Step Up to Writing and the National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association *Standards for the English Language Arts*

NCTE and IRA are widely regarded by educational professionals as leading voices in English language arts education and pedagogy. The *Standards for the English Language Arts*, sponsored by NCTE and IRA, promotes literacy development necessary for students to **"pursue life's goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society."** While NCTE and IRA offer literacy standards, *Step Up to Writing* offers the "how to" – the methods, the tools, and the concrete strategies for helping all students reach the highest levels of literacy development.

With *Step Up to Writing,* students **learn to communicate** (spoken, written, and visual) for a variety of audiences and purposes; they **learn different formats through explicit instruction and guided lessons**; they **apply and practice a number of strategies** to various writing/speaking assignments across subject areas; they **communicate/publish their work** using appropriate mediums such as newspapers, bulletins, web sites, display boards, books, etc.. Students are encouraged to **improve listening skills** – both in one-on-one relationships and in larger groups – as well to be a valuable participant in discussions inside and outside the classroom; this includes asking and answering questions; paraphrasing, retelling and summarizing; and engaging in effective discussions.

NCTE / IRA Standards for the English Language Arts	Step Up to Writing Practical Strategies, Tools, and Lessons

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.
 	
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.
 	
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. sentence structure, context, graphics).
 	
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.
	▪ Teaches students active reading strategies to better comprehend all texts, both fiction and non-fiction, written and visual.
	▪ Equips students with multisensory literacy strategies for analyzing and evaluating texts, making inferences, drawing conclusions, and synthesizing information.
	▪ Provides teachers with examples to model with their students as well as with guided lessons to incorporate into all subject areas, not just English language arts.
	▪ Enables students to strengthen their overall literacy skills and build a historical, cultural, social, etc. understanding of the "human experience."
	▪ Incorporates a multitude of strategies for students to learn, comprehend, and use new vocabulary words. The activities are not simply used in English language arts, but encourage vocabulary development within specific content areas.
	▪ Guides students through the writing process as they…
	  o …write for a variety or audiences and purposes;
	  o …learn different formats through explicit instruction and guided lessons;
	  o …apply and practice a number of writing strategies to various writing assignments across subject areas; and
	  o …communicate/share/publish their work using appropriate mediums such as newspapers,

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.

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.

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.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computers, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create/communicate knowledge.

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.

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.

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

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

- bulletins, web sites, display boards, books, etc.
- Empowers students to develop a repertoire of appropriate writing styles and to complete final drafts that are free of mistakes and follow the established writing conventions.
- Helps students develop the ability to edit and proofread their own and others' writing for usage, punctuation, spelling, syntax, and style.
- Teaches students to take practical, helpful notes that can be personalized during a lesson, discussion, or extra reading to…
   o …improve class discussion and peer sharing; and
   o …improve viewing and listening skills.
- Presents a number of important skills that prepare students for short and longer research assignments. Students master skills such as taking notes, making outlines, generating questions, and creating thesis statements that make research and writing about research possible.
- Encourages teachers and students to incorporate technology throughout the writing process including using technology as a means of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing writing; or crafting visual narratives and visual aids to accompany writing or speeches.
- Asks all students to develop an abundant vocabulary by reading and writing widely.
   o word-recognition
   o language structure
   o language patterns
- Instills confidence in students in analyzing aspects of effective communication in their own and others' speeches, texts, and visual narratives.
- Provides teachers with strategies to help students analyze an author's vocabulary, style and syntax, and text structure.
- Offers various activities for students to improve listening skills – both in one-on-one relationships and in larger groups – as well to be a valuable participant in discussions inside and outside the classroom.

With *Step Up to Writing*, teachers are better prepared to help *all* students master the skills they need to address each of the twelve NCTE/IRA standards.

References

Auman, Maureen. *Step Up to Writing*. 3rd ed. Boston: Sopris West Educational Services, 2008.

National Council of Teachers of English et al. *Standards for the English Language Arts*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1996. 15 Jul 2008. <http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards?source=ql>