The William and Mary Language Arts curriculum is a researched based program of study that emphasizes all four strands of language arts instruction: Literature, writing, oral communication, and language study. The units were developed using appropriate curriculum dimensions for high-ability students but also use design features of curriculum reform. They employ the following:

- **Meaning-based:** depth over breadth, concepts over facts, real world issues
- **Higher order thinking:** treating thinking skills as integral to all content areas
- **Intra- and interdisciplinary connections:** using overarching concepts, issues, and themes as the organizers for making connections between areas of study
- **Metacognition:** reflection on one's own learning processes
- **Habits of mind:** cultivating modes of thinking that resemble professionals in various fields
- **Active learning and problem solving:** putting students in charge of their own learning
- **Concept-based:** organizing activities around broad, interdisciplinary concept that promotes deep thinking
- **Multiculturalism and globalism:** recognizing that other countries and cultures have made significant contributions to the progress of humankind in many areas. Use of more equitable materials.
- **Technology relevant:** using various new technologies as tools
- **Lerner outcome of significance:** setting expectations for learning
- **Authentic assessment:** tapping into what students know as a result of meaningful instruction.

The objectives of the language arts units are for students’ to develop skills in literary analysis, persuasive writing, linguistic competency, and oral communication; as well as to strengthen students' reasoning skills and understanding of the concept of change.

The units engage students in exploring carefully selected, challenging works of literature from various times, cultures, and genres; and they encourage students to reflect on their readings through writing and discussion.

The units also provide numerous opportunities for students to explore interdisciplinary connections to the language arts and to conduct research around issues relevant to their own lives.
The Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM), a theoretical model of curriculum design for gifted learners emphasizes the integration of advanced content, higher order thinking processes, and issues as the foundation for curriculum development. Gifted students are precocious learners so advanced content provides opportunities for new learning. Gifted learners have complex thinking capacities, so providing a curriculum that helps students reason through situations and think critically enhances engagement and creative production. Many gifted students thrive on making connections, so the focus on overarching issues, themes, and concepts elevates their understanding of the real world and how it works.

The development of exemplary curriculum frameworks and units of study for classroom use with high ability learners has been an emphasis at the Center for Gifted Education since its inception. Center materials are grounded in the Integrated Curriculum Model (VanTassel-Baska, 1986, 1995, 2002), which is designed to respond to gifted learners’ characteristics of precocity, intensity, and complexity through its three dimensions of advanced content, higher level processes and product development, and interdisciplinary concepts, issues, and themes. The Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) is comprised of three interrelated dimensions. **ICM Features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching Concepts</th>
<th>Advanced Content</th>
<th>Process-Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>In-depth</td>
<td>Elements of Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>Advanced Reading</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patterns</td>
<td>Primary Sources</td>
<td>Problem-based Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause and Effect</td>
<td>Advanced Skills</td>
<td>Inquiry Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Learner Characteristics and Corresponding Emphases in the Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE LEARNER</th>
<th>THE CURRICULUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Precocity</strong></td>
<td>Advanced content (Provides opportunities for new learning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Advanced development in some curricular area)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intensity</strong></td>
<td>Process/product depth considerations (Enhances engagement and creative production; allows utilization of information in a generative way, concept over facts, real world issues)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Capacity to focus and concentrate for long periods of time)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Complexity</strong></td>
<td>Issues/concepts/themes/ideas across domains of learning (Allows students to make connections across areas and work at a deep level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Can engage in high level and abstract thinking)</td>
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</tbody>
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### Content Goals:

1. **To develop analytical and interpretive skills in literature.** *Application: Writing Model, Literature Webs, Response Journals, specific study of vocabulary, and discussion.*
2. **To develop persuasive writing skills:** *Application: Argument writing model, writing process, Concept Webs to organize their thinking prior to writing, peer, teacher, and self-evaluation*
3. **To develop linguistic competency:** *Vocabulary Webs are used to study etymology, meaning, and relationships between words in literature. They promote word power and facilitate vocabulary analysis. Revision and analysis of written work to demonstrate and refine effective use of language.*
4. **To develop listening and oral communication skills:** *Application: Inquiry-based discussion model promotes active listening and expression of ideas. Oral presentation opportunities enhance communication and listening skills.*

### Process Goal:

5. **To develop reasoning skills:** *Application: Reasoning used in questioning and discussions, research, and argumentation in writing with the elements of purpose, evidence, and conclusions stressed.*

### Concept Goal:

6. **To develop understanding of the concept of change.** *This concept is a set of generalizations from extensive reading on the concept in philosophy, sociology, and science.*

### The Language Arts Teaching Strategies:

- **Questioning:** Organized to address understanding of the Elements of Reasoning and literary response and interpretation.
- **Discussion:** A major emphasis is placed on discussion. Thinking is promoted best through discourse.
- **Metacognition:** Treated through research projects provides for planning, monitoring and assessing theory progress. Response journals allow students to reflect on their learning.
- **Concept teaching:** Systematically encouraged, with generalizations being posted.
- **Higher level thinking:** The use of Paul’s Reasoning Model provides a way to focus on higher level thinking.
- **Communication skills:** Stressed importance of written and oral communication skills.