Grade 8 English Language Arts

1.2 Reading Informational Text

Students read, understand, and respond to informational text—with an emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence.

- 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.
- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.
- Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events.
- 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.
- Analyze the structure of the text through evaluation of the author's use of specific sentences and paragraphs to develop and refine a concept.
- Analyze the influence of the words and phrases in a text including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings, and how they shape meaning and tone.
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
- Evaluate an author's argument, reasoning, and specific claims for the soundness of the arguments and the relevance of the evidence.
- Analyze two or more texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
- 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.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.
- Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

1.3 Reading Literature

Students read and respond to works of literature—with an emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and making connections among ideas and between texts with a focus on textual evidence.

- 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.
- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Analyze the influence of the words and phrases in a text including figurative and connotative meanings and how they shape meaning and tone
- Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by directors or actors
- Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from traditional works, including describing how the material is rendered new.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.
- 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.
- Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently

1.4 Writing

Students write for different purposes and audiences. Students write clear and focused text to convey a well-defined perspective and appropriate content.

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

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately.

- Identify and introduce the topic clearly, including a preview of what is to follow.
- Develop and analyze the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples; include graphics and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts; provide a concluding statement or section; include formatting when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition.
    - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
    - Use sentences of varying lengths and complexities.
    - Create tone and voice through precise language.
    - Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics.

- Introduce and state an opinion on a topic.
- Acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims and support claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic.
- Organize the claim(s) with clear reasons and evidence clearly; clarify relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence by using words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion; provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition.
    - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
    - Use sentences of varying lengths and complexities.
    - Create tone and voice through precise language.
    - Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

- Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters.
- Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, description, reflection, and pacing to develop experiences, events, and/or characters; use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- Organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically using 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; provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
- Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of writing.
    - Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects.
    - Use sentences of varying lengths and complexities.
    - Create tone and voice through precise language.
- Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Writes to respond to literature

- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, applying grade-level reading standards for literature and literary nonfiction.

Produces and distributes writing and engages in the writing process.

- 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.
- 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.

Conducts Research

- 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.
- 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.

1.5 Speaking and Listening

Students present appropriately in formal speaking situations, listen critically, and respond intelligently as individuals or in group discussions.

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
- 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.
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks.
- Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to add interest, clarify information, and strengthen claims and evidence.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking based on Grade 8 level and content.