

## Fourth Grade Language Arts Curriculum

The Grade 4 curriculum modules are designed to address the Common Core State Standards in ELA. The overarching focus for all modules is on building students' literacy skills as they develop knowledge about the world.

### Structure of a Module

- Each module provides eight weeks of instruction, broken into three shorter units. Each module includes seven assessments:
  - Six unit-level assessments that almost always are on-demand: students' independent work on a reading, writing, speaking, or listening task.
  - One final performance task that is a more supported project, often involving research.

### **Module 1 Title: Native Americans in New York**

Focus: Becoming a Close Reader and Writing to Learn

Students learn about Native Americans in New York, with a specific focus on the Iroquois Confederacy. Students read short sections of the Iroquois Constitution, or "Great Law of Peace," learn to write explanatory paragraphs, study a novel and write a literary analysis, and then connect the past to the present by studying data designed to help them think about places in their school where agreements like those found in the Iroquois Constitution would benefit the school community. As the final performance task, students collaborate to write a class constitution, drawing on the texts they have read.

### **Module 2A Title: Interdependent Roles in Colonial Times**

Focus: Researching to Build Knowledge and Teaching Others

Students learn about what life was like in Colonial America, focusing on how colonists were interdependent on one another. Students read about various colonial trades (such as the wheelwright, the cooper, etc.), with an emphasis on making inferences, summarizing informational texts and conducting basic research. As the final performance task, students synthesize information from multiple sources as they write a research-based narrative that vividly describes an event in a colonist's life.

### **Module 2B Title: Animal Defense Mechanisms**

Focus: Researching to Build Knowledge and Teaching Others

Students build proficiency in writing an informative piece, examining the defense mechanisms of one specific animal about which they build expertise. Students also build proficiency in writing a narrative piece about this animal. They build background knowledge on general animal defenses through close readings of several informational texts and use a science journal

to make observations and synthesize information as they research an expert animal in preparation to write about this animal. As the final performance task students write an informative piece describing their animal, the threats to its survival, and how it is equipped to deal with them, and a choose-your-own narrative piece about their animal that incorporates their research.

### **Module 3A Title: Simple Machines: Force and Motion**

Focus: Considering Perspectives and Supporting Opinions

Students build knowledge of simple machines and how they affect force, effort, and work. Students read basic background text and perform Readers Theater about simple machines (written for classroom use). They read an extended scientific text, *Simple Machines: Forces in Action* (870L), focusing on analyzing scientific concepts. Students develop expertise about specific simple machines (inclined plane, levers, pulleys, etc.), read and conduct science experiments using simple machines, and synthesize their findings by writing scientific conclusion statements. They conduct a “simple machine inventory” at school and home. As a final performance task, students write an editorial to an engineering magazine expressing an opinion about which simple machine benefits people most in their everyday lives.

### **Module 3B Title: The American Revolution**

Focus: Considering Perspectives and Supporting Opinions

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### **Module 4 Title: Susan B. Anthony, the Suffrage Movement and the Importance of Voting**

Focus: Gathering Evidence and Speaking to Others

Students learn about voting rights and responsibilities. They first focus on the women’s suffrage movement and the leadership of New Yorker Susan B. Anthony, reading firsthand and secondhand accounts of her arrest and trial. Then students read *The Hope Chest* (historical fiction set in the weeks before the passage of the 19th Amendment) examining the theme of leaders and their impact on others. Finally, students connect the theme of leadership to their own lives by reading about the importance of voting in modern times. As a final performance task, students draft and then create a public service announcement (using Voice Thread technology) to state their opinion to high school seniors about why voting is important.