

**Lower Township Elementary Schools**  
**Cape May, NJ**  
**Grade Level: Sixth Grade (6) / Content Area: Reading, Writing**

Month	Reading Unit	Writing Unit
<b>September</b>	<b>Unit 1-</b> Getting Back into Independent Reading (Curricular Calendar)	<b>Unit 1-</b> Restarting a Writing Life (Curricular Calendar)
<b>October</b>	<b>Unit 2-</b> Deep Study of Character (Spiral)	<b>Unit 2-</b> Personal Narrative (Spiral)
<b>November</b>		
<b>December</b>	<b>Unit 3-</b> Social Issues Book Clubs (Spiral)	<b>Unit 3-</b> Literary Essay (Spiral)
<b>January</b>		
<b>February</b>	<b>Unit 1-</b> Tapping the Power of Nonfiction (Spiral)	<b>Unit 4-</b> Informational Writing (Spiral)
<b>March</b>	<b>Unit 5-</b> Fantasy Unit or Dystopian Unit (Curricular Calendar or Spiral)	<b>Unit 5-</b> Fantasy (Curricular Calendar)
<b>April</b>	Test Prep- NJSLA	Test Prep- NJSLA
<b>May/June</b>	State Testing/Benchmarking	State Testing/Benchmarking

[Reading and Writing Mentor Texts \(Click Here\)](#)

## 6th Grade Reading Unit 1

### **Getting Back into Independent Reading**

The one truly consistent finding in reading research is that reading a lot matters. Reading widely, voraciously, and independently is the primary action that can spark meaningful and lifelong learning. The biggest work, the work that unites and underlies everything you will do as a teacher of reading in this upcoming year, is to help all your students become avid, powerful readers. In this unit, students will take ownership of their own reading lives. They will acquire a deep understanding of themselves as readers and create a community that revolves around shared books.

Reading	
<p><b>Big Ideas Course Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How can I create an active learning community that exposes students to a variety of texts and enables them to develop rich personal reading lives?</li> <li>● Create authentic learning tasks to promote engagement and a lifelong love of reading?</li> <li>● How do we build the skills and strategies of experienced, upper-elementary readers?</li> </ul>	
Essential Questions	Enduring Understanding
<p><i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i></p>	<p><i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Who am I as a reader, and how am I unique among other readers?</li> <li>● What skills and strategies can I use to make myself a better reader?</li> <li>● How will we work together as a community of readers?</li> </ul>	<p>Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Setting reading goals and reflecting on progress</li> <li>● Using expert strategies to develop meaning</li> <li>● Choosing just-right books</li> <li>● Establishing routines and tracking systems</li> <li>● Using thinking strategies to analyze a text</li> <li>● Synthesizing ideas across complex texts</li> <li>● Working hard when books get hard</li> <li>● Modeling interpretation / enjoyment of books through read-aloud</li> <li>● Working effectively with a partner(s) to talk about books</li> <li>● Reflecting on reading goals</li> </ul>

## 6th Grade Writing Unit 1

### Restarting a Writing Life

This writing unit is all about transfer, independence, and student voice. Your students, whatever their current relationship with writing, will reimagine their writerly lives, make choices as writers, and breathe new life into their writer's notebooks. They'll pull from what they've learned in previous years to make these decisions and follow their passions in writing. The teaching that undergirds the unit -- around leading writerly lives, working with increased independence, and above all, transferring the skills they have learned in other classes into this new project -- is teaching that is central to writing workshop all year long. (Bends I and II)

Writing	
<b>Big Ideas Course Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Reclaiming Your Writer's Notebook</li><li>● Drawing on Notebooks to Revise Important Projects</li></ul>	
<b>Essential Questions</b> <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	<b>Enduring Understanding</b> <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● How can my writing notebook become a space to try new ideas and techniques?</li><li>● What writing tools will help me the most?</li></ul>	Students will understand that... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Writers develop writing habits and routines</li><li>● Using writing tools/strategies can help them with revision and accomplishing their goals</li></ul>

## 6th Grade Reading Unit 2

### **A Deep Study of Character**

This unit will help students grow by learning to consider more complex character traits, to investigate how setting shapes characters, and to analyze how characters are vehicles for themes. In Bend I students will analyze complex character traits and will think about how readers collect evidence to support their thinking about character traits. In Bend II students will keep doing character work and this bend introduces investigating the intersection of characters and setting. Bend III moves students to investigating how characters act as vehicles for themes in novels.

Reading	
<b>Big Ideas Course Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Considering complex character traits</li><li>• Investigating how setting shapes characters</li><li>• Analyzing characters as vehicles for themes</li></ul>	
Essential Questions <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	Enduring Understanding <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can I collect evidence to support my thinking about character traits?</li><li>• How can I examine the sides of characters that readers often ignore?</li><li>• How does setting affect characters?</li><li>• How could the troubles a character faces be a possible motif?</li><li>• How are subjects that the author is preoccupied with possible motifs?</li></ul>	Students will understand that... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Characters have complex traits</li><li>• Setting affects and influences characters</li><li>• Symbolism can relate to theme</li><li>• Readers ground their theories in specific text evidence</li><li>• Readers question the text deeply, asking what the author suggests about motifs</li></ul>

## 6th Grade Writing Unit 2

### Personal Narrative

This unit provides the opportunity to teach students the skills required for narrative writing. Narrative writers rely on techniques such as dialogue, inner thinking, precise actions, and setting details to develop the important parts of a story. As you tap into your students' motivations to put the true stories of their lives onto the page, you will convey the important message that writers carry with them and draw from a repertoire of strategies. Your students will assess their work, review their options, and make their own decisions about the work that needs to be done. In Bend I they will generate ideas and flash draft a story. They will write stories with significance and in Bend II they will select a seed idea to take through the writing process. Bend III emphasizes increased initiative and independence. They will draw on everything they know and begin a new personal narrative.

Writing	
<b>Big Ideas Course Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writers draw from a repertoire of strategies</li><li>• Choosing stories that are significant and compelling to write</li><li>• Narrative craft techniques</li><li>• Substantial revision</li></ul>	
<b>Essential Questions</b> <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	<b>Enduring Understanding</b> <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can we craft powerful personal narratives that tell significant and true stories from our lives?</li><li>• How can we analyze and annotate mentor texts in a way that helps us emulate the craft moves of published authors?</li></ul>	Students will understand that... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They can write with honesty and precision.</li><li>• writers draw on all they have already learned about good writing as they begin a new cycle of writing work.</li><li>• writers can use mentor texts to learn the craft moves of published authors and incorporate these moves into their stories/writing.</li></ul>

## 6th Grade Reading Unit 3

### ***Social Issues Book Clubs***

In Bend I students will consider issues that crop up between individuals in their books. These relationship issues lead into talking about how power, perspective, and conflicts affect characters. One goal of this bend is to continue to lift the level of analytical work of your readers. By analyzing the complex dynamics between two or more characters, students will push themselves to do even more-- to be more precise, to consider cause and effect, to weigh and evaluate. Students will form book clubs and will have time to read in class as well as at home. Every other day there will be an opportunity for a book club conversation. By the end of this bend clubs will be finishing their first book and thinking about a book to read next that focuses on an issue they want to continue talking about. In Bend II the focus shifts toward issues that are more structural in nature. Students will learn to notice when issues seem related to the groups a character is part of. Students will consider how group issues and dynamics are playing out in a story. Students will notice that simple themes don't apply to complex stories. In the final bend students will deepen the connections they make to literature. Students will appreciate how their own experiences are always a lens for their reading.

Reading	
<p><b>Big Ideas Course Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Analyzing the the complex dynamics between two or more characters</li> <li>● Analyzing social issues</li> <li>● Making personal connections to literature</li> </ul>	
Essential Questions <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	Enduring Understanding <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How does power, perspective and conflict affect characters?</li> <li>● How are some issues related to groups that a character is part of?</li> <li>● What resonates most with me and why?</li> </ul>	<p>Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● readers study character's relationships</li> <li>● readers analyze group related issues and consider power, perspective, and tone</li> <li>● readers bring their own lives and others' to their reading</li> </ul>

## 6th Grade Writing Unit 3

### Literary Essay

Students will write three incarnations of essays in this unit- character-based, them-based and compare-contrast, with each one building on the last. Repeated practice is essential to the work of helping students become more confident and independent. Students will learn to read texts more closely and with a greater focus on the details. Students will think big about the texts they are reading and will form their own theories about the character (in Bend I) and the them (in Bend II). Students will learn to express their thoughts while reading and to back up their ideas and observations with strong evidence. You will teach that essays have a common structure with claims, support, and evidence. In the last bend students will compare two texts through the lens of a common theme. You will teach them to consider the similarities and differences in the ways two texts deal with an issue or problem.

Writing	
<p><b>Big Ideas Course Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Write a literary essays with claims, support, and evidence</li> <li>● Write an essay comparing and contrasting themes across two texts</li> <li>● Applying everything that you have learned to your revision work</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Essential Questions</b>  <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i></p>	<p><b>Enduring Understanding</b>  <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How can we read texts closely to find details that illuminate great things about a character?</li> <li>● How can we examine characters more deeply by considering their motivations and desires?</li> <li>● How can we consider the theme of the text we are analyzing?</li> <li>● What are the similarities and differences between the ways two texts deal with an issue or problem?</li> </ul>	<p>Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Readers think big about the texts they are reading and form their own theories.</li> <li>● They can read texts closely and with a greater focus on the details.</li> <li>● Essays have a common structure with claims, support, and evidence.</li> </ul>

## 6th Grade Reading Unit 4

### **Tapping the Power of Nonfiction**

Nonfiction reading skills are essential to students’ achievement in virtually every academic discipline. During this unit students will develop a solid set of nonfiction reading skills: discerning central ideas, summarizing to create a concise version of text, synthesizing within and across texts, building vocabulary, growing ideas and reading critically to question the author’s point of view and perspective. In Bend I students will read longer nonfiction texts. They will tease out the central ideas and hold onto their initial ideas loosely knowing that those central ideas may need to be revised in light of new information as they read on. In Bend II students work in research groups to study nonfiction topics they select. Students will synthesize across texts, build their vocabularies and summarize texts while holding onto central ideas. In Bend III students research a new topic and work to overcome the challenges of researching online. Students will read critically to discern an author’s point of view and to celebrate students will deliver their own TED-style talks.

Reading	
<p><b>Big Ideas Course Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Navigating nonfiction chapter books in book clubs, with an emphasis on discerning central ideas</li> <li>● Investigating topics with research groups and synthesizing across texts on that topic</li> <li>● Reading critically to discern an author’s point of view</li> </ul>	
Essential Questions	Enduring Understanding
<p><i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i></p>	<p><i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the central ideas of this text and what are my theories?</li> <li>● How can I transfer what I know from one type of text to the next?</li> <li>● What is the author’s point of view?</li> <li>● How can we navigate the challenges of researching online?</li> </ul>	<p>Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nonfiction readers discern central ideas and summarize to create a concise version of the text</li> <li>● Nonfiction readers synthesize within and across texts</li> <li>● Nonfiction readers grow ideas and read critically to question the author’s point of view and perspective.</li> </ul>



## 6th Grade Writing Unit 4

### **Research-Based Information Writing**

In Bend I students learn to write research-based information essays. They will explain the important ideas related to the whole class topic of teen activism or a topic that students are studying in science or social studies. Students will learn that writers read and analyze a wide variety of sources to develop a big-picture view of a topic and to discover key points and ideas within a larger topic. Students will flash draft an informational essay. In Bend II, students will choose a compelling issue to write about and conduct research. Students will learn to incorporate evidence into their writing to strengthen their credibility (quotes, supportable facts and clear statistics). Students will learn how to elaborate on their key points with concrete details to create an accurate picture for readers. Students will incorporate complex sentences and useful text features into their writing. In Bend III students will study digital mentor texts and will decide how to publish their work (i.e., slideshows or websites).

Writing	
<p><b>Big Ideas Course Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gaining a big picture view of a topic, uncovering key points or ideas within that topic and drafting an informational essay to convey the information and ideas</li> <li>● Incorporating evidence and concrete details to strengthen your writing</li> <li>● Elaborating on key points</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Essential Questions</b> <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i></p>	<p><b>Enduring Understanding</b> <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the important ideas and key points within my larger topic?</li> <li>● How can I create an accurate picture for readers?</li> <li>● What information is most important to share while presenting my work within the constraints of a digital format?</li> </ul>	<p>Students will understand...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How to write a research-based informational essay using a specific structure</li> <li>● Writers pursue a research subject, think about what makes that topic important and conduct research</li> <li>● Writers construct information writing with solid bricks of information- quotations, facts, anecdotes and numbers- connecting them with ideas and transitions</li> <li>● How to revise their texts to fit digital formats</li> </ul>

## 6th Grade Reading Unit 5

### ***Fantasy Book Clubs***

In this final fiction reading unit for sixth grade, you'll find an emphasis on developing students' knowledge of literary traditions and encouraging students to read with more maturity and independence. The unit reflects an acute awareness that we need to ensure students are ready to make their own way through longer and more complicated books, to find and form their own study groups around reading, and to work through hard parts with a toolkit of strategies and a sense of resiliency. The unit is structured so students work in small book clubs, reading fantasy novels and series. They'll read several novels, both so they become deeply immersed in this literary genre, and so they can develop the kind of higher-level thinking skills needed to study how authors develop characters and themes over time. They'll synthesize details and make connections across hundreds of pages in this unit of study. There is an emphasis on transfer in this unit. The teacher introduces new work through a read aloud of parts of a few short texts. Meanwhile, students will practice this work across the several fantasy novels they read, each time exploring how the work differs slightly in different texts.

Reading	
<p><b>Big Ideas Course Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading closely at the start of a book—learning to build the world of the story when it's another world</li> <li>• Developing thematic understanding—it's about more than dwarfs and elves</li> <li>• Literary traditions, including archetypes, quest structures, and thematic patterns</li> </ul>	
Essential Questions <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	Enduring Understanding <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can I tackle the demanding and complex genre of fantasy reading? What will my strategies and goals be that help me to make sense of multiple plot lines, layered characters, complex themes?</li> <li>• How can I learn to read closely at the start of a novel, paying careful attention to the role of the setting, to multiple plotlines, and to new information as it arises?</li> <li>• How can I use all I have learned about how authors develop themes to study the way authors approach common themes in fantasy?</li> <li>• How can I deepen my thoughts about fantasy stories by thinking about the choices the authors have made—especially thinking about symbolism, allusion, and craft?</li> </ul>	<p>Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• readers will draw on all of the skills and strategies they have learned for comprehension to synthesize across complex fantasies individually and with their club members.</li> <li>• readers pay close attention to details as they build the worlds of stories, considering what these worlds are like both physically and psychologically.</li> <li>• readers see fantasies as more than epic adventures but as symbolic of larger themes, and they will begin to think and talk about their fantasies metaphorically.</li> <li>• readers apply previous learning about themes and strengthen this work by considering how different authors approach the grand themes found in fantasies, reading across fantasies to discuss archetypal characters, craft of authors, elements of allusion, and so on.</li> </ul>

## 6th Grade Writing Unit 5

### ***Fantasy***

This unit teaches students to generate possible story ideas while drawing upon students’ past experience generating ideas for realistic fiction stories. Students will begin by rehearsing, which involves thinking about a lot of possible story ideas, generating possible stories, and then, once one has the gist of an idea, thinking deeply about the setting, the characters, and the various ways the story might spin out. When writing a fantasy story, the need for rehearsal is amplified. You will teach students that the question a fantasy fiction writer needs to ask is not just, “What would make a great story?” but also, “How can I keep my fantasy story grounded in the real world?” Students will learn how to draft from inside the fantasy world of their stories, writing to make the unrealistic feel realistic. From there, you will teach them to revise with an eye on craft. Among other things, students will develop meaning and significance through showing, not telling, and they will attend to symbolism and the use of “expert” vocabulary appropriate for their fantasy world.

<b>Writing</b>	
<p><b>Big Ideas Course Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collecting and Developing Ideas for Fantasy Fiction: Writing Stories that Have Depth and Significance</li> <li>● Drafting and Revising: Crafting a Compelling Fantasy Fiction Story</li> <li>● Editing and Publishing: Preparing the Fantasy Story for Readers</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Essential Questions</b> <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i></p>	<p><b>Enduring Understanding</b> <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How can I keep my fantasy story grounded in the real world?</li> <li>● How can I develop meaning through significance?</li> <li>● What type of symbolism is appropriate for my fantasy world?</li> </ul>	<p>Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fantasy writers generate ideas by drawing on past experiences and rehearsing many different possibilities</li> <li>● Fantasy writers revise with an eye on craft</li> <li>● They can study mentor texts to help with revision and editing</li> </ul>