

# First and Second Grade Literacy

The literacy curriculum supports a balanced, comprehensive, and research-based instructional model that reflects the Vermont Framework of Standards. This Framework provides grade-level content standards for all the domains of language – reading, writing, listening and speaking. It also emphasizes the importance of differentiated instruction, high expectations, interactive approaches, and flexible groupings to support student performance. These instructional approaches are combined with ongoing, systematic assessment of student learning.

Below are the instructional approaches that we use during our designated literacy periods.

## Centers

During our reading period we incorporate many small group center activities. They often coincide with small group instruction; they cover skills being learned in other content areas, and include multiple phonics activities. These activities are differentiated to meet the needs of all students.

## Guided Reading

Students work on a multitude of reading skills. Reading groups are small teacher-lead groups assigned based on specific need and ability, where the primary focus is on fluency, comprehension, and reading strategies that span a variety of genres.

## Independent Reading

Throughout the school day students have opportunities to independently read. Research shows that students who have access to books and materials and who practice regularly become better, fluent readers in the future. This skill is emphasized in our center time and other specific times throughout our daily schedule.

# Six Traits Writing

The *6+1 Trait*® Writing framework is a great way to learn and use a common language to refer to characteristics of writing as well as create a common vision of what 'good' writing looks like. The six traits +1 are: ideas, word choice, sentence fluency, organization, voice, conventions and presentation.

This portion of our literacy curriculum covers:

Interactive Read Aloud-- This program emphasizes the use of great models or mentor picture books to teach students how great writer's write and what 'good' writing looks like.

Independent Writing/Writer's Workshop/Writer's Notebook-- In this aspect of the framework students write independently using the trait that is being emphasized. The goal is for students to write daily incorporating learned knowledge about the specific traits that have been introduced. This is how we incorporate the writer's notebook and writer's workshop.

## Writing for Understanding

In the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grade cluster we use the *Writing for Understanding* framework in addition to the *6+1 Trait*® Writing framework. The *Writing for Understanding* framework uses specific organizations and vocabulary when working with specific genres outlined in the Vermont Standards and Grade Level Expectations. These genres include: report writing, response to text, and narrative. Within this framework we also use the *Hand Paragraph*. This structure is used widely within our curriculum. It typically consists of: a topic or focus sentence, three details that support the focus, and a conclusion or wrap-up.

## Foundations

*Wilson Foundations* is a phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling program for the classroom. *Foundations* provides the research-validated strategies that complement our guided reading program to meet federal standards and serve the needs of all children. Teachers incorporate a 30-minute daily *Foundations* lesson into their language arts classroom instruction.

*Foundations* lessons focus on carefully sequenced skills that include print knowledge, alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and spelling. Critical thinking, speaking and listening skills are practiced during *Storytime* activities.