

Relating Shurley English to the Six Traits of Writing

Writing experts have classified the best writing traits into six main areas. These Six Traits, as they are commonly called, are intrinsically taught in the Shurley curriculum.

Shurley English provides the building blocks that enable students to write in any genre. Shurley English writing reinforces the six-trait concepts and helps students develop into competent and confident writers.

The first trait, **IDEAS**, is reinforced by Shurley English when students

- ▶ learn new vocabulary and analogies to expand writing ideas.
- ▶ use prewriting maps to categorize ideas under specific topics.
- ▶ distinguish between supporting and non-supporting information.
- ▶ write Practice and Revised Sentences, using original ideas.
- ▶ utilize Discovery Time to explore various themes and ideas across different content areas.

The second trait, **ORGANIZATION**, is reinforced by Shurley English when students

- ▶ recite jingles to learn definitions of the parts of speech.
- ▶ use the Question and Answer Flow to classify, analyze, and expand the parts of a sentence.
- ▶ write Practice and Revised Sentences to make the connection between grammar and writing.
- ▶ identify and use the four kinds of sentences: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory.
- ▶ identify and write sentences, using different sentence patterns.
- ▶ utilize prewriting organizers for a variety of writing purposes.
- ▶ apply different writing formats to suit the writing purpose, including narrative, expository, persuasive, descriptive, book reviews, and poetry.
- ▶ use different writing genres to write across all content areas for various purposes and audiences.
- ▶ use outlines and note cards to organize ideas from the spoken or written word.

The third trait, **VOICE**, is reinforced by Shurley English when students

- ▶ learn and apply word meaning from their study of vocabulary and analogies.
- ▶ write Practice and Revised Sentences to focus on more specific vocabulary, stronger verbs, expressive adjectives, powerful adverbs, and prepositional phrases.
- ▶ write across all the genres taught in the curriculum, including creative, expository, narrative, persuasive, descriptive, comparison-contrast, how-to, poetry, tall tales, letter writing, and research papers.
- ▶ apply transitional words, phrases, and literary devices, such as simile, metaphor, personification, and onomatopoeia, etc.

The fourth trait, **WORD CHOICE**, is reinforced by Shurley English when students

- ▶ learn vocabulary and analogies through a developmentally paced study to improve word choices.
- ▶ study the etymology (Levels 7–8) of words to utilize word roots, bases, and affixes in writing.
- ▶ select transition words to enhance paragraphs and essays.
- ▶ write Practice and Revised Sentences, which require not only excellent revision skills, but also require critical thought about WHY specific revisions are made.

The fifth trait, **SENTENCE FLUENCY**, is reinforced by Shurley English when students

- ▶ recite the Question and Answer Flow, which promotes excellent sentence fluency, exposes different sentence patterns, incorporates all four types of sentences, and helps students distinguish complete sentences from fragments.
- ▶ write Practice and Revised Sentences that focus on revision skills and help them make critical decisions about the best way to say what they need to say.
- ▶ learn how and when to use the patterns and progressions of simple, compound, and complex sentences.

The sixth trait, **CONVENTIONS**, is reinforced by Shurley English when students

- ▶ utilize the Shurley reference and evaluation systems to focus on the use of specific conventions in writing.
- ▶ use specific conventions in revising and editing: subject/verb agreement, possessives, contractions, homonyms, negatives, verb tenses, point of view, pronoun usage, degrees of adjectives, etc.
- ▶ write Practice and Revised Sentences to analyze the purpose of specific types of capitalization and punctuation.
- ▶ participate in Skill Builders to promote and analyze the specific components of sentences and to engage in speaking activities.