



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 Pfeffer

Z for Zachariah, Robert C. O'Brien

**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)

RESEARACH

- 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.

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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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