

Grade 8 – English Language Arts

Common Core State Standards

Eighth grade students interact extensively with literature and informational text, using evidence from selections to analyze narrative techniques, points of view, and an author’s premise. They identify how the structure of a text contributes to its meaning and style. Students write well-developed arguments, explanations and narratives.

Reading: Literature / Fiction

The student can:

- cite evidence from the text that strongly supports inferences and analysis of the text’s meaning.
- analyze the development of a text’s theme, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.
- provide an objective summary of a story, drama, or poem.
- analyze how specific lines of dialogue or incidents in a story/drama propel the action or provoke a decision.
- determine figurative & connotative meaning of words; analyze the impact of word choice on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- compare/contrast the structure of two texts; analyze how each text’s structure impacts its meaning & style.
- analyze how varied points of view among characters and the reader/audience create suspense or humor.
- analyze how closely a filmed or live production of a story/drama stays true to the text.
- examine how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, events, or character types from myths, traditional stories or religious works such as the Bible.
- proficiently read and comprehend stories, drama and poetry of appropriate complexity for grade 8.

Reading: Informational Text / Nonfiction

The student can:

- cite evidence from the text that strongly supports inferences and analysis of the text’s meaning.
- analyze the development of a text’s central idea, including its relationship to supporting ideas.
- provide an objective summary of a nonfiction text.
- analyze how the text shows connections or distinctions among individuals, ideas, or events.
- determine the meanings of technical words; analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning & tone.
- analyze the structure of a particular paragraph, including the role of specific sentences in refining a concept.
- determine an author’s point of view; analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic.
- evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text; assess whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize irrelevant evidence.
- analyze two or more texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic; identify where the texts disagree on facts or on interpretation.
- proficiently read and comprehend literary nonfiction of appropriate complexity for grade 8.

Writing

The student can:

- write arguments which (a) introduce claim(s), acknowledge and address opposing claims, and logically organize reasons and evidence, (b) support claim(s) or counterarguments with logical reasons and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources, (c) use words, phrases and clauses to create cohesion and clarify relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence, (d) establish & maintain a formal style, and (e) provide a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument.

Writing (*continued*)

The student can:

- write informative/explanatory texts which (a) introduce a topic/thesis statement clearly, preview what is to follow, and organize information using strategies such as comparison/contrast, cause/effect, formatting (e.g., headings), graphics, and multimedia, (b) develop the topic with relevant facts, concrete details, definitions, quotations, and examples, (c) use transition words to create cohesion and clarify relationships among ideas, (d) use precise, subject-specific language, (e) establish & maintain a formal style, and (f) provide a logical conclusion that follows from and supports the information presented.
- write real or imagined narratives which (a) engage the reader by establishing a context and point of view, introducing a narrator and/or characters, and organizing an event sequence that unfolds naturally, (b) use narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, description, pacing) to develop events, experiences and/or characters, (c) use a variety of transition words to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, (d) use precise words, descriptive details and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences, and (e) provide a conclusion that follows from & reflects on the narrated events/experiences.
- develop & strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting or trying a new approach, focusing on how well task, purpose and audience have been addressed.
- use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to collaborate with others.
- conduct research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) using several sources.
- gather relevant information from multiple sources (print & digital); assess the credibility & accuracy of each source, and quote/paraphrase from sources while avoiding plagiarism; follow a standard format for citation.
- draw evidence from texts to support analysis, reflection and research; apply the Grade 8 Reading standards to fiction and literary nonfiction (e.g., evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text).

Speaking and Listening

The student can:

- prepare beforehand & engage effectively in collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, adult led).
- follow rules for collegial discussions, acknowledging new information and building on others' ideas.
- pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to questions with relevant observations and ideas.
- analyze the main ideas & supporting details in diverse media and evaluate the motives behind the address.
- determine a speaker's argument and specific claims; evaluate the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance & sufficiency of the evidence; identify irrelevant evidence.
- plan and present a narrative that (a) establishes context and a point of view, (b) presents a logical sequence, (c) uses narrative techniques, (d) uses varied transitions, and (e) provides a reflective conclusion.
- use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation to present claims and findings.
- include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to strengthen claims and add interest.
- adapt speech to a variety of contexts, demonstrating command of formal English when appropriate.

Language

The student can:

- explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and in specific sentences.
- form and use verbs in the active and passive voice to achieve particular effects.
- form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional and subjunctive mood.
- recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.
- use correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, including punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break and an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
- use context, Greek & Latin roots and affixes, and reference materials to determine the meaning of words.
- interpret figures of speech (e.g., irony, puns) in context.
- distinguish among the connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., willful, bullheaded, firm).