

Best Practices in Grades 6–12 English Language Arts Instruction

Look for	Best Practices	Description
Program and Lesson Components	<p>Plans and teaches lessons to support full implementation of DPS English Language Arts program (SpringBoard)</p>	<p>Sponge/Warm-Up/Bell Work (3–5 minutes daily)</p> <p>Content and Learning Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher articulates clear learning objectives for lessons and discusses purposes behind them. • Learning objectives are posted and evaluated at end of lessons. • Students can articulate daily lesson purposes in age-appropriate language. • Students can articulate essential questions and how they are addressed in lessons. <p>Whole Group: Focus Lesson (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher explicitly models and explains lessons’ reading or writing strategies or skills foci through direct instruction, active engagement, and shared reading. • Teacher and students co-create anchor charts with visuals to use as resources during independent work and as artifacts of learning. Topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SpringBoard English strategies (e.g., SOAPStone, TP-CASTT, Socratic Seminar, close reading, quickwrites, dialectical journals, marking texts, self- and peer editing, jigsaw, role playing). ○ Reading and writing genre features. ○ Comprehension strategies (e.g., self-monitoring, rereading, questioning texts, setting reading purposes, activating background knowledge). ○ Vocabulary, fluency, and word studies. ○ Grammar studies through mentor texts and student work to illustrate teaching points. ○ Grammar and language usage practice linked to authentic student writing. • Students engage in accountable talk during lessons through Think-Pair-Share, Turn and Talk, and other cooperative learning activities. • Preview-Review and other sheltering strategies ensure comprehensible input for ELLs. • Teacher builds on students’ strengths and connects to background experiences and literacy knowledge in their first languages. • Materials used include SpringBoard Levels I–VII for grades 6–12 and <i>Academic Workout</i>, novels, nonfiction, and graphic organizers in all courses. <p>Whole Group: Shared Reading (10 Minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared reading is used not only as reading for enjoyment, but to teach effective reading habits. Teacher routinely and explicitly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thinks aloud. ○ Questions for listening comprehension. ○ Supports vocabulary and word attack strategies. ○ Models comprehension strategies. ○ Develops ELL supports. <p>Work Period: Reading (20–25 minutes; alternate with writing or daily in double-block class)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher confers with students or leads small collaborative groups of 4–6 students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In conferences, students and teacher set SMART goals and monitor progress. ○ In collaborative groups, teacher may meet with 3–4 students who are working together. Support may be offered in short lessons (5–10 minutes) and should be clearly focused and scaffolded for students. ○ Teacher uses reciprocal teaching instructional strategies. • Teacher uses a variety of grouping formats for students who need more support (e.g., literature groups, Turn and Talk). Students participate in both homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings to meet different purposes. • Teacher offers students frequent, multiple opportunities to interact with one another and use oral language purposefully during whole and small group and independent time.

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Program and Lesson Components	Plans and teaches lessons to support full implementation of DPS English Language Arts program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students independently read, either in class or as homework, practicing whole and small group lesson strategies or skills. They may also buddy read, use literature circles (reading folders), and increase the volume of their reading. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher helps students carefully select independent reading materials, based on reading and language levels, concept knowledge, cultural backgrounds, interests, and support books offer, and considers these characteristics for small group reading materials. ○ Activities include independently reading “just-right” books and writing responses to reading and literature through reading letters. • Materials used include novels, short texts, chart paper, graphic organizers, reading notebooks, graphic organizers, and sticky notes. <p>Work Period: Writing (20–25 minutes; alternate with reading or daily in double-block class)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students independently engage in writing process or confer with writing partners or teacher. Students may also read mentor texts as they explore particular genres as part of units of study. • Teacher confers with individual students, asking questions to help them think through how to improve their writing. During frequent writing conferences, teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reads some student writing and asks questions to encourage students to talk about their writing processes and language and grammar usage. ○ Based on students’ questions and interests, decides what to teach students or what to reinforce from recent focus lessons. ○ Helps students reflect on their writing by talking with them about their writing processes and set goals for next steps. ○ Reinforces one strategy or one concept clearly by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting students in using information from other focus lessons. ▪ Connecting students to writing mentors. ▪ Providing guided practice, so students can try writing strategies with teacher assistance. <p>Sharing and Closing (5–10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students or groups share key learnings connected to learning objectives. Sharing demonstrates if learning objectives were met. • Students connect daily lessons to embedded assessment outcomes associated with units. • Students reflect on how strategies enhanced learning.

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Classroom Environment	Establishes physical classroom environment and positive classroom culture to support learning	<p>Arrangement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room is organized for whole and small group instruction and independent work. • Classroom arrangement emphasizes student interactions, in addition to teacher-directed interactions. • Teacher encourages productive, accountable talk by having areas and times available for students to work together. <p>Classroom Reading Materials and Classroom Library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students have SpringBoard student books and course novels. • Students can access wide collection of culturally diverse books that represent various topics, genres, reading levels, and/or lexiles. High-interest, lower reading level books for independent reading are available in ELA-E classrooms where some students are transitioning to English. • Books are effectively sorted and labeled so students can explain, maintain, and use library independently. Books are arranged attractively and invitingly. • Students regularly take home books and other reading materials. <p>Displays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily agendas, content, and learning objectives are posted. • Anchor charts reflect current instructional focus areas, procedures, and expectations. Students can explain how to use charts and displays that reflect current teaching and learning. • Current student work examples are displayed on walls. Regularly changing displays reflect ongoing learning. • Word wall is being developed with students throughout the year to build vocabulary. • Rubrics or attribute charts, created with students, provide clear student work expectations and include visuals to support ELLs. <p>Materials and Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students’ notebooks include content vocabulary, grammar and usage, literary terminology, and word connections. • Students set reading goals (e.g., variety of genres, volume of reading, use of fix-up strategies) and can explain plans to meet them.
Assessment	Uses assessment to support student learning	<p>Both formal and ongoing informal assessments are used to inform instruction and monitor student progress and are gathered into a Body of Evidence (BOE) for each student.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal assessments might include SpringBoard embedded unit assessments, conference notes, exit slips, checklists, and comprehension tests; SRI lexile with appropriate texts; and AIMSweb and other Curriculum-Based Measures (CBMs), such as teacher-developed rubrics and assessments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher collects student progress information in BOEs aligned to standards to facilitate reporting to parents and others. ○ Teacher monitors students who are not making progress and initiates RtI process. • Formal assessments include end-of-unit assessments, SRI, and DPS benchmark reading assessments.