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MISSION STATEMENT

The primary purpose of the Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2006 is to promote an understanding of the principles, concepts, and processes of the language arts curriculum in Mississippi. The content of the framework is centered on the areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, research, and inquiry. In teaching each of these key areas of the language art curriculum, teachers should work to ensure students are actively engaged in meaningful activities that emphasize the importance of language arts in daily life; enhance students’ confidence in their ability to read, write, speak, listen, view, and conduct research; and help students learn to communicate and reason more effectively. The framework provides teachers with a guide to assist in instructing students with the essential language arts concepts students should learn as they pursue a career or continue their education.

PURPOSE

The Mississippi Language Arts Framework is the basis for curriculum development for K-12 language arts teachers in Mississippi. The framework provides an outline of what students should know and be able to do through competencies and objectives, as well as suggested teaching guides that include teaching strategies and assessment methods for these strategies. The framework replaces the previous document, the Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2000 that was implemented in 2000.

CYCLE

All Mississippi content area frameworks are revised on a six (6) year cycle. Approximately three years after a framework is implemented, a writing team is chosen to review the current framework and make changes and modifications based on research and best practices in the teaching of language arts as reflected in state and national trends.

The pilot year (optional) for the Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2006 is school year 2005-2006. The implementation year for the framework is school year 2006-2007.

ORGANIZATION
The framework is organized by grade level (K-12) and by course at the secondary level. A general description that includes the purpose, overview, and suggested prerequisites is found preceding each curriculum outline for the grade level or course. Following each curriculum outline is a curriculum guide that provides suggested teaching strategies and suggested assessment methods. To enhance the implementation of the framework, a section of Literature connections, technology connections, a Glossary and a reference section are included at the end of the framework. The Curriculum Outline for the Mississippi Language Arts Framework is formatted as follows:

**KINDERGARTEN**

**COMPETENCIES and Teaching Objectives:**

1. The student will use word recognition and vocabulary (word meaning) skills to communicate.
   
a. The student will apply knowledge of concepts about print.
   - Demonstrate an understanding of book orientation by holding the book correctly and indicating where to begin reading (e.g., front to back, top to bottom, left to right).
   - Demonstrate that print carries meaning for the reader.

**STRANDS**

The Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2006 is comprised of five strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Viewing. The five interrelated strands combine to provide continuity to the teaching of K-12 language arts. These strands overlap and should be integrated and embedded throughout the framework. This continuity provides the necessary foundation for successful completion of high school language arts requirements. The five strands help to assure that appropriate processes are used and important concepts are learned throughout each grade level and secondary course.

**COMPETENCIES**
The competencies, printed in boldface type are the parts of the document that are required to be taught to all students. The Mississippi Curriculum Tests and Mississippi Subject Area Tests are aligned to the competencies. While competencies for grades K-12 are similar, and in some cases identical, objectives require an extension of knowledge and broader, deeper application of skills. A critical component at each grade level is text complexity. Text complexity is indicated by such elements as sophistication of language, content, and syntax. As students move from kindergarten to grade twelve, texts should require a greater cognitive involvement by the student in order for the student to appreciate and comprehend the meaning and beauty inherent in language. Text composed by students should also reflect this increasing complexity.

Competencies are intentionally broad in order to allow school districts and teachers the flexibility to create a curriculum that meets the needs of their individual students. They may relate to one, many or all of the language arts curriculum strands and may be combined and taught with other competencies throughout the school year. Competencies do not have to be taught in the order presented in the framework. The competencies are presented in outline form for consistency and for easy reference throughout the framework. Competencies may be taught throughout the year in any order and combined with other competencies. They are not ranked in order of importance. Competencies provide a general guideline of on-going instruction, not isolated units, activities, or skills. The competencies are not intended to be a list of content skills that are taught, assessed, and recorded as “mastered.”

OBJECTIVES

Objectives indicate skills that enable fulfillment of competencies, describe competencies in further detail, or show the progression of concepts throughout the grades. Objectives require an extension of knowledge and broader and deeper application of skills. Objectives are further defined by bulleted indicators. Many of the objectives are interrelated rather than sequential, which means that objectives are not intended to be taught in the specific order in which they are presented. Multiple objectives can and should be taught at the same time.

SUGGESTED CURRICULUM GUIDE

The purpose of the “Curriculum Guide” following the curriculum outline for each grade level and secondary course is to assist school districts and teachers in the development of quality language arts lessons. Suggested teaching strategies and assessment methods are optional, not mandatory. They are not meant to be a comprehensive list nor do they represent rigid guidelines. Strategy examples are suggestions of the many dimensions of choice which foster the development of growing sophistication in the use of language. Good teacher-selected strategies include modeling of problem-solving techniques and authentic reading/writing processes. When students emulate problem solving and strategic
thinking modeled by their teacher, they develop confidence and skill while becoming independent problem-solvers and thinkers. Particular works of literature also mentioned are for illustration only. Teachers are encouraged to choose strategies and literature for their particular needs and according to their district policy.

The Curriculum Guide allows for further integration of competencies, concepts, and content which results in maximum curriculum connections, maximum time on task, and maximum learning opportunities for students.

THE REVISION PROCESS FOR THE LANGUAGE ARTS FRAMEWORK

The Language Arts Curriculum Revision Team was selected in March 2004. The purpose of the team was to revise the existing language arts framework as a part of the ongoing curriculum review cycle. The team was charged with ensuring the revised framework reflects current scientifically-based reading research, reflects the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act, addresses increased rigor through the use of Norman Webb’s Depth of Knowledge model, includes a curriculum guide for teachers, resembles the other content area frameworks in format and is user friendly for teachers and administrators. The team met regularly from the spring of 2004 through the summer of 2005. Professional analysis of the competencies and objectives was conducted by Norman Webb and John Fortier. Revisions were made based upon the comments of this group. Additional help for the creation of teaching strategies was provided to the Revision Team by the Mississippi Writing Thinking Institute. The Language Arts Curriculum Revision Team extends sincere thanks to this organization for their valuable contributions to this document.