

# 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

## English Language Arts

### Key Instructional Activities

- Citing the evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what is explicitly stated and/or implied from a book, article, poem, or play
- Analyzing where materials on the same topic disagree on matters of fact, interpretation, or point of view
- Analyzing how authors support their ideas through word choice, sentence and paragraph structure, and other methods
- Building writing around strong central ideas or points of view; supporting the ideas with sound reasoning and evidence, precise word choices, smooth transitions, and different sentence structures
- Planning and conducting research projects that include several steps and use many credible and documented print and digital sources
- Analyzing the purpose of information presented in diverse media (e.g., print, TV, web) and evaluating its social, political, or commercial motives
- Interpreting figures of speech (e.g., irony, puns) and developing a large vocabulary of general academic words and phrases
- Using strong, active verbs to create a clear picture for the reader (e.g., walk, skip, meander, lurch, limp)
- Presenting findings and claims to others, emphasizing key points with relevant evidence and sound reasoning, adapting speech to the audience and the formality of the setting, and responding to questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas
- Using a range of reading strategies to determine the correct meaning of a word based on the context in which it is used
- Developing a large vocabulary of multi-use academic words and phrases
- Participating in class discussions on various topics, texts, and issues by expressing ideas and building on the ideas of others
- Evaluating the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient
- Writing arguments that provide clear reasons and relevant evidence supported by citations from credible sources
- Writing brief informational reports that examine a topic, have a clear focus, and include relevant facts, details, and quotations
- Writing narratives that develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

To prepare for greater challenges in high school, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students must grapple with major works of fiction and nonfiction. As they work to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, students must also learn to question an author's or speaker's assumptions and assess the accuracy of his or her own claims. They must be able to report findings from their own research and analysis of sources in a clear manner.



HOUSTON COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
HIGH-ACHIEVING STUDENTS

*By the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, all students are expected to:*

- *Use words, patterns in words, and word meanings to read fluently and comprehend effectively;*
- *Apply grade-appropriate language skills in writing;*
- *Self-monitor to correct errors when reading and writing;*
- *Talk with and listen to peers about one's reading and writing to become lifelong readers and writers; and*
- *Use reading and writing to communicate through listening, speaking, and viewing.*

# Helping Your Student in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA

Learning does not end in the classroom. Students need help and support at home to succeed in their studies. Try to create a quiet place for your student to study, and carve out time every day when your student can concentrate on reading and writing uninterrupted by friends, brothers or sisters, or other distractions. Sit down with your student at least once a week for 15 to 30 minutes while he or she works on homework. This will keep you informed about what your student is working on, and it will help you be the first to know if your student needs help with specific topics. By taking these small steps, you will be helping your student become successful both in and outside the classroom.

- Read, read, read! The amount your student reads independently is directly connected to his or her success in school.
- Listen with your student to a television reporter, politician, or other speaker. Ask your student to tell you the speaker's main points. Was the speaker trying to convince the audience of something? How?
- Visit a library or bookstore together and ask the librarian or bookseller to recommend young adult books. To find popular young adult books for your student to read, visit <https://tinyurl.com/y3rjcelh>.
- Make time for conversation at home. Discuss current events, shared interests, and future aspirations for education and career.
- Invite your student to participate in an adult gathering, such as a meal with friends, to practice listening skills and making conversation.
- Practice determining meanings of unknown words when you encounter them in written texts, television shows, radio, etc.
- Provide time and space for your student to read independently. This time should be free from distractions such as television.
- Ask your student what topics, events, or activities he or she likes. Then look for books, magazines, or other materials about those topics that would motivate your student to read.
- It is also helpful when your student sees other people reading at home. You could share what you have read.
- Visit museums, zoos, theaters, historical sites, aquariums, and other educational places to help increase your student's exposure to new knowledge and vocabulary.
- Use technology to help build your student's interest in reading. There are several websites where students can read books or articles online. The computer will help with words the student cannot read independently. Libraries also have computers students can use to access those sites. Feel free to ask a librarian or teacher for suggestions.



# 8<sup>th</sup> ELA System Pacing Overview



This guide provides an overview of what your student will learn in his or her 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts course. It focuses on the key skills your student will learn, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects studied throughout middle school. This guide is based on the state-adopted Georgia Standards of Excellence.

## August - October

### Reading Focus: Literary Nonfiction

### Writing Focus: Memoir

### Performance Goal: Developing a memoir

In this unit, students will cultivate their ability to glean central ideas that are not stated outright and identify and trace implicit arguments, develop the stamina, patience, and analytic presence of mind necessary to read longer nonfiction.

This unit brings together the art of narrative and expository writing, teaching writers to skillfully move between conveying events and experiences and building meaning. Students analyze their life experiences to determine what it is they most want to convey about and make purposeful craft and structure choices to do so.

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
- Analyze how differences in the points of view of characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on *grade 8 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Acquire and accurately use grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

**October - December**

**Reading Focus: Dystopian Book Clubs**

**Writing Focus: Writing A Literary Essay**

**Performance Goal: Developing a literary essay**

In this unit, students learn to talk more deeply about their reading and push themselves to read with greater volume. During the unit, readers will develop skills in reading more complex fiction texts: analyzing symbolism, deepening character analysis, understanding story arcs, reading critically with questions in mind. Meanwhile, students will build on their work with reading notebooks, strengthening their ability to transfer their skills from one context to another, and supporting their increasing independence as readers and thinkers.

This unit builds independence and rigor in essay writing as students are taught high-leverage strategies to help them prepare for the expectations of writing in high school. Students will focus on writing an essay based on the theme of a text, then move to writing an essay that analyzes an author's craft. Finally, they will write an essay comparing two texts.

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
- Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.
- Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works.

- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing & present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- 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 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.

**January - March**

**Reading Focus: Argument Reading**

**Writing Focus: Position Papers: Research and Argument**

**Performance Goal: Developing a research-based argument**

This unit immerses students in reading and research work essential to the work of writing position papers. Students develop as skilled nonfiction readers as well as learning the art of researching critically.

This unit asks students to read widely and deeply about an issue, weigh and evaluate evidence for both sides of that issue, develop a position supported by reasons and evidence, then compose a position paper that takes a clear position while acknowledging alternative points of view. Students learn to contextualize the issue, highlighting the complexity inherent in real-world issues.

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or
- Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
- 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.

- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
- 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.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- 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 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.

**April**

**Reading Focus: High-Leverage Reading Strategies**

**Writing Focus: High-Leverage Writing Strategies**

Across this unit, students will have opportunities to practice all of the high-leverage reading strategies they have learned throughout the year. A focus will be on flexibly using though strategies across a variety of text types and genres.

Across this unit, students will have opportunities to practice all of the high-leverage writing strategies they have learned throughout the year. A focus will be on flexibly using though strategies across a variety of text types and genres.

**Performance Goal: Preparing for state assessment**

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
- Analyze how differences in the points of view of characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
- Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.
- Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works
- Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
- Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds 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 a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree.

- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing & present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
- 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.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

<b>May</b>	
<b>Reading Focus: Nonfiction Author Studies</b>	<b>Writing Focus: Investigative Journalism</b>
<b>Performance Goal: Developing a narrative</b>	
<p>In this unit, students will deepen their skills at comparing and contrasting, analyzing authors' patterns and choices in style and structure, and deepening their familiarity with the literary techniques that are used in high-quality nonfiction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> <li>• Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</li> <li>• Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.</li> <li>• Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.</li> <li>• Analyze how differences in the points of view of characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.</li> <li>• Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).</li> <li>• Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.</li> <li>• Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p>This unit asks students to look closely at the world around them and use narrative writing skills to write texts that call readers' attention to issues and moments of social significance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</li> <li>• Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.</li> <li>• Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</li> <li>• Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</li> <li>• With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.</li> <li>• Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</li> </ul>