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In The Headlines...

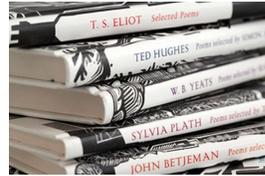
Helping Your Child Become a Reader

The U.S. Department of Education prepared the linked brochure. It provides a direct presentation of the arguments supporting literacy in the home.

Most of us, however, recognize reading's value. The more useful feature of the brochure is the assorted links to resources aimed at parents and families who want to their children to recognize its value as well.

Upcoming Language Arts Unit: Descriptive Language

The **Descriptive Language learning map** displays that students will **analyze the way authors can use figurative language, form, and sound to express themselves in poetry and prose.**



Few students jump for joy at the thought of reading poetry. In fact, I confessed that the middle-school-version of Mr. Angelini was not at all a fan. Yet, I also tell the students one that most will fall in love with descriptive language over the next weeks.



We'll read poetry that is meant to entertain. Other poems will relate lessons about life.

Similar to the literature unit, we'll examine how poems are "understood" at three levels:

1. Comprehending the literal meaning of the text
2. Interpreting the figurative language, sound, and form
3. Analyzing the message and impact of the work.

Throughout the unit, students will perform "close reading" as demanded by the [Common Core State Standards](#). The power of descriptive writing—in poetry and prose—is that it lets each of us dive deep into a text and construct our own meaning.

Students will learn a host of vocabulary (you can do [this pre-assessment](#) with your child to see how you both fare), but the unit's real strength is when we move to apply the terms to texts.

To close the unit, students will examine narrative poetry. A project will require students to select a narrative poem and present a full literary analysis that addresses all three levels of understanding.

Assessment Results: Common Assessments and 4Sights

The **Unit Four** test on **Interpreting Literature** is a challenging exam. Students must know **plot, conflict, setting, point of view, characters, and theme.** In addition to understanding the terms, students must be able to analyze a short story using the **literary elements.**

For all that, students performed admirably. The average score was an 83%, just in the B range. I was pleased with the well-written responses to open-ended questions.

Students will get the tests back on Monday. As usual, we will complete a self-reflection. Parents need to sign the [Test Analysis Form](#) for students to return by Wednes-

day. Re-tests will then take place later in the week. The details for re-testing are on the second page.

We will also spend time on Monday reflecting on the third 4Sight. Since this is the final test before the PSSAs, it holds valuable data. [Parents will have to sign the 4Sight Tracking Sheet](#) that helps students analyze their own results.

Please examine it with your child to look for patterns on how they perform on certain standards.



As the year progresses, students must score better to reach passing levels. Between the first and

second test, we increased the cut-off for proficient from 13 to 16 (out of 29 possible). For the third test, it was raised to 18. **Despite these high expectations, over 90% of my students are still in the proficient and advanced range.**

Students need to show growth in order for us to continue to predict that they will be prepared for the challenging new Common Core-based tests in April.

You can view an overall picture of student data by looking at [this "Fast Facts" document](#).



Inspirational Quote

Knowledge has to be improved, challenged, and increased constantly, or it vanishes.

- Peter Drucker



Upcoming Dates

Monday, March 2nd:
Islam Beliefs Quiz
Tuesday, March 3rd:
Islam Beliefs Essay Due
Wednesday, March 4th:
U4LA Test Forms Due
Friday, March 6th:
End of the 2nd Trimester
(All Make-Up Work Due)
Monday, March 9th:
Two-Hour Delay for Students

Stay on the Scores!

Use [this link](#) to access the Parent Portal of MMS to stay on top of student grades. Students have access as well, so they should always know their scores. MMS is "Live" - meaning as soon as I put the grades in, you can see them!

Email response to...
angelinia@conewago.k12.pa.us



Have you been on the AngelHub yet today?
[Check in now!](#)

Colonials



Upcoming Events

Football Pancake Breakfast

The NOMS and NOHS Football teams will host their annual Pancake Breakfast fundraiser. Tickets cost \$6 in advance and \$8 at the door. Guests are served by the football players. You can find more information at [this website](#). Mr. Angelini will be there promptly at 8:00am!



PTO Meeting

The NOMS PTO is hard at work to support the students of New Oxford. With a new Superintendent and a bold vision for upcoming years, the group is looking to step up its involvement in the school. Consider joining the PTO at their next meeting on Thursday, March 19th at 6:30pm. The crew meets in the NOMS Library.

February Student of the Month



The most recent Student of the Month decision for Team Discovery was heated. Though February can be a challenging month for some students, we have also seen several students shine. After comparing sample work, discussing class behavior, and considering student attitudes, we decided that [Sophie Brakefield](#) deserves to be recognized.

[Sophie](#) is a model of the OxSTRONG habits. She is polite, prompt, and prepared. She demonstrates perseverance and participation. Ms. Martin cited Sophie's leadership within her teams during math class. During group-work and team tests, Sophie is a positive role model for her classmates.

In language arts, [Sophie](#) shows great wisdom in employing resources to help improve her writing. When needed, [Sophie](#) is willing to revise to complete tasks well (and not just quickly). She has further demonstrated strong study skills. [Sophie](#) uses tools such as study guides and online practice tasks to help prepare herself for success.

Congratulations [Sophie](#)!



New Oxford Middle School

"Doing the Right Things, at the Right Time, for the Right Reasons!"

WIT Lesson Update: Diving Deep Into Religious Conflict

In social studies, students are learning the basics of **Islam**. At the beginning of the year, we learned about **the impact religion has on conflicts** happening around the globe. To extend our thinking, students examined **the role of religion in the civil war in Syria**.

We began by reviewing the reasons schools teach religion, using a quote from the **U.S. Supreme Court** for guidance. Next, students reviewed key **facts about Islam**.



In many ways, the lesson was a chance for students to apply learning from the classroom. From there, students reviewed non-fiction reading skills by practicing **text features** and **con-text clues**.

You can explore the [PowerPoint Presentation](#) to see the pre-reading activities.

Once students' skills were refreshed, we then engaged with the **reading**. Since the article came from a high-level source, I put in tasks to help kids interact with the text. By highlighting and marking, students put "close reading" skills to work.

Afterwards, students answered PSSA-style questions (on the PowerPoint) aligned to the standard. We then wrote a structured Text-Dependent Analysis (page two of the reading) to deepen their thinking and practice writing skills.