

Reading Together shares the vision that all students must have the opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need to pursue life's goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society. Our research-based methodology and content help students grow in literacy to become proficient, confident and motivated readers. By using the tutoring bond as a foundation, Reading Together makes productive use of the emerging literacy abilities children bring to school, and encourages the building of a community of learners.

All language arts – reading, writing, listening and speaking – are employed in each lesson. Because Reading Together focuses on fluency and comprehension, several IRA standards, such as computer use, spelling and grammar, fall outside the scope of the program. Reading Together, however, helps promote the achievement of all IRA standards by exposing students to quality text, thoughtful analysis and discussion, and feedback from concerned and caring mentors.

- 1** ***Students read a wide range of texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment.*** Reading Together exposes students to a wide range of texts, including informational and procedural, that support content in language arts, social studies and science. By exploring a variety of genres, students discover the richness of literature. (Book lists available upon request.) Students are encouraged to read with a purpose, whether for acquiring information, managing in society and the workplace, or for personal fulfillment.
- 2** ***Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.*** Reading Together passages and trade books offer students a wide range of human experiences from a variety of cultures, exposing students to new times, places and ideas. Students activate their background knowledge of self, text and world, then question and discuss text to further their understanding of human experience. Tutees are encouraged to ask themselves how they would feel if they were in the situations described in the text.
- 3** ***Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.*** Tutors and tutees learn strategies for intentional thinking, enhancing their understanding of text. Research-based strategies include: activating prior knowledge, predicting, retelling, modeled reading, guided oral reading, questioning, inferring, etc. (List of strategies and their research base available upon request.) Strategies are used repeatedly and consistently until tutees can apply them independently and in real-life situations. Students also are asked to evaluate text and share opinions of the books and passages read.
- 4** ***Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.*** After each tutorial, students communicate their understanding of the story through a related activity. Students build the reading-writing connection through writing, making books, storyboards, graphic organizers, semantic webs, time and weight measurement, etc. By writing, they reflect on what they have learned, helping them synthesize, organize, clarify and refine their thoughts. Students enrich their oral communication through high-level play, dramatic representations and discussion.

- 5** *Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.* Writing is an important element of every Reading Together lesson. Under the guidance of their tutors, tutees learn to communicate effectively through activities such as answering questions, story completion, writing poetry, etc. They learn to express opinions by writing book evaluation cards, letters and thank-you notes. They share their opinions further as they make dramatic presentations of books and characters to their peers.
- 6** *Students apply knowledge of language structure, language convention, media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.* Reading Together is designed to develop fluency and comprehension strategies. Tutor and tutee use oral and written language as tools to comprehend text. The conventions of language are observed and reinforced, but are not paramount to the mission of the program.
- 7** *Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.* Tutors and tutees are encouraged to generate ideas and questions throughout the prescriptive lessons, and during the writing activities at the end of most lessons. In Reading Together Grades Three and Middle School, tutees are required to synthesize information over several lessons and share their analysis with their tutors and peers. Data is derived from the trade books and passages used.
- 8** *Students use a variety of technological and information resources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.* In the final phase of Reading Together, tutees learn to use the media center and select books on their own. Tutor and tutee discuss their purposes for reading, and share the information they learned by reading independently. The use of computers and videos is outside the scope of this program.
- 9** *Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.* Reading Together trade books and passages value and encourage diversity by reflecting a wide variety of cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions and social roles. Caring tutors are role models for respecting literacy and oral abilities as they interact with their tutees.
- 10** *Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.* Reading Together is successful with intermediate and above English language learners. Cooperative learning engages language minority students in all classroom activities. Tutoring is an effective way to help these students make a transition, as research shows that pairing ELL students with peers is the ideal first step in developing oral literacy. Parent information and some book titles are available in Spanish.
- 11** *Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.* Reading Together promotes literacy communities with its rich communication and small-group environment. Strategies such as warm-up chats, questioning and sharing opinions allow children to partake in literacy as a social activity—exchanging trade books, discussing characters, reading favorite passages aloud and sharing opinions.
- 12** *Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes.* All language arts—speaking, reading, writing and listening—are incorporated into every Reading Together lesson. In partnership with their tutors, tutees learn to regard reading as an enjoyable activity as well as a way to acquire knowledge.