

# Third, Fourth and Fifth 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 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.

## Guided Reading

In our multi-age cluster students are grouped for reading based on individual reading goals and reading ability as assessed by three yearly Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments. During our reading time students are working on a wide range of reading skills, which will help them become emergent readers. As students gain proficiency, the focus of our reading program shifts. We focus on helping students learn how to analyze and interpret what they are reading to gain deeper understanding of the text. To help students gain the necessary skills to analyze and interpret what they are reading, students will routinely meet with a teacher lead small group to discuss an assigned text.

## Independent Reading

Students in the 3,4,5 cluster are encouraged to read independently whenever possible. To promote a culture of independent readers silent reading time is built into our weekly schedule, included in our literacy blocks and as a homework requirement. Students are required to maintain an independent reading log and complete self selected reading projects throughout the school year. Independent reading selections should cover a wide variety of genres, to ensure that students develop a diverse reading background.

## Library

To broaden student's reading experiences students attend a weekly session with the school librarian. During this time the students are exposed to a wide variety of reading materials, through the use of a read a loud time and book talks. Students are also taught about how to use reference materials both in print and on the internet.

## Writing for Understanding

Our writing program is based on the idea that students need to organize their thoughts before they write and have an established structure that they may use as a framework for all future writing. Students in our cluster build upon the hand paragraph and spelling & grammar skills that were established in the primary grades. In the upper elementary our writing focus is to teach the students about the painted essay, elaboration and key components of the writing process such as peer/teacher conferencing, editing and revision. Students will have the opportunity to write pieces in several genres, which may include reports, responses to literature, procedures, poetry and personal essays. Whenever possible, writing pieces are integrated into our science and socials studies units, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of the content knowledge they have been studying.