

Course Title:	English Language Arts (ELA)
Grade(s):	8

Course Description
This course builds on middle school literacy skills while preparing students for the expectations of high school English. Students develop their reading, writing, speaking, and research skills through a variety of literary and informational texts. Units explore themes such as identity, responsibility, justice, and innovation, encouraging students to think critically about both historical and contemporary issues. Students engage in close reading, analytical and narrative writing, research projects, and collaborative discussions. Throughout the year, they strengthen their ability to use evidence, communicate ideas clearly, and reflect on multiple perspectives. This course supports all learners while building the core literacy skills needed for success in high school and beyond.
Approved Curricular Materials/Textbook(s)
The Grade 8 English Language Arts curriculum is supported by Amplify ELA, which provides a structured collection of literary and informational texts representing diverse voices, time periods, genres, and perspectives. Core works include a blend of memoir, poetry, informational texts, drama, and novels, with an emphasis on close reading, writing, and research. Supplemental texts may vary by teacher, but all align to grade-level themes and skills. These texts serve as the major instructional anchors for the course and are used consistently across Grade 8 classrooms: • Narrative and Memoir Texts (various) • <i>The Outsiders</i> by S.E. Hinton • <i>Frankenstein</i> (adapted) by Mary Shelley and Gris Grimly • <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (excerpts) by William Shakespeare • Holocaust Literature, including <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel and <i>Maus</i> by Art Spiegelman • Primary Sources and Informational Texts (e.g., Space Race materials) • Independent Reading/Book Club Texts (various grade-appropriate selections)

Unit Title	Unit Description (Include Unit Objectives)	Unit Pacing
Unit 1: Perspectives & Narrative	Students learn to read like writers by examining how authors use details and techniques to develop characters and shape meaning. They explore themes of identity and belonging while writing both personal narratives and analytical responses. Objectives: - Analyze how authors develop character and theme - Use specific details to strengthen writing (“show, not tell”) - Cite evidence to support ideas in discussion and writing - Write narrative and analytical responses - Participate in peer discussion and feedback Key Texts: - Excerpt from <i>Going Solo</i> by Roald Dahl “Fish Cheeks” by Amy Tan “My Mother’s Garden” by Kaitlyn Greenidge	4 Weeks (September)
Unit 2: <i>The Outsiders</i> by S.E. Hinton	Students read <i>The Outsiders</i> to explore themes of identity, belonging, and societal expectations. Through literary analysis and reflection, they examine how characters respond to conflict, pressure, and relationships, while making connections to their own experiences. Objectives: - Analyze how character, conflict, and point of view shape a text - Determine and support themes using textual evidence - Examine the role of identity and societal pressure in decision-making - Analyze literary elements such as symbolism - Express understanding through written and creative responses Key Texts: <i>The Outsiders</i> by S.E. Hinton “We Real Cool” by Gwendolyn Brooks “Nothing Gold Can Stay” by Robert Frost “On the Bridge” by Todd Strasser	5-6 Weeks (October-November)

Unit 3: Science & Science Fiction	Students read a graphic novel adaptation of <i>Frankenstein</i> alongside key excerpts from the original text to explore themes of responsibility, identity, and scientific innovation. They also examine how different authors and thinkers view the relationship between humans and technology. Objectives: • Analyze how theme and character develop across a text • Examine multiple perspectives on scientific responsibility and innovation • Use evidence to support claims in discussion and writing • Write from different points of view to deepen understanding • Conduct brief research and engage in structured debate Key Texts: • <i>Frankenstein</i> (graphic novel) by Gris Grimly • <i>Frankenstein</i> (excerpts) by Mary Shelley • Selected poems by William Wordsworth and Lord Byron • Excerpt from <i>The Innovators</i> by Walter Isaacson	4 Weeks (November-December)
Unit 4: Teen Rights & the Bill of Rights: Podcast Project	Students explore the Bill of Rights by researching issues related to teen rights and constitutional protections. Working collaboratively, they analyze multiple perspectives on real-world issues and create a podcast that presents a clear, evidence-based argument. This is an interdisciplinary unit with the Social Studies Department. Objectives: • Conduct research using credible sources • Evaluate multiple perspectives on an issue • Develop and support claims with evidence • Write and present ideas in a structured, engaging format • Collaborate to produce a multimedia project Key Texts: • The Bill of Rights (U.S. Constitution) • Informational texts and articles on teen rights (various) • Court cases and legal sources (selected excerpts)	2 Weeks (December)

Unit 5: Romeo & Juliet	Students read selected scenes from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> to build familiarity with Shakespearean language and dramatic techniques. Through reading, discussion, and performance, they develop strategies for understanding complex text and explore themes of love and conflict. Objectives: • Interpret Shakespearean language using context and paraphrasing • Analyze literary devices such as metaphor and figurative language • Explore structure and form, including the Shakespearean sonnet • Participate in speaking and performance activities • Write an evidence-based literary analysis Key Texts: • Excerpts from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare	4 Weeks (January-February)
Unit 6: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning	Students examine memoirs, primary sources, and literature to understand the causes and impact of the Holocaust. Through multiple perspectives, they explore questions of responsibility, human behavior, and the role of individuals in times of injustice. Objectives: • Analyze how perspective shapes understanding of historical events • Evaluate how authors convey experiences through memoir, poetry, and informational texts • Use evidence to support analysis in discussion and writing • Examine the impact of propaganda and bias • Reflect on themes of responsibility and ethical decision-making Key Texts: • "I Cannot Forget" by Alexander Kimel • <i>Shores Beyond Shores</i> by Irene Butter • Excerpts from <i>A Child of Hitler</i> by Alfons Heck • <i>Maus</i> by Art Spiegelman • <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel	5 Weeks (March-April)

Unit 7: The Space Race Collection	Students explore the history of the Space Race through primary sources and independent research. They examine the people, events, and impact of this global competition while developing research and media literacy skills. Objectives: • Conduct research using multiple credible sources • Develop and refine research questions • Analyze primary and secondary sources • Present ideas through writing and multimedia • Engage in discussion using evidence from research Key Texts: • Primary sources from the Space Race era • Informational texts on key figures, including John F. Kennedy, Buzz Aldrin, Katherine Johnson, and Alexei Leonov	6 Weeks (May-June)
---	--	-------------------------------