

SECONDARY ELA NEWSLETTER

January & February 2025

Hello, ELA Colleagues!

There are many wonderful opportunities for students and educators with fast-approaching deadlines that are shared within this newsletter. I hope you are able to take advantage of them.

Naomi Watkins
USBE Secondary ELA Specialist
naomi.watkins@schools.utah.gov



I'M CURRENTLY ENJOYING:

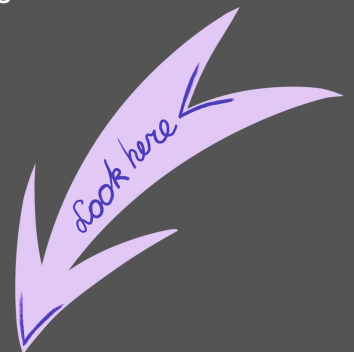
- *James* by Percival Everett
- *Somebody Somewhere* on Max



P-12 ELA STANDARDS RESOURCES

[Link](#) to resource folder which includes:

- [Secondary ELA Webinars](#) from 2023-24 - **you can still view them!**
- **NEW!!!** [2024-25 Secondary ELA Webinars](#) recordings & resources
- [Best Practices in Secondary ELA](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Reading Strand Standards Breakdown](#)
- [Speech Progression Chart](#)
- [Slides](#) from summer 2023 professional learning
- Resources shared by other districts (e.g., vertical alignment)
- [ACT Crosswalk](#)
- [Grades 6 - 12 Core Guides](#)
- **NEW!!!** [Formative Assessment Process Toolkit](#)
- **NEW!!!** [Bringing Grammar and Language to Life Through Evidence-Based Practices](#) (USBE guidance document written by Dr. Deborah Dean)





SECONDARY ELA WEBINAR



Sustainable Writing Assessment for ELA Teachers



FEBRUARY 10, 2025

04.00 PM – 05.00 PM MDT

Rubrics? Single Point Grading? Portfolios? Self-Assessment? Peer Assessment? Mastery Grading? Ungrading? (Gasp!) Writing assessment includes a dizzying array of options and leaves lots of questions about what works. Whether your purpose is to measure student growth and/or to respond to student writing in meaningful ways, let's discuss how to make these choices without trading your nights and weekends.



DR. AMBER JENSEN,
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL UTAH
WRITING PROJECT, & ELA
TEACHER, MEGAN MCOMBER

[REGISTER NOW](#)



SECONDARY ELA NEWSLETTER

January & February 2025

2024–25 SECONDARY ELA PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WEBINAR SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Presenter
Thurs, Oct. 10	Writer's Craft	Dr. Deborah Dean
Wed, Nov. 13	Effective Writing Assignments	Dr. Amber Jensen & ELA educator
Mon, Dec. 16	AI in Secondary ELA	Matt Winters
Wed, Jan. 15	Explicit Writing Instruction	Dr. Naomi Watkins
Mon, Feb. 10	Effective Writing Assessments	Dr. Amber Jensen & Megan Wight
Thurs, March 13	Morphology	Katie Wilburn, Univ. of Virginia
Thurs, April 24	Poetry	Jason Stephenson, Red Dirt Poetry
Tues, May 6	Reflection Writing	Dr. Amber Jensen & ELA educator

If you are interested in receiving 0.5 USBE credits for your participation in the 2024–25 Secondary ELA Professional Learning Webinars, you will need to enroll in the Canvas course to complete the following tasks:

- Attend or view 7 webinars
- Complete reflections for the 7 webinars you attend or view
- Provide evidence of implementation of at least one instructional practice with students or working with educators

There will be a total of 8 webinars. You select the 7 webinars that are most of interest or applicable to you. More information about what these tasks entail and how to submit this work will be provided within the Canvas course. You will have until December 31, 2025 to complete all of the required work to receive credit.



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SECONDARY ELA NEWSLETTER

January & February 2025



BETTER DAYS



ART CONTEST FOR GRADES 4 – 12

CASH & OTHER PRIZES

SUBMIT BY JANUARY 31, 2025

STUDENT ART CONTEST

Utah women make history, but they're often missing from our classrooms. We need your help to change that!

Create an original piece of art about a woman in Utah history who made a difference in your community.

- Compose an artist statement (written or video) explaining the connection between your art and the woman you featured.
- Winners in each age category (grades 4-6, 7-8, 9-12) will receive cash awards and prizes from local Utah businesses!
- Winning artwork will be displayed at the Utah State Capitol for the Utah Women Making History student event on March 4, 2025 and in a special Women's History Month exhibit at Mestizo Coffeehouse in SLC.

DEADLINE: JANUARY 31, 2025

Details and submission link:

bit.ly/3LchQgx

Questions? Email us at:

info@betterdays2020.org

SECONDARY ELA NEWSLETTER

January & February 2025



REGISTER NOW

february

7

**UCTE NORTHERN
CONFERENCE**

AT THE MEGAPLEX IN SANDY
(JORDAN COMMONS)

March

10

**UCTE SOUTHERN
CONFERENCE**

AT SOUTHERN UTAH
UNIVERSITY





The Central Utah Writing Project
invites teachers of all subjects and grade levels
to apply for participation at the annual

SUMMER INSTITUTE



Join our family of teacher
leaders and writers in a
rich and rewarding
personal and professional
development experience
for three weeks this
summer!

APPLY BY FEB 15!

2025 DATES

Pre-Institute Events

March TBD | 4:30 – 8:30 pm
April 26 | 8:30–3:30 pm

Summer Institute

8:30 am – 3:30 pm daily

June 9 – June 12

June 16 – June 18

June 23 – June 26

APPLY HERE

- Collaborate with K-16 teachers
- Share and expand teaching and writing strategies
- Work on your own personal and professional writing in writing groups
- Earn 6 BYU credits (optional)

utahteacherswrite.org

SECONDARY ELA NEWSLETTER

January & February 2025



presents

STORY CON

At Operation Literacy, 501c3 Nonprofit, we join with educators in our efforts to inspire young writers and readers and empower them to tell their own unique stories. For years, we've brought you Teen and Tween Author Boot Camp as some of the nation's largest writing conferences for kids. To build upon this program and ensure greater impact and access for your students, we've merged the two conferences, adding programming tracks for educators and general audiences to form **StoryCon, held February 21-22, 2025, at the Salt Palace Convention Center.**

At StoryCon your students will:

- Connect - with our powerful community of aspiring and bestselling authors. (See our full list of headliners at Storycon.org)
- Create - by learning skills that empower students to tell their authentic stories in our amazing list of Teen Classes
- Become - the author, playwright, screenwriter, game developer, journalist, or storyteller they've always wanted to be.

While students learn and celebrate story, **teachers and librarians may attend a two-day educator conference track.** This includes classes and keynotes taught by internationally bestselling authors, networking opportunities, a vast expo hall of bookish and education-focused vendors, giveaways, and up to 5 SUU graduate credits for attendees.

Access and equity, especially for students from Title 1 populations, is at the core of our mission. To make StoryCon affordable for students of all backgrounds, we've accumulated **a vast array of funding resources** including scholarships, school group discounts with free educator passes, pre-written funding application letters, and more.

Additionally, we have the following printable and digital assets:

- A printable TEEN poster for hanging in the classroom
- A printable TWEEN poster for hanging in the classroom
- TEEN ¼-sheet flyers for printing and distribution
- TWEEN ¼-sheet flyers for printing and distribution
- Full digital StoryCon Educator Guide



Contact Heather Clark for questions: cco@operationliteracy.org



The Grand Theatre

School Outreach

Jesus Christ Superstar

February 22 - March 22, 2025
Musical | Thursday – Saturday

This rock opera tells the story of the last seven days of Jesus' life, detailing friendship, loyalty, and ultimate betrayal.



Dreamgirls

May 21 - June 14, 2025
Musical | Thursday – Saturday

Three talented young Black women go from seedy shows to stardom, where they face love, betrayal, and the dangers of ambition.



.....

The Grand Theatre is eager to bring theatre to each new generation, so we offer free tickets to 7-12th grade students, in addition to up to 3 half-price tickets to each student per show. Don't miss the (free!) opportunity to see local theatre by local artists! Contact Ellie Otis at eotis2@slcc.edu to set up a free showing for students!



March 21-22, 2025 | Brigham Young University

Annual Conference on Tutoring and Teaching Writing

**invites K-12 and college
peer tutors and writing center directors,
writing teachers and administrators,
and NWP teacher consultants**
to collaborate and learn
about writing and
tutoring



see the conference website for more
information and registration links

SSWCA.ORG/CONFERENCE



Conference Snapshot

Friday, March 21

8:30 am - 3:30 pm

SSWCA Strand: Peer Tutoring and Writing Center Programs

In-person and virtual sessions on peer tutoring and writing centers given by

- middle-school peer tutors
- high-school peer tutors
- secondary writing center directors
- university partners
- district and school leaders

University writing center tutor and director panel for K-12 attendees

Keynote address by Dr. Tom Deans, University of Connecticut professor

In-person registration includes

Breakfast and lunch

Utah's famous "dirty soda" and a soft pretzel snack bar



Saturday, March 22

8:30 am - 3:30 pm

NWP Strand: Teaching Writers and Becoming Writers

In-person sessions and workshops on teaching and becoming writers given by NWP teacher consultants

In-person and virtual sessions on writing center implementation given by K-12 and college tutors and directors

Workshops on writing in college and for college admission for K-12 students

Keynote address by Dr. Anne Whitney, Penn State University professor

In-person registration includes

Breakfast and lunch

Embodied writing experiences (yoga, hiking, bookmaking, walk and write)



SSWCA.ORG/CONFERENCE

SECONDARY ELA NEWSLETTER

January & February 2025

The Statue of Liberty is shown in a light blue/white color against a dark blue background. A large, stylized American flag is overlaid on the image, with the top portion being blue and the bottom portion being red. The text "AMERICA'S Field Trip" is written in white, with "AMERICA'S" in a bold, sans-serif font and "Field Trip" in a large, italicized serif font.

AMERICA'S *Field Trip*

AMERICA 250 CELEBRATION

In 2026, the United States will mark our Semiquincentennial: the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Today's young people are the leaders, innovators, and thinkers who will shape the next 250 years — and it's important their voices are heard as we commemorate this historic milestone.

America's Field Trip is a contest that invites students across the country in grades 3–12 to be part of America's 250th anniversary by sharing their perspectives on what America means to them — with the opportunity to earn an unforgettable field trip experience at some of the nation's most iconic historic and cultural landmarks. Students are asked to submit writing or original artwork in response to the contest's prompt: "What does America mean to you?"

Submissions will be accepted until Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. ET.



LEARN MORE

SECONDARY ELA NEWSLETTER

January & February 2025

TEACHING SHAKESPEARE WITH UTAH SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Have you ever felt completely lost trying to understand Shakespeare? Maybe you've sat through a performance feeling bewildered, or stumbled over the language while reading one of his plays. You're not alone! Many people find Shakespeare's works challenging, but the problem isn't Shakespeare himself – it's how he's often taught. The Utah Shakespeare Festival believes everyone can enjoy and appreciate the Bard, and their "Teaching Shakespeare" course can help you unlock the magic for yourself and your students. This immersive, four-day course, offered in beautiful Cedar City, Utah, provides practical and engaging strategies to make Shakespeare accessible and exciting.

What can you expect?

- Earn college credit: This course offers three university credits, enhancing your professional development.
- Interactive learning: Engage in hands-on activities and exercises that demystify Shakespeare's language and bring his works to life.
- Behind-the-scenes access: Go beyond the stage with tours and interactions with Festival company members, gaining unique insights into the world of Shakespearean theater.
- Ready-to-use resources: Receive lesson plans, handouts, and assessments designed for immediate classroom application.
- Experience the magic: Your course fee includes tickets to four Utah Shakespeare Festival plays, allowing you to experience Shakespeare's genius firsthand.

If you're looking to deepen your understanding of Shakespeare and discover innovative ways to share his brilliance with your students, this course is for you. Summer in Cedar City is truly enchanting, offering a perfect escape to learn, grow, and be inspired.

Interested in other professional development opportunities at the Utah Shakespeare Festival? Visit the [USF Education webpage](#), email educationprograms@bard.org for general information, or contact "Teaching Shakespeare" instructor Shawnda Moss directly at bsmossfam@gmail.com with specific questions.

LEARN MORE



SECONDARY ELA NEWSLETTER

January & February 2025

UTAH FILM FESTIVAL WORKSHOPS

Calling all content creators and future filmmakers! Tumbleweeds workshops give kids the tools to tell great stories and up their filmmaking game! Our workshops will feature filmmaking and camera use, editing, green screen, stop motion animation, and MORE! These hands-on workshops will have your kids making awesome content they can share with their friends, family and beyond.

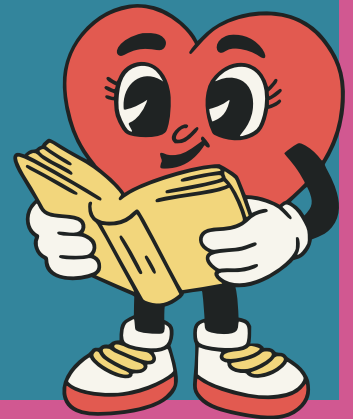
LEARN MORE



EVIDENCE-BASED SECONDARY LITERACY PRACTICES

These 4 reports from the What Works Clearinghouse outline and detail recommendations based on empirical evidence, so yes, we do have a "Science of Reading" in the secondary space:

- [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom & Intervention Practices](#)
- [Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9](#)
- [Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively](#)
- [Guides & Checklist for a School Leader's Walkthrough During Literacy Instruction in Grades 4-12](#)



BOOK LOVE
F O U N D A T I O N

The [Book Love Foundation](#) seeks teachers who demonstrate a passion for promoting a hunger for books. These teachers recognize the diversity of every class of readers, and they challenge each student to build an independent reading life of increasing depth and joy. Teachers who apply for a Book Love Foundation grant must demonstrate that they are already committed to the support of readers through current classroom practices such as maintaining access to a range of books, conferring regularly and purposefully to understand and support students' changing needs, and sharing their own contagious passion for reading inside and outside of their classroom. Read about the [requirements](#) for a grant, and then apply for either a classroom library or book clubs.

TeachingBooks is...

a dynamic, PreK–12 a dynamic collection of resources that strives to deepen understanding, engagement and joy of the books they are reading.. With hundreds of thousands of engaging video, audio, and online resources, TeachingBooks brings to life the books that are enjoyed in your community.

Access Directions

1. Go to www.TeachingBooks.net/Utah
2. Sign in with your school email address
3. Start exploring and enjoy!

To explore without logging in, visit <https://onlinelibrary.uen.org/>



For assistance, please email accounts@TeachingBooks.net or call 216-573-6886 (press 2).

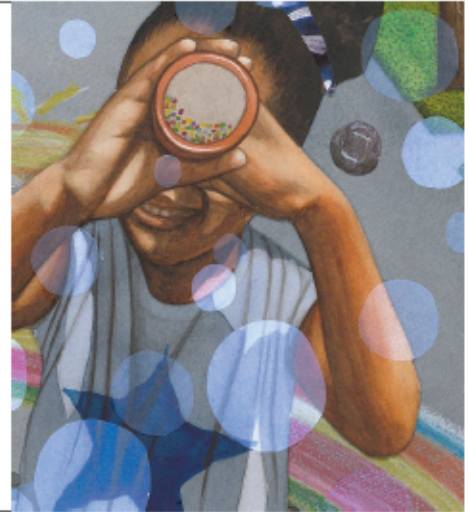


Image courtesy of Bryan Collier

Exploration Suggestions



Search for resources about a book, author/illustrator, or subject, using the search box on the top of the screen.



Explore the resources, including Meet-the-Author interviews, Read-along Book Recordings, Leveled Lesson Plans, Video Book Trailers, Literature-based Vocabulary Lists, and more.



Browse the books, authors, lists, series, awards, and collections. Highlights include...

- Grade Level, Genre, and Cultural Area exploration.
- Diverse Books Collection
- Meet-the-Author and Illustrator Original Resource Collection



Share tools provide immediate access to the book and author resources of your choice. No sign-in required.

Distribute via...

- QR Code Printables
- Any Digital Platform



Technological Highlights



Any Device

including phones, tablets, and computers, deliver literacy connections to everyone in your community.



Home Screen Button

for Apple and Android devices includes scanning a barcode to immediately have resources for the book in your hand!



Integration

into Clever, Canvas, Classlink, Google Classroom, and more.



Sharing tools

so that teachers, students, administrators, and families can seamlessly learn about and access materials via email, text, QR code flyers, and more.

Utah TeachingBooks Webinars

Visit <https://www.uen.org/uosl/webinar-archive.shtml> to access current webinars and trainings.

Activities & Lessons



Book Readings



Book Trailers



Games



TeachingBooks®
Where books come to life

Author Interviews



Want to learn more?

TeachingBooks.net/QuickStart



Questions?

800-596-0710

accounts@TeachingBooks.net

TeachingBooks.net/Help

READY TO ADVANCE YOUR CAREER

Master's of Education (M.Ed) in Literacy Education AND Secondary Literacy Interventionist Endorsement

Literacy Education at the University of Utah develops literacy professionals and leaders in a variety of educational settings

Contact Us:
Program Director, Dr. Claire Son
literacy@utah.edu

Program Overview

Our program provides research-based professional education, dedicated to develop exemplary practitioners and leaders in the field of literacy. We are committed to support research-informed teaching practices to ensure literacy learning for all students.

Students can take individual endorsement courses, which can count toward a master's degree in literacy education (33 credits).



Secondary Literacy Interventionist Endorsement

We offer USBE approved courses to fulfill all ten competency areas for Secondary Literacy Interventionist Endorsement.

- (Area 1) EDPS 6711-030 Foundations of Literacy
- (Area 2) EDPS 6631-030 Assessment and Intervention
- (Area 3) EDPS 6126-030 Content Area Literacy Instruction
- (Areas 4,5,6) EDPS 6713-030 Literacy Acquisition
- (Area 7) EDPS 6840-030 Vocabulary
- (Area 8) EDPS 6714-030 Comprehension
- (Area 9) EDPS 6130-030 Writing
- (Area 10) EDPS 6124-030 Children & Adolescent Literature in the School

A Different Kind of Program

Our courses are fully online with summer and evening classes to accommodate a working schedule of professionals, including:

- PreK-12 educators
- Literacy specialists
- Reading coaches
- School media/library specialists
- Special education teachers
- School administrators

Our core courses are offered at a significantly reduced rate for educators. Merit-based scholarships are available for master's students.

With rolling admission, you can start your study during any semester.





Earn your Secondary Literacy Interventionist endorsement

The School of Teacher Education and Leadership is now offering 5 courses that will count towards a Secondary Literacy Interventionist endorsement through the Utah State Board of Education. Join us and finish your endorsement in just 3 semesters! This sequence of endorsement courses can be started during any semester and will be offered yearly. For more information on literacy courses at USU, contact Dr. Marla Robertson: marla.robertson@usu.edu.

All courses will be offered either online or through synchronous broadcast over Zoom. Students are not required to attend through a USU campus.

Courses (3 credits each):

- TEAL 5380 Effective Writing Instruction
- TEAL 5320 Foundations of Literacy*
- TEAL 6350 Literacy Assessment and Intervention
- TEAL 6340 Adolescent Literacy Development and Engagement
- TEAL 6310 Multi-Component Literacy Instruction and Interventions

**If you have completed LETRS training, you can be exempt from taking TEAL 5320.*

These courses can also count towards a Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction at USU. To learn more about graduate programs visit cehs.usu.edu/teal/graduate/master-of-ed or contact Dr. Max Longhurst: max.longhurst@usu.edu.

To view the Secondary Literacy Interventionist endorsement application scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/SIL-endorsementapplication



Emma Eccles Jones
College of Education & Human Services
UtahStateUniversity

