

8th Grade English Language Arts & Reading Syllabus 2025-2026

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to 8th Grade ELAR. In this class, we will explore a variety of texts and writing styles. We will work to improve our reading comprehension, critical thinking skills, writing skills and vocabulary.

This syllabus is aligned with Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Texas Curriculum Management Program Cooperative TCMCP.

Mrs. J. Garza

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Conference: 2:06-2:54

First Six Weeks: Unit 1-Fundamentals of Communication

Unit Description:

This unit bundles expectations that address foundational collaboration, speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. The unit serves as an introduction to the fundamental skills that contribute to becoming a critical reader and writer.

Key Skills and Focus:

- Comprehension strategies: monitoring comprehension, re-reading, annotation, asking questions
 - Academic vocabulary
 - Understanding text types/genres
 - Writing basics: sentence structure, paragraphing, narrative voice
 - Speaking & listening skills
 - Literary elements (plot, character, setting) and non-fiction basics
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Second Six Weeks: Unit 2A-Analyzing & Composing Literary Narrative Nonfiction & Fiction

Unit Description:

This unit bundles student expectations that address a study of literary works including fiction and literary/narrative nonfiction. These genres represent narratives, or stories, that include literary elements and devices. Readers read both fictional and nonfiction narratives in order to learn about the world by making connections to literary elements such as character, setting, plot, etc.

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Key Skills and Focus:

- Distinguishing narrative nonfiction vs fiction
 - Analyzing point of view, voice, narrative techniques
 - Crafting own narrative: effective openings/closings, pacing, dialogue, description
 - Character development, conflict/resolution
 - Use of sensory detail and figurative language
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Second Six Weeks: Unit 2B-Analyzing and Composing Literary Texts: Poetry and Drama

Unit Description:

This unit bundles student expectations that address a study of literary works, specifically drama and poetry. These genres represent creative writing and narratives that include literary elements and devices that have an impact on authors' messages.

Key Skills and Focus:

- Reading & analyzing poetry: form, meter, imagery, figurative language, sound devices
 - Reading & analyzing drama: dialogue, stage directions, character relationships, dramatic elements
 - Composing both: writing own poems, writing/dramatizing scenes
 - Comparison across dramatic & poetic works
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Third Six Weeks: Unit 3-Analyzing and Composing Informational Texts

Unit Description:

This unit bundles student expectations that address analyzing and writing informational texts, specifically the multi-paragraph informational essay. This genre represents writing that informs, explains, and describes a topic. Readers read a variety of informational texts to learn about specific topics and areas of interest.

Key Skills and Focus:

- analyze a variety of informational texts for key ideas
- identify the author's purpose, intended audience, and controlling idea/thesis
- identify how the author uses evidence, facts, and details to support their controlling idea/thesis
- use reading strategies such as notetaking and annotating
- summarize and paraphrase texts as part of the comprehension process and utilize text evidence to support their understanding

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Fourth Six Weeks: Unit 4-Rhetorically Analyzing and Composing Argumentative Texts

Unit Description:

This unit bundles student expectations that address analyzing and writing argumentative texts, specifically the multi-paragraph argumentative essay. This genre represents writing meant to persuade an audience. Readers read a variety of argumentative texts to consider their own and others' understandings of and perspectives on specific topics and areas of interest.

Key Skills and Focus:

- Understanding argument structure (claims, counterclaims, evidence, reasoning)
 - Rhetorical devices, word choice, persuasion techniques
 - Use of credible sources
 - Writing argumentative essays
 - Listening & critiquing arguments
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Fifth Six Weeks: Unit 5-Interpretation and Response across Genres

Unit Description:

This unit bundles student expectations that address analyzing and making connections across multiple genres as well as writing across multiple genres. This unit focuses on comparing and contrasting a variety of genres on a related topic in order to reinforce the analysis and application of genre characteristics and author's craft. Most texts consumed and composed today are diverse in genre and purpose and can include a variety of modes such as images, charts, audio, or video to effectively reach intended audiences. Active readers and effective writers use their knowledge of genre and craft to understand and communicate ideas effectively.

Key Skills and Focus:

- Comparing and contrasting texts of different genres on similar themes
- Making meaning: themes, tone, mood, symbolism, author's intent
- Responding to texts both in writing and discussion
- Deepening reading comprehension: inference, allusion, context

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Sixth Six Weeks: Unit 6-Research-Based Synthesis, Creation, and Innovation

Unit Description:

This unit bundles student expectations for the research process with comprehension and writing skills for the purpose of composing an original argumentative research product around a topic/field of personal interest. Student expectations based on the analysis of a variety of sources, including multimodal texts with images, graphics, text features, font, color, audio, video, etc. are the focus of research efforts. Exploring a variety of texts during the research process is representative of the type of texts readers and writers consume today. Readers and writers who are aware of authors' craft and techniques across genres, including the use of multimodal elements, are better prepared to read critically and compose effectively. The focus and foundation of this unit is to use the research process to refine and support one's own ideas in an argumentative research essay and a visual multimodal research presentation.

Key Skills and Focus:

- Research skills: finding credible sources, note taking, synthesis
 - Citing sources, avoiding plagiarism
 - Writing research papers; integrating quotes & paraphrase into own voice
 - Presentation skills; publishing work
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Dates and unit durations are approximations and may be adjusted based on student needs and progress.

Year-Long Skills Development

Throughout all six weeks, students will continuously develop:

- **Vocabulary acquisition** through context clues and word analysis
- **Reading fluency** and comprehension strategies
- **Critical thinking** and analytical skills
- **Written and oral communication** of ideas
- **Collaborative discussion** and peer feedback skills
- **Digital literacy** and research competencies

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Assessment Methods

- Formative assessments: daily reading responses, discussion participation, quick-writes
 - Summative assessments: unit tests, essays, projects, presentations
 - Performance assessments: dramatic readings, research presentations
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Class Expectations

- Be respectful to everyone.
 - Come prepared, on time, with materials and a positive attitude.
 - Participate actively in discussions and activities.
 - Gum, candy, and drinks are not permitted.
 - Follow all school and district rules, policies, and classroom procedures.
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