CORE ENGLISH
GRADE 8

Counselors are available to assist parents and students with course selections and career planning. Parents may arrange to meet with the counselor by calling the school's guidance department.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In Core English 8, the students learn to compare their own experiences and feelings to those of characters in literature and to write about their observations. Through this experience, the students recognize the emotions they share with other young people and adults and identify ideas, opinions, and actions which differ from their own. Through frequent writing in a variety of forms and from many points of view, the students strengthen their ability to reason and think critically about their own ideas. Throughout the year, the students continuously revise and edit their work as they build their writing portfolios.

This course is organized around four thematic units that enable students to analyze the style and structure of writing: examine the heroic figure in literature, history, modern society, and within; and explore the poetic view. In Learning from Storytelling, the students analyze a variety of nonfiction, fiction, drama, poetry, and folklore to determine how universal challenges and beliefs are expressed across text. In the unit, Learning from the Past, the students examine the cyclical nature of history and how it affects us today. Students examine the concerns of the modern world that create conflict for people, as well as how characters experience internal and external conflicts which result in their ability to change and grow in the unit. Learning from the Present. Finally, the unit, Considering the Future, is designed to have students analyze how writers use various modes of communication to influence readers’ personal choices and opinions. In addition, nonfiction texts and mass media will inform students about current issues relevant to their lives.

These thematic units integrate skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Throughout all the units students read a variety of genres: nonfiction, drama, poetry, short stories, novels, and folklore. Through reading and analyzing a variety of texts, students learn to analyze, to prioritize, to organize, and to retain important concepts and information. Grammar, usage, mechanics, and vocabulary skills are addressed within the context of the literature and within the student’s own writing. At this grade level, students take the two Standards of Learning (SOL) tests for grade eight: English: Reading, Literature, and Research and English: Writing. Specific dates for the SOL tests will be announced by the school.

PREREQUISITE
English 7

OPTIONS FOR NEXT COURSE
Enrollment for the next English course should be based on student performance, teacher recommendation, and parent input. The courses available are Core English, Grade 9 and Advanced English, Grade 9.

REQUIRED STUDENT TEXTBOOK(S)
Elements of Literature, 8

READING SELECTION
In addition to poems, short stories, and plays, the following is a list of works commonly studied at this level. Teachers select works from all genres which are appropriate for students in a given class. The literature selections are provided by the school.

The Acorn People, Ron Jones
Across Five Aprils, Irene Hunt
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain
And One For All, Theresa Nelson
April Morning, Howard Fast
Code Talker, Joseph Bruchac
Crispin, Avi
The Contender, Robert Lipsyte
The Daybreakers, Louis L’Amour
Deathwatch, Robb White
The Diary of Anne Frank, Anne Frank
A Family Apart, Joan Nixon
Farewell to Manzanar, Jeanne W. and James D. Houston
The First Woman Doctor, Rachel Baker
Freak the Mighty, Rodman Philbrick
The Giver, Lois Lowry
Good Night Mr. Tom, Michelle Magorian
Home Before Dark, Sue Ellen Bridgers
The House of Dies Drear, Virginia Hamilton
Last Shot, John Feinstein

A Light in the Forest, Conrad Richter
A Long Way from Chicago, Richard Peck
No Promises in the Wind, Irene Hunt
Nothing But The Truth, Avi
The Outsiders, S.E. Hinton
The Pearl, John Steinbeck
The Pigman/The Pigman’s Legacy, Paul Zindel
The Sea of Trolls, Nancy Farmer
Shane, Jack Schaefer
Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World, Jennifer Armstrong
The Skin I’m In, Sharon Flake
Waiting for the Rain, Sheila Gordon
Walkabout, James Vance Marshall
When a Hero Dies, Anne Schraff
Won’t Know Till I Get There, Walter Dean Myers
The Year Without Michael, Michael Peiffer
Z for Zachariah, Robert C. O’Brien

Virginia Beach City Public Schools ♦ Department of Curriculum and Instruction

CIS-0030 (Revised 8/12)
8TH GRADE VIRGINIA BEACH STANDARDS
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

COMMUNICATION: SPEAKING, LISTENING, AND MEDIA LITERACY

ELA 8.1 The student will contribute to and participate in small-group discussions, including using interview techniques to gain information. (SOL 8.1; SOL 8.2)
ELA 8.2 The student will present, listen critically, and express opinions in oral presentations individually and in collaboration with peers. (SOL 8.2)
ELA 8.3 The student will analyze, develop, and produce creative or informational media messages. (SOL 8.3)

READING AND RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

ELA 8.4 The student will apply knowledge of word origins, analogies, and figurative language to extend vocabulary development within authentic texts. (SOL 8.4)
ELA 8.5 The student will read and analyze a variety of fictional texts, narrative nonfiction, and poetry presented in a variety of media and formats. (SOL 8.5)
ELA 8.6 The student will read, comprehend, and analyze a variety of nonfiction texts presented in a variety of media and formats. (SOL 8.6)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

ELA 8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narration, exposition, persuasion, and informational. (SOL 8.7)
ELA 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing. (SOL 8.8)

RESEARCH

ELA 8.9 The student will apply knowledge of appropriate reference materials to produce a research product. (SOL 8.9)
Mission Statement

The Virginia Beach City Public Schools, in partnership with the entire community, will empower every student to become a life-long learner who is a responsible, productive and engaged citizen within the global community.

Dr. James G. Merrill, Superintendent

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
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The following staff are designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:
Director of Guidance Services at (757) 263-1980 or to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources at (757) 263-1133.

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

Alternative formats of this publication which may include taped, Braille, or large print materials are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Call or write The Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038. Telephone (757) 263-1070 or (757) 263-1429; fax (757) 263-1424; TDD (757) 263-1240

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