

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO STUDY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Literacy used to mean the ability to read and write. A person was considered to be literate if he/she possessed these skills at an 8th grade level. Not so anymore. People can be computer literate, mathematically literate, musically literate, and on and on. As the information explosion has rolled on exponentially since 1980, literacy means far more than just reading and writing.

English Language Arts includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In an age where the ability to listen, as opposed to merely hearing, is becoming a rare skill, it is imperative that we prepare our students to be good listeners. Success in any career field requires sharp listening skills.

Additionally, to be successful in any job market requires that one be able to speak clearly, with a well-developed vocabulary. “It ain’t here yet” is not what any business owner, supervisor, or manager wants to hear.

Reading is more important than ever. While some occupations require a very specialized ability to read (reading code, scientific data, legal terminology, medical information, etc.), every adult in our society needs to be able to read and comprehend at an acceptable level.

Similarly, writing competently is essential to being a successful member of our society. Although social media has adapted a “dumbed down” code of writing, we still must possess the ability to write clearly with strong and focused intention.

When I asked my classes why it is important to study English language arts, the middle school kids cited such reasons as to learn how to spell properly, understand vocabulary, read without stuttering, and write clearly.

The 9th and 10th graders added being able to organize information, write descriptively, integrate information from various resources, and present research coherently.

After a lively discussion on the importance of English language arts with my juniors and seniors, they came to the conclusion that “without English language arts, we would never get anywhere in life. It is how the world works. If you can’t read and write, listen carefully and speak plainly, we wouldn’t get anywhere in life.” To which I can only say “Amen!”

---- Mrs. Carrie Langston, 6-12 ELA Instructor