

3rd Grade English Language

Year Plan 2013-14

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1. Aims

The overall aim of the year will be to help students become more confident linguistically, more practised in articulating their views and emotions, and more skilled in sharing concepts and factual information. Students will achieve this by gaining a deeper competence with the English language and by practising its use in both oral and written forms (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and drama).

The SEE syllabus provides detailed objectives for English for the whole primary section, together with specific recommendations for Year 3. Below I summarize the methodology I shall adopt in achieving these objectives and implementing these recommendations, together with my key objectives and the range of content I shall use. Term plans are given in a separate document.

2. Method

Although English is assumed to be students' mother tongue, it is not the only language these students have. Most have at least one other native language (Greek, Swedish, etc.), and 3rd grade students are expected to have a good level (for their age) of a third language too (e.g., French or German). Although it is hugely valuable to have these additional linguistic skills, students are pressed to find sufficient opportunities to practice each of their languages. This means that, although fluent in English, they each have gaps in their mastery of the language. Linguistically, this is a crucial year for students – with less linguistic guesswork and a move to a more methodical style of learning. So it is important that, while students continue to experiment with their competence, they do so with a view to filling in any gaps they may have, gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of English, and preparing to study the language in a more sophisticated way. The teaching will take account of these additional needs on a day-to-day basis, as appropriate for each student.

Attention to personal needs is particularly important because each student has their own level of mastery. Although this is a 3rd grade class, each student will be treated as an individual learner as well as a member of a class group. Students will learn not only to progress within the group but also to improve upon their own past performance. In this they will be assisted both by their fellow classmates and by me.

Students will be encouraged and expected to *talk* a lot in class. They will engage in frequent comprehension exercises in order to practise their skills in expression and communication. They will be expected to *read aloud* a variety of texts, from a range of genres, both in class and at home, so as to become used to hearing their own voices and get into habits of speaking correctly. They will grow accustomed to hearing what well-formed English sounds like and will be encouraged to imitate it themselves when speaking or writing. They will learn *idiomatic expressions* and be expected to use these correctly and appropriately. They will practise *writing* stories, poetry, journals, reports, letters, and other texts. The emphasis will be on expressing themselves coherently and taking into account the audience for whom they are writing.

Students will be expected to reflect continually on their learning, and they will be helped to set personal targets for the next stage of their work -- in spelling, presentation, reading, and so on. Students will work on personal projects to be presented in class, and

they will improve these in response to the views of their fellow students' and to comments and corrections from their teacher. They will be encouraged to use a variety of resources, and they will use dictionaries and thesauri to expand their vocabularies, electronic media to research their story writing and reporting, and CD-ROMs to practise their spelling.

3. Key objectives

As already noted, the overall aim will be to develop students' skills in clear, creative, and coherent use of the English language in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and thinking, and thereby to help them become more confident, positive, and effective in their language use, both as individuals and as a group. Students will also begin to appreciate the different forms of language and the different roles its plays in our lives. ICT will be used, as appropriate, to help achieve these objectives. This might include using the internet to correct spelling and do searches on linguistic and literary matters, making video recordings to motivate and present Drama work, and using the interactive board to work together on editing texts.

It is worth remembering that English-section students tend be of mixed backgrounds and abilities -- which is, of course, in many ways an asset. However, since these students form a minority in our school, this diversity can also mean that they have additional emotional needs to grapple with. I believe in the power of language and literature to help students deal with such needs and issues, and I will use reading and creative writing exercises to this end, as appropriate for students' abilities and needs. (Work in Ethics will also be used to help students deal with emotional and other issues.)

The overall key objective for the year is that students should be more confident, independent, creative and critical in language use. More specific objectives are listed under the following headings:

(a) Speaking and Listening

By the end of the year students will:

- feel more at ease with public speaking;
- be able to describe events to a group of peers;
- be able to deliver a short talk to a group of peers;
- be able to learn and deliver a short theatrical performance in front of an audience;
- understand the mechanics of defending opinion and group discussions;
- be able to take part in an informal debate or argue a case;
- be able to conduct an interview, using appropriate vocabulary and questioning techniques;
- display an understanding of the different natures of the above speaking activities and be able to vary tone, register, and vocabulary accordingly; and
- be able to give clear and concise oral directions to peers

(b) Reading

By the end of the year students will:

- have further developed their ability to read silently and with sustained concentration;
- be able to read aloud with increasing fluency, accuracy and independence;
- have consolidated their phonic skills and extended their comprehension skills;

- developed a desire to read for pleasure;
- feel at ease with both fictional and non-fictional texts;
- have used a variety of non-fictional/resource material to illicit specific information; and
- be able to read and recite poetry using timing and expression to enhance effect.

(c) *Writing*

By the end of the year students will:

- display a positive attitude to writing;
- have a richer vocabulary and better spelling, grammar, and punctuation skills, in line with the syllabus recommendations;
- have a richer understanding of linguistic conventions;
- have begun to learn about different literary genres;
- understand that writing is a way to express thoughts and feelings as well as to provide information;
- display an understanding of the differences between formal and informal writing;
- have learned to compare different types of poems;
- have begun to use metaphor, simile, and onomatopoeia;
- have learned about other forms of writing (description, adverts, reports, formal letters, etc.);
- have begun to use margins, paragraphs, and headings appropriately;
- be able to use punctuation and speech marks appropriately;
- be able to use correct phonetic structures and spelling patterns in writing;
- employ a more legible style of handwriting;
- have begun to edit work on computer; and
- have begun to develop habits of self-criticism and a sense of pride and accomplishment in their own written work.

(d) *Amazing thinkers!*

Building on the above, students will begin to be critical and creative thinkers. They will be have opportunities to:

- appreciate connections between L1 and other subjects such as Ethics (e.g., learning to step back to review characters and situations), Exploring Our World (EOW) (e.g., critically assessing historical events and engaging in scenario-building activities), and European Hours (becoming familiar with the diversity of reading materials in the Western tradition), and
- take part in interactive and student-led lessons during which will they engage with new technologies such interactive boards, the internet, and video recording.

4. Content

The following is an outline of the types of text that will be used throughout the year. The topics were chosen both because they will expand students' linguistic skills and knowledge and also because they are intrinsically interesting and will help students enjoy language in all its forms.

(a) Narrative

- Narrative stories and plays (e.g., EOW handouts, Horrible Histories, Harry Potter).
- Introducing different authors and genres (e.g. modern American children's stories).
- Short stories and/or short novels (depending on students' interests).
- Stories which raise moral issues and stories from other cultures (connections with Ethics and European Hours).

(b) Non-narrative

- Journalistic writing (newspapers, websites, TV reports).
- Short biographies and autobiographies (e.g., H. C. Andersen).
- Presentations on topics of interest to students (linking with other subjects, such as Ethics, EOW, European Hours).
- Persuasion (advertisements in magazines and on TV; religious and political pamphlets).
- Introducing formal writing (writing letters to an important person).

(c) Poetry and Drama

- Introducing imagery (e.g., poetry from other cultures, in connection with European Hours).
- Introducing a major European poet (e.g., introducing Shakespeare at Halloween via the witches' spells from Macbeth).
- Introduction to poetical form (e.g., through haiku).

5. Assessment

Assessment will be continuous and will be qualitative rather than quantitative. In addition, students will begin to learn to engage in self-assessment by standing back and reviewing their own work, both in privacy and in class. There will be class discussions on this, where we shall aim to help students improve individually and in groups. There will also be a series of progress meetings both with individual students and with their parents/guardians.

6. Resources

Available teaching resources will include the following Year 3 teaching texts:

- *Comprehending Genre* Prim-Ed
- *Comprehend it!* Prim-Ed
- *Comprehending the Newspaper* Prim-Ed
- *Language Homework* Prim-Ed
- *Literacy Through Science* Prim-Ed
- *My Spelling Workbook*
- *Onwords and Upwords* CJ Fallon
- *Oral Language* Prim-Ed
- *Short Plays for the Classroom*
- *Thinking Skills Comprehension* Prim-Ed
- *Write Creatively* Prim-Ed

Other selected texts will include

- Betty G. Birney's Humphrey books (*The World According to Humphrey*, etc.)
- Some of Ronald Dahl's children's stories.
- *Philosophy: The Basics* by Nigel Warburton (to introduce students to critical and clear thinking -- with their teacher's help!).
- *Thinking from A to Z* by Nigel Warburton

I shall also offer the following book suggestions for the children's term projects and pleasure reading. Some of these books are more challenging than others, and students will be encouraged to explore and experiment!

- *A Long Way from Chicago* by Richard Peck
- *A Monster Calls* by Kenneth Oppel
- *A Tale Dark and Grimm* by Adam Gidwitz
- *City of Orphans* by Avi
- *Dead End in Norvelt* by Jack Gantos
- *Dog and Bear: Two Friends, Three Stories* by Laura Vaccaro Seeger
- *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss
- *Half Brother* by Kenneth Oppel
- *Mockingbird* by Kathryn Erskine
- *Okay for Now* by Gary D. Schmidt
- *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss
- *The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Down
- *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss
- *The Magician's Elephant* by Kate DiCamillo
- *The Mostly True Story of Jack* by Kelly Barnhill
- *The Mysterious Benedict Society* by Trenton Lee Stewart
- *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster