

English Language Arts Benchmarks for Grade 8

Reading Standards for Literature
Strand: Key Ideas and Details (KID)
1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
Cite compelling evidence from a story, drama, or poem to support the explicit meaning of the text
Cite compelling evidence to support an inference drawn from a story, drama, or poem
2. Determine a theme 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.
Infer a theme of a story, drama, or poem using compelling evidence provided in the text
Describe the development of characters in relation to a theme over the course of a story, drama, or poem
Analyze the development of the plot in relation to a theme over the course of a story, drama, or poem
Describe how changes in the setting relate to the theme over the course of a story, drama, or poem
Create an objective summary of a story, drama, or poem
3. 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.
Analyze how the author's use of incidents in a story or drama propel the action, explain a character, or provoke a decision
Analyze how the author's use of dialogue in a story or drama propel the action, explain a character, or provoke a decision
Strand: Craft and Structure (CAS)
4. 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.
Determine the meaning of words and phrases that are used figuratively in a story, drama, or poem
Determine the connotative meaning of words and phrases in a story, drama, or poem

Analyze the author's use of specific word choices to create meaning in a story, drama, or poem
Analyze the impact of specific word choices on the meaning of a story, drama, or poem
Analyze the impact of specific word choices on the tone of a story, drama, or poem
Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a story, drama, or poem
5. 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.
Compare and contrast the structure of two or more stories, dramas, or poems
Analyze how the structure of two or more stories, dramas, or poems relates to their meaning
Analyze how the structure of two or more stories, dramas, or poems relates to their style
6. Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor
Analyze how the different points of view of characters and the audience create effects in a story, drama, or poem
Analyze how the different points of view of characters and the reader create effects in a story, drama, or poem
Strand: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (IKI)
7. 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.
Compare and contrast the choices made by a director of a film or live production of a story or drama to its original text/script
Evaluate the choices made by the director or actors in a film or live production to stay faithful to the original script
9. Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.
Relate the themes found in a contemporary work of fiction to themes found in myths, traditional stories, or religious works

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Relate the patterns of events found in a contemporary work of fiction to themes found in myths, traditional stories, or religious works
Relate character types found in a contemporary work of fiction to themes found in myths, traditional stories, or religious works
Reading Standards for Informational Text
Strand: Key Ideas and Details (KID)
1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
Cite compelling evidence from an informational text to support the meaning of the text
Cite compelling evidence to support an inference drawn from a story, drama, or poem
2. 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.
Describe the development of a key idea over the course of an informational text
Create an objective summary of an informational text
3. Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
Compare and contrast connections between individuals, ideas, or events from an informational text
Compare and contrast the distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events in an informational text
Strand: Craft and Structure (CAS)
4. 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 allusions to other texts.
Determine the meaning of words and phrases that are used figuratively in an informational text
Determine the meaning of words and phrases that have connotative meanings in an informational text
Determine the meaning of words and phrases that have technical meanings in an informational text
Analyze the impact of word choice on the meaning and tone of an informational text

5. 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.
Analyze how particular sentences develop and refine a key concept in a paragraph of an informational text
Analyze how the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text develops a key concept
6. 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.
Identify an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text
Evaluate an author's response to conflicting evidence or viewpoints in an informational text
Strand: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (IKI)
7. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums to present information on a topic or idea
8. 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.
Evaluate an argument and its specific claims presented in an informational text
Evaluate whether the reasoning used to support specific claims in an informational text is sound
Evaluate whether the evidence used to support specific claims in an informational text is relevant and sufficient
9. Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
Evaluate two or more informational texts on the same topic which make different claims based on conflicting evidence

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Writing Standards
Strand: <i>Text Types and Purposes (TTP)</i>
1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
Introduce claim(s) when writing an argumentative essay
Address alternate or opposing claims when writing an argumentative essay
Organize reasons and evidence logically when writing an argumentative essay
Cite logical reasons and relevant evidence to support claims when writing an argumentative essay
Use accurate, credible sources when writing an argumentative essay
Write accurately about a topic or text when writing an argumentative essay
Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion when writing an argumentative essay
Use transitions to clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence when writing an argumentative essay
Maintain a formal style when writing an argumentative essay
Write a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports an argument when writing an argumentative essay
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
Introduce a topic when writing an informative/explanatory text by previewing what is to follow
Organize ideas, concepts, and information into broad categories when writing an informative/explanatory text
Use a variety of methods to aid comprehension when writing an informative/explanatory text
Develop a topic with relevant, well-chosen information and examples when writing an informative/explanatory text
Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion when writing an informative/explanatory text
Use appropriate and varied transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts when writing an informative/explanatory text
Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to explain a topic when writing an informative/explanatory text

Maintain a formal style when writing an informative/explanatory text
Write a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information when writing an informative/explanatory text
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
Introduce a narrator and/or characters when writing a narrative
Organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically when writing a narrative
Orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view when writing a narrative
Develop events and/or characters when writing a narrative
Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence when writing a narrative
Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another when writing a narrative
Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to show the relationships among events when writing a narrative
Use appropriate words and phrases to convey experiences and events when writing a narrative
Write a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated events when writing a narrative
Strand: <i>Production and Distribution of Writing (PDW)</i>
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in Writing Standards 1–3.)
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
5. 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. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language Standards 1–3 up to and including grade 8.)
Strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach

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Strengthen writing as needed by focusing on the appropriateness of writing for its purpose and audience
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
Use technology to produce and publish writing
Use technology to present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently when producing and publishing writing
Use technology to collaborate with others when producing and distributing writing
Strand: <i>Research to Build and Present Knowledge (RBK)</i>
7. 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.
Conduct short research projects to answer a question
Generate multiple research questions for a short research project
Generate a research question based on several sources of information
8. 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.
Gather relevant information from multiple sources for use in a short research project
Gather information for a short research project by using search terms effectively
Evaluate the credibility and accuracy of each source of information considered for use in a short research project
Quote sources of information to avoid plagiarism in a short research project
Paraphrase sources of information to avoid plagiarism in a short research project
Use a standard format for the citation of sources in a short research project
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Use Reading Standards for Literature to support analysis, reflection, and research for a short research project
Use Reading Standards for Informational Text to support analysis, reflection, and research for a short research project
Speaking and Listening Standards
Strand: Comprehension and Collaboration (CAC)
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.
Prepare for a group discussion by reading or researching material related to a topic
Provide evidence about a topic based on preparation during a group discussion
Follow rules for a collegial group discussion where decision-making is required
Track progress toward specific goals and deadlines in a group discussion
Define individual roles as needed in a group discussion
Ask questions that integrate the ideas of several speakers during a group discussion
Respond to others' questions and comments with relevant ideas during a group discussion
Acknowledge group members who share new information during a group discussion
Evaluate one's own views in light of the evidence presented in group discussion
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.
Relate the purpose of information to its presentation in diverse oral media formats
Evaluate the point of view expressed in information presented orally in diverse media and formats
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.
Describe the specific claims that support an argument in a presentation
Evaluate the soundness of reasoning presented by a speaker

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Evaluate the relevance of evidence presented by a speaker
Strand: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas (PKI)
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.
Present claims and findings in a focused and coherent way in an oral presentation
Cite compelling evidence and reasoning that support claims and findings in an oral presentation
Use appropriate eye-contact, volume, and pronunciation when presenting orally
5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
Present information in an oral presentation by integrating multimedia and visual displays
Integrate multimedia and visual displays into an oral presentation to strengthen claims and evidence
Engage student interest by integrating multimedia and visual displays into an oral presentation
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 8 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)
Adapt a speech to a variety of contexts and tasks
Use formal English in an oral presentation when it is appropriate to the task and situation
Language Standards
Strand: Conventions of Standard English (CSE)
1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
Define the general function of gerunds, participles, and infinitives
Use gerunds, participles, and infinitives appropriately when writing or speaking
Construct verbs in the active voice
Use verbs in the active voice when writing or speaking
Construct verbs in the passive voice
Use verbs in the active and passive voice when writing or speaking

Construct verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood
Use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood when writing or speaking
Edit writing with inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
Use a comma, ellipsis, and dash to indicate a pause or break when writing
Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission when writing
Spell grade-appropriate words correctly when writing
Strand: Knowledge of Language (KOL)
3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
Use verbs in the active and passive voice to create an effect when writing or speaking
Use conditional and subjunctive mood to create an effect when writing or speaking
Strand: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use (VAU)
4. 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.
Determine the meaning of a word or phrase by using a range of strategies
Determine the meaning of a word by using grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues
Find the pronunciation of a word by consulting general and specialized reference materials
Clarify a word's precise meaning by consulting general and specialized reference materials
Clarify the part of speech of a word by consulting general and specialized reference materials
Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase using strategies
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
Interpret figures of speech in context when presented orally or in writing
Determine the meaning of words related to each other when presented orally or in writing

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Distinguish among connotative and denotative words that are presented orally or in writing

6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Use general academic words and phrases accurately

Use domain-specific words and phrases accurately

Apply vocabulary knowledge when considering which word or phrase to use for comprehension or expression