

# **Pequannock Township School District**

## **Curriculum Syllabus**

### **ELA / Grade 8**

#### **Course Description:**

The eighth grade English curriculum covers multiple facets of language arts. Students will work to further develop existing communication skills through the study of literature, reading strategies, process writing, and presentation skills. The reading program will include the use of a literature anthology, class novels, informational pieces, genre studies, poetry, supplementary materials, and self-selected readings. While reading novels, short stories and poetry students will build a list of literary terms and examine such literary elements as plot, setting, point of view, character, and theme. Students will also develop higher level thinking skills by comparing and contrasting, analyzing cause and effect, and evaluating. Self-assessment and peer critique will help to establish essential “give and take” of successful writing and reading. As well, writing and reading selections will be examined closely for author and genre characteristics. All of these skills will be taught using a variety of methods including class discussion, cooperative group activities, differentiation of instruction, and individual assignments designed to challenge each student. In each unit, students will complete writing assignments or creative projects to apply these new skills and literary terms. In addition, each unit will generate a vocabulary list for students to explore words in new ways. Finally, students will study verbal communication, practice public speaking skills, interact with 21st Century technology skills, and continue to learn organizational and study habits as they prepare for high school and beyond.

# Course Standards:

## Progress Indicators for Reading Literature

### Key Ideas and Details

RL.8.1. Cite the textual evidence and make relevant connections that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.8.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.8.3. Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

### Craft and Structure

RL.8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

RL.8.5. Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

RL.8.6. Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL.8.7. Evaluate the choices made by the directors or actors by analyzing the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script.

RL.8.8. (Not applicable to literature)

RL.8.9. Analyze and reflect on (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

**Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**

RL.8.10. By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above, scaffolding as needed.

**Progress Indicators for Reading Informational Text****Key Ideas and Details**

RI.8.1. Cite the textual evidence and make relevant connections that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.8.2. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.8.3. Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

**Craft and Structure**

RI.8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

RI.8.5. Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences, to develop and to refine a key concept.

RI.8.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

RI.8.7. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

RI.8.8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

RI.8.9. Analyze and reflect on (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

**Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**

RI.8.10. By the end of the year read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above, with scaffolding as needed.

**Progress Indicators for Writing**

**Text Types and Purposes**

W.8.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

A. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

D. Establish and maintain a formal style.

E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

A. Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia).

B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

C. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

E. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.

F. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

W.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

C. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.

D. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

E. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

### **Production and Distribution of Writing**

W.8.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.8.5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

W.8.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

### **Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

W.8.7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

W.8.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

W.8.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- A. Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new”).
- B. Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced”).

### **Range of Writing**

W.8.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### **Progress Indicators for Speaking and Listening**

SL.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

A. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

B. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

C. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others’ questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

D. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

SL.8.2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

SL.8.3. Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

### **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

SL.8.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SL.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

SL.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

### **Progress Indicators for Language**

#### **Conventions of Standard English**

L.8.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- A. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.
- B. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.
- C. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
- D. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.

L.8.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- A. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
- B. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
- C. Spell correctly.

#### **Knowledge of Language**

L.8.3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

- A. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).

#### **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

L.8.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

- B. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
- C. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- D. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.8.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.
- B. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
- C. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

L.8.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

## Scope and Sequence

### **Unit 1: Coming of Age** (Trimester 1)

Students will begin this Unit with the exploration of the Vietnam War. Students will then investigate the theme of “Coming of Age” through the dissection and comparison of summer reading novel *Wednesday Wars* and class readings of *Okay for Now*. Honors classes will read *Peace Like a River*.

### **Unit 2: Journey to Self Discovery** (Trimester 2 )

Students will explore self discovery while reading selected informational texts on loneliness and psychology and focusing on the literary novel *The Pigman*. Students will accurately cite textual evidence from both literary and nonfiction texts to support their arguments. Students will determine central ideas and details of non-fiction text. A focus will be on compare and contrast writing.

### **Unit 3: Voices of Courage/Choice Reading Unit** (Trimesters 2 and 3 )

Unit three focuses on reading historical texts, beginning with an examination of World War II. Students will explore this time period through examination of the graphic novels *Maus I and II*. Students will then select a choice book in the historical fiction or historical nonfiction genres. Students will meet in collaborative groups to analyze and discuss their historical readings. Students will examine

the importance of historical literature as well as the impact of historical events and time periods both in the past as well as in the present. The focal writing piece in this unit is the research simulation task essay in which students will use a variety of sources to support an argument.

**Unit 4: Allegory** (Trimester 3) :

Students will explore the idea of an allegorical story. In this unit, students will read *The Time Machine*, by H.G. Wells, and will examine and compare novels, short stories, and poems, with Honors students reading *Watership Down* by Richard Adams and studying Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*. Students will examine story elements and how they are interrelated. Students will use QAR to develop and identify questions and use those questions when participating in literature circles.

**Unit 4: Drama** (Trimester 3):

Unit 5 will focus on drama. Students will focus on reading and understanding *Twelfth Night*, by William Shakespeare. Students will use a variety of supplemental materials to make sense of the text and story. Students will also examine texts such as "Sorry, Wrong Number" in which students will examine how an author builds suspense. "The Veldt," and "The Monkey's Paw" from *Elements of Literature*. Students will continue to use QAR to develop and identify questions and use those questions when participating in literature circles.

## Assessments

Evaluation of student achievement in this course will be based on the following:

All units will include evaluation tools such as short answer responses, graphic organizers, multiple choice assessments, projects, and formal writing pieces. Major assessment (summative) per unit are as follows:

**Unit 1:** Literary analysis essay

**Unit 2:** Compare and contrast essay

**Unit 3:** Research simulation essay (Argumentative) and narrative extension

**Unit 4:** Narrative writing/narrative extension

# Curriculum Resources

## Anchor Programs/Teacher Materials

Novels and major texts:

*Wednesday Wars*, Gary Schmidt

*Okay for Now*, Gary Schmidt

*Peace Like a River*, Leif Enger

*The Pigman*, Paul Zindel

*Maus I and II*, Art Spiegelman

*The Book Thief*, Markus Zusak

*Watership Down*, Richard Adams

*Twelfth Night*, William Shakespeare

\*Selected Shakespearean sonnets

\*Selected nonfiction, informational, short stories, and poetry from [commonlit.org](http://commonlit.org), [readworks.org](http://readworks.org), [newsela.com](http://newsela.com), and the *Elements of Literature* textbook

Short stories:

“Bury the Dead,” Irwin Shaw (one act play)

“The Necklace,” Guy de Maupassant

“Miss Brill,” Katherine Mansfield

“The Use of Force,” William Carlos Williams

“The Rocking-Horse Winner,” D.H. Lawrence

“The Veldt,” Ray Bradbury

“Sorry, Wrong Number,” Lucille Fletcher

“The Allegory of the Cave,” Plato

“The Interlopers,” Saki

# Home and School Connection

The following are suggestions and/or resources that will help parents support their children:

- [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)
- <https://www.khanacademy.org/signup?isparent=1>
- <https://newsela.com/join/#/teach-or-read>
- <https://www.readingrockets.org/>
- <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading.html>
- <https://www.thechildrensbookreview.com/>
- <https://www.chompchomp.com/menu.htm>
- <https://www.parenttoolkit.com/>
- <https://www.quill.org/>