

# **The Middle Country Central School District's K-12 ELA Program**

## **Overview**

The Middle Country ELA program is fully aligned with the New York State Next Generation ELA Learning Standards. Our curriculum and instruction is designed to thoroughly prepare our students for success in college and their careers by empowering and inspiring them to grow into powerful, lifelong readers, writers, researchers, listeners, and speakers.

### **Reading**

By the time students graduate from the Middle Country School District, they will have demonstrated proficiency in closely reading, analyzing, and discussing a wide range of texts in order to develop their ability to fully understand, critique, and enjoy diverse works of both fiction and nonfiction. They will have also learned that while actively reading is an essential human activity, reading and discussing literature can also be a wonderful experience.

### **Writing and Research**

As writers, students will be able to clearly, confidently, and creatively communicate their thoughts and ideas through numerous genres to a variety of audiences. They will also become proficient in evaluating and utilizing sources of information to develop and present evidence-based claims that are free from plagiarism.

### **Listening and Speaking**

Our students will know how to listen with an open mind, ask insightful questions, and voice their opinions articulately, respectfully, and persuasively.

## **Elementary ELA**

The Middle Country Elementary ELA program is fully aligned with the New York State Next Generation ELA Learning Standards and is based on research in the essential elements of literacy with scaffolds for learners in need of assistance.

The elementary teachers provide ELA instruction through integrated, thematic modules, collaborative and individual work, and student-centered learning to make children active, independent learners. To support the teachers and students, the Middle Country Central School District provides a daily literacy block and utilizes expert literacy consultants who provide ongoing professional development throughout the school year.

Instruction begins with Kindergarten students learning the components of letter knowledge using developmentally appropriate strategies and activities. Students develop knowledge and build curiosity about letters through explicit and systematic instruction, along with meaningful play experiences and exploration of print. After learning all of the letter names and forms, students build knowledge of letter sounds while building their phonics skills.

Students gain meaning of letters and sounds through activities that involve exploring a variety of texts. Alphabet knowledge is practiced and reinforced through games, instruction, and literacy centers. Skills and concepts are repeated throughout the year to give students multiple opportunities to practice, review, and reinforce their letter knowledge, so they become proficient.

Throughout the primary grades, teachers continue to strengthen the students' skills in the key areas of beginning reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, sight word instruction, handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Students enhance their ability to make connections, and they build capacity to identify key details, elements, and unknown words in various types of text. In writing, students first learn to inform, narrate, and express their opinion. They also collaborate, explore a variety of digital tools to publish their writing, and they participate in basic research projects in which they answer questions and form opinions.

By fifth grade, the students' reading instruction focuses on building fluency and enhancing the students' ability to accurately comprehend and evaluate more complex texts. Students learn to quote text while drawing inferences, determine main ideas and themes in texts, determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words, compare the structure of multiple texts, and integrate information to synthesize ideas. Teachers also continue to provide targeted word study to further develop the students' spelling and vocabulary skills. The fifth grade writing instruction enables students to produce well-developed opinion, informative, and narrative pieces that are appropriate for the intended task, purpose, and audience. Students also participate in the research and writing process, culminating in a Capstone Research Project that

revolves around a self-selected topic.

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Grade 1</u>	<u>Grade 2</u>	<u>Grade 3</u>	<u>Grade 4</u>	<u>Grade 5</u>
<b>Thematic Modules</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curious About Kindergarten</li> <li>• There's Only One Me</li> <li>• My Community Heroes</li> <li>• Happy, Healthy Me</li> <li>• I Can Do It!</li> <li>• Home of the Free and the Brave</li> <li>• Zoom In; From Plant to Plate</li> <li>• Animal Habitats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nice to Meet You!</li> <li>• My Family, My Community</li> <li>• Amazing Animals</li> <li>• Better Together</li> <li>• Now You See It, Now You Don't</li> <li>• Celebrate America</li> <li>• The Big Outdoors</li> <li>• Tell Me a Story</li> <li>• Grow, Plants, Grow</li> <li>• Dare to Dream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a Super Citizen</li> <li>• Look Around and Explore</li> <li>• Meet in the Middle</li> <li>• Once Upon a Time</li> <li>• Lead the Way</li> <li>• Weather Wise</li> <li>• Everyone Has a Story</li> <li>• Time to Grow</li> <li>• Home Sweet Habitat</li> <li>• Many Cultures, One World</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What a Character!</li> <li>• Use Your Words</li> <li>• Let Freedom Ring</li> <li>• Stories on Stage</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Animal Behaviors</li> <li>• Make a Difference</li> <li>• Imagine! Invent!</li> <li>• From Farm to Table</li> <li>• Tell a Tale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Makes Us Who We Are?</li> <li>• Come to Your Senses</li> <li>• Rise to the Occasion</li> <li>• Heroic Feats</li> <li>• Art Everywhere</li> <li>• Marvels of Nature</li> <li>• Tricksters and Tall Tales</li> <li>• Food for Thought</li> <li>• Global Guardians</li> <li>• Communication Nation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventors at Work</li> <li>• What a Story</li> <li>• Natural Disasters</li> <li>• Wild West</li> <li>• Project Earth</li> <li>• Art for Everyone</li> <li>• Above, Below, and Beyond</li> <li>• A New Home</li> <li>• Unexpected, Unexplained</li> <li>• The Lives of Animals</li> </ul>
<b>Reading Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think, write, speak, and listen to understand</li> <li>• Read often and widely from a range of global and diverse texts</li> <li>• Read for multiple purposes, including for learning and for pleasure</li> <li>• Self-select texts based on interest</li> <li>• Persevere through challenging, complex texts</li> <li>• Enrich personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary through reading and communicating with others</li> <li>• Monitor comprehension and apply reading strategies flexibly</li> <li>• Make connections (to self, other texts, ideas, cultures, eras, etc.)</li> </ul>					
<b>Writing Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think, read, speak, and listen to support writing</li> <li>• Write often and widely in a variety of formats, using print and digital resources and tools</li> <li>• Write for multiple purposes, including for learning and for pleasure</li> <li>• Persevere through challenging writing tasks</li> <li>• Enrich personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary through writing and communicating with others</li> <li>• Experiment and play with language</li> <li>• Analyze mentor texts to enhance writing</li> <li>• Strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach</li> </ul>					

## Secondary ELA

The Middle Country secondary-level ELA curriculum consists of units of study collaboratively synthesized by administrators and teachers who have closely analyzed the model NYS ELA Next Generation Standards. These Standards-aligned units of study incorporate the ongoing development of language skills and the writing of narrative, informational, and argumentative text as the students build their abilities in close reading, formulating evidence-based claims, conducting research, and developing evidence-based arguments. Also, because media and technology are integral to life in the twenty-first century, the students' skills in critically analyzing and producing media are developed throughout the units. Instruction needs to evolve along with the needs of our students, so our development of the ELA curriculum is ongoing – the ELA teachers and administrators continuously revise the maps as they engage in ongoing discussions about student learning and effective teaching.

## Middle School ELA

In grades 6-8, our goal is to encourage our students' love of reading, to enhance their ability and desire to develop their vocabulary, comprehension and analytical skills, and to expose them to a wide variety of powerful fiction and nonfiction texts. Through the middle school ELA curriculum and instruction, students engage in various activities that promote deeper thinking and the establishment of connections among texts and the world, including independent reading outside of school. Our middle school ELA curriculum also immerses the students in a variety of writing experiences arising from the study of literature. This includes both creative and analytical writing. As students move through the grades, cumulative expectations regarding research, language skills, and the development of poetry, narrative, informational, and argumentative texts prepare students for the demands they will face as they progress through high school.

	<u>Grade 6</u>	<u>Grade 7</u>	<u>Grade 8</u>
<b>NYS Standards-aligned Curriculum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Reading</li> <li>• Making Evidence-based Claims</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Building Evidence-based Arguments</li> </ul>		
<b>Examples of Grade-level Skill Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Writing:</b> Writing with more depth (ex. writing with relevant details)</li> <li>• <b>Reading:</b> Reading for meaning and author's craft (ex. author's purpose)</li> <li>• <b>Research:</b> Building upon grade 5 Capstone skills (ex. paraphrasing sources).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Writing:</b> Writing with precision (ex. sensory language)</li> <li>• <b>Reading:</b> Analyzing the relationship of parts to whole (ex. purpose of a section)</li> <li>• <b>Research:</b> Enhancing independent research skills (ex. vetting sources)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Writing:</b> Writing stylistically and cohesively (ex. varied transitions)</li> <li>• <b>Reading:</b> Making logical inferences (ex. interaction of elements within texts)</li> <li>• <b>Research:</b> Building independence and readiness for high school (ex. longer research paper and more citations)</li> </ul>
<b>Reading Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think, write, speak, and listen to understand</li> <li>• Read often and widely from a range of global and diverse texts</li> <li>• Read for multiple purposes, including for learning and for pleasure</li> <li>• Self-select texts based on interest</li> <li>• Persevere through challenging, complex texts</li> <li>• Enrich personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary through reading and communicating with others</li> <li>• Monitor comprehension and apply reading strategies flexibly</li> <li>• Make connections (to self, other texts, ideas, cultures, eras, etc.)</li> </ul>		
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## High School ELA

At the high school, all students must complete four years of English and demonstrate proficiency on the NYS English Regents (Common Core) at the conclusion of eleventh grade in order to be eligible for graduation. At each grade level, students build upon the knowledge and skills they developed in elementary and middle school in order to demonstrate the proficiency and independence required for success on the Regents and in reading, writing, researching, listening, and speaking at the post-secondary level and beyond. Because we believe it is also imperative that we instill in our high school students a life-long love of literacy, we provide students an opportunity to explore and choose from a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction texts, and we offer the students numerous courses that were created with the students' needs and interests in mind. Course choices include the following:

<b>9th</b>	<b>ELA 9</b> or <b>ELA 9 H</b>	<b>Advanced Creative Writing</b> <b>Creative Writing</b> <b>Exploring Mythology</b> <b>Journalism</b> <b>Public Speaking</b>
<b>10th</b>	<b>AP Seminar</b> or <b>ELA 10</b> or <b>ELA 10 H</b>	<b>Advanced Creative Writing</b> <b>Creative Writing</b> <b>Exploring Mythology</b> <b>Journalism</b> <b>Public Speaking</b> <b>Speech and Debate</b>
<b>11th</b>	<b>AP Language and Composition</b> or <b>ELA 11</b> or <b>ELA 11 H</b>	<b>Advanced Creative Writing</b> <b>AP Seminar (1-Credit)</b> <b>Creative Writing</b> <b>Exploring Mythology</b> <b>Journalism</b> <b>Public Speaking</b> <b>Speech and Debate</b>
<b>12th</b>	<b>AP Literature and Composition</b> or <b>College English</b> or <hr/> <u><b>Senior Half-Year Courses</b></u> <b>(Choose Two)</b> <b>Contemporary Issues in Literature</b> <b>Greatest Hits in Literature</b> <b>Heroic Journeys in Literature</b> <b>Literacy in the Digital Age</b>	<b>Advanced Creative Writing</b> <b>AP Seminar (1-Credit)</b> <b>Contemporary Issues in Literature</b> <b>Creative Writing</b> <b>Exploring Mythology</b> <b>Journalism</b> <b>Greatest Hits in Literature</b> <b>Heroic Journeys in Literature</b> <b>Literacy in the Digital Age</b> <b>Public Speaking</b> <b>Speech and Debate</b>