



America SCORES' Literacy Program and the Standards for the English Language Arts

America SCORES programs use two unique creative writing curricula that have been developed by our staff of Education Directors and are used exclusively in all SCORES elementary after-school creative writing workshops. *The Power of Poetry* curriculum, used in the fall, is grounded entirely on teaching students to read, interpret, write, and perform poetry while simultaneously building our students' voices through self-expression and teamwork. Students bring knowledge of the world around them to their writing workshops, and they build on that knowledge by reading poetic works by diverse authors, through discussions in class with their peers, and by using the genre of poetry for their own self-exploration.

The *Writing for the Community* curriculum, used in the spring semester, incorporates literacy instruction and writing for a variety of purposes, while guiding the students through the discrete stages of a service-learning project. Students engage in community awareness through both oral and written literacy activities, they research issues that affect their community, and they use writing as a tool to affect positive change for themselves and others.

Together, these curricula address all twelve of the Standards for the English Language Arts that were developed by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA). Outlined below are the activities that stem directly from the America SCORES curricula as they relate to each of the standards.

1. *Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.*
 - America SCORES' literacy curricula engage students in reading various genres such as poetry; short fiction; interviews; and newspaper, magazine, and internet articles.
 - Students react to literary texts through discussion with teachers and classmates, through journal responses, and through creating written and dramatic interpretations based on their own knowledge of the world.
2. *Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.*
 - Students read authentic texts on a daily basis through the "Literary Moment" section within each lesson of the curricula.



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- The “Literary Moments” are selected with the goal of providing students with a diverse chorus of cultural input through which they may understand the variety of human experience.
 - Students read literature and poetry to investigate common issues and interests in relation to themselves and to others.
3. *Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).*
- Students make connections between prior knowledge and material that they read through discussions and journal reflections.
 - Students infer the meaning of unfamiliar words in the context of a passage by examining known words, phrases, and structures.
 - Students identify and use organizational features of texts, such as headings, paragraphs, and format, to improve understanding.
 - Students apply literary elements such as theme, point of view, rising/falling action, plot, personification, exaggeration, foreshadowing, and imagery when appropriate.
 - Students learn to distinguish poetry from prose.
 - Students learn and appropriately use age-appropriate literary terminology.
4. *Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.*
- Students write for a variety of audiences, including peers, teachers, and other adults by adapting content, style, and structure to the audience and the situation.
 - Students learn to use literary devices such as figurative language, symbolism, dialect, and precise vocabulary, as well as a variety of poetic techniques to convey meaning.
 - Students write expressive pieces (narratives, reflections, and letters) employing descriptive detail and a personal voice.
 - Students write creative pieces (poetry, fiction, and plays) employing basic aesthetic principles appropriate to each genre.
 - Students learn about and incorporate the criteria for effective oral presentations, including techniques such as eye contact, projection, tone, volume, rate, and articulation.



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- Students are encouraged and coached how to read aloud with age-appropriate fluency, accuracy, and expression. They participate in group readings such as choral reading, call and response, and shadow reading.
 - Students perform dramatic readings and presentations of their written work in both public and private settings such as: in the classroom with a teacher or SCORES staff member, coffee house readings, school assemblies, community Poetry Slams, and other community events.
5. *Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.*
- Students write journal entries, poems, letters, articles, and short essays using all five steps of the writing process.
 - Students produce written drafts that demonstrate the capacity to generate, focus, and organize ideas; they review the language, organization, and content in order to fulfill a specific purpose for communicating with a specific audience.
 - Students edit writing using editing checklists provided in the curriculum and participate in editing conferences with peers and/or the writing teacher.
 - Students publish edited pieces of writing with formal and correct conventions of English and/or Spanish in national and local publications, such as SCORES Scoop, *Learning Kicks!* and *Kicker!*.
 - Students use multiple strategies for peer and self-evaluation of their written work.
6. *Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.*
- Students learn poetic conventions and techniques such as line breaks, comparisons, alliteration, anaphora, and onomatopoeia to analyze their writing and the writing of others.
 - Students take inspiration from and model their writing after examples they have learned from.
 - Use knowledge to edit writings for grammar, punctuation, and spelling.



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7. *Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.*
 - Students use writing to address and solve problems in their communities as part of the *Writing for the Community* project.
 - Students propose research by formulating initial questions, narrowing the focus of a topic, identifying prior knowledge, and developing a basic plan for gathering information.
 - Students evaluate, record, organize, and acknowledge information pertinent to a project, accurately blending discoveries into projects and solutions.
 - Students analyze the results of inquiry by reporting and commenting on the substance and process of learning, orally and in writing, using appropriate visual aids.
8. *Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.*
 - Students may use technologies in a variety of formats, such as textual, graphic, audio, video, electronic, and multimedia to increase their understanding of literature and texts.
 - Students listen to audio recordings or watch video recordings of poets reciting their work in order to better understand the genre and the writers' intended meaning.
 - Students use technology as a form of communication to publish or record their own work.
 - Students research facts and information for the *Writing for the Community* project by using information gathered in reference materials, newspapers, videos, and other community based organizations' published materials.
9. *Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.*
 - Students read written works by a diverse group of writers, which represent a global perspective of the English language and experience.
 - Students learn about community, including the global community, by reading about diverse perspectives from a variety of authors and writers.



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10. *Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.*

- All students are expected to participate in 100% of literacy activities and make progress based on their own ability and access to the English language.
- Teachers utilize a variety of strategies that are provided in the curricula to aid English language learners in the understanding and full engagement of literacy activities.
- Templates and guided writing activities are provided in Spanish in order to facilitate understanding and bilingual literacy for Spanish-speaking students.

11. *Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.*

- Students engage in teambuilding activities that build a strong team and a community of learners and leaders. They are taught the skills necessary to communicate, reflect, and use problem-solving skills in their own community.
- Students are encouraged to volunteer relevant information, ask questions, and answer questions directly during discussions.
- Students are taught to use appropriate eye contact and other nonverbal forms of communication when interacting with members of their group as well as other individuals.
- Students reflect on the ideas and opinions of others and respond thoughtfully.

12. *Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).*

- Students are encouraged to use reading in their daily lives for enjoyment; to gather information; to learn other people's perspectives, experiences, and opinions; and to learn about topics that are interesting and meaningful to them.
- Writing coaches and teachers provide opportunities and encouragement for students to use writing in their daily lives to express their experiences and opinions, to share information, to persuade others on a topic, and to experiment and play with language.
- Students use public performance as a way to exchange and share information.