Wall Township Public Schools	Board Approval Date: August 18, 2026

Grade 8 ELA

Course Description: This 8th-grade ELA course helps students build strong reading, writing, speaking, and language skills through a variety of texts and activities. Students analyze literature, write in multiple genres, and expand their vocabulary and communication abilities. They also develop media literacy and research skills by evaluating sources and presenting ideas. By the end, students become critical thinkers and effective communicators prepared for high school and beyond.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards

Vision for English Language Arts Education in New Jersey

A New Jersey education in English Language Arts builds readers, writers, and communicators prepared to meet the demands of college and career and to engage as productive American citizens with global responsibilities. Throughout their kindergarten through grade 12 experience, students will:

- Develop the necessary skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are the foundations for creative and purposeful expression in language.

- Read rich, challenging texts that build their knowledge of the world, grow their confidence and identities as readers, and develop critical thinking skills and vocabulary necessary for long-term success.
- Engage in regular, meaningful, writing authentic tasks, exploring valued topics, writing for impact and expression, and sharing their work with others (including authentic audiences).
- Leverage complex texts and digital media to develop comprehension, active listening, and discussion skills.
- Ground daily writing and discussion in evidence, fostering an ability to read critically, build arguments, cite evidence, and communicate ideas to contribute meaningfully as productive citizens.
- Evaluate the reliability, credibility, and perspective of authors and speakers across all forms of media.
- Express ideas and knowledge through a variety of modalities and media, and serve as effective communicators who purposefully read, write, and speak across multiple disciplines.
- Learn to persist in reading complex texts, establishing lifelong habits to read voluntarily for pleasure, for further education, for information on public policy, and for advancement in the workplace.

Practices of English Language Arts

The English Language Arts Practices offer the capacities held by students who have progressed through a kindergarten through grade 12 English Language Arts program in New Jersey. These practices describe students who are proficient in literacy, possessing the ability to read deeply, create their own works, and listen and speak to a broad range of ideas. As New Jersey students advance through the grades and demonstrate proficiency in the standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, they are able to exhibit with increasing fullness and regularity the following capacities of the literate individual.

Student capacities include:

- Developing Responsibility for Learning: Cultivating independence, self-reflection, and responsibility for one's own learning.
- Adapting Communication: Adapting communication in response to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose,

and discipline.

- Valuing Evidence in Argumentation: Constructing viable claims and evaluating, defending, challenging, and qualifying the arguments of others.
- Building Knowledge: Building strong content knowledge and connecting ideas across disciplines using a variety of text resources and media.
- Leveraging Technology: Employing technology and digital media thoughtfully, strategically, and capably to enhance reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use.
- Understanding Self and Others: Using literacy as a vehicle to affirm all the aspects of one's own identity, as well as understand, connect to, and respect other perspectives and cultures.
- Acquisition of Vocabulary: Learning and applying sophisticated vocabulary for effective communication when speaking and writing.

Inclusion of Climate Change Opportunities

( **)** notes opportunities to integrate specific examples of climate change education provided by additional age-appropriate resources

The goal of inclusion of climate change education implementation is to foster generations of New Jersey students that can analyze, question, interpret, to think independently, and bring critical deduction to fulfill, and to lead in jobs created by burgeoning industries of the future green economy.

Course Sequence & Pacing	
Unit Title	**Estimated # of Instructional Days**
Unit 1- Unraveling Themes Through A Whole Class Novel Study This unit guides students through a whole-class novel study to explore fiction in depth. Students engage in discussions, guided and close reading, and literary analysis to understand the text's deeper meaning. They demonstrate their learning through explanatory and analytical writing tasks. By the end, students become stronger readers and more thoughtful interpreters of literature.	32 days MP 1
Unit 2- Moments That Matter: Crafting Powerful Narratives Through Prompts This unit focuses on helping students explore meaningful personal experiences and turn them into engaging narratives. Students learn how to use prompts to generate ideas, develop strong story elements, and organize their writing effectively. Emphasis is placed on crafting vivid details, clear perspectives, and purposeful storytelling. By the end of the unit, students will be able to create well-developed narratives.	17 days MP 1-2
Unit 3- Critically Reading Informational Text This unit teaches students how to critically read and analyze informational texts. Students identify main ideas, evaluate evidence, and examine how authors present information. They practice close reading and respond through discussion and writing. By the end, students strengthen their ability to understand and evaluate nonfiction texts.	17 days MP 2

Unit 4- Crafting Compelling Arguments This unit teaches students how to analyze and create effective persuasive arguments. Students examine how authors use claims, evidence, and reasoning to influence an audience. They practice writing their own arguments with clear structure and strong support. By the end, students develop skills in critical thinking and persuasive communication.	31 days MP 2-3
Unit 5- Shifting Views: Exploring Perspective Through Book Clubs This unit encourages 8th-grade students to explore how perspective shapes stories through collaborative book clubs. Students read and discuss texts in small groups, analyzing different characters' viewpoints and how they influence the narrative. Through discussions and written responses, students compare perspectives and deepen their understanding of theme and character. By the end, students develop stronger analytical and communication skills while learning to consider multiple viewpoints.	28 days MP 3-4
Unit 6- Informative/Explanatory Writing This unit teaches students how to write clear and informative texts. Students learn to develop strong thesis statements, organize ideas logically, and support their writing with evidence. They practice explaining topics in a structured and engaging way. By the end, students strengthen their ability to inform and explain effectively in writing.	16 days MP 4
Unit 7- Poems from the Holocaust In this unit 8th-grade students will explore the history of the Holocaust through reading. Students will gain background knowledge on the topic and perspectives of the time period. Additionally, the students will read first hand accounts of the experiences in poetry form created by Jewish prisoners of camps in the time period from 1930-1945. They will learn strategies to deeply analyze the poetry of the Holocaust victims such as: speaker, word choice, imagery, figurative language, as well as tone and mood to develop a theme and analyze the deeper meaning of each poem.	12 days MP 4

Unit 8- Reflecting on Life Stories: Reading and Writing Memoirs This unit includes reading and writing lessons on the Memoir genre. Students will read a series of vignettes around objects, topics, or experiences from people's lives. Key topics of this unit will include ways writers develop and organize ideas, use descriptive and emotional details, using proper organization and conventions. Concluding the year with the stories and themes of our lives will give students a chance to author life stories that they can take with them as they reflect and grow older.	12 days MP 4
Unit 9 (Alternate for Unit 8) - Connecting to the Ancient World: Greek Myths In this unit, students will explore the myths and adventures of Theseus, an Ancient Greek hero. Through close reading and analysis of the plays *The Road to Athens* and *Lost in the Labyrinth*, students will examine how playwrights adapt traditional myths for modern audiences. Throughout the unit, students will build academic and domain-specific vocabulary through previewing and contextual analysis strategies. They will strengthen reading comprehension skills by identifying key details, analyzing character development, and examining plot structure. As a culminating project, students will demonstrate their understanding of dramatic storytelling by creating an original graphic novel adaptation of a Theseus myth. Incorporating elements from one of the plays as well as the conventions of graphic novels, students will combine visual and textual storytelling techniques to retell a myth in an engaging and creative format.	12 days MP 4

Unit 1

Desired Results

Unit 1: Unraveling Themes Through A Whole Class Novel Study

Unit Summary: This unit guides students through a whole-class novel study to explore fiction in depth. Students engage in discussions, guided and close reading, and literary analysis to understand the text's deeper meaning. They demonstrate their learning through explanatory and analytical writing tasks. By the end, students become stronger readers and more thoughtful interpreters of literature.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.

A. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.

L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
B. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
C. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
D. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
E. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

RL.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.CI.8.2. Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W.RW.8.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self- correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

9.4.8.CI.1: Assess data gathered on varying perspectives on causes of climate change (e.g., cross cultural, gender-specific, generational), and determine how the data can best be used to design multiple potential solutions.

9.4.8.DC.8: Explain how communities use data and technology to develop measures to respond to effects of climate change (e.g., smart cities).

Computer Science & Design Thinking (*CS & DT*):

8.2.8.ED.3: Develop a proposal for a solution to a real-world problem that includes a model (e.g., physical prototype, graphical/technical sketch).

8.2.8.ETW.4: Compare the environmental effects of two alternative technologies devised to address climate change issues (technology used to protect and/or mitigate health impacts) and use data to justify which choice is best.

MS-ESS3-5 Ask questions to clarify evidence of the factors that have caused the rise in global temperatures over the past century.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

6.1.8.EconNE.4.b: Analyze how technological innovations affected the status and social class of different groups of people and explain the outcomes that resulted.

Learning Targets

Unit Essential Questions:

- What do characters' thoughts and actions reveal about the theme of the story?
- How does the topic and information presented develop the central idea of the text?
- How can I use the relationship between the main idea and details to summarize the text?
- What do you think the author wants you to learn from this story?
- How might your understanding of the theme of this story make your own life better?
- What character traits and attitudes are necessary for survival?
- What causes characters to change in a story?

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- Characterization is revealed through what a character says and does.
- Theme is revealed both by how characters in a story behave and by what happens to the characters in the story.
- Analyze fiction elements including setting, characterization, plot, and conflict to develop themes.
- Word choice can be used to develop the author's tone and mood.
- Make connections between informational and realistic fiction texts.
- Gain knowledge of hobbies and harness interests through reading.

• How are the lives of different characters from various texts impacted by their ability to overcome hardships?	

Vocabulary/Grammar:

- *Vocabulary Workshop or Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction*
- *Words Their Way*

Grammar:

- *Grammar for Writing*
    - Chapter 8

from *Wild River*:

- impish, sullen, steep, oblivious, retrofit, portage, duly, sentry, ravine, sheer, subside, defiant, ration, plummet, grudgingly, rummage, kindling, brandish, bramble, jut, seethe, gorge, coax, solemn, hub,wistful. keen, yoke, vigilant, erode, expedition, protrude, pivot, careen, eddy, revolting, improvise, leer, utterly, dejected, unanimous, contempt, baffled, resolute, patent, leaden, frantic, frail, amble, grimace, delirium, inflict, jounce, buoyant, pirouette, cadaver, spectacle

Academic Vocabulary:

- theme, perspective, informative/explanatory texts, analysis, central idea, open ended response

Students will be able to:

- Cite textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis.
- Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details of the text.
- Provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- Analyze how particular elements of a text interact.
- Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details.

- Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
- Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented orally and explain how the ideas clarify a topic or text.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Identify the functions of verbals
- Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use common Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word
- Consult reference materials to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- Check the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase.

Learning Activities: *Potential Learning Activities can include:*

- Mini Lessons from Grammar for Writing
- Mini Lessons from Vocabulary Workshop or Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction
- Establish each student's prior understanding through a relatable hook (story, survey, posing questions, webquest)
- Engage in whole-class reading.
- Execute standards-based mini-lessons to develop skills and strategies.
- Identify and employ the key skills of reading at grade-level complexity.
- Engage in protected time for independent reading and writing.
- Confer individually with the teacher.
- Independent reading with note taking and comprehension practice.
- Engage in small-group reading/writing skills-based instruction.
- Share and collaborate with assigned partners.
- Respond to text weekly using reading responses.
- Read nonfiction articles to make real world connections to the text.
- Socratic Seminars

To satisfy the laws related to *Amistad & Holocaust*, *Asian American & Pacific Islanders*, *Climate Change*, *LGBTQ and People with Disabilities*, *Diversity*, *Equity & Inclusion [DEI]* in the state of New Jersey, teachers must implement at least one of the following texts, activities, or approaches in their lesson planning:

- Climate Change
    - *Wild River* by Rodman Philbrick
        - The flooding disaster that drives the survival plot can be connected to increasing extreme weather events caused by climate change. The novel opens space for discussions about environmental responsibility, human impact, and natural disaster preparedness.
- Climate Change and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion [DEI]
    - "Whose Crazies Are They? How the Crazy Mountains Became Ground Zero in Montana's Most Vexing Land Debate" by by Atmanda Egger
        - The land management and conservation lens ties directly to Climate Change. The debate over preserving wildlands vs. developing them is central to climate resilience, environmental stewardship, and sustainability.
        - Indigenous land rights and the question of "whose land is it?" are at the core of the Crazy Mountains dispute. This article highlights issues of equity, cultural respect, and inclusion of Indigenous voices in land management decisions and reinforces the importance of acknowledging and respecting historically silenced communities.

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- Vocabulary/Grammar Quizzes
- Reading Responses
- Comprehension Questions
- Summary Writing
- Think/Pair/Share

- Exit Tickets/Closure
- Levels of Understanding

Summative Assessments

- On-Demand Reading Assessment with multiple-choice and short constructed response questions
- *Wild River* Project

Common Benchmark Assessments:

- IXL Diagnostic

Alternative Assessments:

- Modified Assignments
- *Wild River* Essay

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials
Text Resources: • 9/11 Activity- "Boatlift" Video • *Wild River* by Rodman Philbrick • "Whose Crazies Are They? How the Crazy Mountains Became Ground Zero in Montana's Most Vexing Land Debate" by by Atmanda Egger • The 1972 Andes Flight Disaster • Teacher chosen texts based on the student population.
Supplemental Resources • CommonLit • IXL • Vocabulary Workshop (online resources) • Learning Ally

Accommodations and Modifications:
Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,
Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Small group/One to one
- Additional time
- Review of directions
- Student restates information
- Space for movement or breaks
- Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts
- Preferential seating
- Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task
- Checklists
- Immediate feedback
- Graphic Organizers
- Audiobooks
- Chapter Summaries and Notes

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts

- Personal Glossary
- Extended Time
- Printed copies of notes
- Simplified/Verbal Instructions
- Visual learning, including graphic organizers
- Use of cognates to increase comprehension
- Teacher modeling
- Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills
- Scaffolding
- Think-pair-share
- Cooperative learning groups
- Audiobooks
- Chapter Summaries and Notes

Students at Risk of Failure

- Home/School Connection
- Homogeneous Grouping
- Supplemental Instruction
- Think-Pair-Share
- Small Group Instruction
- Work Alone Choice vs. Group Work Choice
- Graphic Organizers
- Audiobooks
- Chapter Summaries and Notes

Students with 504 Plans

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.

504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

- Homogeneous Grouping
- Small Group In-Depth Instruction
- Differentiated Online Practice
- Enrichment Activities

Unit 2

Desired Results

Unit 2: Moments That Matter: Crafting Powerful Narratives Through Prompts

Unit Summary: This unit will focus on students learning how to use prompts to generate ideas, develop strong story elements, and organize their writing effectively. Emphasis is placed on crafting vivid details, clear perspectives, and purposeful storytelling. By the end of the unit, students will be able to create well-developed narratives.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.

D. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.

L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

C. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).

D. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

E. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

W.NW.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

C. Use 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.

D. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

E. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

9.4.8.CI.4: Explore the role of creativity and innovation in career pathways and industries.

9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

Computer Science & Design Thinking *(CS & DT)*:

8.1.8.DA.3: Identify the appropriate tool to access data based on its file format.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

6.3.8.CivicsPD.3: Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues.

Learning Targets

Unit Essential Questions:

- How do writers vary their writing for different purposes and audiences?
- What role do grammar and mechanics play in crafting a solid piece of writing?
- What elements contribute to a compelling story, and how do they do so?
- How do authors develop ideas, characters, and events within the text?

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- A writer's voice and word choice must be deliberate so his/her message is clearly conveyed and the tone used must be appropriate to the writing task.
- Comprehension of the story to note the setting, point of view, character traits, plot, and writer's style are necessary to effectively create an ending to a story.
- Transition words or phrases must be used to assist with the organization and flow of the writing.

• What is the author's point of view? • What brings a character to life?	• When writing in an academic setting, the rules of Standard English must be applied. • Writing is never 'done' and can always be improved. It is a recursive process, so writers can move from stage to stage, either forward or backward.
Vocabulary/Grammar: Vocabulary: • *Vocabulary Workshop* • *Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction* Grammar: • *Grammar for Writing* ○ Chapter 8 Academic Vocabulary: narrative, character development, point of view, setting, sensory details, dialogue, plot diagram, exposition, rising action, climax, conflict, falling action, resolution	
Students will be able to: • Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters. • Organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. • Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. • Use 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. • Use descriptive details and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.	

- Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
- Analyze how particular elements of a text interact across multiple texts.
- Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums, including the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (a narrative in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.
- Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
- Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use common Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word
- Consult reference materials to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- Check the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase
- Effectively use verbs in the active and passive voice.
- Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.
- Punctuate dialogue correctly.

Learning Activities: *Potential Learning Activities can include:*

- Mini Lessons from Grammar for Writing
- Mini Lessons from Vocabulary Workshop or *Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction*
- Establish each student's prior understanding of material through a relatable hook.
- Engage in whole-class reading of short stories.
- Execute standards-based mini-lessons to develop skills and strategies for narrative writing.
- Engage in protected time for independent reading and writing.
- Confer individually with the teacher.
- Engage in small-group writing skills-based instruction.
- Share and collaborate with assigned partners.
- Demonstrate understanding through various assessments.

- Practice narrative skills through models and writing activities.
- Plan, revise and edit writing as part of the writing process.

To satisfy the laws related to *Amistad & Holocaust*, *Asian American & Pacific Islanders*, *Climate Change*, *LGBTQ and People with Disabilities*, *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]* in the state of New Jersey, teachers must implement at least one of the following texts, activities, or approaches in their lesson planning:

- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - "Stray" by Cynthia Rylant
        - The story encourages students to consider compassion, fairness, and the ethical treatment of vulnerable beings. Doris advocates for the stray dog despite others' objections, demonstrating empathy and social responsibility.
        - Students examine themes of empathy, compassion, and advocacy as Doris demonstrates care and concern for a vulnerable stray animal. Through discussion and writing, students consider how individuals can act with kindness and responsibility toward those in need and how perspectives can change through understanding and empathy.

Assessment Evidence
Formative Assessments: • Vocabulary/Grammar Quizzes • Writing Practices • Think/Pair/Share • Exit Tickets/Closure • Levels of Understanding
Summative Assessments: • Narrative On Demand

Common Benchmark Assessments:

- IXL
- All ELA 8 Summative Assessments

Alternative Assessments:

- Modified Assignments
- Narrative Continuation Project

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

Text Resources:

- "Stray" by Cynthia Rylant
- Various Writing Prompts and short story starters

Supplemental Resources:

IXL
CommonLit
Learning Ally
Vocabulary Workshop (online resources)

Accommodations and Modifications:
Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Small group/One to one

- Additional time
- Review of directions
- Student restates information
- Space for movement or breaks
- Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts
- Preferential seating
- Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task
- Checklists
- Immediate feedback
- Graphic Organizers
- Outlines

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts
- Personal Glossary
- Extended Time
- Simplified/Verbal Instructions
- Visual learning, including graphic organizers
- Use of cognates to increase comprehension
- Teacher modeling
- Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills
- Scaffolding
- Think-pair-share
- Cooperative learning groups
- Outlines

- Modified Assignment

Students at Risk of Failure

- Home/School Connection
- Homogeneous Grouping
- Supplemental Instruction
- Think-Pair-Share
- Small Group Instruction
- Work Alone Choice vs. Group Work Choice
- Graphic Organizers
- Outlines

Students with 504 Plans

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.
504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

- Homogeneous Grouping
- Small Group In-Depth Instruction
- Differentiated Online Practice
- Enrichment Activities and Opportunities

Unit 3

Desired Results

Unit 3 Title: Reading Nonfiction Texts

Unit Summary: In this unit, students will engage in close reading and thoughtful analysis of nonfiction mentor texts. Students will examine how authors craft arguments by employing rhetorical appeals and strategic techniques to influence their audiences. Students will evaluate the strength and relevance of evidence, analyze the coherence of reasoning, and develop a deeper understanding of how effective arguments are constructed and conveyed.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.

- C. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
- F. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
- G. Recognize spelling conventions.

L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

- A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
- B. Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.

RI.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

RI.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.

RI.AA.8.7. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

SL.ES.8.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

9.1.8.FP.6: Compare and contrast advertising messages to understand what they are trying to accomplish.

9.1.8.FP.7: Identify the techniques and effects of deceptive advertising.

9.2.8.CAP.4: Explain how an individual's online behavior (e.g., social networking, photo exchanges, video postings) may impact opportunities for employment or advancement.

9.4.8.DC.1: Analyze the resource citations in online materials for proper use.

9.4.8.DC.2: Provide appropriate citation and attribution elements when creating media products (e.g., W.6.8).

9.4.8.DC.5: Manage digital identity and practice positive online behavior to avoid inappropriate forms of self-disclosure.

9.4.8.DC.6: Analyze online information to distinguish whether it is helpful or harmful to reputation.

9.4.8.IML.1: Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.

9.4.8.IML.2: Identify specific examples of distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of information.

9.4.8.IML.3: Create a digital visualization that effectively communicates a data set using formatting techniques such as form, position, size, color, movement, and spatial grouping (e.g., 6.SP.B.4, 7.SP.B.8b).

9.4.8.IML.4: Ask insightful questions to organize different types of data and create meaningful visualizations.

9.4.8.IML.5: Analyze and interpret local or public data sets to summarize and effectively communicate the data.

9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, 2.1.8.CHSS/IV.8.AI.1, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8).

9.4.8.IML.9: Distinguish between ethical and unethical uses of information and media (e.g., 1.5.8.CR3b, 8.2.8.EC.2).

9.4.8.IML.10: Examine the consequences of the uses of media (e.g., RI.8.7).

9.4.8.IML.12: Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.

9.4.8.TL.3: Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally.

9.4.8.TL.4: Synthesize and publish information about a local or global issue or event (e.g., MS- LS4-5,6.1.8.CivicsPI.3).

Computer Science & Design Thinking (*CS & DT*):

8.1.8.DA.1: Organize and transform data collected using computational tools to make it usable for a specific purpose.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

6.3.8.CivicsPD.1: Deliberate on a public issue affecting an upcoming election, consider opposing arguments, and develop a reasoned conclusion.

6.3.8.CivicsPD.3: Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues.

Learning Targets	
Unit Essential Questions: • How can persuasive techniques such as ethos, pathos, and logos strengthen or weaken an argument? • What criteria should be used to evaluate the credibility and reliability of sources in argumentative writing? • What strategies can writers use to effectively organize and structure an argumentative essay? • How does understanding your audience impact the effectiveness of your argument? • What role does evidence play in supporting claims and counterclaims in argumentative writing? • How can language and tone influence the persuasiveness of an argument? • How do ethical considerations influence the development and presentation of arguments? • In what ways can argumentative writing contribute to constructive dialogue and informed decision-making in society?	**Unit Enduring Understandings:** • Students will understand how persuasive techniques such as ethos, pathos, and logos are used to effectively convey arguments and influence audiences. • Students will develop the ability to critically analyze texts to identify arguments, evidence, and logical reasoning, distinguishing between strong and weak arguments. • Effective arguments are deliberately crafted; authors use rhetorical appeals and strategic techniques to shape audience perception and influence thinking. • Critical readers actively interrogate texts, evaluating the quality, relevance, and sufficiency of evidence rather than accepting claims at face value. • Authors make purposeful choices in structure, language, and evidence to achieve specific effects and advance their intended message. • Understanding how arguments work empowers readers to become more discerning consumers of information in an increasingly complex media landscape.

	• Skilled analysis of nonfiction texts deepens comprehension and enables readers to engage thoughtfully with real-world issues and perspectives.
Vocabulary/Grammar: • Vocabulary Workshop • *Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction* Academic Vocabulary: • Argument, Claim, Counterclaim, Evidence, Reasoning, Persuasive Techniques, Rebuttal, Credibility, Bias, Audience, Context, Ethos, Pathos, Logos, Plagiarism Grammar • Grammar for Writing Ch. 8	
Students will be able to: • Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections that strongly support an analysis. • Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details • Provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. • Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure. • Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. • Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced. • Analyze and reflect on informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the	

texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

Learning Activities: *Potential Learning Activities can include:*

- Anticipation Guide
- Engage in whole-class reading
- Execute standards-based mini-lessons to develop skills and strategies:
    - Logical Appeals (Ethos, Logos, Pathos, Kairos)
    - Argument Structure
    - Argumentative/Persuasive Techniques (i.e. counterarguments/counterclaims)
    - Evaluating a Thesis (Grammar Resource pg. 129)
- Identify and employ the key skills of reading at grade-level complexity.
- Engage in protected time for independent reading.
- Confer individually with the teacher.
- Engage in small-group reading skills-based instruction.
- Share and collaborate with assigned partners.
- Experience activities with partners where critical reading skills are discussed as they relate to argumentation and persuasion.
- Demonstrate understanding through various assessments.

To satisfy the laws related to *Amistad & Holocaust*, *Asian American & Pacific Islanders*, *Climate Change*, *LGBTQ and People with Disabilities*, *Diversity*, *Equity & Inclusion [DEI]* in the state of New Jersey, teachers must implement at least one of the following texts, activities, or approaches in their lesson planning:

- LGBTQ+ and People with Disabilities, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
    - “Opinion: High school football is a dangerous and unnecessary sport”
        - The discussion of permanent injuries and brain trauma can foster conversations about empathy, accessibility, and the experiences of individuals whose disabilities result from injury or illness.

        - Students evaluate competing perspectives regarding safety, tradition, and personal choice. They consider how communities balance individual freedoms with collective well-being and how differing viewpoints deserve respectful consideration.
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)
    - "Instagram Influencers"
        - The text can support conversations about representation, identity, beauty standards, cultural perspectives, bias, and whose voices are amplified on social media platforms.
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)
    - "Violent Video Games: Just play the game and stop the blame"
        - The article explores differing perspectives about the causes of violence, media influence, and societal responsibility. It encourages students to evaluate evidence, consider multiple viewpoints, and engage in respectful discourse about controversial topics.

Assessment Evidence
Formative Assessments: • IXL • Think, Pair, Share • Turn and Talk • Group Work/Informal Discussions • Closure/Exit Tickets • Levels of Understanding • Minute Writes • Class Polls • Kahoot/BlookIt/Gimkit • Minor: Rhetorical Appeals and Argument Structures and Techniques

- Minor: Timed Writing

Summative Assessments:

- Nonfiction Reading Assessment (multiple choice)

Common Benchmark Assessments:

- IXL
- Vocabulary Assessment
- All ELA 8 Summative Assessments

Alternate Assessments:

- Nonfiction Reading Project

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

Mentor Texts:

- "Violent Video Games: Just play the game and stop the blame"
- "Instagram Influencers"
- "Opinion: High school football is a dangerous and unnecessary sport"
- Common Lit
- Teacher chosen texts based on the student population.

Accommodations and Modifications:
Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Small group/One to one
- Additional time
- Review of directions
- Student restates information
- Space for movement or breaks
- Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts
- Preferential seating
- Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task
- Checklists
- Immediate feedback
- Graphic Organizers
- Outlines

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts
- Personal Glossary
- Extended Time
- Simplified/Verbal Instructions
- Visual learning, including graphic organizers
- Use of cognates to increase comprehension
- Teacher modeling
- Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills
- Scaffolding
- Think-pair-share

- Cooperative learning groups
- Outlines

Students at Risk of Failure

- Home/School Connection
- Homogeneous Grouping
- Supplemental Instruction
- Think-Pair-Share
- Small Group Instruction
- Work Alone Choice vs. Group Work Choice
- Graphic Organizers
- Outlines

Students with 504 Plans

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.
504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

- Homogeneous Grouping
- Small Group In-Depth Instruction
- Differentiated Online Practice
- Enrichment Activities

Unit 4

Desired Results

Unit 4: Crafting Compelling Arguments

This unit teaches students how to analyze and create effective persuasive arguments. Students examine how authors use claims, evidence, and reasoning to influence an audience. They practice writing their own arguments with clear structure and strong support. By the end, students develop skills in critical thinking and persuasive communication.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.

E. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.

F. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.

L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

C. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).

D. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

E. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary)

RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.

RI.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.

RI.AA.8.7. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced. 

RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.:

W.AW.8.1. Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

A. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

D. Establish and maintain a formal or academic style, approach, and form.

E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

SL.II.8.2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation. 

SL.ES.8.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

SL.PI.8.4. 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.

SL.UM.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, 2.1.8.CHSS/IV.8.AI.1, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8).

9.4.8.CT.1: Evaluate diverse solutions proposed by a variety of individuals, organizations, and/or agencies to a local or global problem, such as climate change, and use critical thinking skills to predict which one(s) are likely to be effective (e.g., MS-ETS1-2).

9.4.8.IML.1: Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information. 9.4.8.IML.2: Identify specific examples of distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of information. 9.4.8.TL.2: Gather data and digitally represent information to communicate a real-world problem (e.g., MS-ESS3-4, 6.1.8.EconET.1, 6.1.8.CivicsPR.4). 9.4.8.TL.3: Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally. 9.4.8.TL.4: Synthesize and publish information about a local or global issue or event (e.g., MSLS4-5, 6.1.8.CivicsPI.3). 9.4.8.TL.6: Collaborate to develop and publish work that provides perspectives on a real-world problem. 9.4.8.IML.12: Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.
Computer Science & Design Thinking (*CS & DT*): 8.1.8.DA.1: Organize and transform data collected using computational tools to make it usable for a specific purpose.
Interdisciplinary Connections: 6.3.8.CivicsPD.1: Deliberate on a public issue affecting an upcoming election, consider opposing arguments, and develop a reasoned conclusion. 6.3.8.CivicsPD.2: Propose and defend a position regarding a public policy issue at the appropriate local, state, or national level. 6.3.8.CivicsPD.3: Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues.

Learning Targets	
Unit Essential Questions: • How will I know if I have convinced my audience? • What are the main characteristics of an argumentative essay?	**Unit Enduring Understandings:** • Writers need to organize ideas into a proper format in order to create a strong argument. • Strong writers use ethos, pathos, and logos, to persuade readers in argumentative writing.

• How is argumentative writing similar or different from other genres of writing? • Which strategies do I notice when reading arguments that make the writing stronger? • When reading arguments and ads are writers using ethos, pathos, or logos, to persuade readers? • What strategies can I use to make my writing strong and organized? • Who are the likely readers or audiences for this form of writing? • What kind of voice would be most effective for this form of writing? • How can I check my sources to know their information is credible when proving a position with strong reasons with evidence? • How do I convince my reader that my position is valid? • When reading or writing an essay where can I find the position and reasons stated as the thesis? • How, when, and why should I include counter arguments in my argumentative writing? • Is it necessary to have a rebuttal to counter arguments? • How can I use a call to action in the conclusion of my writing to make a strong point?	• Writers find strong evidence to support their reasons by conducting research only using credible sources. • When writing most arguments writers should use a formal, persuasive voice. • Evidence should be strong enough to support reasons when creating an argument. • When reading arguments, readers should check evidence for credibility. • When reading arguments readers should be able to note if it is a strong argument by tracing the strategies used to develop the argument. • Counter arguments with rebuttals make a writer's argument stronger by acknowledging and refuting the opposition. • Writers of persuasive texts and ads use ethos, pathos, and logos, to convince readers. • A thesis contains the position and reasons in an argument essay.
Vocabulary/Grammar: • *Vocabulary for Writing:* Chapter 8	

- *Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction*
- From *Grammar for Writing*

Academic Vocabulary: ethos, logos, pathos, claim, counterclaim, figurative language, evidence, refute, perspective, transition, word choice, voice, style, tone, position, thesis

Students will be able to:

- Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details.
- Provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- Analyze how particular elements of a text interact.
- Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.
- Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops, and presents ideas.
- Analyze how an author establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.
- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use common Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word.
- Consult reference materials to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- Check the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use punctuation to indicate a pause or break.
- Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
- Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats and evaluate the motives behind its presentation.
- Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

- Present claims and findings, emphasizing 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, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Learning Activities: *Potential Learning Activities can include:*

- Mini Lessons from Grammar for Writing
- Mini Lessons from Vocabulary Workshop
- Establish each student's prior understanding of material through a relatable hook.
- Engage in whole-class reading of short stories.
- Execute standards-based mini-lessons to develop skills and strategies for argumentative writing.
- Engage in protected time for independent reading and writing.
- Confer individually with the teacher.
- Engage in small-group writing skills-based instruction.
- Share and collaborate with assigned partners.
- Demonstrate understanding through various assessments.
- Practice narrative skills through models and writing activities.
- Plan, revise and edit writing as part of the writing process.

To satisfy the laws related to *Amistad & Holocaust*, *Asian American & Pacific Islanders*, *Climate Change*, *LGBTQ and People with Disabilities*, *Diversity*, *Equity & Inclusion [DEI]* in the state of New Jersey, teachers must implement at least one of the following texts, activities, or approaches in their lesson planning:

- Students' argument project topics may relate to any of the above. For example, students may be encouraged to explore controversial ideas that deal with any of the above topics.

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- Ethos, Pathos, Logos Minor
- Vocabulary/Grammar Minor
- Evidence Organizers
- Writing Practices
- Think/Pair/Share
- Exit Tickets/Closure
- Levels of Understanding

Summative Assessments:

- Argument Presentation
- Argument On Demand Major

Common Benchmark Assessments:

- IXL Diagnostics

Alternative Assessments:

- Modified Assessments

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials
Text Resources: • Teacher-selected articles • Library database curated articles • Student found articles per topic (credible online sources) • Potential teacher model topics include: mindset, technology/social media, sports
Additional Resources: • IXL

- CommonLit
- Learning Ally
- Vocabulary Workshop (online resources)

Accommodations and Modifications:
Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,
Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Small group/One to one
- Additional time
- Review of directions
- Student restates information
- Space for movement or breaks
- Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts
- Preferential seating
- Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task
- Checklists
- Immediate feedback
- Graphic Organizers
- Outlines

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts
- Personal Glossary
- Extended Time
- Simplified/Verbal Instructions
- Visual learning, including graphic organizers
- Use of cognates to increase comprehension
- Teacher modeling
- Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills
- Scaffolding
- Think-pair-share
- Cooperative learning groups
- Outlines
- Presentation samples

Students at Risk of Failure

- Home/School Connection
- Homogeneous Grouping
- Supplemental Instruction
- Think-Pair-Share
- Small Group Instruction
- Work Alone Choice vs. Group Work Choice
- Outlines
- Graphic Organizers

Students with 504 Plans

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.
504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

- Homogeneous Grouping
- Small Group In-Depth Instruction
- Differentiated Online Practice
- Enrichment Opportunities

Unit 5

Desired Results

Unit 5: Shifting Views: Exploring Perspective Through Book Clubs

Unit Summary: This unit encourages 8th-grade students to explore how perspective shapes stories through collaborative book clubs. Students read and discuss texts in small groups, analyzing different characters' viewpoints and how they influence the narrative. Through discussions and written responses, students compare perspectives and deepen their understanding of theme and character. By the end, students develop stronger analytical and communication skills while learning to consider multiple viewpoints.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.

A. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.

L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

C. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).

D. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

E. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.

B. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

D. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

RL.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.CI.8.2. Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

RL.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).

RL.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums, including the representation/s or various perspectives of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.

RL.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.

SL.PE.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

A. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

B. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

C. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

D. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:
9.4.8.CI.1: Assess data gathered on varying perspectives on causes of climate change (e.g., cross cultural, gender-specific, generational), and determine how the data can best be used to design multiple potential solutions.
9.4.8.CT.1: Evaluate diverse solutions proposed by a variety of individuals, organizations, and/or agencies to a local or global problem, such as climate change, and use critical thinking skills to predict which one(s) are likely to be effective.
9.4.8.CT.2: Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option.
9.4.8.GCA.1: Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect (e.g., 1.5.8.C1a).
9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.
Computer Science & Design Thinking (*CS & DT***):**
8.2.8.ITH.1: Explain how the development and use of technology influences economic, political, social, and cultural issues.
8.2.8.ITH.2: Compare how technologies have influenced society over time.
8.2.8.EC.1: Explain ethical issues that may arise from the use of new technologies.
Interdisciplinary Connections:
6.1.8.EconNE.4.b: Analyze how technological innovations affected the status and social class of different groups of people and explain the outcomes that resulted.

Learning Targets	
Unit Essential Questions: • How do different perspectives shape our understanding of a story? • In what ways do characters develop over the course of a narrative?	**Unit Enduring Understandings:** • Readers read to understand themes and characters to make better decisions in life and learn applicable lessons. • Readers make connections with characters to learn more about themselves.

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- How can themes be identified and what role do they play in literature?
- How can collaboration enhance our comprehension and interpretation of texts?
- How can reading expand our vocabulary?
- How can context help a reader determine the meaning of a word?
- How can knowledge of Latin and Greek roots help a reader determine the meaning of a word without context?
- Why is it important to use proper grammar in speech and writing?
- Why does punctuation matter?

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- People read for a variety of reasons including desire to think about new ideas, improve themselves, entertain themselves and as a form of relaxation.
- Readers choose books that are just right for them depending on content, characters, and plot.
- Good readers read with focus on meaning, while building reading stamina.

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Vocabulary/Grammar:

- *Vocabulary Workshop*:
- *Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction*

from *Grammar for Writing*:

- Chapter 8: Verbs

Academic Vocabulary: point of view, theme, dialogue, citation, characterization

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Students will be able to:

- Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

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- Create a theme of a literary text and explain how it is conveyed through particular details.
- Craft an objective summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- Analyze how particular elements of a text work together to affect the plot and characters to create conflict, character traits, tone, or mood of a work.
- Explain how an author develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters through the use of literary devices.
- Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
- Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use common Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word
- Consult reference materials to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- Check the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase
- Interpret figures of speech in context.
- Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
- Distinguish among the connotations and denotations of words
- Come to discussions prepared, having read material and draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from the text to reflect on ideas under discussion.
- Follow rules for discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
- Acknowledge new information expressed by others and comment on their opinions with your own
- Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives)

Learning Activities: *Potential Learning Activities can include:*

- Mini Lessons from Grammar for Writing
- Mini Lessons from Vocabulary Workshop

- Creation of group reading calendars to create goals and track them
- Read-aloud sessions and class discussions
- Focused activities on perspective, character and theme in the read-aloud novel
- Focused activities on perspective, character and theme in book club books
- Book club discussions
- Reading responses on various mini lesson skills
- Synthesize understanding with a One Pager Project
- Oral presentation of ideas to the class

To satisfy the laws related to *Amistad & Holocaust*, *Asian American & Pacific Islanders*, *Climate Change*, *LGBTQ and People with Disabilities*, *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]* in the state of New Jersey, teachers must implement at least one of the following texts, activities, or approaches in their lesson planning:

- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli
        - The novel challenges conformity and encourages students to value individuality, celebrate differences, and examine how communities treat those who do not fit social norms.
- Climate Change and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - *Wildfire* by Rodman Philbrick
        - The novel sheds light on wildfires being natural disasters. While the story doesn't lecture about global warming, it provides a natural entry point into discussions of how climate change has increased wildfire intensity and frequency. It is an excellent text for environmental literacy and climate justice conversations.
        - The novel highlights how two kids from different backgrounds must rely on each other to survive, showing that collaboration, equity, and valuing differences are critical.
- LGBTQ and People with Disabilities and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - *House Arrest* by K.A. Holt

        - Timothy's baby brother suffers from a severe chronic illness, placing disability and healthcare struggles at the forefront. The book raises awareness of equity in healthcare, invisible burdens, and stigma associated with medical conditions.
        - Economic inequality and social justice are woven into the story. Timothy steals only to save his brother, highlighting inequities in healthcare access and poverty. The novel shows the importance of empathy, compassion, and inclusion for families struggling with circumstances outside their control.
- Climate Change and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - *Two Degrees* by Alan Gratz
        - The book explicitly dramatizes the dangers of global warming, wildfires, hurricanes, and melting ice. It directly supports teaching of climate literacy.
        - The three protagonists represent different geographies and identities, showing how climate change is a global issue affecting people differently. The story emphasizes empathy, interconnection, fairness, and justice.
- LGBTQ and People with Disabilities and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - *Mockingbird* by Kathryn Erskine
        - Caitlin's perspective as a child with Asperger's syndrome. It provides direct representation of a neurodiverse character, highlighting her struggles with social interaction, emotions, and acceptance.
        - The narrative emphasizes inclusion, understanding differences, empathy, and community healing. It challenges readers to think about how schools and communities include (or exclude) neurodiverse individuals.
- Amistad & Holocaust, LGBTQ and People with Disabilities and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - *The Selection* by Kiera Cass
        - The novel explores class inequality, privilege, and social hierarchy through the caste system.
        - Students can analyze how opportunity is shaped by wealth and social status.
        - Discussions can focus on fairness, discrimination, and unequal access to power.
        - While LGBTQ+ themes are not central, the novel can support conversations about gender expectations, identity, and societal pressures regarding relationships and roles.

        - Students can examine how societies enforce traditional norms.
        - The rigid caste structure and government control allow comparisons to historical systems of oppression and loss of individual freedoms.
        - Students can discuss how authoritarian governments maintain control over populations.
- Climate Change and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - *Alone* by Megan E. Freeman
        - Strong connection through emotional health, trauma, isolation, anxiety, and resilience.
        - Students can discuss how prolonged isolation affects mental well-being.
        - Supports social-emotional learning and empathy development.
        - Survival themes naturally connect to environmental disasters, preparedness, and human vulnerability.
        - Students can discuss how environmental crises impact communities and individuals.
- Climate Change and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - *Canyon's Edge* by Dusti Bowling
        - The novel directly addresses grief, trauma, PTSD, anxiety, and emotional healing.
        - Students can discuss invisible disabilities and mental health awareness.
        - Wilderness survival and environmental dangers provide strong opportunities to discuss drought, extreme weather, wildfires, and environmental stewardship.
        - Students can examine how humans interact with nature and environmental risk.

Assessment Evidence
Formative Assessments: • Book Club Discussions • Weekly Book Club Work • Comprehension Checks • Reading Responses • Vocabulary/Grammar Quizzes

- Think/Pair/Share
- Exit Tickets/Closure
- Levels of Understanding

Summative Assessments:

- One Pager or Group Presentation
- Vocabulary / Grammar Test
- On-demand Reading Assessment with multiple choice and short constructed response questions

Common Benchmark Assessments:

- IXL
- All ELA 8 Summative Assessments

Alternative Assessments:

- One Pager or Group Presentation

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials
Read Aloud: *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli (or teacher chosen novel based on student population)
Book Club Choices: *Teachers may choose additional titles to fit the student population.*** • *Wildfire* by Rodman Philbrick • *Wilder Boys* by Brandon Wallace • *House Arrest* by K.A. Holt • *Two Degrees* by Alan Gratz • *Mockingbird* by Kathryn Erskine • *Free Lunch* by Rex Ogle • *Fuzzy Mud or Holes* by Louis Sachar

- *The Selection* by Kiera Cass
- *Alone* by Megan E. Freeman
- *Canyon's Edge* by Dusti Bowling
- *Lockdown* by Alexander Gordon Smith
- *City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau

Supplemental Materials

- IXL
- CommonLit
- Learning Ally
- Vocabulary Workshop or Words Their Way
- Sadlier Vocabulary/Grammar Worksheets & Online Resources

Accommodations and Modifications:
Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,
Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Small group/One to one
- Additional time
- Review of directions
- Student restates information
- Space for movement or breaks
- Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts

- Preferential seating
- Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task
- Checklists
- Immediate feedback
- Audiobooks
- Graphic Organizers
- Chapter Summaries and Notes
- Group work

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts
- Personal Glossary
- Extended Time
- Simplified/Verbal Instructions
- Visual learning, including graphic organizers
- Use of cognates to increase comprehension
- Teacher modeling
- Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills
- Scaffolding
- Think-pair-share
- Cooperative learning groups
- Audiobooks
- Chapter Summaries and notes

Students at Risk of Failure

- Home/School Connection
- Homogeneous Grouping
- Supplemental Instruction
- Think-Pair-Share
- Small Group Instruction
- Work Alone Choice vs. Group Work Choice
- Audiobooks
- Graphic Organizer
- Chapter summaries and notes

Students with 504 Plans

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.
504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

- Homogeneous Grouping
- Small Group In-Depth Instruction
- Differentiated Online Practice
- Enrichment Activities

Unit 6

Desired Results

Unit 6 Title: Explanatory/Informative Writing

Unit Summary: This unit teaches students how to write clear and informative texts. Students learn to develop strong thesis statements, organize ideas logically, and support their writing with evidence. They practice explaining topics in a structured and engaging way. By the end, students strengthen their ability to inform and explain effectively in writing.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.

B. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.

L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

A. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension.
B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
C. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
D. Use precise language and domain/grade-level- specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
E. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.
F. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.

W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

W.WR.8.5. 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.

- There is no change from the prior standard.

W.RW.8.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self- correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

9.1.8.CR.2: Compare various ways to give back through strengths, passions, goals, and other personal factors. 9.1.8.PB.5: Identify factors that affect one's goals, including peers, culture, location, and past experiences.
Computer Science & Design Thinking (*CS & DT*): 8.2.8.ITH.1: Explain how the development and use of technology influences economic, political, social, and cultural issues. 8.2.8.ITH.2: Compare how technologies have influenced society over time.
Interdisciplinary Connections: 6.2.8.CivicsHR.3.a: Compare and contrast the rights and responsibilities of free men, women, slaves, and foreigners in the political, economic, and social structures of classical civilizations. 6.2.8.HistoryUP.3.a: Compare and contrast social hierarchies in classical civilizations as they relate to power, wealth, and equality.

Learning Targets	
Unit Essential Questions: • What makes an explanation clear, effective, and engaging? • How can writers use evidence to support and develop their ideas? • Why is organization important when explaining a topic? • How do transitions help guide a reader's understanding? • What does it mean to write in a formal, informative style? • How can writing help us make sense of difficult or complex topics? • How can we use writing to inform others about important events and ideas?	**Unit Enduring Understandings:** • Students will understand that evaluating sources for reliability and bias is necessary when constructing an informed explanation. • Students will understand that evidence must be carefully selected, interpreted, and organized to support clear understanding. • Students will understand that effective explanatory writing clearly introduces a topic, organizes ideas logically, and develops them with relevant evidence. • Students will understand that strong writing uses precise language, formal tone, and appropriate transitions to guide the reader.

	• Students will understand that writing is a process that involves planning, drafting, revising, and refining ideas for clarity and impact.

Vocabulary/Grammar:

- Vocabulary Workshop
- *Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction*

Academic Vocabulary:

- Explanatory Essay, Introduction, Thesis Statement, Body Paragraph, Conclusion, Evidence, Paraphrase, Quotation, Transition, Organization, Clarity, Cohesion, Analysis, Formal Tone

Grammar:

- Grammar for Writing Ch. 8

Students will be able to:

- analyze informational texts and cite relevant textual evidence to support their ideas.
- draw inferences from informational texts and connect those inferences to explicit details in the text.
- interpret text features, including charts, graphs, and diagrams, to build understanding.
- write an informative/explanatory essay that clearly introduces and develops a topic.
- organize ideas and evidence using an appropriate text structure.
- support ideas with relevant facts, details, quotations, and examples.
- use transitions, precise language, and academic vocabulary to clarify ideas.
- maintain a formal style and produce a concluding section that synthesizes information.
- apply the conventions of standard English in writing and speaking.
- strengthen writing through planning, revising, editing, reflection, and feedback.

- write effectively for different tasks, purposes, and audiences over varied time frames.

Learning Activities: *Potential Learning Activities can include:*

- Anticipation Guides
- Text Previewing
- Multimedia supports
- Essay Structure Graphic Organizer
- Sample Essay
- Mini Lessons:
    - Understanding a Prompt
    - Reading and Annotating Sources
    - Writing Topic Sentences
    - Paraphrasing
    - Introducing and Citing Evidence
    - Crafting Analysis
    - Writing an Introduction and a Conclusion

To satisfy the laws related to *Amistad & Holocaust*, *Asian American & Pacific Islanders*, *Climate Change*, *LGBTQ and People with Disabilities*, *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]* in the state of New Jersey, teachers must implement at least one of the following texts, activities, or approaches in their lesson planning:

- Climate Change and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - “Threats to Pollinators” & “Factors Contributing to Bee Decline”
        - Students examine how rising temperatures, habitat loss, extreme weather, and changing ecosystems affect pollinators such as bees and butterflies. This directly supports New Jersey’s climate change education requirements by connecting environmental changes to biodiversity and food systems. Students can discuss how environmental issues affect communities differently, including how food supply and agriculture depend

on healthy pollinator populations. This builds awareness of environmental equity and shared community responsibility.

- Climate Change and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - "Teddy Roosevelt Championed Conservation Efforts" & "The Conservationist"
        - Students examine how Roosevelt's conservation policies helped protect natural resources, national parks, forests, and wildlife. The lesson encourages discussion about environmental responsibility and how conservation efforts continue to impact current conversations about climate change and sustainability.

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- IXL
- Think, Pair, Share
- Turn and Talk
- Group Work/Discussions
- Closure/Exit Tickets
- Levels of Understanding

Summative Assessments:

- Write an explanatory essay

Common Benchmark Assessments:

- IXL

Alternate Assessments:

- n/a

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

- “Teddy Roosevelt Championed Conservation Efforts” & “The Conservationist”
- “Threats to Pollinators” & “Factors Contributing to Bee Decline”
- Teacher chosen texts based on the student population.

Accommodations and Modifications:
Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,
Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Small group/One to one
- Additional time
- Review of directions
- Student restates information
- Space for movement or breaks
- Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts
- Preferential seating
- Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task
- Checklists
- Immediate feedback
- Audio Recording of Shakespeare
- Side by Side Translation

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts
- Personal Glossary
- Extended Time
- Simplified/Verbal Instructions
- Visual learning, including graphic organizers
- Use of cognates to increase comprehension
- Teacher modeling
- Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills
- Scaffolding
- Think-pair-share
- Cooperative learning groups
- Audio Recording of Shakespeare
- Side by Side Translation

Students at Risk of Failure

- Home/School Connection
- Homogeneous Grouping
- Supplemental Instruction
- Think-Pair-Share
- Small Group Instruction
- Work Alone Choice vs. Group Work Choice
- Audio Recording of Shakespeare
- Side by Side Translation

Students with 504 Plans

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.
504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

- Homogeneous Grouping
- Small Group In-Depth Instruction
- Differentiated Online Practice
- Full-text version of Shakespearian

Unit 7

Desired Results

Unit 7: Poems from the Holocaust

Unit Summary: In this unit 8th-grade students will explore the history of the Holocaust through reading. Students will gain background knowledge on the topic and perspectives of the time period. Additionally, the students will read first hand accounts of the experiences in poetry form created by Jewish prisoners of camps in the time period from 1930-1945. They will learn strategies to deeply analyze the poetry of the Holocaust victims such as: speaker, word choice, imagery, figurative language, as well as tone and mood to develop a theme and analyze the deeper meaning of each poem.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

RL.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

RL.TS.8.4. Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.

W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

W.SE.8.6. 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.

SL.UM.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

9.4.8.IML.1: Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.

9.4.8.GCA.1: Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect (e.g., 1.5.8.C1a).

9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, 2.1.8.CHSS/IV.8.AI.1, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8).

9.4.8.IML.12: Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.

9.4.8.TL.3: Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally.

9.4.8.TL.4: Synthesize and publish information about a local or global issue or event (e.g., MS-LS4-5, 6.1.8.CivicsPI.3).

Computer Science & Design Thinking *(CS & DT)*:

8.1.8.DA.3: Identify the appropriate tool to access data based on its file format.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

6.3.8.CivicsPI.3: Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to examine the role of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a local or global issue and share this information with a governmental or nongovernmental organization as a way to gain support for addressing the issue.

6.3.8.CivicsHR.1: Construct an argument as to the source of human rights and how they are best protected.

Learning Targets

Unit Essential Questions:

- What were the social, economic, and political factors in Germany and Europe that contributed to the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party?
- How did the Holocaust impact survivors and their families, both immediately after the war and in the long term? What were the challenges of rebuilding their lives?

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- Readers use strategies to construct the meaning of poetry.
- Reading expands understanding of the world, people, and oneself; deeper understandings are the result of reflecting upon the text, which involves rereading.
- Authors write in poetic forms with different purposes in mind.

• What are the ethical and moral lessons of the Holocaust, and how have they influenced international human rights laws and policies? • Why is it important to remember the Holocaust today? How can education about the Holocaust help prevent future genocides and promote tolerance and empathy? • How do different countries and communities memorialize and commemorate the Holocaust? • In what ways does prejudice, discrimination, and hate speech persist in society today, and how can we confront these issues based on lessons learned from the Holocaust? • How does poetry contribute to our understanding of self, others, and the world? • How does the use of a writer's style and voice develop the theme of a poem? • How do poetic elements such as the speaker, word choice, imagery, figurative language, and tone/mood work together to create meaning in a poem? • What strategy can writers use to organize a strong comparative literary analysis?	• Writing is a multi-stage process; comparative writing is a reflective process that utilizes strategies applied during reading. • People communicate through words and word choice to develop tone and mood which is critical to the effective conveyance of the message in poetry. • Strong voices, cooperation, research, and the use of strong visual materials enhance understanding when presenting. • Literary Analysis essays are used to analyze texts' use of literary elements, devices, or figurative language to develop meaning.
Vocabulary/Grammar: from *Grammar for Writing:* Chapter 8 • *Vocabulary Workshop*: • *Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction*	

Academic Vocabulary

- genocide; anti-semitism; Nazi Party; Final Solution; Death Camp; Ghetto; Resistance

Students will be able to:

- Present claims and findings in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details.
- Use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of a text as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
- Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- With some guidance and support strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks.

Learning Activities: *Potential Learning Activities can include:*

- poems from *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*

    - Read Alouds and Cold Read Practices
- Execute standards-based mini-lessons to develop skills and strategies:
    - Poetry Analysis: SWIFT
    - model poetry analysis using SWIFT
- Engage in protected time for independent reading and writing
- Confer individually with the teacher
- Engage in small-group reading/writing skills-based instruction.
- Work collaboratively to research aspects of the holocaust and develop a slide presentation
- Present findings as a group to your peers

To satisfy the laws related to *Amistad & Holocaust*, *Asian American & Pacific Islanders*, *Climate Change*, *LGBTQ and People with Disabilities*, *Diversity*, *Equity & Inclusion [DEI]* in the state of New Jersey, teachers must implement at least one of the following texts, activities, or approaches in their lesson planning:

- Amistad & Holocaust, LGBTQ and People with Disabilities, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - I Never Saw Another Butterfly Poems from Terezin Concentration Camp by Hana Volavková
        - This text directly fulfills the Holocaust mandate. It provides firsthand evidence of Nazi persecution and explores themes of systemic dehumanization, resistance through creativity, and remembrance of victims. The book encourages historical literacy, empathy, and critical moral reflection, essential components of Holocaust education.
        - Many children in Terezín were marginalized for ethnic, religious, and physical traits, creating a bridge to conversations about the broader impacts of discrimination and exclusion. This supports social-emotional awareness and empathy toward all who experience systemic injustice.
        - The work aligns deeply with DEI principles by humanizing victims of systemic hatred and affirming the universal value of each life. Through poetry and art, students explore identity, empathy, tolerance, and the consequences of prejudice. The poems encourage reflection on how diversity and inclusion counter hate, and how education preserves human dignity and justice.

Assessment Evidence
Formative Assessments: • SWIFT Annotations • Poetry Minor Assessment • Grammar/Vocab Activities • Writing Practices • Think/Pair/Share • Exit Tickets/Closure • Levels of Understanding
Summative Assessments: • Vocabulary Major • Holocaust Presentation/Objective Summaries • Comparative Literary Analysis Essay
Common Benchmark Assessments: • IXL
Alternative Assessments: • Modified Assessments

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials
Text Resources: • I Never Saw Another Butterfly Poems from Terezin Concentration Camp by Hana Volavková • The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Website
Additional Resources: • IXL

- CommonLit
- Learning Ally
- Vocabulary Workshop (online resources)

Accommodations and Modifications:
Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,
Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Small group/One to one
- Additional time
- Review of directions
- Student restates information
- Space for movement or breaks
- Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts
- Preferential seating
- Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task
- Checklists
- Immediate feedback
- Videos
- Audiobooks
- Graphic Organizers
- Outlines

- Notes with summaries and key words

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts
- Personal Glossary
- Extended Time
- Simplified/Verbal Instructions
- Visual learning, including graphic organizers
- Use of cognates to increase comprehension
- Teacher modeling
- Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills
- Scaffolding
- Think-pair-share
- Cooperative learning groups
- Videos
- Audiobooks
- Outlines
- Notes with summaries and key words

Students at Risk of Failure

- Home/School Connection
- Homogeneous Grouping
- Supplemental Instruction
- Think-Pair-Share
- Small Group Instruction

- Work Alone Choice vs. Group Work Choice
- Videos
- Audiobooks
- Graphic Organizers
- Outlines
- Notes with summaries and key words

Students with 504 Plans

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.
504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

- Homogeneous Grouping
- Small Group In-Depth Instruction
- Differentiated Online Practice
- Enrichment Activities
- Extensions where applicable

Unit 8

Desired Results

Unit 8: Reflecting on Life Stories: Reading and Writing Memoirs

Unit Summary: This unit includes reading and writing lessons on the Memoir genre. Students will read a series of vignettes around objects, topics, or experiences from people's lives. Key topics of this unit will include ways writers develop and organize ideas, use descriptive and emotional details, using proper organization and conventions. Concluding the year with the stories and themes of our lives will give students a chance to author life stories that they can take with them as they reflect and grow older.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking

G. Recognize spelling conventions.

L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
B. Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
C. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).

L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
B. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
C. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
D. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronuL.VI.8.4nciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

E. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.

B. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

C. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

D. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

RI.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.

RL.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.

RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

A. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension.

B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

C. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

D. Use precise language and domain/grade-level- specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

E. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.

F. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.

W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

SL.PE.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

A. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

B. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

C. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

D. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

9.1.8.CR.2: Compare various ways to give back through strengths, passions, goals, and other personal factors.

9.1.8.PB.5: Identify factors that affect one's goals, including peers, culture, location, and past experiences.

Computer Science & Design Thinking (*CS & DT***):**

8.2.8.ITH.1: Explain how the development and use of technology influences economic, political, social, and cultural issues.

8.2.8.ITH.2: Compare how technologies have influenced society over time.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

6.1.8.EconNE.4.b: Analyze how technological innovations affected the status and social class of different groups of people and explain the outcomes that resulted.

Learning Targets

Unit Essential Questions:

- How do our confrontations with obstacles help to shape our identity?
- How do our life experiences influence the things we say and do?
- How do people grow from facing obstacles and overcoming them?

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- Even though there are different essay types, the overall organization is similar and have common characteristics like hooks, transitions, introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions, with a lasting impression.

• How do authors use literary devices, themes, and motifs to create a memoir? • How can writers develop themes in their writing?	• Strong writers use strategies to bring meaning to their writing by implementing life experiences to teach readers a lesson and develop the theme. • Effective writers use literary devices like imagery, repetition, dialogue, and figurative language to evoke emotion and connection with their readers. • Life experiences can be documented in memoirs to teach others.
Vocabulary/Grammar: • *Vocabulary Workshop*: • *Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction* from *Grammar for Writing*: • Chapter 8 Academic Vocabulary: memoir, theme, anecdote, characterization, flash back, flash forward, imagery, sensory details, voice, & figurative language	
Students will be able to: • Point out the similarities and differences between memoir writing and narratives. • Utilize flashbacks, figurative language, and higher level academic vocabulary in writing. • Trace the literary elements and organization used to develop a memoir in order to create an effective memoir. • Identify the characteristics of memoirs and how this genre of text brings together informational and narrative details to tell a person's life experiences.	

- Read and comprehend memoirs in order to explain the theme in writing with evidence for support.
- Write a memoir to develop a theme using figurative language, dialogue, and life experiences using a rubric for self assessment.

Learning Activities: *Potential Learning Activities can include:*

- Mini Lessons from Grammar for Writing
- Mini Lessons from Vocabulary Workshop
- Creation of group reading calendars to create goals and track them
- Various activities to introduce dystopian genre
- Read-aloud sessions and class discussions
- Focused activities on perspective, character and theme in the read-aloud novel
- Focused activities on perspective, character and theme in book club books
- Book club discussions
- Reading responses on various mini lesson skills
- Oral presentation of ideas to the class

To satisfy the laws related to *Amistad & Holocaust*, *Asian American & Pacific Islanders*, *Climate Change*, *LGBTQ and People with Disabilities*, *Diversity*, *Equity & Inclusion [DEI]* in the state of New Jersey, teachers must implement at least one of the following texts, activities, or approaches in their lesson planning:

- LGBTQ and People with Disabilities and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - Excerpts from *Things We Keep* Book of Memoirs
        - Memoirs emphasize authentic self-expression and acceptance, often exploring internal and external struggles with identity. When paired with works like *How Beautiful the Ordinary: 12 Stories of Identity* or memoirs of overcoming adversity, this supports the LGBTQ and Disabilities mandate through empathy, inclusion, and visibility.

- The unit's guiding questions ("Which groups define you? Which groups misdefine you?") and activities that examine multiple "sides of self" directly teach DEI principles such as identity awareness, empathy, and the importance of voice and perspective in narrative writing.

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- Memoir Reading Comprehension
- Independent Reading / One Pager
- Writing Responses
- Grammar Activities
- Think/Pair/Share
- Exit Tickets/Closure
- Levels of Understanding

Summative Assessments:

- Memoir Essay
- Reading Comprehension Major
- Vocabulary Assessment

Common Benchmark Assessments:

- IXL

Alternative Assessments:

- Modified excerpts
- Memoir Essay Project

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

Text Resources:

- Excerpts from *Things We Keep* Book of Memoirs
- Memoir Template
- Volar by Judith Ortiz
- Aha Moment by Julia Alvarez
- Teacher chosen texts based on the student population.

Additional Resources:

- IXL
- CommonLit
- Learning Ally
- Vocabulary Workshop (online resources)

Accommodations and Modifications:
Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,
Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:

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- Space for movement or breaks
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- Preferential seating
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- Immediate feedback
- Graphic Organizers
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Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

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- Extended Time
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- Visual learning, including graphic organizers
- Use of cognates to increase comprehension
- Teacher modeling
- Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills
- Scaffolding
- Think-pair-share
- Cooperative learning groups
- Graphic Organizers

Students at Risk of Failure

- Home/School Connection
- Homogeneous Grouping
- Supplemental Instruction

- Think-Pair-Share
- Small Group Instruction
- Work Alone Choice vs. Group Work Choice
- Graphic Organizers
- Outlines

Students with 504 Plans

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.

504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

- Homogeneous Grouping
- Small Group In-Depth Instruction
- Differentiated Online Practice
- Enrichment activities
- Extension assignments

Unit 9

Desired Results

Unit 9 (Alternate for Unit 8) - Connecting to the Ancient World: Greek Myths

Unit Summary: In this unit, students will explore the myths and adventures of Theseus, an Ancient Greek hero. Through interdisciplinary dovetailing with social studies, through close reading and through analysis of the plays *The Road to Athens* and *Lost in the Labyrinth*, students will examine how playwrights adapt traditional myths for modern audiences. Throughout the unit, students will build academic and domain-specific vocabulary through previewing and contextual analysis strategies. They will strengthen reading comprehension skills by identifying key details, analyzing character development, and examining plot structure. As a culminating project, students will demonstrate their understanding of dramatic storytelling by creating an original graphic novel adaptation of a Theseus myth. Incorporating elements from one of the plays as well as the conventions of graphic novels, students will combine visual and textual storytelling techniques to retell a myth in an engaging and creative format

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking

A. Recognize spelling conventions.

L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
B. Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
C. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).

L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
B. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

C. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).

D. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronuL.VI.8.4nciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

E. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.

B. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

C. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

D. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

RL.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

RL.TS.8.4. Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.

RL.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).

RL.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.

W.NW.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
C. Use 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.
D. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
E. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

SL.PE.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

A. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
B. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
C. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

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Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

Computer Science & Design Thinking (*CS & DT***):**

8.2.8.ITH.2: Compare how technologies have influenced society over time.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

6.2.8.HistoryCC.3.a: Determine the extent to which religion, economic issues, and conflict shaped the values and decisions of the classical civilizations.

6.2.8.HistoryUP.3.a: Compare and contrast social hierarchies in classical civilizations as they relate to power, wealth, and equality.

6.2.8.HistoryCA.3.a: Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of Greece, Rome, India, and China over time.

6.3.8.CivicsPI.2: Evaluate the extent to which different forms of government reflect the history and values of various societies (e.g., monarchy, democracy, republic, dictatorship)

Learning Targets

Unit Essential Questions:	**Unit Enduring Understandings:**
• How do myths reflect the values, beliefs, and cultures of the societies that create them? • What qualities make a hero, and how do those qualities change across stories and time periods?	• Myths are powerful stories that communicate cultural values, explain human experiences, and explore universal themes. • Heroes are often defined by their actions, choices, strengths, and flaws rather than by their abilities alone.

• How do playwrights use dialogue, stage directions, and dramatic structure to bring stories to life? • How does understanding vocabulary and context deepen a reader's comprehension of a text? • How can the same story be told effectively through different formats and genres? • How do illustrations and visual elements contribute to storytelling and meaning? • How are these topics interlaced with those that have been learned in social studies classes?	• Readers use vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, and comprehension strategies to construct meaning from complex texts. • Dramatic literature uses unique elements, such as dialogue and stage directions, to develop characters and advance plot. • Authors and playwrights adapt traditional stories in different ways to engage new audiences and emphasize specific themes. • Graphic novels combine visual and textual elements to communicate ideas, develop characters, and tell compelling stories. • Effective storytellers make purposeful choices about structure, language, and visuals to enhance meaning and engage their audience. • Understanding a story deeply enables readers to reinterpret and retell it creatively in new formats.

Vocabulary/Grammar:

- *Vocabulary Workshop*
- *Word Study for Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction*

from *Grammar for Writing*:

- Chapter 8

Academic Vocabulary:

Myth
Hero
Theme
Characterization
Conflict
Dialogue
Stage Directions
Adaptation
Inference
Context Clues

Students will be able to:

- Preview a text and use vocabulary strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases.
- Read and comprehend dramatic texts independently and collaboratively.
- Cite relevant textual evidence to support analysis and responses.
- Analyze how dialogue and stage directions contribute to character development and plot.
- Identify and analyze key story elements, including character, setting, conflict, plot, and theme.
- Explain how myths reflect cultural values, beliefs, and traditions.
- Compare and contrast the portrayal of characters, events, and themes across multiple texts.
- Make inferences and draw conclusions based on textual evidence.
- Summarize important events and ideas from a text objectively.
- Analyze the characteristics and qualities of a hero within mythological literature.
- Evaluate how playwrights adapt traditional myths for dramatic presentation.
- Interpret and analyze visual and textual elements in graphic narratives.
- Plan, draft, revise, and publish a graphic novel adaptation of a myth.
- Incorporate graphic novel conventions, such as panels, captions, dialogue, and illustrations, to enhance storytelling.

- Synthesize information from multiple sources to create an original product.
- Communicate understanding of a text through both written and visual expression.
- Collaborate with peers to discuss ideas, share interpretations, and provide constructive feedback.
- Present creative work clearly and effectively to an audience.

Learning Activities: *Potential Learning Activities can include:*

- Mini Lessons from Grammar for Writing
- Mini Lessons from Vocabulary Workshop
- Preview vocabulary (Gallery Walk)
- Reading/Listening Comprehension (direct questions)
- Read Aloud / Performances
- Creation of a graphic novel

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- LGBTQ and People with Disabilities and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - The Road to Athens (TPT)
        - Discussions of the Paralympic Games, adaptive athletics, and the inclusion of athletes with disabilities provide meaningful opportunities to address disability awareness and inclusion. Teachers may also highlight LGBTQ+ Olympians when examining representation in sports.
        - The Olympics bring together athletes from diverse nations, cultures, and backgrounds. Students can explore themes of global citizenship, respect, fairness, perseverance, and the celebration of human diversity.
- LGBTQ and People with Disabilities and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI]
    - Lost in the Labyrinth (TPT)

- The novel challenges traditional narratives, examines prejudice and power structures, and asks students to reconsider who is labeled as a hero, villain, or outsider.
- The portrayal of the Minotaur encourages students to reflect on how society responds to individuals with differences and the importance of advocacy, acceptance, and dignity.

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- Vocabulary Activities
- Grammar Activities
- Think/Pair/Share
- Exit Tickets/Closure
- Levels of Understanding

Summative Assessments:

- Graphic Novel
- Vocabulary Assessment

Common Benchmark Assessments:

- IXL

Alternative Assessments:

- Children's Book

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

Text Resources:

- The Road to Athens (TPT)
- Lost in the Labyrinth (TPT)

- Graphic Novel Template

Additional Resources:

- IXL
- CommonLit
- Learning Ally
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