

# ALIGNMENT

## ***Step Up to Writing and the NCTE / IRA Standards for the English Language Arts***

The *Step Up to Writing* program provides effective, multisensory writing strategies to improve students' overall literacy skills. This flexible, strategy-based program connects reading and writing to build a common language of literacy and increase proficiency across grade levels and content areas.

Extensive modeling, guided practice, and independent practice improve student writing, reading comprehension, vocabulary, note-taking, and critical-thinking skills. Students learn to read, write, listen, speak, and view with skill and confidence.

Because these critical 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills are also reflected in the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and International Reading Association's (IRA) *Standards for the English Language Arts*, the *Step Up to Writing* program is a natural fit for improving overall K-12 student literacy across the curriculum.

NCTE and IRA are widely regarded by educational professionals as leading voices in language arts. 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, the concrete strategies for helping all students reach the highest levels of literacy development.\*\*

### **NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 1**

#### ***Standard 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.

#### ***Step Up to Writing***

Students are given a variety of active reading strategies to better comprehend all texts, both fiction and non-fiction, written and visual. From recognizing text structures and features to marking and annotating a text, students are equipped with multisensory literacy strategies for analyzing and evaluating texts, making inferences, drawing conclusions and synthesizing information. Teachers are provided with examples to model with their students and guided lessons to incorporate into all subject areas, not just English/language arts.

For example:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (Various strategies for making connections between the message and the self/other texts/world; taking effective reading and research notes; making inferences and analyzing the text; paraphrasing, retelling and summarizing main ideas and details; asking and answering questions; recognizing text structures; using informal outlines)
- Section 2: Vocabulary (Developing a strong vocabulary across content areas)
- Sections 4 and 5 (Recognizing and working with two kinds of writing: expository/informational and narrative; defining *fiction*, *non-fiction*, *prose*, *poetry*, *explain*, and *entertain*; creating informal outlines)
- Sections 6 and 7 (Recognizing and composing story and narrative structures; sequencing events; creating and developing characters; showing, not telling; writing personal narratives)

\*\**Step Up to Writing* Section references refer to the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (2008); the program also applies to the content, tools, and strategies found in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> editions.

- **Section 8: Speeches** (Asking and answering questions; developing good listening skills; participating in one-on-one and large group discussions)
- **Section 9: Specific writing assignments** (Array of non-fiction and informational forms including persuasive writing; supporting opinion with fact; compare/contrast; cause/effect; technical writing; science reports; writing in math)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 2

### **Standard 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.

### **Step Up to Writing**

As with writing for a variety of purposes, reading widely across content areas for various purposes enables students to strengthen their overall literacy skills and build a historical, cultural, social, etc. understanding of the “human experience.” With *Step Up to Writing* students are taught active reading strategies to improve their comprehension of texts – fiction and non-fiction, and within specific subject areas. Students are not only given opportunities to read and connect with different forms and genres, but to also practice crafting their own texts in these forms and genres.

For example:

- **Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension** (Various strategies for making connections between the reading and the self/other texts/world; marking and highlighting the text; taking effective notes; making inferences and analyzing the text; paraphrasing, retelling and summarizing main ideas; recognizing text structure; asking and answering questions)
- **Section 2: Vocabulary** (Developing a strong vocabulary across content areas)
- **Sections 4-7** (Reading and writing two kinds of texts: information/expository and narrative; analyzing organizational structures; understanding story elements and terminology; recognizing narrative patterns; defining *fictions, nonfiction, prose, poetry, explain, and entertain*)
- **Section 9: Specific writing assignments** (Array of writing forms and genres including persuasive writing, supporting opinion with fact, compare/contrast, cause/effect, poetry, dramatic skit, and personal narrative)
- **Section 10: Assessment and high standards** (Setting high and clear expectations; participating in effective peer review; using self-evaluation quick checks for note taking and for speeches)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 3

### **Standard 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., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

### **Step Up to Writing**

Students are given a variety of active reading strategies to better comprehend all texts, both fiction and non-fiction, written and visual. From recognizing text structures and features to marking and annotating a text, students are equipped with multisensory literacy strategies for analyzing and evaluating texts, making inferences, drawing conclusions and synthesizing information. Teachers are provided with examples to model with their students and guided lessons to incorporate into all subject areas, not just English/language arts.

For example:

- **Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension** (Various strategies for making connections between the message and the self/other texts/world; taking effective reading and research notes; making inferences and analyzing the text; paraphrasing, retelling and summarizing main ideas and details; asking and answering questions; recognizing text structures; using informal outlines)

- Section 2: Vocabulary (Developing a strong vocabulary across content areas)
- Section 3: Sentence mastery (e.g. writing better sentences; using a variety of sentence structures – simple, compound, complex, compound/complex; understanding the kinds of sentences; writing with sentence variety; recognizing parts of speech; using sentence fragments effectively; eliminating run-ons; playing with language; learning parts of sentences with diagrams; adding quotations; considering purpose and audience)
- Sections 4 and 5 (Recognizing and working with two kinds of writing: expository/informational and narrative; defining *fiction*, *non-fiction*, *prose*, *poetry*, *explain*, and *entertain*; creating informal outlines)
- Sections 6 and 7 (Understanding story grammar and terminology; recognizing story elements; sequencing events; creating and developing characters; showing, not telling; composing, sharing, and publishing personal narratives)
- Section 8: Speeches (Asking and answering questions; developing good listening skills; participating in one-on-one and large group discussions)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (Array of non-fiction and informational forms including persuasive writing; supporting opinion with fact; compare/contrast; cause/effect; technical writing; science reports; writing in math)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (Using quick checks for self-evaluation; implementing practical, effective scoring guides)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 4

### Standard 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.

### Step Up to Writing

Vocabulary development is a critical component of the *Step Up to Writing* program. Students are given a multitude of strategies 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. Similarly, students are empowered to develop a repertoire of appropriate writing styles and to complete final drafts that are free of mistakes and follow the established writing conventions. As a result, students develop the ability to edit and proofread their own and others' writing for usage, punctuation, spelling, syntax, and style. Students are taught to present writing that effectively conveys a message to their audience for a specific purpose.

For example:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (Using active reading strategies for responding to the text; making connections between the text and the self/other texts/world; marking the text; taking effective notes; analyzing the text and making inferences; paraphrasing, retelling and summarizing; asking and answering questions)
- Section 2: Vocabulary (Mastering vocabulary; teaching tips for reading dictionary definitions, breaking down definitions, using correct pronunciation, developing concept maps, creating meaningful vocabulary sentences with context; using vocabulary note cards to develop definition/synonyms/antonyms/part of speech, categorizing vocabulary words and content-specific terminology, understanding homonyms/homophones/homographs, and developing subject-specific vocabulary)
- Section 3: Sentence mastery (Identifying parts of speech; playing with language; analyzing sentence structures; writing with a variety of sentences)
- Section 4-7 (Recognizing and working with two kinds of writing: expository/informational and narrative; defining *fiction*, *non-fiction*, *prose*, *poetry*, *explain*, and *entertain*; understanding story structure and terminology; considering audience, purpose, and message in word choice)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (Array of writing/speaking forms and genres including persuasive, compare/contrast, cause/effect, poetry, dramatic skit, personal narrative, and more)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (Using quick checks for self-evaluation; using practical and effective scoring guides that provide feedback on *organization*, *content*, *style*, and *grammar/mechanics/usage*; analyzing examples of *below basic*, *basic*, *proficient*, and *advanced* writing; recording and monitoring own progress)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 5

### Standard 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.

### Step Up to Writing

Students learn to write for a variety of audiences and purposes; they learn different formats through explicit instruction and guided lessons; they apply and practice a number of writing strategies to various writing assignments across subject areas; they communicate/publish their work using appropriate mediums such as newspapers, bulletins, web sites, display boards, books.

For example:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (Learning to summarize; create useable and accurate notes; write and answer questions; respond to text; mastering short responses – writing for clarity and accuracy)
- Section 2: Vocabulary (Writing meaningful vocabulary word sentences)
- Section 3: Sentence mastery (Carefully selecting sentence structures; using a variety of sentences; considering purpose and audience; playing with language; adding quotations)
- Sections 4 and 5: Expository paragraph, report, and essay writing (Writing for a variety of purposes; writing in first, second, and third person; writing for a specific audience)
- Sections 6 and 7: Story and personal narratives (Writing to entertain, to share a message, and/or to create visual images; writing to share an experience)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (Writing in numerous formats – Examples: writing from a different point of view, writing letters, writing a skit, personal writing, writing to persuade, convince, or inspire, writing to inform, business writing, personal writing)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (e.g. checklists for revision; improving word choice with the ABC Activity; editing with CUPS – *capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling*; quick check for self-evaluation; practical, effective scoring guides with examples of *below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced* writing)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 6

### Standard 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.

### Step Up to Writing

Students use writing for learning as they apply strategies in all subject areas for all kinds of content. Students learn to take practical, helpful notes that can be personalized during a lesson, discussion, or extra reading. Writing helps improve class discussion and peer sharing. Writing is used to improve viewing and listening skills. Students realize that if they want to learn something, they must write. Expository/information writing pushes students to clarify their thinking, demonstrate what they know and understand, evaluate ideas, and critique arguments. Story and narrative writing challenges students to expand their style repertoire and understanding of forms/genres even further.

For example:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (Responding to the text; making connections to the self/text/world; taking effective notes; making inferences and analyzing the text; retelling and summarizing; recognizing text structures; asking and answering questions)
- Section 2: Vocabulary (Mastering vocabulary; teaching tips for reading dictionary definitions, breaking down definitions, using correct pronunciation, developing concept maps, creating meaningful vocabulary sentences with context; using vocabulary note cards to develop definition/synonyms/antonyms/part of speech, categorizing vocabulary words and content-specific terminology, understanding homonyms/homophones/homographs, and developing subject-specific vocabulary)
- Section 3: Sentence mastery (Identifying parts of speech; playing with language; analyzing sentence structures; writing with a variety of sentences)

- Sections 4 and 5 (Writing informal outlines; developing topic sentences; elaborating on ideas; the thinking game; train of thought; accordion races; “stretch, don’t stack” activities)
- Sections 6 and 7 (Recognizing story elements and terminology; planning and prewriting; developing characters; writing dialogue; showing, not telling; recognizing the narrative pattern; sharing and publishing)
- Section 8: Speeches (Analyzing components of a good speech; developing good listening skills; participating in discussion)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (An array of writing opportunities including persuasive; compare/contrast; cause/effect; biographical and autobiographical sketches; literature response; poetry; descriptive; letters; science reports; technical writing; writing in math)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (e.g. checklists for revision; improving word choice with the ABC Activity; editing with CUPS – *capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling*; quick check for self-evaluation; implementing practical, effective scoring guides)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 7

### **Standard 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.

### **Step Up to Writing**

Students learn a number of important skills that prepare them 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.

For example:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (Taking notes; making inferences and analyzing the text; retelling and summarizing; asking and answering questions; using bookmarks)
- Section 4: Information/expository paragraphs (Writing strong topic sentences, thesis statements, and leads)
- Section 5: Accordion essays and reports (Writing focused thesis statements; key supporting statements; elaboration; quotations and documentation)
- Section 8: Speeches (Creating a thesis; mastering leads; blocking out support; adding accurate, effective detail and elaboration; adding a conclusion)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (Array of formal and informal writing forms and genres including writing to persuade or convince; analogies; advertisements; technical writing; writing in math)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (e.g. checklists for revision; improving word choice with the ABC Activity; editing with CUPS – capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling; quick check for self-evaluation; implementing practical, effective scoring guides)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 8

### **Standard 8**

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

### **Step Up to Writing**

Students are encouraged to incorporate technology throughout the writing process as they present writing that effectively conveys a message to their audience. This includes 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.

For example:

- Sections 1-10 (*Step Up to Writing* includes customizable CD tools for use in the classroom, as overhead transparencies, in computer/writing labs, and with computer projectors; strategies for planning, organizing, and developing ideas during the drafting process include graphic organizers, two-column notes, and webbing/mapping; encourages the use of the computer to draft paragraphs, essays, and reports; conducting peer review; self-evaluating writing; monitoring student progress; editing with CUPS – *capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling*; using a checklist for revision; implementing practical and effective scoring guides)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 9

### **Standard 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.

### **Step Up to Writing**

Students learn to write for a variety of audiences and purposes; they learn different formats through explicit instruction and guided lessons; they apply and practice a number of writing strategies to various writing assignments across subject areas; they communicate/publish their work using appropriate mediums such as newspapers, bulletins, web sites, display boards, books.

For example:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (Learning to summarize; create useable and accurate notes; write and answer questions; respond to text; mastering short responses – writing for clarity and accuracy)
- Section 2: Vocabulary (e.g. teaching tips; reading and understanding dictionary definitions; breaking down definitions; pronouncing vocabulary words; writing meaningful vocabulary sentences; creating detailed vocabulary word maps and webs; creating and using concept maps; understanding abstract nouns and vivid verbs; homonyms, homophones, and homographs; using strong vocabulary in writing across the curriculum)
- Section 3: Sentence mastery (e.g. writing better sentences; using a variety of sentence structures – simple, compound, complex, compound/complex; understanding the kinds of sentences; writing with sentence variety; recognizing parts of speech; using sentence fragments effectively; eliminating run-ons; playing with language; learning parts of sentences with diagrams; adding quotations; considering purpose and audience)
- Sections 4 and 5: Expository paragraph, report, and essay writing (Writing for a variety of purposes; writing in first, second, and third person; writing for a specific audience)
- Sections 6 and 7: Story and personal narratives (Writing to entertain, to share a message, and/or to create visual images; writing to share an experience)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (Writing in numerous formats – Examples: writing from a different point of view, writing letters, writing a skit, personal writing, writing to persuade, convince, or inspire, writing to inform, business writing, personal writing)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 10

### **Standard 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.

### **Step Up to Writing**

All students are encouraged to develop an abundant vocabulary by reading and writing widely. Along with word-recognition, students are empowered to develop of master of language structure and language patterns. They learn different strategies through direct teacher instruction and guided lessons; they apply and practice a number of strategies to strengthen their literacy skills while taking advantage of their native language.

For example:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (Various strategies for responding to the text including: free response, reading notation, sticky notes, agree/disagree, and quotation response; marking the text; developing note-taking strategies including research note cards, and mapping and webbing to synthesize ideas; making connections to self, text, and world; recognizing text structures; asking and answering questions)
- Section 2: Vocabulary (Teaching tips; reading and understanding dictionary definitions; breaking down definitions; pronouncing vocabulary words; writing meaningful vocabulary sentences; creating detailed vocabulary word maps and webs; creating and using concept maps; understanding abstract nouns and vivid verbs; homonyms, homophones, and homographs; using strong vocabulary in writing across the curriculum)
- Section 3: Sentence mastery (Writing better sentences; using a variety of sentence structures – simple, compound, complex, compound/complex; understanding the kinds of sentences; writing with sentence variety; recognizing parts of speech; using sentence fragments effectively; eliminating run-ons; playing with language; learning parts of sentences with diagrams; adding quotations; considering purpose and audience)
- Sections 4 and 5 (Recognizing two kinds of writing: expository and narrative structures; defining *fiction*, *nonfiction*, *prose*, *poetry*, *explain*, and *entertain*; planning essays and reports; writing strong topic sentences, thesis statements, and leads; using transitions effectively to create cohesion; elaborating on ideas; using quotations and citations; writing successful conclusions)
- Sections 6 and 7 (Introducing story grammar and terminology; understanding story elements; sequencing events; creating and developing characters; showing, not telling; writing dialogue; understanding the function of narrative transitions; composing, sharing, and publishing personal narratives)
- Section 8: Speeches (Recognizing components of a good speech; giving speeches; including stories/aneecdotes; focusing on your audience)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (Creating writing assignments such as persuasive writing, literature response, descriptive writing, writing in math and science, technical writing, poetry, writing a skit, and more)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (Using checklists for revision; improving word choice with the ABC Activity; editing with CUPS – *capitalization*, *usage*, *punctuation*, and *spelling*; quick check for self-evaluation; implementing practical, effective scoring guides; monitoring student progress)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 11

### Standard 11

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

### Step Up to Writing

Because students are taught to craft both formal and informal texts that consider their audience, purpose, and message, they also become confident in analyzing those aspects of effective communication in others' speeches, texts, and visual narratives. Teachers are given strategies to help students analyze an author's vocabulary, style and syntax, and text structure; as a result, students become more skillful and confident in their analysis and evaluation of a variety of texts structures in a variety of occasions and contexts. Students are taught not only active reading and writing strategies, but also active listening skills. Through various activities, 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.

For example:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (Various strategies for making connections between the message and self/text/world; taking effective notes; making inferences; paraphrasing, retelling and summarizing; asking and answering questions)
- Section 2: Vocabulary (Developing content-area vocabulary mastery; teaching tips; reading and understanding dictionary definitions; breaking down definitions; pronouncing vocabulary words; writing meaningful vocabulary sentences; creating detailed vocabulary word maps and webs; creating and using concept maps; understanding abstract nouns and vivid verbs; homonyms, homophones, and homographs; using strong vocabulary in writing across the curriculum)
- Sections 4-7 (Developing two kinds of writing: expository and narrative structures; defining *fiction*, *nonfiction*, *prose*, *poetry*, *explain*, and *entertain*; planning, drafting, revising, and sharing writing; writing

strong topic sentences, thesis statements, and leads; using transitions effectively and accurately; writing successful conclusions; considering audience and purpose)

- Section 8: Speeches (Planning and organizing speeches – formal and informal; giving effective speeches – formal and informal; asking and answering questions; improving impromptu speaking, informational and how-to speeches, and persuasive speeches; focusing on your audience; delivering oral book reports; developing good listening skills; participating in a discussion)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (Creating writing assignments in new contexts/literacy communities such as persuasive writing, literature response, descriptive writing, writing in math and science, technical writing, poetry, writing a skit, and more)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (e.g. checklists for revision; improving word choice with the ABC Activity; editing with CUPS – *capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling*; quick check for self-evaluation; implementing practical, effective scoring guides; monitoring student progress)

## NCTE/IRA Language Arts Standard 12

### Standard 12

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

### 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 valuable and effective discussions.

For example:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (Various strategies for making connections to self/text/world; taking effective notes; making inferences; paraphrasing, retelling and summarizing; asking and answering questions; mastering short responses – writing for clarity and accuracy)
- Sections 4 and 5: Expository paragraph, report, and essay writing (Writing for a variety of purposes; writing in first, second, and third person; writing for a specific audience)
- Sections 6 and 7: Story and personal narratives (Writing to entertain, to share a message, and/or to create visual images; writing to share an experience)
- Section 8: Speeches (Developing good listening skills; participating in a discussion; asking and answering questions; “stand up and sound off” activity; improving impromptu speaking)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (Writing in numerous formats – Examples: writing from a different point of view, writing letters, writing a skit, personal writing, writing to persuade, convince, or inspire, writing to inform, business writing, personal writing)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (Setting high standards and clear expectations; using quick checks for self-evaluation; participating in peer review activities; recording and monitoring own progress)

## REFERENCES

Auman, Maureen. *Step Up to Writing*. 3<sup>rd</sup> 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>>