

# SNAPSHOT OF A SUCCESSFUL SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM



COLUMBUS  
CITY SCHOOLS

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## TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES/ACTIVITIES IN GRADES 6-12 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

*The key to teaching and learning for English Language Arts (ELA) Grades 6-12 is integrating reading, writing, listening, speaking, language, and vocabulary in every unit for achieving literacy. Students should be:*

- **Reading Complex Texts** (with and without scaffolding)
- **Reading Lexile-Leveled Informational Articles & Novels** (whole class and small group)
- **Reading Primary and Secondary Documents**
- Engaging in **Close Reading** (develop an understanding of a text based on its small details and the larger ideas those details evoke; analyze not just *what* a text means but *how* that meaning comes about)
- Engaging in **Analysis of Complex Text** [break down literary, informational, and historical/scientific texts into their parts in order to tie those parts to a whole, e.g. notice how an author's word choice (part) affects the theme (whole)]
- Composing and Answering **Text-Dependent Questions**
- Being held accountable for **citing text** when answering questions **orally and in writing**
- **Writing routinely over extended and short time frames** (rather than writing one longer essay or research paper per nine-weeks)
- **Developing and Strengthening Writing**
- Producing **Analytical Writing**
- Producing **Argument Writing**
- Producing **Informative/Explanatory Writing**
- Producing **Narrative Story and Narrative Description Writing**
- Conducting **Research Projects** (short- and long-term)
- **Summarizing and Synthesizing**
- **Comparing and Contrasting**
- **Sourcing and Contextualizing**
- **Integrating and Evaluating**

- Determining and Analyzing **theme, central idea, plot, characterization, tone, diction, point of view, purpose, argument, claims, counterclaims, primary and secondary documents, structure, transformation of source material, rhetoric, aesthetics, irony, etc.**
- **Supporting Claims** (with explanation and textual citations)
- Engaging in a **range of Collaborative Discussions** (both teacher- and student-led)
- Making **Speeches** (formal and informal)
- Making **Presentations** (with multimedia elements)
- Using **Vocabulary Acquisition** techniques to determine literal, figurative, connotative, and technical meanings of **Tier Two-General Academic Words** and **Tier-Three Domain-Specific Words** through direct instruction, context clues, knowledge of Greek and Latin roots and affixes, reference guides, vocabulary strategies like the Frayer model, etc.
- Investigating and Using **Literary and Syntactical Devices**
- Demonstrating command of **MUGS** (mechanics, usage, grammar, and spelling)



### *Some Best Practices...*

- Ownership of the Clear Learning Targets
- Reading Daily/Writing Weekly
- Reading & Writing Workshop
- Literature Circles
- Socratic Seminar
- Writer's Seminar
- Close Reading Strategies (e.g. Annotating and Coding Text)
- Interactive Notebooks and Graphic Organizers
- Carousels and Stations
- Student-Led Discussions/Scored Discussions