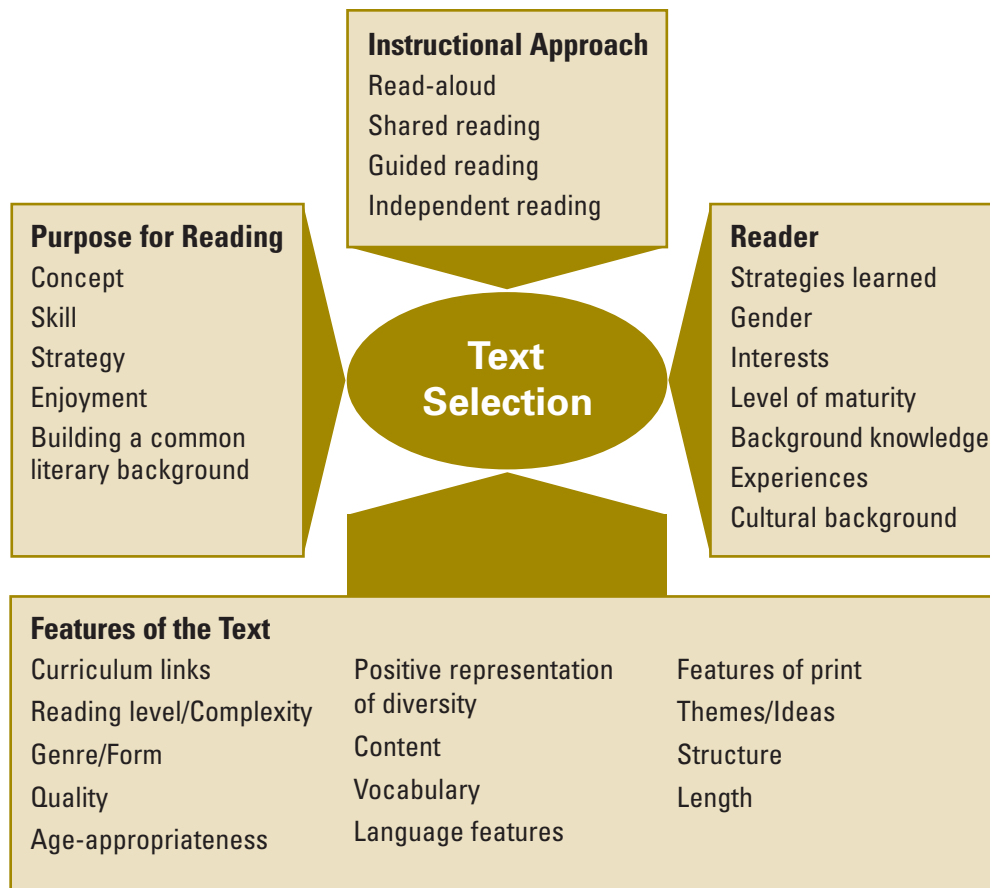
An annotated list of children’s book review websites that describe appropriate, high-quality texts for junior students is provided on pages 86–87.

## **Texts for Cross-Curricular Literacy Instruction**

Content-area teachers benefit from understanding the key instructional approaches and other literacy teaching strategies, and literacy teachers benefit from understanding the distinct literacy demands of the content areas. A cross-curricular approach to text selection is therefore one way to work towards an improved level of student achievement. For example, a read-aloud could be used in a content-area lesson to introduce students to difficult subject-specific vocabulary and to complex material that students may be unable to read independently. The specific literacy demands of each content area, as well as the distinct focuses or main themes of each content area, may require a specific



## General Considerations in Selecting Resources for the Key Instructional Approaches to Reading



literacy strategy, which must be explicitly taught. For example, students who are being asked to examine a social studies topic from different perspectives and then write an expository essay defending one position could first be introduced to the use of a triple-entry journal as a strategy for sorting fact from perspectives and personal ideas.

Many of the textbooks used in content areas are written above the average grade level for which they are intended, making it difficult for some students to gain access to the information in those texts on their own. Allington and Johnston (2002, pp. 42–47) found that effective teachers did not rely on traditional content-area textbooks alone but used a variety of content-related books at different reading levels and a variety of additional, content-related resources such as magazines, periodicals, newspapers, picture books, CD-ROMs, and the Internet. When teachers provide a variety of content-related materials at a range of reading levels, students are better supported as they learn the concepts, skills, and content of each discipline.

“The process of weaving comprehension strategies into content area teaching takes time, especially if you are a new teacher. . . . Teaching itself can create an awareness of the importance of modeling what good readers do to comprehend and learn.”

*(Robb, 2003, p. 13)*

Effective literacy teachers also make every effort to link Language and content-area studies through well-aligned cross-curricular themes. The chart that follows suggests several kinds of texts, and themes found in texts, for junior learners that link Language with other subjects across the curriculum.

### Texts and Themes That Link Language and Content-Area Studies

Texts That Link Language and the Arts	Texts That Link Language and Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics	Themes That Link Language and Guidance and Health
Biographies How-to books Poetry based on aspects of the arts Books about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• musical instruments</li> <li>• musical styles (e.g., jazz)</li> <li>• music through the ages</li> <li>• famous works of art</li> <li>• artists' styles and/or techniques</li> <li>• genres in art (e.g., portraiture)</li> <li>• architecture</li> <li>• types of dance (e.g., ballet)</li> <li>• signs and symbols</li> <li>• cartoons/cartooning</li> <li>• illusion</li> <li>• advertising</li> </ul>	Memoirs/biographies Folk tales, legends, myths Short stories Poetry Picture books Author studies (e.g., of Monica Hughes, Kit Pearson, Christopher Paul Curtis) Historical fiction Science fiction Alphabet books Brain teasers <i>Guinness Book of World Records</i> David Macaulay's books, <i>The Way Things Work</i> and <i>The New Way Things Work</i> Books about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• art from a certain period of history</li> <li>• war art/artists</li> <li>• the immigrant experience</li> <li>• human rights</li> <li>• kid inventors</li> </ul> Books in series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dear Canada</i></li> <li>• <i>Adventure.Net</i></li> </ul>	Belonging Bullying Shyness Peer pressure Prejudice Physical challenges Courage Getting along Coping with change Conflict resolution Taking a stand Having the courage to be different Friendship Family relationships Intergenerational relationships Perspective Growing up Decision making Truthfulness

### Mentor Texts

Classroom resources should include a wide selection of mentor texts. Mentor texts are high-quality, well-written texts that can be used by teachers to introduce students to a strategy, literary device, or text feature, and that students can then refer to when

they need to remember how to apply the strategy or to recall the literary device or text feature. Any text form can be a mentor text, as long as it is well crafted and meets the needs of the teacher and students.

After teachers have used a mentor text to introduce students to a new literacy strategy or concept, they refer to the text often to solidify the connection in students' minds. Although other texts may be used to offer additional support, mentor texts are cited as the "best example". An anchor chart that records mentor texts and how they were used provides students with a visual reminder. A sample anchor chart follows, showing three texts used to illustrate, respectively, a reading strategy, a literary device, and a text feature.

### Sample Mentor Text Anchor Chart

Mentor Texts Used in Our Classroom	
Title of Text	Strategy/Literary Device/Text Feature
<i>Postcards From Pluto</i> , by Loreen Leedy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy: questioning</li> </ul>
<i>Encounter</i> , by Jane Yolen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literary device: foreshadowing</li> </ul>
<i>Stephen Biesty's Incredible Cross-Sections</i> , by Stephen Biesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text feature: diagrams</li> </ul>

### Texts That Meet the Needs of All Readers

Effective literacy teachers take all students into account when selecting resources, including reluctant readers, students for whom English is an additional language, and students with special education needs. Just-right reading material is crucial in helping all readers feel more competent and confident. At times, students need easy text to build fluency; at other times they need challenging text that will stretch them as readers. To meet the needs of all learners, teachers ensure that many different types of fiction and non-fiction forms are available, including magazines, instruction manuals, picture books, comic books, graphic novels, books on tape, and non-fiction texts. Books in series tend to engage all junior readers, as they offer familiar characters, settings, forms, content, and writing style. The predictable plots and language typical of series books offer students support as well. For students for whom English is an additional language, dual-language books or books in their first language are invaluable sources of reading support.

"Choice isn't just about picking a book. Choice is about allowing reluctant readers to retain ownership of, and take responsibility for, the processes in which they are engaged and the topics they care about. Putting choice into their hands allows reluctant readers to feel the power and control over reading that all good readers feel."

(*Jobe and Dayton-Sakari, 1999, p. 38*)

## Manipulatives to Support Literacy Learners

In addition to a wide variety of texts, the junior literacy classroom should contain a variety of manipulatives for language-based activities and games. Language-based manipulatives are highly motivating and encourage active word play. A games centre could include commercial word games such as Scrabble, Boggle, and Spill and Spell, an assortment of crossword puzzles, and word search and other games. Many templates for word games, word searches, and puzzles can be found on the Internet. Interactive software that allows students to play with language is also available.

In addition, pocket charts, sentence strips, word and letter cards for word sorts (both blank and printed), as well as a variety of teacher-created games and materials should be part of the classroom literacy resources.

## An Annotated List of Children’s Book Review Websites

### Canadian Sites

#### Canadian Review of Materials

[www.umanitoba.ca/cm/](http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/)

This site is maintained by the Manitoba Library Association. Access reviews by clicking on **Authors** or **Titles** on the left side of the site. The reviews are written by teacher-librarians and are accompanied by a recommendation.

#### Just for Kids Who Love Books

[www.alanbrown.com/](http://www.alanbrown.com/)

Retired Ontario teacher-librarian Alan Brown has created this site for children to submit and read one another’s book reviews. The site includes many links to authors’ and publishers’ websites.

#### Read Up On It

[www.collectionscanada.ca/read-up-on-it/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/read-up-on-it/index-e.html)

This site is maintained by Library and Archives Canada. The books reviewed on the site are organized by twelve themes: Poetry, Multiculturalism, Magic, Nature and the Environment, Music, Humour, Mystery and Adventure, Sports, History, Science Fiction and Fantasy, The Family, and Aboriginal Legends.

#### The Children’s Literature Web Guide

[www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/](http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/)

David K. Brown of the University of Calgary has compiled a list of “Internet resources related to books for children and young adults”. The reviews link is under **More Links**.

## Other Sites

### **KidsReads.Com**

[www.kidsreads.com/](http://www.kidsreads.com/)

Click on **Reviews** at the top right of the site for a list of book titles. Click on a title to see a synopsis of the book.

### **Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site: All Reviewed Children's Books**

[www.carolhurst.com/titles/allreviewed.html](http://www.carolhurst.com/titles/allreviewed.html)

This section of the site has many featured books. Carol Otis Hurst and Rebecca Otis have reviewed each of the books and linked them to related areas of the site. Reviews can be accessed by title, author, and grade level, and each book is rated.

### **World of Reading**

[www.worldreading.org/](http://www.worldreading.org/)

This site is maintained by the Ann Arbor District Library. The reviews, which are written by and for children, are accessed by clicking on a link on the left side of the home page.



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