

The Learning Choice Academy
August 28, 2017

6th Grade Language Arts - First Week's Assignments

Greetings Students!

Welcome to 6th grade Language Arts! I am excited to be your teacher, and I am looking forward to an exciting and academically rewarding year.

During your first week of school, you will need to complete this packet and be prepared to submit it to me at our first class meeting.

I can't wait to get to know you, and to begin discovering and enjoying great literature together!

Assignments:

1. Review the class syllabus. Please bring all required materials to the first class.
2. Complete your "Getting to Know Me" essay.
3. Read the short story provided in this packet ("Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros). We will be discussing this story during our first week of class in our study of narrative writing.
4. Complete the attached Spelling Power assignment.

Happy Learning!

-Mr. Chris Trompas
ctrompas@learningchoice.org

2016-2017 Study Group Syllabus: Middle School Language Arts (6-8)

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Description and Overview: This Middle School Language Arts course is designed to begin preparation for high school English courses. Students will read and study a variety of literature, as well as practice multiple genres of writing. Through their literature and writing genre studies, students will enhance their grammar proficiencies and vocabulary repertoire. Students will also learn research, revision, and presentation skills.

Literature Reading and Analysis:

1) Responses to Literature and Informational Texts – Every learning period, you will be assigned several literature pieces and/or informational texts to read and analyze. The stories and texts will be assigned by the teacher and sent home with students. For full credit, please answer thoroughly and in complete sentences.

2) Novel Reading – Each semester, we will read a selected novel in its totality and complete meaningful assignments related to the text.

Writing Assignments:

Regular Writing Assignments – Every learning period, you will be assigned writing projects and essays, which vary in format and genre. Your final drafts need to be typed and should reflect your very best effort. Rubrics will be provided so that you know how your writing assignment will be evaluated. Where possible, model samples will also be provided. We will focus on the following:

1. Narrative writing
2. Literary analysis writing based on novel reading
3. Informative research essay writing
4. Argumentative essay writing

Additionally, students will be completing spelling and grammar practice throughout the year.

Approximate Weighting of Assignments & Assessments:

Reading and Responses to Literature
30%
Writing Assignments
30%
Participation/Attendance
10%
Vocabulary/Spelling/Grammar
10%
Projects and Presentations
20%

Attendance:

Weekly and punctual attendance is expected and necessary for student success.

Necessary Materials:

- 1) 1 ½ inch binder
- 2) Notebook
- 3) Pencil
- 4) Highlighter
- 5) Notebook dividers

Week One - "Getting to Know Me" Essay

Dear Student,

This first assignment will allow you to introduce yourself to me via writing, and will give you an opportunity to share a little about yourself. As your teacher, I am interested in getting to know who you are as a person, not just as a student. Please compose a 1-2 page typed, double-spaced, essay which tells me the following snippets of information about you:

Note: Please write in paragraphs, not a bullet point list.

The Basics:

- What is your name? What is the origin/ethnicity of your name?
- How long have you been a student at TLC? How would you describe your experience at our school?
- What do you consider your strongest subject in school? What subject do you struggle with the most? Why?
- What is your favorite and least favorite part of English class?
- Do you consider yourself more of an introvert or an extrovert?
 - *Introverts* (or those of us with introverted tendencies) tend to recharge by spending time alone. They lose energy from being around people for long periods of time, particularly large crowds.
 - *Extroverts*, on the other hand, gain energy from other people. Extroverts actually find their energy is sapped when they spend too much time alone. They recharge by being social.

Fun Stuff:

- What is your favorite hobby or pastime?
- Who is your favorite musical artist? Why?
- Name the most interesting movie you have seen during the past year. In what ways was it interesting to you?
- If you could go anywhere in the world on vacation, where would you go? Why?
- Tell me about something interesting that you learned, about yourself or about the world, over summer.
- What would you like to be doing in five years?

I want you to have fun with this assignment. Be creative in your responses, as I will read all of them to gain some insight into who you are as a person.

I am looking forward to receiving your essay on our first class day.

-Mr. Chris Trompas
ctrompas@learningchoice.org



Eleven

By Sandra Cisneros

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are --underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five. And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Only today I wish I didn't have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box. Today I wish I was one hundred and two instead of eleven because if I was one hundred and two I'd have known what to say when Mrs. Price put the red sweater on my desk. I would've known how to tell her it wasn't min instead of just sitting there with that look on my face and nothing coming out of my mouth.

"Whose is this?" Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. "Whose? It's been sitting in the coatroom for a month."

"Not mine," says everybody. "Not me."

"It has to belong to somebody," Mrs. Price keeps saying, but nobody can remember. It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope. It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so.

Maybe because I'm skinny, maybe because she doesn't like me, that stupid Sylvia Saldivar says, "I think it belongs to Rachel." An ugly sweater like that, all raggedy and old, but Mrs. Price believes her. Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out.

"That's not, I don't, you're not...Not mine," I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.

"Of course it's yours," Mrs. Price says. "I remember you wearing it once." Because she's older and the teacher, she's right and I'm not.

Not mine, not mine, not mine, but Mrs. Price is already turning to page thirty-two, and math problem number four. I don't know why but all of a sudden I'm feeling sick inside, like the part of me that's three wants to come out of my eyes, only I squeeze them shut tight and bite down on my teeth real hard and try to remember today I am eleven, eleven. Mama is making a cake for me tonight, and when Papa comes home everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you.

But when the sick feeling goes away and I open my eyes, the red sweater's still sitting there like a big red mountain. I move the red sweater to the corner of my desk with my ruler. I move my pencil and books and eraser as far from it as possible. I even move my chair a little to the right. Not mine, not mine, not mine.

In my head I'm thinking how long till lunchtime, how long till I can take the red sweater and throw it over the school yard fence, or even leave it hanging on a parking meter, or bunch it up into a little ball and toss it in the alley. Except when math period ends Mrs. Price says loud and in front of everybody, "Now Rachel, that's enough," because she sees I've shoved the red sweater to the tippy-tip corner of my desk and it's hanging all over the edge like a waterfall, but I don't care.

"Rachel," Mrs. Price says. She says it like she's getting mad. "You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense."

"But it's not--"

"Now!" Mrs. Price says.

This is when I wish I wasn't eleven, because all the years inside of me-- ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two and one-- are pushing at the back of my eyes when I put one arm through one sleeve of the sweater that smells like cottage cheese, and then the other arm through the other and stand there with my arms apart like if the sweater hurts me and it does, all itchy and full of germs that aren't even mine.

That's when everything I've been holding in since this morning, since when Mrs. Price put the sweater on my desk, finally lets go, and all of a sudden I'm crying in front of everybody. I wish I was invisible but I'm not. I'm eleven and it's my birthday today and I'm crying like I'm three in front of everybody. I put my head down on the desk and bury my face in my stupid clown-sweater arms. My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because I can't stop the little animal noises from coming out of me, until there aren't any more tears left in my eyes, and it's just my body shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head hurts like when you drink milk too fast.

But the worst part is right before the bell rings for lunch. That stupid Phyllis Lopez, who is even dumber than Sylvia Saldivar, says she remembers the red sweater is hers! I take it off right away and give it to her, only Mrs. Price pretends like everything's okay.

Today I'm eleven. There's cake Mama's making for tonight, and when Papa comes home from work we'll eat it. There'll be candles and presents and everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you, Rachel, only it's too late.

I'm eleven today. I'm eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one hundred and two. I wish I was anything but eleven, because I want today to be far away already, far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny *o* in the sky, so tiny-tiny you have to close your eyes to see it.



Spelling Power

Lesson 1: Short Vowel Spellings

Word Bank

arid	benefit	static	text	complex
distract	vivid	unselfish	trusting	plot

Key Concepts

- Short vowel sounds are often spelled with single vowel letters.
 attic block unrest
- Short vowel sounds include *\a* as in *hat*, *\e* as in *net*, *\i* as in *did*, *\o* as in *lot*, and *\u* as in *cup*.

Spelling Practice

Put the words from the Word Bank in alphabetical order. Then circle all short vowel sounds: *\a*, *\e*, *\i*, *\o*, and *\u*.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Spelling in Context

Choose the word from the Word Bank that best completes each sentence. Write the word on the line.

- Giving to charity is a(n) _____ deed.
- Desert lands usually have a(n) _____ climate.
- The _____ on our car radio was annoying.
- Can I borrow your math _____ to finish my homework?
- "I'm _____ you to keep your promise," said Dad.

LESSON 1 continued

Proofreading Practice

As you read the following paragraph, circle the five misspelled words. Write the correct spelling for each circled word on the lines.

My friend Nick and I were planning a plout for a mystery. I wanted to yell out my idea, but I was afraid I would destract him. The scene—quite vived in my mind—was very complix. I thought both of us might benifit if I drew a picture. "What a great idea!" Nick exclaimed when he looked at the drawing.

1. _____ 3. _____ 5. _____
 2. _____ 4. _____

Spelling Application

Below are eight more words that reflect the Key Concepts in the lesson. Find each hidden word in the word chain. Circle the words and then write them on the lines provided in the order in which they appear in the word chain. Circle the short vowels.

Example:

s*i*te*n*tr*u*st

s*i*t t*e*nt tr*u*st

catnip daffodil encrust knot
 nonsense pun timid trunk

catnipunonsensencrustrunknotimidaffodil

1. _____ 5. _____
 2. _____ 6. _____
 3. _____ 7. _____
 4. _____ 8. _____