

SMA Literacy and Language Initiatives`
2011-2012

SMA has five literacy and language initiatives, in ALL classes.

The first ---**READING**. Once again, reading is a focus of the school. All students are required to carry an independent reading book, of their choice, at all times. Students that do not have an independent reading book with them will be issued a classroom infraction. The media center, or Major Donehew, the literacy coach, are always available to help a student find a book. When there are a few minutes before a class begins, or before a class ends, students will be asked to take out their independent book and read. It is strongly suggested that **all cadets read a minimum of 15 pages a day**. Research indicates that the only way to improve reading abilities---is to read. Fifteen pages a day is the minimum suggested in order for improvement to be noticed. Of course, we would encourage reading more than 15 pages daily.

The second initiative is **WRITING**. All content area classes will be doing, at least, weekly writing. Writing will consist of short answer responses, long answer responses, essays, research projects, and/or quick writes. Teachers are encouraged to use the FCAT holistic method and scale for scoring writing in order for students to become familiar with what good writing looks like for high scores on FCAT. Good writing for FCAT is GOOD writing in general.

The third initiative is **VOCABULARY**. Since one can only learn and understand the world around them through language, vocabulary is a vital component of academic success. Teachers have received professional development in identifying tier one, tier two, and tier three vocabulary words; and will be focusing on tier two and tier three words within their content areas. Tier two words are words that students are familiar with but that take on different meanings within different content areas. Tier three words are content specific technical terms. Additionally, SMA will have a Word-of-the-Week (WOW). Teachers will display the WOW in their classrooms and will also require students to use the WOW in various ways throughout the week.

The fourth initiative is **CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS**. Critical thinking transcends subject area divisions; it examines elements of thought implicit in all reasoning. Critical thinking employs a set of skills and questioning strategies that help guide students to an enhanced clarity and better comprehension.

Lastly, the fifth initiative is **READING BY NUMBERS**. The reference and research section of the FCAT has traditionally been the most difficult section for students to improve upon or pass. Students need the ability to locate information, organize, synthesize, evaluate information from a variety of sources and interpret the information given within a text, graph or picture. Teachers will be incorporating these skills into all content area classes.

If you have any questions about the initiatives or if you would like me to help suggest reading materials, please contact Pamela Donehew, Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach, via email or phone at SMA.