

Grade 8 English Language Arts

A. READING: Students read to comprehend, interpret, analyze, evaluate, and appreciate literary and expository texts by using a variety of strategies. They connect essential ideas, evaluate arguments, and analyze the various perspectives and ideas presented in a variety of literary and expository texts.

A1 Interconnected Elements: Comprehension, Vocabulary, *Alphabetic*s, *Fluency*

Students read and make generalizations from texts, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, by applying their knowledge and strategies of comprehension, vocabulary, *alphabetic*s, and *fluency*.

- a. Use a range of before, during, and after *reading strategies* to deepen their understanding of text(s).
- b. Demonstrate ownership of appropriate vocabulary by effectively using a word in different contexts and for different purposes.
- c. Determine the meaning of unknown words by using a variety of strategies including the *connotative* and *denotative* meaning of words.
- d. Use knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon *roots* and *word parts* to maintain fluency and meaning as they read science, social studies, and mathematics texts.
- e. Fluently and accurately read text, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, using appropriate pacing, phrasing, intonation, and expression.
- f. Demonstrate comprehension by summarizing, generalizing, drawing conclusions, making judgments, interpreting text, and synthesizing information within and across texts.

A2 Literary Texts

Students read *fiction*, *nonfiction*, *drama*, and *poetry*, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, and analyze the characteristics, noting how *structural features* and common *literary devices* help shape the reader's response.

- a. Analyze the effect of the qualities of a *character* on the *plot* and on the resolution of the conflict.
- b. Evaluate the structural elements of the *plot*, such as subplots, parallel episodes, and climax; the *plot*'s development; and the way in which conflicts are (or are not) addressed and resolved.
- c. Explain how different points of view can affect the overall theme of the work.
- d. Analyze the *literary devices* that define a writer's style and use those elements to interpret the text.
- e. Identify and analyze recurring *themes* that appear frequently across traditional and contemporary works.
- f. Describe the use of *diction*, *figurative language*, repetition, *rhyme* and *tone* to convey meaning in *poetry*.
- g. Evaluate the characteristics of various genres of literature and their purposes.

A3 Informational Texts

Students read multiple **informational texts**, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, making decisions about usefulness based on purpose, noting how the **text structures** affect the information presented.

- a. Create and revise questions that can be answered by using *text structures* and information found within texts.
- b. Analyze differences in the structures and purposes of varied informational materials.
- c. Evaluate the appropriateness of the evidence presented for an author's conclusions and evaluate whether the author adequately supports inferences.
- d. Draw conclusions about information from multiple texts and support them with evidence from the texts.
- e. Follow multi-step instructions to complete an application or a complex task.

A4 Persuasive Texts

Students evaluate the information in persuasive texts, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, noting how the **structural features** and **rhetorical devices** affect the information and argument(s) presented in these texts.

- a. Explain how organizational patterns shape an author's argument.
- b. Analyze the author's perspective, noting instances of *bias, stereotyping*, and generalizations.
- c. Explain instances of *propaganda* and faulty reasoning.
- d. Evaluate positions presented in text(s) and take a supported stand.
- e. Identify purpose and intended audience of a text.
- f. Identify rhetorical devices an author uses to persuade the reader including *bandwagon, peer pressure, repetition, testimonial, hyperbole, loaded words, transfer, amplification*, and *extended metaphor*.

B. WRITING: Students write to express their ideas and emotions, to describe their experiences, to communicate information, and to present or analyze an argument.

B1 Interconnected Elements

Students use a **writing process** to communicate for a variety of audiences and purposes.

- a. Determine a purpose for writing.
- b. Decide which information is included to achieve the desired purpose.
- c. Revise drafts to improve focus, effect, and *voice* incorporating *peer response* when appropriate.

- d. Edit for correct grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- e. Write to achieve a specific purpose.
- f. Create *legible* final drafts.
- g. Create *legible* final drafts.

B2 Narrative

Students write *narratives* that convey complex ideas, observations, events, or reflections.

- a. Establish a *plot* or other narrative structure, *point of view*, setting, and *conflict*.
- b. Develop *characters*.
- c. Use a range of *narrative strategies* for effect including dialogue and suspense.
- d. Use *stylistic devices* including figurative language and *point of view* to clarify, enhance, and develop ideas.

B3 Argument/Analysis

Students write *academic essays* that state a clear position, supporting the position with relevant evidence.

- a. Summarize and paraphrase and/or explain information from reading, listening, or viewing.
- b. Write essays that support an idea and build a *logical* argument excluding extraneous information and differentiating between facts and opinions.

B4 Persuasive

Students write *persuasive essays* addressed to a specific audience for a particular purpose.

- a. Employ a variety of persuasive techniques, including presenting alternate views objectively or addressing potential counterclaims, in an essay that supports an idea using facts, supported inferences, and/or opinions appropriate to the audience and purpose and is intended to influence the opinions, beliefs, or positions of others.

B5 Practical Application

Students write simple business letters and documents related to career development.

- a. Write information purposefully and succinctly to meet the needs of the audience.
- b. Write to convey specific requests for detailed information.
- c. Follow a conventional format for writing resumes, memoranda, and/or proposals.
- d. Write multi-step directions, with annotation where appropriate, for completing a task.

C. RESEARCH: Students engage in inquiry by developing research questions, accessing and verifying a variety of sources, communicating findings, and applying the conventions of documentation. Students present findings orally, in writing, or using mixed media.

C1 Research

Students propose and revise research questions, collect information from a wide variety of *primary and/or secondary sources*, and follow the conventions of documentation to communicate findings.

- a. Determine the nature and extent of information needed.
- b. Locate and access relevant information.
- c. Demonstrate facility with note-taking, organizing information, and creating bibliographies.
- d. Distinguish between *primary and secondary sources*.
- e. Evaluate and verify the credibility of the information found in *print and non-print sources*.
- f. Use additional sources to resolve contradictory information.
- g. Summarize and interpret information presented in varied sources, and/or from fieldwork, experiments, and interviews.
- h. Present findings by paraphrasing, quoting sources, and using proper *citation*.
- i. Use information ethically and legally.

D. LANGUAGE: Students write and speak using the conventions of *Standard American English*. They apply knowledge of grammar and usage when reading to aid comprehension. They know and apply rules of mechanics and spelling to enhance the effectiveness and clarity of communication.

D1 Grammar and Usage

Students manipulate the parts of speech effectively and employ a variety of sentence structures to communicate.

- a. Use forms of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and their modifiers, adverbs, prepositions, transitions, conjunctions, and interjections correctly.
- b. Use compound complex sentences.
- c. Use active and passive voices effectively.

D2 Mechanics

Students apply the rules of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to communicate effectively.

- a. Use correct capitalization and punctuation including commas and semi-colons.
- b. Correctly spell frequently misspelled words and common *homophones*.

E. LISTENING AND SPEAKING: Students listen to comprehend and speak to communicate effectively.

E1 Listening

Students adjust listening strategies to understand formal and informal discussion, debates or presentations and then apply the information.

- a. Ask appropriate clarifying questions.
- b. Summarize and apply information presented.
- c. Acknowledge and build upon the ideas of others.

E2 Speaking

Students adjust speaking strategies for formal and informal discussions, debates, or presentations appropriate to the audience and purpose.

- a. Organize and present information logically.
- b. Adjust volume, tone, eye contact, and gestures to suit the audience.
- c. Use conventions of *Standard American English*.
- d. Seek feedback and revise to improve effectiveness of communication.
- e. Select appropriate media, relevant to audience and purpose that support oral, written, and visual communication.

F MEDIA: Students recognize and can explain the effects that both *print and non-print sources* have on listeners, viewers, and readers, in order to develop an awareness of the effects that the media have on forming opinions and making decisions.

F1 Analysis of Media

Students identify the various purposes, techniques, and/or effects used to communicate auditory, visual, and written information found in different forms of media.

- a. Describe and evaluate the *text features* of visual and non-visual media.
- b. Explain the role of the media in shaping opinions.
- c. Note instances of *bias, stereotyping, and propaganda*.