



English Language and Arts



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We begin with the fundamentals of language, taught with the use of Montessori materials. With Montessori textured “sandpaper” letters, children trace their finger over the shape of a letter, learning the symbols and the dexterity needed for writing. Through the “Movable Alphabet” (wooden letters in a box), young children start to construct words and phrases. In class, daily read-aloud sessions build critical-thinking skills as children ask and respond to questions, and discuss books. In kindergarten, children start their first writing workshops. Moving into the elementary years, students deepen their understanding of grammar and the building blocks of sentence construction and expression: analysis of parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms, compound words, etc. We use Words Their Way™ to teach phonics and spelling construction. These lessons naturally dovetail with reading and writing lessons of increasing difficulty, with a focus on narrative and expository writing. In the final years of MMS, students become more critical readers, exploring a wide variety of genres: realistic fiction, formula fiction, fantasy, traditional literature, poetry, nonfiction, essay, newspaper and magazine articles. They draft with a clear purpose or thesis and use organizational structures and techniques to build arguments. They also learn to edit on the premise that all good writing involves honing ideas and reworking language. Throughout the years, teachers consciously expose students to a wide variety of voices, backgrounds, and perspectives.

Core	Major Topics	Skills	Children's House				Lower School					Middle School		
			SS	Age 3/4	Age 4/5	K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Fluency	Concepts of Print	Orient a book												
		Distinguish between words and pictures												
		Identify direction of print												
		Distinguish between letter and word												
		Distinguish between letter and word												
		Move from one line of text to the next												
		Use finger to follow text while being read to												
		Find and explain a period												
	Letter Sounds	Identify 26 letters												
		Identify 26 sounds (short vowels)												
		Say consonant and vowel digraphs												
		Blend consonants												
		Recognize silent "e" for long vowels												
	High Frequency Words	Read 35												
		Read 140												
		Read 200												
	Automaticity	Read sight words automatically												
		Read familiar words automatically												
Read unfamiliar words automatically														
Read silently at 100 words per minute														

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Fluency	Automaticity	Read silently at 140 words per minute													
		Read silently at 150 words per minute													
		Read silently at 160 words per minute													
	Prosody	Use voices for characters when engaging in fantasy play													
		Use voices for characters in books													
		Pause for periods when reading													
		When rereading, mimics expression of adult reader													
		Read aloud with expression that reflects character or topic													
		Read with intonation, phrasing and expression													
		Read aloud with awareness of the function of punctuation and dialogue													
		Read with phrased, fluent oral reading with appropriate stress on words													
		Change style and pace of reading to reflect style													
		Read dialogue with phrasing, intonation and expression that reflect understanding of character and events													
		Adjust reading to process text with complex layouts and vocabulary													
		Accuracy	Identify beginning letter sound in a word												
			Identify ending letter sound in a word												
			Identify middle letter sound in a word												
	Locate words in texts														
	Analyze words from left to right														

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Fluency		Recognize some high-frequency words, text												
		Recognize known high-frequency words, text quickly												
		Use onset and rimes to solve words												
		Use consonant clusters in words												
		Break apart words to solve												
		Use pictures and context to solve unfamiliar words												
		Solve and understand content specific words from a text												
		Use word parts to solve words												
		Use prefixes and suffixes to solve words												
		Use knowledge of root words and origins to understand meaning of words												
		Use background knowledge and context to solve technical words												
		Use prior knowledge to understand undefined words												
		Use glossaries, dictionaries and pronunciation guides to understand difficult words												
		Derive the meaning of words that reflect regional or historical dialects												
		Notice words with multiple meanings												
		Explain secondary meaning of words												
		Explain and discuss words with multiple meanings												
		Use context to select the correct meaning of words												
	Summarize	Remember what a story is about after a read aloud												

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Comprehension	Summarize	Use information from the story to understand the ending from a read aloud													
		Retell important parts or events from a read aloud													
		Remember what a story is about while reading													
		Use information from the story to understand the ending													
		Retell important parts or events from a text													
		Sequence events from a text													
		Retell events from a story in sequence													
		Relate events within a story to each other													
		Name the problems and solutions of a story													
		Elaborate on the problem and solution in stories													
		Organize information from texts into categories													
		Summarize episodes within a text in writing													
		Use the events of a story to explain the ending													
		Follow and remember events and the problem in stories over increasingly longer texts													
		Follow and remember information in summary form over chapters of sequels													
		Report important ideas in a text in an organized way - orally/written													
		Construct summaries that are concise and reflective of the important overarching ideas													
		Synthesize	Identify new information in text/pictures during a read aloud												

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Comprehension	Synthesize	Talk about the already known relative to the information in the text during a read aloud												
		Identify new information in text/pictures												
		Talk about the already known relative to the information in the text												
		Learn new content while reading												
		Mentally form categories of related information												
		Revise thinking as events in stories unfold or new information is acquired												
		Express changes in ideas or opinions after reading and justify ideas using text evidence												
		Demonstrate changing perspectives as events in stories unfold												
	Infer	Talk about character feelings from a read aloud												
		Interpret ideas from pictures from a read aloud												
		Interpret cause for feelings and motives from a read aloud												
		Show empathy for characters from a read aloud												
		Talk about character feelings												
		Interpret ideas from pictures												
		Interpret cause for feelings and motives												
		Show empathy for characters												
		Point to evidence in text to support inferences												
		Name character feelings												
		Name cause and effect of events in a story												

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Comprehension	Infer	Name character traits												
		Name lesson learned from a story												
		Discuss character traits and feelings as they change throughout the story												
		Discuss the potential causes of the main problem in a story												
		Follow multiple characters in a story												
		Use dialogue and events as evidence to discuss major and minor character traits												
		Follow multiple plot lines in a story												
		Speculate on alternative meanings that a text may have												
		Infer causes of problems or outcomes in fiction and nonfiction												
		Speculate how characters could have behaved differently												
		Infer character motivations and changes in what they do or say												
		Infer the meaning of symbols the writer uses												
	Connect & Analyze	Talk about own experiences in relation to read aloud												
		Talk about meaningful connections in relation to read aloud												
		Talk about own experiences in relation to the text												
		Make text-to-text connections												
		Identify recurring characters across series												
		Talk about how the ideas in the book are related to the title												
		Share opinions about books and illustrations												

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Comprehension	Connect & Analyze	Make and discuss self-to-text connections												
		Recognize fiction versus nonfiction												
		Recognize features of informational texts												
		Recognize when authors use humor												
		Agree or disagree with the actions of characters												
		Hypothesize how characters might have behaved differently												
		Relate lesson learned while reading to one's own life												
		Make connections between real-life experiences across cultures												
		Interpret characters and events that are outside the reader's experience												
		Discuss the role of setting in realistic, historical and fantasy genres												
		Use knowledge from one text to understand others												
		Notice aspects of writer's style across texts												
		Connect and compare texts across genres												
		Discuss connections between life today and other times and places												
	Collaborate & Respond	Respond to reading orally or through drawings												
		Respond to reading with short written sentences												
		Engage in talking about a common book in pairs												
		Record reactions and thinking about a text in writing												
		Record reactions and thinking about a text while reading												
		Use notes from reading to write an organized response to reading												

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Study by Genre	Collaborate & Respond	Engage in small group and whole class discussions												
		Write five-paragraph essays in response to texts												
	Realistic Fiction	Early readers												
		Series books												
		Book clubs												
		Mysteries												
		Social issues												
		Historical fiction (same book clubs)												
		Reading novels for multiple interpretations												
		Interpreting and analyzing themes (book clubs)												
	Nonfiction	Early readers												
		Reading to research (book clubs by topic)												
		Biographies												
		Reeading scientific technological texts												
		Reading current events												
		Reading for historical research (book clubs by topic)												
		Complex nonfiction texts												
		Researching for debate: argument and advocacy												
	Poetry	Songs												
		Poems												

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Leveled Texts	Fantasy	Fariytales & folktales						<div></div>	<div></div>					
		Themes & symbols in fantasy series									<div></div>			
	Realistic Fiction	A-D				<div></div>								
		D-L					<div></div>							
		I-N						<div></div>						
		M-Q							<div></div>					
		P-T								<div></div>				
		S-W									<div></div>			
		U-Y										<div></div>		
		W-Z											<div></div>	
		Y+												<div></div>
Handwriting	Fine Motor Development	Tear paper	<div></div>	<div></div>										
		String beads	<div></div>	<div></div>										
		Lace cards	<div></div>	<div></div>										
		Use tongs	<div></div>	<div></div>										
		Use chalk	<div></div>	<div></div>										
		Use crayons	<div></div>	<div></div>										
		Use a paintbrush	<div></div>	<div></div>										
		Use a glue brush or stick	<div></div>	<div></div>										
		Use scissors		<div></div>										

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			SS	Age 3/4	Age 4/5	K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Handwriting	Fine Motor Development	Cut out a straight line			<div></div>	<div></div>								
		Cut out a complex pattern			<div></div>	<div></div>								
		Sew a running stitch			<div></div>	<div></div>								
		Trace using stencils			<div></div>	<div></div>								
		Use a three finger grip to hold a pencil			<div></div>	<div></div>								
		Draw circles			<div></div>	<div></div>								
		Draw straight lines			<div></div>	<div></div>								
	Cursive	Tactile formation of 26 lowercase letters		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>								
		Write 26 lowercase letters				<div></div>								
		Connect letters in a word				<div></div>	<div></div>							
		Write 26 uppercase letters					<div></div>	<div></div>						
	Print	Tactile tracing of 0-9		<div></div>	<div></div>									
		Write digits 0-9		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>								
Write digits 10 and over					<div></div>									
Information Writing		Write and draw on known topics			<div></div>									
		Work through pauses			<div></div>									
		Write and draw about one topic			<div></div>									
		Draw in one place and write in another			<div></div>									
		Add more to pages after initial draft			<div></div>									
		Draw and write on one topic				<div></div>								

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Information Writing		Begin by choosing topic					<div></div>							
		Write different facts on different pages					<div></div>							
		End with a closing sentence					<div></div>							
		Include important facts on the topic					<div></div>							
		Begin by naming topic						<div></div>						
		Begin with attention getters						<div></div>						
		Use different pages for subtopics						<div></div>						
		End with a closing sentence						<div></div>						
		Include facts						<div></div>						
		Include labels						<div></div>						
		Begin by naming and attempting to hook reader into topic							<div></div>					
		Use as, and, also for transtions							<div></div>					
		End with a final sentence							<div></div>					
		Categorize infomration by page							<div></div>					
		Use differing kinds of information: facts, definitions, details, setps							<div></div>					
		Incude some content specific vicabulary							<div></div>					
		Begin by priming reader to read on							<div></div>					
		Use sequence words: before, after, then, later								<div></div>				
		End by drawing conclusions or asking questions								<div></div>				
		Organize sequentially by section according to the genre								<div></div>				

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Information Writing		Begin with an introduction that includes as thesis									<div></div>			
		Use words and phrases for results: because of this, consequently									<div></div>			
		Use words and phrases for comparing: in contrast, by comparrison									<div></div>			
		Use words to relay opinion: most importantly, consequently									<div></div>			
		End with a conclusion that restaes thesis + final thoughts									<div></div>			
		Organize sequentially by section according to the genre									<div></div>			
		Include fact checked dates, examples, quotes, details									<div></div>			
		Include references									<div></div>			
		Elaborate with deliberate word choice, text features									<div></div>			
		Define content specific voabulary									<div></div>			
		Blend styles depending on section: storytelling, summary									<div></div>			
		Use a variety of sentence structures									<div></div>			
	Keystone Pieces	Create unit study booklets (parts of ____)									<div></div>			
		Create lifecycle reports									<div></div>			
		Write reports on unit studies				<div></div>	<div></div>							
		Write How To Books				<div></div>	<div></div>							
		Write Information Books (not resesearch based)				<div></div>	<div></div>							
		Embed How To Chapters in Informatoin Books				<div></div>	<div></div>							
Writing grade 3						<div></div>	<div></div>							
	Writing About History 4.3						<div></div>	<div></div>						

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Narrative Writing		Writing through historical lenses: the westward expansion												
	List Key pieces by grade	Record Early Personal Stories "Small Moments"												
		Write Personal Narratives												
		Write a Series of Realisitc Fiction Books												
		Use Character Motivation & Scenes to Write Realistic Fiction 4.1												
		Study Craft to Dramatize Personal Narrative Writing 5.1												
		Memoire Writing 5.3												
Opinion Writing		Begin by naming a like or dislike												
		Draw in one place, write in another												
		Work through pauses												
		Add more ot pages after initial draft												
		Begin by giving opinion												
		Use words to support opinion: because												
		End with a final page												
		Elaborate by adding thoughts on pages												
		Add details in pictures												
		Begin by writing opinion												
		Begin with attention getters												
		Use words to support opinion: because, and												
		End with a final sentence												

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Opinion Writing		Include one or more reason to support opinion						<div></div>							
		Use labels in pitctures						<div></div>							
		Begin by writing opinion								<div></div>					
		Begin with attempt to convince								<div></div>					
		Use words to support opinion: because, also, another								<div></div>					
		End by repeating opinion								<div></div>					
		Include two or more reasons + elaboration to support opinion								<div></div>					
		Select persuasive words with purpose								<div></div>					
		Begin with persuading								<div></div>					
		Begin with a hook that attempts to enduce empathy								<div></div>					
		Use words to connect ideas: because, for example, another									<div></div>				
		End with a thought or comment related to opinion									<div></div>				
		Include three or more reasons + elaboration to support opinion									<div></div>				
		Organize writing into parts (reson + support)									<div></div>				
		Tell the reader to believe in the cause									<div></div>				
		Attempt to write in ways that elicit feelings / empathy											<div></div>		
		Begin by stating claim											<div></div>		
		Begin with hooks: questions, surprising facts, rationale											<div></div>		
		Use words to orient readers: another example, one time, for instance											<div></div>		
		Use words to make new points: in addition, also, another											<div></div>		

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Opinion Writing		End by stating + reflecting on claim								<div></div>				
		End by suggesting action or response								<div></div>				
		Write in paragraphs								<div></div>				
		Include examples and information to support reasons								<div></div>				
		Use repeated words to elicit emotion from readers								<div></div>				
		Use figurative language to draw readers in								<div></div>				
		Attempt to use a convincing tone									<div></div>			
		Begin with an introduction + thesis									<div></div>			
		Use words to reasons and evidence: this shows that									<div></div>			
		Use words to orient readers: most important reason, because of									<div></div>			
		Use precise words: specifically, in particular									<div></div>			
		Conclude by highlighting the main points									<div></div>			
		Organize paragraphs to effectively support claim									<div></div>			
		Include facts, examples, quotes, micro-stories									<div></div>			
		Selet words for a deliberate impact									<div></div>			
		Use phrases and metaphore to elicit response									<div></div>			
		Use caried sentence structure and pace									<div></div>			
		Attempt to sound expertly									<div></div>			
	Keystone Experiences	Persuasive writing (we should have more recess time because)				<div></div>								
		Opinion writing (all about me book)				<div></div>								

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Opinion Writing		Rate and write about collections												
		Express opinion through reviews												
		Call for change through persuasive letters and speeches												
		Early persuasive essay writing (not research based) 4.2												
		Use literature to write expository essays 4.4												
		Write argumentative essays (research based) 5.4												
Writing Conventions	Across Genres	Draw and labels												
		Spell using sounds												
		Puts spaces between word												
		Write name												
		Spell using most sounds												
		Capitalize beginning of sentences												
		Spell using word families												
		Capitalize names												
		Use commas in lists and dates												
		Spell using patterns (ly, ed, er)												
		Use quotation marks												
		Use apostrophes for contractions												
		Apply learned spelling patterns to writing												
		Self-edit spelling												

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Writing Conventions	Across Genres	Edit with a peer												
		Punctuate dialog												
		Edit spelling with a dictionary												
		Use commas for clarity in complex sentences												
		Use commas for introductory parts of sentesnces												
		Use punctuation to revise run-on sentences												
		Use punctuation in citations												
		Use a variety of resources to edit spelling												
		Use dashes, parentheses, colons and semicolons												
Touchstone Texts	To teach writing, we read! We use mentor texts to analyze what authors do, and then we try it ourselves.	See list by grade and genre												