GROWING the Language Arts

This cross-disciplinary approach to the garden will cultivate your students’ creativity and communication skills. Through garden-inspired literature and an exploration of Cheekwood’s grounds, students will discover personal expression, poetry, prose, and presentation. Designed to highlight the 2009-2010 Tennessee Standards, this tour will help you dig deeper into your classroom curriculum.
**Cultivating Writers**

To prepare your students for their *Growing the Language Arts* adventure at Cheekwood, read a selection of poems, stories, or books aloud in class. Before you read, review the basic literary elements outlined below with your students. Afterwards, discuss these elements in relation to your chosen story or poem.

**Style**
Review the various forms of text: poetry, short stories, books, novels, plays, etc. Discuss the style of the book or poem that you read aloud.

**Subject**
Ask students to listen for the theme of the written work. Who or what is the story or poem about?

**Point of View**
Remind your class that someone is always between the reader and the action of the story. Ask your class, “Who is telling the story?” and “How it is told?”.

**Language**
Discuss figurative language and ask students to listen for examples of similes, metaphors, rhythm, personification, hyperbole, etc.

**Setting, Plot & Characters**
Define these basic literary elements with the class. Where does the story/poem take place? What is the action in text? Who are the individuals that interact in the story?

### Suggested Books & Poems:
There are many wonderful nature and garden-inspired literary works for all grades and reading levels. Use your favorite or try one from the list below.

**Grades 1 - 3**

**Poetry**
- *Twilight Comes Twice*
  By Ralph Fletcher
- *The Giving Tree*
  By Shel Silverstein
- *A Child’s Calendar*
  By John Updike

**Books**
- *Cucumber Soup*
  By Vickie Leigh Krudwig
- *City Green*
  By DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan
- *The Maybe Garden*
  By Kimberly Burke-Weiner

**Grades 4 - 6**

**Poetry**
- *Old Elm Speaks*
  By Kristine O’Connell George
- *Color Me A Rhyme*
  By Jane Yolen
- *Cactus Poems*
  By Frank Asch

**Books**
- *Seedfolks*
  By Paul Fleischman
- *My Side of the Mountain*
  By Jean Craighead George
- *Where the Lilies Bloom*
  By Vera & Bill Cleaver
Garden Guidelines

- Visitors are asked to stay on the paths for the protection of the plant collections and for their own safety.
- Please do not touch the plants or artwork throughout the garden.
- Many varieties of wildlife make their homes at Cheekwood. Please do not disturb these valuable members of our ecosystem.
- Speak in a normal 'inside' voice. Please do not disturb other guests in the gardens or Museum by yelling or shouting to others.
- Stay with your group. Cheekwood is large, and it is easy to get distracted.

Optional Tour Route

Cheekwood's many gardens offer endless inspiration for the blossoming young student. Several specific locations are suggested for each activity, but you are welcome to explore other areas. Choose to follow the optional tour route outlined on the map above and highlighted on each activity page or strike out on your own adventure through the garden.
Observation in Bloom

Suggested Locations:
Robertson Ellis Color Garden or Herb Study Garden

Objective:
This activity will encourage students to develop diverse ways of describing garden objects and events and to recognize that they each have a unique way of expressing themselves. Students will expand their vocabulary as they translate their observations into words and write about their time in the garden.

1. Observations & Reactions

Before handing out the Word Harvest Worksheet, review the difference between observations and feelings. Ask your students, “What does it mean to observe something?” Explain that to observe something is to study it with all of your senses. Continue the discussion by asking, “How are observations different from reactions and feelings?” Observations are based on external factors, things you can see, hear, touch, or smell. Feelings and reactions depend on internal factors, how something makes you feel or act.

Give students a few minutes to quietly observe something in the garden that captures their attention. (For example: a tree, flower, or the garden as a whole) Have them use the Word Harvest Worksheet to record what they sense about it in the Observations column. If it is not possible to use all the senses (i.e. tasting), suggest they use their imagination. Ask students to record the feelings that arise from their observations in the Reactions column. After everyone is finished, encourage students to share their answers out loud.

2. Sow A Story

Using the ‘seeds’ they recorded on the Word Harvest Worksheet, students are ready to sow a story all their own. Pass out the provided worksheet and have students begin their descriptive writing. Remind students to think about: purpose for writing, point of view, topic sentences, and descriptive language.

As they write, give students the option of illustrating their words. Drawing and writing are a good combination, as each will help students discover more details and see things more sharply.
Find a spot in the garden to sit and quietly observe what you see. Choose one thing that captures your attention or focus on the garden as a whole. Write down what you sense in the Observations column and your feelings in the Reactions column. Remember to use your imagination for “touch” and “taste”.

**Observations**

What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell, feel, and even taste?

*Example:*
soft green grass

**Reactions**

How does it make you feel? What is your reaction?

*Example:*
rolling down the hill, having a picnic

**Draw It!**

Draw the details that you see in the garden below. Try to illustrate the observations and reactions that you wrote in the charts above.
Authors have been inspired by nature for centuries. Now it is your turn! Use the words and ideas you wrote down on your Word Harvest Worksheet as the ‘seeds’ to sow your own nature story.

- Choose an idea, image, or feeling from your trip to the garden that you want to communicate.
- Start with a word or phrase from your worksheet that you like best and make that your topic.
- Use your other observations and reactions from the worksheet to support your topic.

**My title is:**

---

Now that you have written your first draft of your descriptive piece, you are ready to revise. Read your writing to yourself or share it with a friend. Did you include enough detail? Were you specific in your descriptions? Do you like what you've written? Is there something you think could be better?

At school, make any needed changes or edits and write the final draft of your story.
ACTIVITY #2

‘Plant’ A Poem

Suggested Locations:
The Robinson Family Water Garden & Japanese Garden

Objective:
Students will expand their vocabulary by exploring the relationships between nouns, adjectives, and synonyms. They will discover two different poetic styles as they transform their words and ideas into descriptive, creative, and rhythmic poems.

1. Word Warm-Ups
   The Word Warm-Up Worksheet will help your students get their creative juices flowing and prepare them to write their own poems. Before passing out the worksheet, go through the exercises together as a class. Choose one object and have your students describe it in detail, name a few synonyms, and brainstorm for rhyming words. If needed, this is also a great opportunity to review the definitions and functions of nouns, adjectives, and synonyms.

2. Plant A Poem
   After completing the Word Warm-Up activities, your students will be ready to experiment with their own poems. The style of poetry that you would like your class to create is completely up to you. If you choose to focus on rhyming poems, it is a great opportunity to explore rhythm and the different rhyming patterns.

3. A Haiku for You
   The Japanese Garden is the perfect environment to introduce students to the haiku. This type of poetry may be especially helpful for those students that need more structure. Ask students to use their observations and ideas to create a haiku on the provided worksheet. Because haikus are based on syllables, it may be helpful to ‘clap out’ the example haiku together as a class.

Robinson Family Water Garden

The original design of the Cheekwood gardens included three large ponds that served as reservoirs for the many water features as well as the water supply for the house. Now, the same ponds are planted with hardy water plants and shade loving perennials. Let the sound of cascading water and the sight of the marine flora and fauna help your students develop a love for poetry!

Japanese Garden

Shomu-en, the pine-mist garden, reflects the Japanese culture’s love for nature and simplicity. Designed as a place of quiet and meditation, it is a refuge from the outside world. Every component of the garden has symbolic meaning. The lantern is a symbol of enlightenment, and the gate always stands open as a sign of welcome. A great body of water, symbolized by raked gravel, and a quietly flowing stream add to the peaceful scene. While uniquely suited for teaching the haiku, the serenity of this garden can inspire a number of different poetic forms.
Just like you would stretch before going for a run or draw a sketch before starting a painting, you need to warm-up before writing poetry. Complete the activities below to get your creative juices flowing!

1. Learning to Look

Choose three objects and write down everything you notice about them. Pay attention to the details – look for shape, color, texture, sound, size, feel, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Silly Synonyms

Look at the words you used to describe the three objects above. Now think of synonyms, or words that have the same meaning, for those adjectives. This list will be helpful when you are trying to describe objects in your poems!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>SYNONYM</th>
<th>SYNONYM</th>
<th>SYNONYM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Rhyme Time

Think about the words on your lists of objects, adjectives, and synonyms. List words that rhyme with them below. To get started, try thinking of one-syllable words first. Then move on to words with two or more syllables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use the space below to turn your words and ideas into descriptive and creative poems. When you write a poem, you are making a picture out of words. After you’ve finished your ‘word picture’, add drawings around the border to complete the illustration.

The title of my poem is:

..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
....................................................
Haiku is a classical form of Japanese poetry. It became popular in Japan over 300 years ago, in the 17th Century.

**How to Haiku**

A haiku has three lines and does not rhyme. The first and third lines have five syllables. The second line has seven syllables, making the combination 5-7-5. Haikus are written in simple language and usually express: a response to nature, a place, a time or season, an emotion or feeling, or a contrast or conflict.

**Write a Haiku**

- Line 1: Write words with a total of 5 syllables.
- Line 2: Write words with a total of 7 syllables.
- Line 3: Write words with a total of 5 syllables.

**Example:**

The butterfly is
Fluttering through the bamboo
As wind blows gently
ACTIVITY #3

A Forest of Fiction

Suggested Locations:
The Carell Woodland Sculpture Trail or Carell Dogwood Garden

Objective:
Students will flex their imaginations as they sow the seeds for a fictional story. In addition to point of view, the basic elements of character, setting, and plot will be highlighted through the use of graphic organizers.

Take the class to one of the spots indicated on the map. Students should each choose a tree for inspiration as they work on their project.

1. A New Point of View
   To highlight the importance of point of view as well as encourage a little creativity, ask students to write their story from the standpoint of a tree. If you choose, this is also an opportunity to discuss point of view, such as 1st person or 2nd person and involved or uninvolved.

2. Story Branches
   Before using the Story Branches Worksheet, review the basic elements of a story.
   - Character: Remind students that while the tree is the narrator, it does not have to be the main character of the story.
   - Setting: Because this is an exercise in imaginative writing, the setting can be any number of options. From a forest or park to downtown Nashville or the Moon, the setting options are limitless. Encourage students to think outside of the box.
   - Plot: Determining the plot can be one of the most difficult aspects of fictional writing. The ‘Planting’ the Plot Worksheet is designed to help students choose the path for their story.

3. Planting the Plot
   Before moving to the Planting the Plot Worksheet, define and review the basic elements of a plot. While there are endless plot variations, this activity is based on the general view that the story begins with rising action as the character encounters conflict. This conflict reaches a climax or high point, after which the problem is resolved, and the falling action leads quickly to the resolution and the story’s end. Encourage students to think through the steps between the conflict and solution as they complete their worksheet.

4. Growing A Story
   After returning to the classroom, students can continue to refine the ‘seeds’ of their story to create a rough draft and, ultimately, their final copy.
What does it take to create a great story? Just as there are many key elements to a garden – soil, seeds, and sun to name a few – there are also important parts to a good fiction writing. Each story should have a setting, characters, and a plot. Use this worksheet to brainstorm the branches that will become your tree story!

The title of my story will be: ____________________________
Using the characters, setting, conflict and solution from your Story Branches Worksheet, you can now begin to choose the action of your story. Plan your plot by filling in the details below.

- **Conflict Introduction**
- **Rising Action**
- **Climax**
- **Resolution**

*a forest of fiction*
We hope that you and your class enjoyed the Growing the Language Arts adventure at Cheekwood. When you return to your school, there are further opportunities to continue the projects started in the garden. If time permits, try the following exercises with your students in the classroom.

1. **Edit**
   Editing is a vital component of creative writing. Students should review the stories and poems that they wrote at Cheekwood carefully, checking for spelling, punctuation, and grammar mistakes. Encourage students to partner together and read their works out loud, focusing on word flow and rhythm.

2. **Finalize**
   Once all the edits have been made, students are ready to write their final copies. Get creative with your class by challenging them to present their writing in a fun and unique way. From binding their works as books to molding their words into shapes and pictures, there are numerous inventive ways to add more ‘creativity’ to their writing.

3. **Present**
   Ask your students to present their finished works in front of an audience. Whether with fellow students in the classroom or a group of parents and peers at Cheekwood, this activity will surely build confidence and communication skills in your students.
This self-guided tour was designed to satisfy the Tennessee State Performance Standards for the Language Arts. The following Grade Level Expectations are specifically highlighted through the activities and content of the tour:

### Grade Level Expectations

**Standard 1 - Language**
- Demonstrate control of basic Standard English usage, mechanics, spelling, and sentence structure.
- Employ a variety of strategies to decode words and expand vocabulary.
- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies and resources to determine the definition, pronunciation, and usage of words and phrases.
- Demonstrate knowledge of Standard English sentence structure.

**Standard 2 - Communication**
- Develop critical listening skills essential for comprehension, problem solving, and task completion.
- Develop critical speaking skills essential for effective communication.

**Standard 3 - Writing**
- Compose simple stories with a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Employ a variety of strategies to generate story ideas.
- Begin to develop topic sentences.
- Write in a variety of modes for a variety of audiences and purposes.
- Employ a variety of prewriting strategies.
- Organize ideas into topic paragraph with complete, coherent sentences.
- Revise first drafts for clearer meaning, correct capitalization, and punctuation.
- Evaluate own and others’ writing.
- Write in a variety of modes and genres (e.g., narration, description, personal expression, imaginative writing, response to literature, response to subject matter content.)
- Know and apply the steps of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.
- Organize ideas into an essay with an introduction, developing paragraphs, conclusion, and appropriate transitions.

**Standard 8 - Literature**
- Explore and experience various literary genres.
- Employ a variety of reading comprehension strategies.
- Identify basic literary elements.
- Learn basic characteristics of literary genres.
- Explore basic literary terms (e.g., setting, point of view, simile, metaphor, rhythm).
- Know and understand the basic characteristics of the genres studied.
- Experience various literary genres, including fiction and nonfiction, poetry, drama, chapter books, biography/autobiography, short stories, folk tales, myths, science fiction.

---

**References and Resources**

Gardening with Kids  
National Gardening Association  
www.kidsgardening.com

Scholastic, Inc.  
Writing with Writers  
http://teacher.scholastic.com