

FOUNDATION PHASE

The goal of *Reading, Writing, Thinking* is to give learners control of the messages they encounter in their lives. Whether on screens or in books, whether clear or hidden, by text or by voice, learners are constantly bombarded by information. Navigating successfully in the world depends on making sense of this barrage; communicating ideas requires mastering how to understand and how to create such messages. As clear writing and clear thinking go hand-in-hand, these skills provide the foundation for thinking across the different subjects.

Topics and Themes

Learners explore different parts of communication: what we take in, what we send out, and how we transform messages in these processes. In all phases of communication, learners are called upon to grapple with claims about what they should do or believe. To prepare learners to join this conversation, the Foundation Phase asks questions like:

- What makes you, you? Where do your beliefs and values come from? How does your world affect who you are?
- What motivates you? How do you approach challenges? How do you grow through those challenges?
- What place do others have in your life? Who do you care about? How do you balance your needs and theirs?

Answering these questions about themselves gives learners a foundation for understanding and evaluating the messages they encounter, while becoming more effective advocates for their own views. When we know what's important to us and how we learn and work best, we are closer to achieving our goals.

Mindset

Fostering a critical and active attitude towards reading, and a reflective goal driven approach towards writing are essential components of the mindset we aim to develop. When reading learners should always be asking questions, looking for connections, and understanding what is being said, how it is being said, and why it is being said. When writing, they should know how to tell a story, how to be persuasive, and how to engage their readers. In the process, they learn how to be thoughtful critics, and how to use constructive criticism to improve their own writing.

Essential Skills

Don't Read on Autopilot Think when reading, take notes, mark up the book as you follow along.

Actively follow the Clues Use strategies to make sense of texts you don't quite understand; how to use clues about the meaning of parts, or about the larger context.

Start Writing Breaking down and organizing your ideas makes it easier to start; brainstorming, personal writing, and practices supporting regular and confident writing.

Say Something What are you trying to communicate? Stating your claim clearly, both for yourself and for your reader, is the first step to making your argument.

Find the Facts Finding strong, clear evidence is one of the best ways to convince an audience, even if they start out with their own contrary opinions.

Get Organized Organize your writing around its purpose and argument; the better organized something is, the easier it will be for readers to understand its points.

Do Over Editing can make almost any writing better. Learn strategies and discipline for effective revision.

Make It Shine Having something to say is not enough. To be understood, it also matters how you say it.

Find the Motive Discern the author's objectives or inclinations, explicitly stated or otherwise. Look for effects and evidence of the intent or bias in the text.

Find Fault While it's easy to be swayed by good writing, with the right tools you can look beneath the surface and critically assess what an author is actually saying.

Standards Addressed

CCSS ELA Practice and Content

RL/RI.9-10.1- 9; R.9-10.4,6; L.9-10.1- 6; W.9-10.1- 10; SL.9-10.1

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Featured Quests



A Million Ways (Part II)

Why do you hate what you hate?

📌 books, film, television, music, art, psychology

6 Activities

1 Artifact



Their Lives in Pictures

Why do people choose dangerous jobs? Is our responsibility to our families and communities bigger than our dedication to a greater cause?

📌 photography, photojournalism, sacrifice, news, reporting

6 Activities

2 Artifacts



Hot 100

What factors influence a person's feelings about songs or albums? Can music be objectively judged?

📌 music, songs, lyrics, likes, dislikes, good

6 Activities

1 Artifact



Henrietta Lacks: The Tumor That Gives Back

How can one person's sacrifice change history? Is the obligation to the family more important than the obligation to the greater good?

📌 HeLa, self-sacrifice, Interview

7 Activities

1 Artifact



Poetry in the Everyday

How can you use observations from your day-to-day life to get inspired and create poetry?

📌 poetry, writing, creativity

9 Activities

1 Artifact

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