Joyful Learning in the English Language Arts
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Five principles to joyful learning in the English Language Arts (Fresch, 2014):
1. Enthusiasm is contagious – if teachers are excited, students will be too
2. Content counts – make it engaging and hands-on
3. Humans are storytellers – hook students’ interest
4. Challenge students appropriately – help them develop their passion for learning
5. Invite students to continue the conversation – let them take ownership

Research that supports joyful learning:
→ Novelty helps us remember;
→ What we thought about during the learning experience influences what we remember;
→ Feeling empowered helps our minds work best

Consider the “cotton broccoli” view!

Whenever possible, VOW to engage students by asking them to utilize multiple areas of the Language Arts:
1. Visual skills (viewing, visual representation)
2. Oral skills (listening, speaking)
3. Written skills (reading, writing)

Night at the Museum

Artifact descriptor guide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job at school:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My artifact is:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to me because:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade(s) at school:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our artifact is:</td>
</tr>
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<td>It is important to us because:</td>
</tr>
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Tour guide:

What artifact surprised you?
Which was your favorite?
What new thing did you learn about someone in our school community?
Who in our school community shares an interest with your family?

Easel – Language of origin _______________; meaning ________________

Other _____ words:

Berserk – Language of origin _______________; meaning ________________

Other _____ words:

Auburn – Language of origin _______________; meaning ________________

Auburn’s relatives:

Salary – Language of origin _______________; meaning ________________

Salary’s relatives:

Tragedy – Language of origin _______________; meaning ________________

Tragedy’s relatives:

**News at Six**

**Headline News Reporter:**
1. Choose a headline.
2. Jot down keys ideas you would deliver when reporting the story!
   - Alpaca herd gallops through Stevens Point
   - New bicycle lane being added to Stanley Street
   - Hamster runs wild in McDill Elementary School
   - Boys from P.J. Jacobs Junior High School to compete in jump rope contest
   - Stevens Point Area Senior High girl navigates 20 miles of Wisconsin River in homemade canoe

**Weather Reporter:**
1. Place weather conditions on the map.
2. Jot down the words and phrases to describe what’s happening.
3. Use present tense (“it is”) and future tense (“it will”).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Windy</th>
<th>Rain</th>
<th>Partly Cloudy</th>
<th>Tornado</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Windy | Rain | Partly Cloudy | Tornado
Sports Editor:
1. Choose a sports headline.
2. Jot down the words and phrases to describe what happened.
   → Reds – Indians game goes for 11 innings
   → NASCAR has a new champion and this is what he drives!
   → Crazy shot wins basketball game in last two seconds
   → Squirrels interrupt Green Bay Packers game
   → Missing field hockey stick found!
Ad Writer:
1. Write an ad for any of the following items (make us want to buy it!).
2. You may only use 50 words:
   → Grandma’s old tea set
   → Your brother or sister’s marble collection
   → Your cousin’s drum set
   → Your neighbor’s dog

Science Editor:
1. Read the story.
2. Circle the key ideas.
3. Sum up this story in 5 or less sentences.
4. Give it a headline!

New discoveries offer a bit [of] hope that some form of life existed [on Mars] in the past—and perhaps is still there in the present. Methane gas and water have been found on the Red Planet. The presence of both suggests at least the possibility of life.

According to a new report in the journal Science, the Mars rover Curiosity has detected spikes of methane in the Martian atmosphere. This gas is also found in Earth’s atmosphere, and comes from animal and plant life. If there’s methane in Mars’s atmosphere, where is it coming from? Scientists aren’t sure. But it marks a big change. In September 2013, Curiosity found almost no traces of methane in the Martian air. Just weeks later, however, the rover picked up a whiff of the gas. “It took us by surprise,” says Christopher Webster of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, in California. He is the lead scientist for the instrument on the rover that detected the methane. Over the next two months, Webster says, “Every time we looked there was methane.” Six weeks later, however, the methane was gone, and hasn’t been sniffed since. The scientists don’t know whether the methane spikes are caused by some form of biological matter or by the geology of the planet.

The discovery of water on Mars is nothing new. For decades, scientists have had evidence that it flowed across the surface of the planet billions of years ago. But according to another new report in Science, while the surface water on Mars seems to be long gone, there’s a lot more of it left than most people realize. But where there is (or was) water, there could be (or could have been) life. (Edited from Time for Kids, December 17, 2014)

Inquiry With a Purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. What should I do?</th>
<th>2. What questions do you have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Where shall we begin our research?</td>
<td>4. Then what?</td>
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</table>

Wisconsin Reading Conference 2015

Fresch
References


Small group discussion
Consider the five principles to joyful learning in the English Language Arts (Fresch, 2014)

HWhat specific content do you teach that could use a “new vision?”

HWhat do your students currently see/feel/experience in the lesson(s) about this content?

HHow could you “dismount” and try a different approach? Think about the following:

→ Enthusiasm is contagious – What element of surprise could you incorporate?

→ Content counts – what can you do to make it engaging and hands-on?

→ Humans are storytellers – what stories or activities could you use to hook students’ interest? What elements of the “social process” of writing and reading can you tap into?

→ Challenge students appropriately – how might you differentiate the activities for this content?

→ Invite students to continue the conversation – what part of this allows students to take ownership?

Walt Disney was afraid of mice…but look where his vision took him!