



**Cecil County Public Schools**  
**Division of Education Services**  
*Serving learners, families, and the community.*



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## **Grade 8 English Language Arts**

**Purpose of the Document:** This document provides an overview of this course. The information provided below is designed to support students, parents, and the school community to understand the major content of the course and the standards used to design it. To support the needs of students, teachers may make adjustments as needed. Please contact your child’s teacher and/or review the course Schoology page with your child for additional information.

**Program Mission:** The Secondary English Language Arts Department will empower all students with the agency to navigate a diverse and technologically fluid society, articulate informed viewpoints, engage in productive collaborations, and disrupt limiting patterns so that they can pursue personally meaningful goals.

**Commitment Statements:**

In recognition of the honor and privilege of being Teachers of English Language Arts, we commit to the following values and behaviors that will strengthen our community and promote life-long learning.

- We will collaborate with our colleagues, students, parents, and communities to develop teaching practices that are grounded in research, relevant to our students’ lives, and reflective of technological and cultural advancements.
- We will engage in honest self-reflection, supporting one another as we build on our strengths and recognize our limitations, always seeking to balance autonomy and accountability.
- We will strive to educate the whole learner, demonstrating empathy and respect while providing learning experiences that are aligned with state standards and flexible enough to adapt as we meet the needs of each learner.
- We will earn the trust of our students, providing a safe space for vulnerability and diversity. As guides and advocates, we will help our students find purpose and meaning in their lives, working alongside them to remove barriers to their personal and academic growth.

**Course Description:** The CCPS Secondary English Language Arts Curriculum has been designed using the quad text set framework. Units of study are grounded in complex, grade-level texts and made accessible to all learners through supplementary texts (visual texts, informational texts, young adult literature) that build background and vocabulary. Text sets are aligned with focus standards and explored through the lens of essential questions that challenge students to consider the author's craft and purpose.

**MODULE 1- Narrative Elements and Theme**

<p><b>Essential Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or determine an outcome?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Standards/ and or skills taught</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify the theme or central idea</li> <li>● Analyze dialogue</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Unit 1</b> <b>How students are graded:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Anchor chart(s)</li> <li>● Response to text</li> <li>● Poetry analysis</li> <li>● Essay Organizer/outline</li> <li>● County Summative Unit Assessment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unit 2</b> <b>How students are graded</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Poetry analysis</li> <li>● Short writing tasks</li> <li>● Chapter Analysis</li> <li>● Benchmark summative essay: What central idea about education, peer pressure, <i>or</i> friendship are the authors trying to convey to readers throughout the book? How do they develop and support that idea? Explain using specific text evidence from at least two of the authors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit 1</b> <b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Target Text: “The Treasure of Lemon Brown” by Walter Dean Myers (<a href="#">Parent letter</a>)</li> <li>● Supporting Texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Thank You, M’am” by Langston Hughes</li> <li>○ “Identity” by Julio Noboa Polanco (poem)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Unit 2</b> <b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Pact by Drs. Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, and Rameck Hunt with Lisa Frazier Page <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Parent letter</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Supporting Texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">“Choices”</a> by Nikki Giovanni</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Four Skinny Trees” Sandra Cisneros(vinette)</li> <li>● YA Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>The Glory Field</i>, Walter Dean Myers (800L)</li> <li>○ <i>Soldier X</i>, Don Wulffson (740 L)</li> <li>○ <i>Messenger</i>, Lois Lowry (720 L)</li> <li>○ <i>The Fault in Our Stars</i>, John Green (850 L) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="#">Parent letter</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes</a></li> <li>○ Optional:</li> <li>○ <a href="#">“Nothing Gold Can Stay”</a> by Robert Frost</li> <li>○ <a href="#">“We Real Cool”</a> by Gwendolyn Brooks</li> <li>○ <a href="#">“Caged Bird”</a> Maya Angelou</li> <li>○ “The Lesson of the Moth” by Don Marquis</li> <li>● YA: <i>The Outsiders</i> by S.E. Hinton</li> </ul>
<p><b>Home and School Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Find an interesting family photo and write a story using only dialogue.</li> </ul>	

**MODULE 2, Units 3 and 4- Argument**

<p><b>Essential Questions</b> What factors should I consider when selecting evidence to support a claim?</p>	
<p><b>Standards/ and or skills taught</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cite evidence to support analysis of the text</li> <li>● Write arguments to support claims</li> <li>● Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown words</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Unit 3</b> <b>How students are graded:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Comprehension assessments (articles)</li> <li>● Brief written responses</li> <li>● Summative Benchmark Essay (argumentative)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unit 4</b> <b>How students are graded:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Short responses to text</li> <li>● Close reading activities</li> <li>● Summative Benchmark Essay (argumentative)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit 3</b> <b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Target Texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Flanigan, Robin L. "Get Your Mind-Body Exercise: Thinking Differently Can Improve.." <i>Rochester</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Unit 4</b> <b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Target Texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Phineas Gage</i>, John Fleishmann (L 1030)</li> <li>○ <i>Into the Unknown</i>, David Roberts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><i>Democrat and Chronicle</i>, 09 Apr 2017, pp. L.5. <i>SIRS Issues Researcher</i>, <a href="https://sks.sirs.com">https://sks.sirs.com</a>. (L 1250)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strep, Peg. “5 Pitfalls of Positive Thinking.” <i>Psychology Today</i>. 13 March 2014: Web. (L 1250)</li> <li>○ Grant Halvorson, Heidi. "How Positive Thinking Sets You Up To Fail." <i>Fast Company</i> 25 July 2011: Web. (L1400-1500)</li> <li>● The Optimism Bias (video)</li> <li>● The Power of Negative Thinking (video)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Supporting Texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “The Quitter,” Robert Service (poem)</li> <li>○ Infographic on TBI</li> </ul> </li> <li>● YA Options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Ender’s Game</i> by Orson Scott Card (780L)</li> <li>○ <i>The Hunger Games</i> by Suzanne Collins (810L)</li> <li>○ <i>Unwind</i> by Neal Shusterman (740L) <a href="#">Parent letter</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Home and School Connection</b> Review media sources together and evaluate their reliability</p>	

**MODULE 3, Units 5 and 6- Author’s Choice**

<p><b>Essential Questions</b> How do literary devices (dramatic irony, etc.) and differing character perspectives affect the reader’s understanding?</p>	
<p><b>Units 5 and 6</b> <b>Standards/ and or skills taught:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Analyze differences in points of view between the characters and the audience or reader to create suspense</li> <li>● Write narratives</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Unit 5</b> <b>How students are graded:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Short responses to text</li> <li>● County Mid-unit Assessment</li> <li>● Summative Benchmark Essay</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unit 6</b> <b>How students are graded:</b></p>
<p><b>Unit 5</b></p>	

**Resources:****● Target Texts:**

- “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson (560L)
- “The Poison Tree,” William Blake
- “The Cask of Amontillado,” Edgar Allan Poe (830L)

**● YA Selections:**

- *I am Regina* by Sally Keehn (720 L)
- *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson (990L)
- *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* by Avi (740 L)
- *Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson (580 L)

**Home and School Connection**

Research a notable public figure. How was this person influenced but the people, ideas, and events in her/his life.

**MODULE 4, Unit 6- Theme Analysis****Essential Questions****Standards/ and or skills taught**

- Compare/contrast the fictional portrayal and historical portrayal of a time period
- Determine theme

**How students are graded:**

- Short responses to text
- County Summative Unit Assessment

**Resources:**

- Target Text: *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, John boyne (L1080)

[Parent Letter](#)

- YA Selections:

- *Berlin Boxing Club* by Robert Sharenow (880 L)
- *Soldier X* by Don Wolffson (740 L)
- *The Book Thief* by Mark Zusak (730 L)
- *The Boy Who Dared* by Susan Bartoletti (760 L)
- *Wonder*, R.J. Palacio, (L 790)

**Home and School Connection**

Compare a documentary about a historical event (example, WWII) with a fictional movie that portrays the event. Where is the movie accurate? Where does it take creative liberties?