

**Northwestern Local Schools
English/Language Arts Department
Grades 6 – 9 Writing Guidelines**

Item	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Writing				
<p>Narrative</p> <p><i>Number of pages refers to typed work for revised and edited pieces</i></p> <p><i>Students should also write draft-only pieces to practice these skills</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 pages • clear focus and point of view • use sensory details • use dialogue • developed plot • developed characters • specific setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 pages • clear focus and point of view • use sensory details • use dialogue to create developed plot and characters • specific setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 pages • focus on pacing action and plot • use literary devices for style and tone • complex characters in believable setting • focus on organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3+ pages • focus on pacing action, engaging plot, range of strategies and devices with figurative language and specific narration • organized, well-developed structure
<p>Persuasive</p> <p><i>Number of pages refers to typed work for revised and edited pieces</i></p> <p><i>Students should also write draft-only pieces to practice these skills</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 pages • essay form • establish a clear position • organized ideas • support ideas with relevant information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 pages • essay form • establish a clear position • include relevant information to support details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 pages • full composition • develop controlling idea • support arguments with detailed text • exclude irrelevant information • cite sources in MLA format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3+ pages • full composition • focus on logic and reasoning • establish and develop controlling idea • support arguments with detailed text • exclude irrelevant information • cite sources in MLA format
<p>Response to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least one short composition per 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least one short composition per 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least two short compositions per 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least two per quarter in response to

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<p>Literature</p>	<p>quarter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 page; does not have to be in final draft form • in response to novels, stories, poems, plays • provide an interpretation, critique or reflection • use specific references to text to support judgments 	<p>quarter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 page; does not have to be in final draft form • in response to novels, stories, poems, plays • provide an interpretation, critique or reflection • use specific references to text to support judgments 	<p>quarter in response to literary text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 page; does not have to be in final draft form • clear interpretation • clear ideas, premises • specific references to text to support judgments 	<p>literary text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 pages • <i>insightful</i> interpretation • <i>several</i> clear ideas, premises, or images • support judgments with <i>specific references</i> to original text, other texts, author, prior knowledge
<p>Informational Writing</p> <p><i>These are writings in addition to a research report</i></p> <p><i>Do not have to be taken to final draft stage</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 1 per quarter • 1-2 pages • literal understanding of topic • include specific facts and details • organizing structure • multiple sources (list) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 1 per quarter • 2 pages • literal understanding of the topic • organizing structure • include specific facts, details and examples • multiple sources (list) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 1 per quarter • 2 pages • use relevant questions • clear perspective • organizing structure • support main ideas with facts • multiple sources (list) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 1 per quarter • 2-3 pages • relevant questions to engage reader • clear, accurate perspective on subject • organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, context • support main ideas with facts • cite sources as appropriate

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<p>Research</p> <p><i>Note: A formal research paper is completed <u>in addition to shorter informational writings</u></i></p> <p><i>Students must write one each year</i></p> <p><i>Ideally, other content areas assign additional research work to help students apply the skills they learned in Language Arts</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 pages • at least 3 sources • identify validity of sources • identify important information in source • paraphrase findings in a systematic way (notes, outlines, charts, graphic organizations) • compare and contrast findings and select sources to support central ideas • Use bibliography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 pages • at least 3 sources (inc. electronic) • identify and explain importance in validity, including publication date, coverage, language, point of view • define primary and secondary sources • use organizational system for structuring information • in-text citations with MLA format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 pages • Focus: finding, selecting and organizing sources • at least 3 sources (inc. electronic) • define primary and secondary sources • determine sources' validity • gather information in a systematic way (notes, outlines, charts, graphic organizers) • organize information and select sources • Min. 3 citations using MLA format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-5 pages • Focus: using and citing sources to support ideas • narrow or extend focus during investigation • at least 3 sources (inc. electronic) • analyze sources' validity • organize information with appropriate sources to support central ideas, concepts and themes • in-text citations • use MLA format
<p>Style Guides</p>	<p>Basic bibliography (MLA format preferred)</p>	<p>Works Cited page MLA format</p>	<p>Works Cited page Paraphrase citations MLA format</p>	<p>Full MLA format</p>
<p>Thesis statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What the writer is proving or supporting</i> • <i>Provides direction, structure and focus</i> • <i>Is a specific sentence</i> 	<p>Content standards address as “main idea” but use tern “thesis” as well for exposure to terminology</p> <p>Explain as the topic</p>	<p>Content standards address as “main idea” but use tern “thesis” as well for exposure to terminology</p> <p>Explain as the topic</p>	<p>Content standards address as “main idea” but use tern “thesis” as well for exposure to terminology</p> <p>Explain as the topic</p>	<p>Use term “thesis”</p> <p>Placement: last sentence of the first paragraph</p>

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<i>in the first paragraph</i>	sentence for an entire essay Occurs in first paragraph	sentence for an entire essay Occurs in first paragraph	sentence for an entire essay Occurs in first paragraph	
Paraphrasing and Plagiarism <i>In addition to instruction provided by the librarian</i>				Properly cite paraphrases in MLA format
Spelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students' application of spelling strategies is seen in the context of writing, and only when final editing has been completed • When words are assigned, use a pre-test to excuse students who already know the words • Cannot count for more than 5% of total language arts grade • Encourage students to use Spell Check on the computer when preparing final drafts 				
Forms of Discourse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach separation of informal/casual register used outside of school and among friends, compare to formal register (the language of power) • Teach students to focus on the audience when writing 				