

# NEWSLETTER

## All About Language Arts



We do not use a separate textbook for language arts. Grammar skills are correlated with each story in the reading textbook.

### Writing

Learning the writing process will be the main focus of Language Arts this year. Your child will write friendly letters and poems as well as narrative and expository papers. We will do a lot of writing in class to develop these skills.

Each student will keep their writing assignments at school, so you may not see many writing assignments come home. You are welcome to come look at your child's writing folder at any time.

Students are expected to be able to **write an essay**, either a narrative story or expository (informational), of **at least 5 paragraphs** using appropriate grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Third grade students participate in the county-wide writing test in February. For this writing assessment, students will have **40 minutes to write an essay to a written prompt**. My goal is to have every student score at least a 3 on the district Writing Scale.

I am using an organizing method called "Four Square Writing" that is very simple and easy to understand.

### Grammar

Grammar skills are taught as part of the writing process. Grammar skills are also integrated into each Reading unit.



There will be one grammar skill

presented each week. **That grammar skill will be tested on Friday.**

After much discussion on our grade level, we have decided to count the **weekly spelling tests as part of the Language Arts grade**, and not the reading grade like I told you before.

### Grades

Language Arts grades will be based on:

**Continuum of Practice (10% of grade):** Spelling tests, worksheet assignments.

**Progress Monitoring (90% of grade):** Weekly tests and writing assignments.

### Four Square Writing Method

Four Square Writing is a very simple and easy organizing method for students to plan their writing. Students are given a written prompt that they must address in their writing. Students **begin each essay by dividing one sheet of paper into four squares to make their organizer**. The topic is written in the first box, and the three main ideas are written in the other boxes. Three details are added under each main idea. **One paragraph can then be developed from each square of the box**. Writing begins and ends in the same box to remind students that the introduction and the conclusion both restate the prompt.

Once students are comfortable using the organizer, we will add more sophisticated writing skills such as using vivid language, improving the conclusion, and writing an interesting opening.



**Sample 4-Square Essay using the 4 Square Writing Organizer**

**Writing Prompt:** Many people have a favorite meal that they enjoy eating. Think about your favorite meal. Write to tell your reader about your favorite meal.



**Writing Organizer:**

<p><b>Paragraphs 1 and 5.</b></p> <p>My Favorite Meal: spaghetti and meatballs</p>	<p><b>Paragraph 2.</b> <u>easy to make</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*roll up meat</li> <li>*throw in pot</li> <li>*pour on sauce</li> </ul>
<p><b>Paragraph 4.</b> <u>delicious</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*tomatoes</li> <li>*Italian spices</li> <li>*very filling!</li> </ul>	<p><b>Paragraph 3.</b> <u>fun to eat</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*twirl on fork</li> <li>*slurp it up</li> <li>*splatter sauce</li> </ul>

**Essay written from organizer:**

My favorite meal is spaghetti and meatballs. It's my favorite meal because it's easy to make, fun to eat, and delicious. I could eat spaghetti and meatballs for dinner every night.

First, my favorite meal is spaghetti and meatballs because it's easy. You simply roll up the meat. Then, you throw it in the pot and brown it. When the meat is brown, you pour on some store-bought sauce.

Next, my favorite meal is spaghetti and meatballs because it's fun to eat. I like to twirl the spaghetti on the fork. It's fun to slurp up the very end of the piece. I always splatter the sauce!

Also, my favorite meal is spaghetti and meatballs because it's delicious. I like the taste of tangy red tomatoes. The Italian spices are great, especially the zesty garlic. The meat is very filling, too.

As you can see, my favorite meal is spaghetti and meatballs. I like it because it is easy, fun to eat, and delicious. I wish I could have some for dinner tonight!

**Calendar**

**October 7, 2009**

Early Release Day.  
Picture money due.

**October 13, 2009**

Timelines due.

**October 24, 2009**

Teacher Work Day.  
No School.

**October 30, 2009**

Fall Party 1:30

**This Week:**

**READING**

"Strongest One"  
Spelling Unit 2.1

**MATH**

Addition with regrouping  
Timed test on addition facts.

**SCIENCE**

Classifying animals.  
Vertebrates and invertebrates.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

Landforms.

**LANGUAGE ARTS**

Common and proper nouns.  
Cursive lower case letters o, x, z