Secondary English Language Arts
Grade 8 Public Overview

Grade 8 ELA
1st 9 Weeks
Assessments MAP Growth Reading: Sept. 9-10

What are we learning? How can I help at home?
Unit 1 Overview: Rites of Passage **Genre Focus: Literary Texts and Narrative Writing** **Essential Question: What are some challenges of growing up?** **Timeline: August 11 – October 8** **Priority Standards: 8.1D, 8.5E, 8.5F, 8.6B, 8.7A, 8.7B, 8.7C, 8.7D, 8.8B, 8.9F, 8.10A, 8.10B, 8.10C, 8.10D, 8.10E** **Link to TEKS/Parent Guide:** Link to TEKS Unit Overview: In this unit, students will explore the theme of Rites of Passage through a variety of literary texts while building advanced reading, writing, and critical-thinking skills. Students will analyze how authors develop themes through characters, conflicts, settings, and plot structures, including flashbacks and foreshadowing. Through discussions, annotations, and independent reading, students will examine the challenges, responsibilities, and experiences that shape a person's journey toward adulthood. Students will also strengthen their ability to support ideas with evidence and communicate their thinking through both discussion and writing. As a culminating experience, students will write a narrative that incorporates effective storytelling techniques and reflects meaningful experiences, growth, or change. At-Home Connections: • Discuss important milestones in your family's history and how those experiences shaped family members. • Ask your child to compare a challenge they have faced with one experienced by a character in a book. • Watch a movie together and discuss how flashbacks, foreshadowing, or setting influence the story. • Encourage your child to write about an experience that taught them an important lesson.
2nd 9 Weeks
Assessments PSAT: Oct. 27

What are we learning? How can I help at home?

Unit 2 Overview: Human Intelligence
Genre Focus: Informational Text and Inquiry
Essential Question: How do we know what we know?

Timeline: October 19-December 18
Priority Standards: 8.5E, 8.8D(i), 8.8D(iii), 8.9A, 8.10B, 8.10C, 8.10D, 8.12A, 8.12D, 8.12J
Link to TEKS/Parent Guide: Link to TEKS

Unit Overview: In this unit, students will explore the concept of Human Intelligence through informational texts, inquiry, and research. Students will examine how knowledge is acquired, communicated, and supported through evidence. They will analyze thesis statements, evaluate supporting details, research topics using multiple sources, and determine the credibility of information. Through reading, writing, and discussion, students will learn to organize information clearly and communicate their understanding effectively. As a culminating experience, students will conduct research and create an informational product that presents evidence-based conclusions on a topic connected to human intelligence, learning, or knowledge

At-Home Connections:

- Discuss how family members learn new skills and identify resources they use to gain knowledge.
- Compare information from two sources on the same topic and discuss which source is more reliable.
- Encourage your child to investigate a topic of personal interest and share their findings with the family.
- Talk about how evidence is used to support claims in news articles, documentaries, and everyday conversations.

3rd 9 Weeks

Assessments
TELPAS Window: Feb. 15-Mar. 26
MAP Growth Reading: Jan. 27-28

What are we learning?
How can I help at home?

Unit 3 Overview: What Matters
Genre Focus: Argumentative Text and Inquiry
Essential Question: When is it right to take a stand?

Timeline: January 6 – March 4
Priority Standards: 8.5E, 8.8E(i), 8.8E(ii), 8.8E(iii), 8.9A, 8.9B, 8.10B, 8.10C, 8.10D, 8.12D, 8.12H(i), 8.12J
Link to TEKS/Parent Guide: Link to TEKS

Unit Overview: In this unit, students will examine the question, "When is it right to take a stand?" through argumentative texts and research. Students will analyze claims, counterarguments, evidence, and author's purpose while evaluating the credibility and bias of sources. They will learn how writers persuade audiences and how strong arguments are constructed using sound reasoning and credible evidence. Through inquiry, discussion, and writing, students will develop their own positions on important issues and communicate those ideas effectively. As a culminating experience, students will create and present an evidence-based argument supported by research.

At-Home Connections:

- Discuss current events and encourage your child to explain their opinion using evidence and reasoning.
- Compare two viewpoints on the same issue and identify strengths and weaknesses of each argument.
- Talk about advertisements, social media posts, or news headlines and identify attempts to persuade audiences.
- Encourage respectful family debates where participants support claims with facts and examples.

4th 9 Weeks

Assessments

TELPAS Window: Feb. 15-Mar. 26
STAAR Reading: April 12-14 (1 day)
Reading MAP: May 12-13

What are we learning?
How can I help at home?

Unit 4 Overview: Making Connections
Genre Focus: Synthesizing Ideas and Evidence-Based Writing
Essential Question: How can readers deepen understanding by connecting ideas across texts and sources?

Timeline: March 15 – April 14
Priority Standards: 8.6B, 8.6C, 8.5E
Link to TEKS/Parent Guide: Link to TEKS

Unit Overview: In this unit, students will strengthen their ability to synthesize information across multiple texts and genres. Through close reading and analysis, students will compare perspectives, themes, structures, and evidence from a variety of sources. They will practice making meaningful connections between texts, personal experiences, and real-world events while supporting their thinking with textual evidence. This unit emphasizes deeper comprehension, evidence-based writing, and critical thinking as students prepare to demonstrate mastery of grade-level reading and writing skills.

At-Home Connections:

- Read two articles about the same topic and compare how each author presents information.
- Discuss connections between books, current events, and personal experiences.
- Encourage your child to support opinions with evidence during family conversations.
- Compare how information is presented in print, video, and social media formats.

Unit 5 Overview: Choices
Genre Focus: Fiction Book Clubs
Essential Question: Are we defined more by our choices or by our circumstances?

Timeline: April 15-May 27
Priority Standards: 8.5E, 8.6A, 8.9A, 8.10A, 8.10B, 8.12J
Link to TEKS/Parent Guide: Link to TEKS

Unit Overview: In this unit, students will explore the question, "Are we defined more by our choices or by our circumstances?" through fiction book clubs and independent reading. Students will analyze how characters are influenced by their environments, relationships, and decisions while examining themes related to identity, responsibility, and personal growth. Through collaborative discussions and reflective writing, students will make connections between literature and their own experiences. Students will also consider audience and purpose as they create written, oral, or multimedia products. As a culminating experience, students will communicate their understanding of how choices and circumstances shape individuals through a presentation, publication, or creative project.

At-Home Connection:

- Discuss real-life situations where choices led to positive or negative outcomes and explain why.
- Ask your child whether a character's actions or circumstances had a greater impact on the story and support the answer with evidence.
- Encourage your child to set a personal goal and reflect on how daily choices influence progress toward that goal.
- Share family stories about important decisions and discuss how those decisions affected future opportunities.