



2024 ENGLISH STANDARDS OF LEARNING

Grade 8 Instructional Guide

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GUIDANCE OVERVIEW

The *2024 English Standards of Learning* ensure that educators across the Commonwealth approach literacy instruction with an emphasis on providing students with opportunities to read complex, grade-level texts. These texts are used as a basis for deep, text-based classroom discussions and as a starting point for writing activities. By developing students' literacy skills and structuring classrooms to offer chances to read, discuss, and write about content, teachers can support student comprehension and increase experiences that allow students to strengthen literacy skills and understand content deeply.

Virginia educators will notice that literacy standards are no longer highlighted in the instructional guides in isolation or in silos of each other, literacy standards are not meant to be taught in isolation. When Grade 8 students engage with complex literary texts (RL), they also practice communicating (C), writing (W and LU), and building vocabulary (RV), all within a literacy genre. The same integration of skills is true as Grade Eleven students read complex, grade level informational text (RI). While reading informational text, students will respond through discussion and access the communication standards (C) as well as in writing (W) and draw several pieces of evidence to support reading information text (RI).

This guidance document provides considerations and approaches that integrate multiple English standards to provide students with a deeper understanding. Each section starts with educators previewing students' current levels and future objectives using the "Side-by-Sides" and "Progression Charts." Educators will then review the "Understanding the Standards" section to gain a deeper understanding of grade-level concepts and instructional practices. Guided by the "Developing Skilled Readers and Building Reading Stamina" standards, educators can utilize the suggested considerations and instructional approaches to ensure that all students engage with grade-level content at the appropriate level of rigor. Finally, the guide provides suggested or sample thematic and/or cross-content area connections to extend student learning and deepen their understanding.

Text Sets

Text sets are a collection of conceptually related texts of various genres and types (e.g., articles, literary texts, poems, technical texts) organized around topics of study to build knowledge and vocabulary. They expose students to different perspectives and formats for deeper understanding. Text sets enhance the teaching of the 2024 English *Standards of Learning* and can naturally be paired with content area subjects. Text sets will vary by school and division based on resources and relevant school board policies. Text sets provide the opportunity for students to make authentic connections between texts and apply their background knowledge.

Example:

Sample Text Set	Disciplinary Connections
<p>Theme: <i>Transformation and Redemption</i> Literary: <i>A Christmas Carol</i> – Charles Dickens Literary: <i>The Gift of the Magi</i>– O. Henry Literary: <i>Contents of a Deadman’s Pocket</i>– Jack Finney Informational: “Why Dickens Wrote: A Christmas Carol (1070L)” – J.E. Luebering Literary nonfiction (Interview): “Interview with a former child laborer in the Industrial Revolution” – Michael Sadler Literary (Poem): <i>I am Offering this Poem</i>– Jimmy Santiago Baca Literary (Poem): <i>Ring Out, Wild Bells</i>– Alfred Lord Tennyson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When working through the thematic unit, “Transformation and Redemption,” students can explore the historical context of the Industrial Revolution (e.g., child labor, workhouses) and how this influenced social reforms.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Students may also study the impact of industries on the environment and natural resources to connect to science standards.• Read multiple information sources on the topic of transformation to compare and contrast the standard of living, quality of life, government, and economic opportunity at that time compared to now (<i>WG.12c</i>).

The included text sets are intended to serve as a suggested sample for compiling text variety within a suggested topic. When determining text sets and materials to utilize in the classroom, it is key that all educators adhere to and follow the guidance of their local school board and division.

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE QUICK LINKS:

- [Developing Skilled Readers](#)
- [Reading and Vocabulary](#)
- [Reading Literary Text](#)
- [Reading Informational Text](#)
- [Writing & Language Usage](#)
- [Communication & Multimodal Literacies](#)
- [Research](#)

DEVELOPING SKILLED READERS AND BUILDING READING STAMINA

Developing Skilled Readers and Building Reading Stamina (DSR)

8.DSR The student will build knowledge and comprehension skills from reading a range of challenging, content-rich texts. This includes fluently reading and gathering evidence from grade-level complex texts, reading widely on topics to gain purposeful knowledge and vocabulary, and using reading strategies when comprehension breaks down.

- A. Read a variety of grade-level complex text with accuracy, automaticity, appropriate rate, and meaningful expression in successive readings to support comprehension. Monitor while reading to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, as necessary (**Reading Fluency, K-12**).
- B. Proficiently read and comprehend a variety of literary and informational texts that exhibit complexity at the higher range of the grades 6-8 band (See the Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis charts for determining complexity in the Appendix.) (**Text Complexity, 2-12**).
- C. When responding to text through discussion and/or writing, draw several pieces of evidence from grade-level complex texts to support claims, conclusions, and inferences, including quoting or paraphrasing from texts accurately and tracing where relevant evidence is located (**Textual Evidence, K-12**).
- D. Regularly engage in reading a series of conceptually related texts organized around topics of study to build knowledge and vocabulary. (These texts should be at a range of complexity levels so students can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support.) Use this background knowledge as context for new learning (**Deep Reading on Topics to Build Knowledge and Vocabulary, K-12**).

- E. Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text. These sense-making strategies attend to text structure, common organizational structures, summarizing, asking questions of the text, and others (**Reading Strategies, 3-12**).

***Note: These standards will be applied when students are reading, writing, collaborating, and researching as described in the remaining standards.**

Critical for successful planning and implementation of grade level expectations for Developing Skilled Readers and Building Reading Stamina in the 2024 English *Standards of Learning*.

- [LINK- Grade 8 Understanding the Standards- Developing Skilled Readers and Building Reading Stamina](#)

READING & VOCABULARY | GRADE 8 – INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

Prior to teaching the Grade 8 Reading & Vocabulary standards, review:

- [Progression Chart - Reading and Vocabulary](#)
- [Grades 7-9 Side-By-Side](#)

Critical for successful planning and implementation of grade level expectations for Reading Informational Text in the 2024 English *Standards of Learning*.

- [LINK- Grade 8 Understanding the Standards- Reading and Vocabulary](#)

Teacher’s Note:

- Use the Grade 8 Understanding the Standards.
- The Grade 8 Reading and Vocabulary strand highlights how word etymology, context clues, and cross-discipline vocabulary words impact reading comprehension.
- Students should build vocabulary authentically through exposure to content-rich texts and participating in rich conversations. Students will use context within grade level text to ensure deeper understanding of vocabulary.
- When instructing on word meanings, teachers should also incorporate opportunities to discuss and practice with word relationships (e.g. synonyms, antonyms, etc.) and figurative interpretations of words and phrases as these help to support the building of vocabulary and word knowledge.
- Students in Grade 8 need opportunity to practice using Greek and Latin roots and affixes to enhance their ability to decipher the meanings of new or unknown words.

- Teachers should provide opportunities for students to use newly learned words and phrases in speaking, writing, and discussion activities as well as opportunities to explore newly learned words in word-reference materials to deepen understanding.
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Reading and Vocabulary

8.RV The student will systematically build vocabulary and word knowledge based on grade eight content and texts.

8.RV.1 Vocabulary Development and Word Analysis

- A. Develop and accurately use general and academic language and content-specific vocabulary by listening to, reading, and discussing a variety of grade-eight texts and topics.
- B. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) to determine the meaning of words or phrases.
- C. Apply knowledge of Greek and Latin roots and affixes to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- D. Use the relationship between particular words, including synonyms, antonyms, and analogies to better understand each word.
- E. Analyze the construction and meaning of an author's use of symbols, analogy, and figurative language such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and idiom.
- F. Discriminate between the meanings of connotative words and their denotative meanings.
- G. Use general and specialized word-reference materials, print and digital, to determine pronunciation, etymology, derivations, and parts of speech.
- H. Use newly learned words and phrases in multiple contexts, including in students' discussions and speaking and writing activities.

Planning for Literacy Instruction + Integration of Standards

Standard	Considerations for Planning	Instructional Approaches for Integrating Strands
<p>Within the selected literary or informational text <i>8.DSR.B – Proficiently read and comprehend a variety of literary and informational texts that exhibit complexity at the lower range of the grades 6-8 band.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary taught is dependent on the text. Plan for ways to build students’ vocabulary and add to students’ understanding of etymology. • Use the Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis chart for determining text complexity (Appendix of the 2024 <i>English Standards of Learning</i>- p.105). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a series of conceptually related texts within a thematic unit to expose students to high level, complex vocabulary to build background knowledge and strengthen their understanding of a concept (<i>8.DSR.B</i>). • When possible, select a series of texts that allow students multiple opportunities to encounter similar roots/affixes, discriminate between the connotative and denotative meanings of words, and analyze the construction and meaning of symbols, analogies, and figurative language (<i>8.RV.1C, 8.RV.1D, 8.RV.1E, 8.RV.1F</i>). • Facilitate multiple opportunities for students to use and practice newly learned words in discussion, speaking, and writing activities (<i>8.RV.1H</i>).
<p>Connect to Previously Read/Related Text to Build Knowledge and Vocabulary Understanding <i>8.DSR.D – Regularly engage in reading (independently, with peers, or with modest support) a series of conceptually related texts organized around topics of study to build knowledge and vocabulary. Use this background knowledge as context for new learning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this vocabulary instruction connect to previously instructed or learned words? • How will teachers help students gain background knowledge or context to better understand complex vocabulary and the text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build background knowledge around the historical, cultural, or social contexts if necessary to understand authors’ specific word choices within a text (<i>8.DSR.D</i>). • Review previously learned concepts (e.g., roots, affixes, etymology, figurative language) as needed to ensure comprehension of complex vocabulary before reading. • Review vocabulary that appeared in previously read texts that may be transferable across a unit of study or between connected texts.

<p>Skills in Practice</p> <p><i>8.DSR.C – When responding to text through discussions and/or writing, draw several pieces of evidence from grade-level complex texts to support claims, conclusions, and inferences, including quoting or paraphrasing from texts accurately and tracing where relevant evidence is located.</i></p> <p><i>8.DSR.E – Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will teachers model application of the selected skills and standards? • How will students show knowledge of the selected skills and standards? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate appropriate discussions around newly learned vocabulary and encourage students to adopt these structures into discussions and written responses (8.C.1A). • Choose and model appropriate reading strategies to model analyzing complex vocabulary using context, knowledge of Greek and Latin roots to understand new words (8.RV.1B, 8.RV.1C). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrate how to break new or challenging words into word parts using morphology, finding Greek and Latin roots as well as prefixes and suffixes (8.RV.1C). • Annotate for the meaning and construction of figurative language; Analyze how authors strategically construct figurative language to enhance the text and its impact on the reader (8.RV.1E). • Model the use of word-reference tools by walking students through the process of looking up a challenging or newly learned word and determining different aspects of the word (e.g., pronunciation, part of speech, etymology) (8.RV.1G). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss when and how words with similar denotative meanings would have a different connotative meaning while reading a variety of literary and informational texts (8.RV.1F, 8.RL.2B, 8.RI.2B). • Provide opportunities for students to use newly learned vocabulary within writing exercises (8.RV.1H, 8.LU.1A).
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Connections

Sample Text Sets	Disciplinary Connections
<p>Theme: <i>The Human Longing for Connection and Nature</i> Literary: <i>All Summer in a Day</i> (780L)– Ray Bradbury Literary: <i>The Pedestrian</i> (980L)– Ray Bradbury Informational: “Will We Fix the Weather? Yes. Should We Fix the Weather? Hmmm.” (1010L)– Robert Krulwich Informational: “Earthlings, Meet Venus” (1100L) – Rachel Stivnick Informational: “Recess for Everyone” – Kaylen Oliver</p> <p>Theme: <i>Influence of Fear in Times of Crisis</i> Informational: “A Journal of the Plague Year (1420L)”– Daniel Defoe (Excerpts only) Literary: <i>The Masque of the Red Death</i> (1100L) – Edgar Allan Poe Informational: “The Black Death” (8.94 ATOS) – Margaret Gushe) Informational: “Don’t Blame the Rats for Spreading the Black Death” (880L)– Bethany Brookshire</p> <p>Theme: Dreams Literary: <i>One Friday Morning</i> (1090L)– Langston Hughes Informational: “American Dream Faces Harsh New Reality” (1070L)– Ari Shapiro Informational: “Free Land: How the Homestead Act Helped America Expand Westward” (9.82 ATOS)– John Donovan Literary (Poem): <i>The Hill We Climb</i>– Amanda Gorman</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When incorporating historical texts, speeches, and/or primary sources, focus on words that are critical for understanding historical events. Vocabulary within these sources should be reinforced in context to allow students to understand how words and concepts apply across English and history (8.RV.1B). • Review common roots and affixes that appear in other content area text or resources. • Students can analyze historical documents and use vocabulary strategies or routines to strengthen connections between vocabulary in English and different content areas. • Scientific terms often appear when reading informational and technical texts. For example, when reading texts connected to the thematic unit, “The Human Longing for Connection and Nature,” students will encounter a variety of topics connected to the Life Science standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help students identify and define critical scientific vocabulary in context and use newly learned scientific vocabulary in writing and discussion activities. • Analyze how authors of historical, scientific, or technical texts unfolds a perspective or series of ideas and events analyzing the text for organizational pattern or text structure. • Consider collaborating with teachers across disciplines to incorporate reading and vocabulary instruction beyond the English classroom (8.DSR.D).

READING LITERARY TEXT | GRADE 8 - INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

Prior to teaching the Grade 8 Reading Literary Text standards, review:

- [Progression Chart- Reading Literary Text](#)
- [Grades 7-9 Side-By-Side](#)

Critical for successful planning and implementation of grade level expectations for Reading Literary Text in the 2024 English Standards of Learning.

- [LINK- Grade 8 Understanding the Standards- Reading Literary Text](#)

Teacher's Note:

- Use the Grade 8 Understanding the Standards.
- Students in Grade 8 will increase their understanding and comprehension of literary texts by reading short stories, literary nonfiction, novels, poetry, and drama.
- Instruction should focus on explaining and analyzing the development of plot patterns, characterization, and thematic analysis emphasizing how characters' decisions and actions manifest static or dynamic portrayals.
- Teachers should model the analysis of texts to include impact of author's style, specific word choice, points of view, and other literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, symbolism).
- Discussion and analysis of literary texts should also focus on comparing and contrasting texts that address various concepts, topics, or themes to enhance analysis skills and build students' ability to synthesize information.
- Teachers should provide a variety of literary reading experiences connecting content and themes to enrich the reading experience for students and to help deepen understanding, enhance appreciation, and encourage critical thinking.

Reading Literary Text

8.RL The student will use textual evidence to demonstrate comprehension and build knowledge from a variety of grade-level complex literary texts read to include short stories, literary nonfiction, novels, poetry, and drama.

8.RL.1 Key Ideas and Plot Details

- A. Analyze and explain the development of theme(s) over the course of texts and their relationship to the characters, settings, plots, and overall messages.
- B. Explain how different plot patterns (e.g., comedy, drama, tragedy) and subplots create meaning and examine their influence on characters, theme, pacing, and point of view.

C. Justify the decisions and actions of dynamic versus static characters using dialogue or specific events from the text.

8.RL.2 Craft and Style

- A. Interpret the meaning and analyze the impact of poetic elements in prose and poetry (e.g., rhyme, rhythm, repetition, alliteration, and onomatopoeia) on the reader.
- B. Analyze how the elements of an author’s style (e.g., dialogue, sentence structure and word choices) are used to influence and develop tone and voice.
- C. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.
- D. Analyze how an author’s use of literary devices including foreshadowing, flashback, symbolism, and irony are used to build mystery, suspense, or surprise.

8.RL.3 Integration of Concepts

- A. Compare and contrast the structure of two or more stories, poems, and plays and analyze how the differing structure of each literary text contributes to its meaning and style.
- B. Compare and contrast fictional portrayals of a time, place, or character with historical accounts of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.
- C. Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories; literary nonfiction and informational) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

Planning for Literary Instruction + Integration of Standards		
Standard	Considerations for Planning	Instructional Approaches for Integrating Strands
<p>Select Complex Texts <i>8.DSR.B – Proficiently read and comprehend a variety of literary and informational texts that exhibit complexity at the higher range of the grades 6-8 band.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis chart for determining text complexity (Appendix of the 2024 English Standards of Learning- p.105). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure texts exhibit complexity at the higher range of the grade 6-8 Lexile band of 925 –1185 on the Qualitative Analysis Chart (<i>Appendix of the 2024 English Standards of Learning</i>-p.105). • When selecting literary texts, it is important to consider both quantitative and qualitative measures. Ensure the themes and subject matter are suitable for students in Grade 8.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When applicable, align topics, concepts, or themes to other course content such as History and Social Sciences, Science, Math, or the Arts. (See Disciplinary Connections for examples for interdisciplinary opportunities). • Select a series of conceptually related texts organized around a topic of study that provides students multiple exposures to high level vocabulary, language, and content, allowing for students to read various texts independently, with peers, or with modest support (8.DSR.D).
<p>Demands of the Text* 8.DSR.E – Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the knowledge demands (literary knowledge, background knowledge, vocabulary knowledge) of the text? • Examine the text to locate authentic opportunities to highlight, apply, or integrate additional standards to enhance students’ understanding of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-teach and review important terms/vocabulary needed to deepen students’ conceptual understandings of the text. • Students can use graphic organizers to synthesize information and make connections between texts, themes, plot patterns, and character dynamics. • Grade 8 students are being introduced to new literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, symbolism, and irony) (8.RL.2D). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Locate points in the texts to think-aloud the analysis of these devices. ○ Provide opportunities for students to re-read text to gather textual evidence needed to analyze how these elements impact the meaning of a literary text. • *Provide scaffolded assistance as needed.

<p>Connect to Previously Read/Related Text to Build Knowledge and Vocabulary Understanding <i>8.DSR.E – Regularly engage in reading (independently, with peers, or with modest support) a series of conceptually related texts organized around topics of study to build knowledge and vocabulary. Use this background knowledge as context for new learning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will new learning connect to previously learned skills and/or concepts? • How will students build background knowledge or context to understand the text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate visuals, discussions, or short excerpts to provide background knowledge before reading. • Conduct research on the historical, cultural, or social contexts that may be needed to understand concepts within texts (8.DSR.D). • Build anticipation around a new unit or concept by facilitating discussion around ideas from previously read texts to activate prior knowledge.
<p>Skills in Practice <i>8.DSR.C – When responding to text through discussions and/or writing, draw several pieces of evidence from grade-level complex texts to support claims, conclusions, and inferences, including quoting or paraphrasing from texts accurately and tracing where relevant evident is located.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a purpose for reading. • How can teachers model application of the selected skills and standards? • How will students show knowledge of the selected skills and standards? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate points to stop while reading to annotate for character development and gather textual evidence on the character’s actions and dialogue (8.DSR.C, 8.RL.1A). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use textual evidence during discussions or reader’s response activities to justify the decisions and actions of dynamic versus static characters (8.RL.1C). • Analyze and discuss how the author’s choice of point of view impacts the reader’s perspective of the story and events (8.RL.2C). • Explain the theme of entire text connecting it to characters, setting, and plot events and explain how these elements develop the theme (8.RL.1A).

<p><i>8.DSR.E – Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitate writing opportunities for students to connect their own lives/experiences to the text’s theme. ● Facilitate discussion while reading to build collaboration and communication skills and increase shared understanding of texts (8.C.1A). ● Model the examination of an author’s word choice, sentence structures, and use of dialogue and support students in discussing how these stylistic choices influence the overall meaning of the text (8.RL.2A, 8.RL.2B, 8.RL.2D). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Close read for use of symbols, analogy or figurative language and model analyzing its impact on the text (8.RV.1E). ○ Model analyzing author’s craft and style to support students making intentional stylistic choices when writing their own short stories/narratives (8.W.1A). ● After reading a section or entire text, model analyzing the tone of a text using textual evidence and thinking critically about an author’s style choices (e.g., dialogue, sentence structure, and word choices) (8.RL.2B). ● Provide students opportunities to compare and contrast texts within a given thematic set (8.RL.3, 8.RI.3B). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compare different author’s uses of literary devices and how effect they were in building mystery, suspense, or surprise (8.RL.2D). ● Facilitate opportunities for students to respond to text through discussion and/or writing (8.DSR.C). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create multimodal presentations in response to reading (8.C.2, 8.C.3).
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Connections

Sample Text Sets	Disciplinary Connections
<p>Theme: <i>Survival and the Search for Safety</i> Literary nonfiction: “The Voices of Refugees” (7.39 ATOS) – UNHCR Literary: <i>Sea Prayer</i> (930L)– Khaleed Hosseini Informational: “A Century of Refugees” (1060L)– Big History Project Informational: “Seven Years On: Timeline of the Syria Crisis” (9.74 ATOS)– UNHCR Literary (Poem): <i>Red Brocade</i>– Naomi Shihab Nye Literary (Poem): <i>Refugee</i> – Brian Bilston</p> <p>Theme: <i>The Struggle Between Freedom and Control</i> Informational: The Bill of Rights (990L) Literary: <i>The Giver</i> – Lois Lowry (760L) Informational: “Comparing Governments: Democracy vs. Authoritarianism” (1070L)– USHistory.org Literary nonfiction (Speech): “Fear is Simple and Profound” (1110L)– Julia Hill Literary (Poem): <i>The Unknown Citizen</i>– W. H. Auden Literary (Poem): <i>Burning a Book</i> – William Stafford</p> <p>Theme: <i>The Consequences of Deception and the Unexpected</i> Literary: <i>Tell Tale Heart</i> (830L)– Edgar Allan Poe Literary: <i>The Monkey’s Paw</i> (880L)– W. W. Jacobs Literary: <i>The Necklace</i> (890L)– Guy de Maupassant Informational: “Guilt” (9.79 ATOS)– Psychology Today Informational: “How to Make your Writing Suspenseful” (1020L)– Victoria Smith</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make natural connections to the historical events across texts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, students can learn the history and causes of the Syrian refugee crisis and learn about the history and causes of other refugee experiences. • Help students situate the events in the text within geographical locations when applicable to the text’s settings. For example, students can map different government types and structures around the world and discuss their implications. • Provide opportunities to study human impact on environment, health and disease, and brain psychology. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, when reading about refugees, students can investigate informational texts to draw conclusions about how war and conflict impact ecosystems and how refugee camps manage sanitation, water, and food. Students might also read informational texts about diseases in refugee camps and provision of medical aid. • When reading literary texts and working through thematic units, teachers can provide opportunities for students to study visual, auditory, or media representations of concepts and themes within thematic units.

<p>Literary (Poem): “A Poison Tree” – William Blake Literary (Poem): “We Wear the Mask” – Paul Dunbar</p>	
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READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT | GRADE 8 - INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

Prior to teaching the Grade 8 Reading Informational Text standards, review:

- [Progression Chart - Reading Informational Text](#)
- [Grades 7-9 Side-By-Side](#)

Critical for successful planning and implementation of grade level expectations for Reading Informational Text in the 2024 *English Standards of Learning*.

- [LINK- Grade 8 Understanding the Standards- Reading Informational Text](#)

Teacher’s Note:

- Use the Grade 8 Understanding the Standards.
 - In Grade 8, students should read a variety of complex informational texts that provide opportunities to summarize using main idea and details.
 - Reading a variety of texts will also help students learn to differentiate between various text structures.
 - Move beyond summarization and determining text structure and utilize these skills to help support their efforts to analyze authors’ perspectives and claims. This analysis should include students finding and citing evidence from texts as well as comparing and contrasting different texts.
 - Teachers should provide students multiple opportunities to read and examine informational texts and to read informational texts that are connected by topic or theme.
 - Analyze authors’ uses of text features and authors’ personal and stylistic choices.
 - Support students when reading informational texts with direct and explicit instruction that moves from guided experiences and teacher modeling to independent practice.
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Reading Informational Text

8.RI The student will use textual evidence to demonstrate comprehension and build knowledge from grade-level complex informational texts read.

8.RI.1 Key Ideas and Confirming Details

- A. Create a main idea statement and provide an accurate summary, clarifying the relationships among the key details and ideas or events.
- B. Analyze how the author unfolds a perspective or series of ideas or events in historical, scientific, or technical texts, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections drawn between them.
- C. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning and evidence are relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

8.RI.2 Craft and Style

- A. Evaluate an author’s use of text features (e.g., boldface and italics; type set in color; underlining; indentation; sidebars; illustrations, graphics, and photographs; headings and subheadings; footnotes and annotations) to enhance and support the reader’s comprehension.
- B. Analyze how an author’s word choice, organizational pattern, language structure, viewpoints, and qualifications impact meaning and credibility of a text.
- C. Analyze how an author establishes and conveys a perspective or purpose in a text and acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

8.RI.3 Integration of Concepts

- A. Analyze ideas within and between selections including how specific sentences, paragraphs, sections, and text features contribute to the development and refinement of the ideas presented.
- B. Compare and contrast how two or more authors present conflicting information on the same topic by assessing where the texts disagree in reasoning and evidence.

Planning for Literacy Instruction + Integration of Standards

Standard	Considerations for Planning	Instructional Approaches for Integrating Strands
<p>Select Complex Texts <i>8.DSR.B – Proficiently read and comprehend a variety of literary and informational texts that exhibit complexity at the lower range of the grades 6-8 band.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis chart for determining text complexity (Appendix of the 2024 <i>English Standards of Learning</i>-p.105). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a variety of texts that fall within the higher-range of the grade 6-8 Lexile band of 925 –1185. • Choose exemplars that expose students to a variety of textual elements (e.g., titles, headers, charts, graphics, footnotes) and organizational patterns. • Ensure texts include a variety of genres/styles (e.g., scientific, historical texts, literary nonfiction, literary texts, and/or research) (<i>8.DSR.D</i>). • Pair informational and/or literary texts that represent diverse perspectives on the same or similar topics to compare and contrast texts. • When applicable, align topics, concepts, or themes to other course content such as History and Social Sciences, Science, Math, or the Arts. (See <i>Disciplinary Connections</i> for examples for interdisciplinary opportunities).
<p>Demands of the Text* <i>8.DSR.E – Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the knowledge demands (literary knowledge, background knowledge, vocabulary knowledge) of the text? • Examine the text to locate authentic opportunities to highlight, apply, or integrate additional standards to enhance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-teach and review important terms/vocabulary needed to deepen students’ conceptual understandings of the text (e.g., text structures, text features, qualifications, credibility) (<i>8.RV.1, 8.RI.1</i>). • Investigate and analyze the different text types in print or digital texts to determine how text features impact the reading experience and presentation of ideas (<i>8.RI.2</i>). • Students may need explicit instruction on counterclaims before read to acknowledge how authors respond to conflicting evidence or viewpoints (<i>8.RI.2C</i>).

	students' understanding of the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide scaffolded assistance as needed.
<p>Connect to Previously Read/Related Text to Build Knowledge + Vocabulary Understanding <i>8.DSR.D – Regularly engage in reading (independently, with peers, or with modest support) a series of conceptually related texts organized around topics of study to build knowledge and vocabulary. Use this background knowledge as context for new learning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does this reading instruction connect to previously instructed reading/texts? How will students gain background knowledge or context to understand the text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to reading, utilize videos, discussions, or short excerpts to provide background knowledge on historical, cultural, or social contexts that may be needed to understand concepts within texts (<i>8.DSR.D</i>). Review key terminology needed to understand concepts within the thematic unit and connect to other disciplines and historical events/scientific discoveries (<i>8.DSR.D</i>). Use graphic organizers or annotations from previous reasons to help students track ideas and findings across multiple texts by using side-by-side comparison charts and documenting the differing claims, reasoning, and evidence in each article (<i>8.RL.3A, 8.RL.3B</i>). Make connections to literary texts and units where students have compared character perspectives and actions to increase understanding of comparing/contrasting informational texts (<i>8.RI.3</i>).
<p>Skills in Practice <i>8.DSR.C – When responding to text through discussions and/or writing, draw several pieces of evidence from grade-level complex texts to support claims, conclusions, and inferences, including quoting or paraphrasing from texts accurately and</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set a purpose for reading. How will teachers model application of the selected skills and standards? How will students show knowledge of the selected skills and standards? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While reading, have students capture key details to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the text including the main idea statement analyzing the relationship among key details to show how different parts of the text are connected (<i>8.RI.1A</i>). Trace an author's arguments and discuss whether the evidence sufficiently supports the claims (<i>8.RI.1C</i>). Write alongside students to model an accurate summary including a main idea statement and using textual evidence for key details (<i>8.RI.1A</i>).

<p><i>tracing where relevant evident is located.</i></p> <p><i>8.DSR.E – Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage students in a variety of writing activities, writing both short and longer pieces and model writing by providing exemplars to reinforce sentence structures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Write narratives to connect personal and creative ideas to informational texts (8.W.1A); write expository texts to explain newly learned information from informational thematic units (8.W.1B); write persuasively to defend an argument or position founded within an informational text unit (8.W.1C); write reflectively to make text-to-self connections to informational texts within a thematic unit (8.W.1D). • While reading, model how to evaluate an author’s use of text features, word choices, organizational pattern, language structures, viewpoints, credibility, etc. (8.RI.2). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guide students in determining how the use of specific text features impact the structure of the text and consequently, the reader’s understanding (8.RI.2A). • Engage in a variety of discussion activities to increase shared understanding of complex texts and concepts (8.C.1A). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss how authors of informational text also use techniques such as claims/counterclaims, persuasive language, and fact/opinion to convey their perspective or purpose before applying techniques to their own writing/speeches (8.RI.2C). ○ Debate opposing sides/conflicting evidence of an argument based on paired informational text and citing textual evidence as support (8.RI.1C, 8.RI.3B). ○ Model appropriate responses to audience questions
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		<p>or claims in a debate-style activity (8.C.2iv).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pair literary and informational texts to analyze how author’s style impacts the text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For literary text, examples include dialogue, sentence structure, and word choices (8.RL.2B). ○ For informational text, analyze how word choice, organizational pattern, and language structure impact the meaning and credibility of a text (8.RI.2B). • Compare and contrast informational texts written on the same topic to determine how two or more authors present conflicting information, noting where and how the texts disagree (8.RI.3B). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Think-aloud analyzing how authors develop and present ideas between different texts. Model thinking aloud during compare/contrast activities and using graphic organizers to record these ideas and findings (8.RI.3B). ○ Pair historical portrayals of a time with real historical texts to analyze and discuss how the bias, perspective, and storytelling in historical fiction shape historical understandings (8.RL.3C). • Create multimodal presentations in response to reading (8.C.2, 8.C.3).
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Connections	
Sample Text Sets	Disciplinary Connections

Theme: *Courage in the Face of Adversity*

Literary: *The Promise of Change: One Girl’s Story in the Fight for School Equality*—Jo Ann Allen Boyce and Debbie Levy

Informational: “The Youngest of the Little Rock Nine Speaks Out About Holding onto History” (1150L)—Allison Keyes

Informational: “If They Could do it, I Could do it: The Integration of Ole Miss Football” (9.43 ATOS)—David Steele

Literary (Poem): *Merry-Go-Round* – Langston Hughes

Literary (Poem): *We Rise* – Amanda Gorman

Theme: *The Power of Nature and Transformation*

Literary: *The Call of the Wild* (1120L)—John London

Literary: *The King of Mazy May* (1170L)—Jack London

Informational: “Glacier” (7.62 ATOS)—National Geographic

Informational: “In Alaskan Park, Winter Means Paws on Patrol” (1030L) – Kitson Jazynka

Informational: “The Aurora Borealis Turns the Night Sky into a Paint Box of Colors” (990L)—Andrea Sachs

Literary (Poem): *After the Winter* – Claude McKay

Literary (Poem): *The Spell of the Yukon* – Robert Service

Theme: *The Persistence of Hope Amidst Despair*

Informational: “Holocaust Survivor Testimonies”—United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (7.68 ATOS)

Literary (Play): *Diary of Anne Frank*—Frances Goodrich & Albert Hackett

Informational: “Understanding Kristallnacht” (1120L)

- Incorporate infographics, charts, timelines, and graphs when applicable (e.g., thematic unit, “Courage in the Face of Adversity”) to help students analyze and interpret historical events.
 - When reading *The Promise of Change* and connected informational texts, students can map key locations where Civil Rights events took place to show the impact of setting on people and events. This text set also allows students to explore major historical events and concepts (e.g., integration, segregation, and The American Civil Rights Movement).
- Historical texts also present opportunities for students to research and explore how cultural characteristics link regions (*WG.1c*).
- Connecting to Science: Teachers can provide opportunities to study human impact on environment, health and disease, brain psychology, and animal behavior.

<p>– Facing History and Ourselves Literary (Poem): <i>First They Came</i> – Martin Niemöller Literary (Poem): <i>Fear</i> – Eva Pickova</p>	
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WRITING AND LANGUAGE USAGE | GRADE 8 - INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

Prior to teaching the Grade 8 Writing and Language Usage standards, review:

- [Progression Chart - Writing](#)
- [Progression Chart - Language Usage](#)
- [Grades 7-9 Side-By-Side](#)

Critical for successful planning and implementation of grade level expectations for Writing and Language Usage in the 2024 English Standards of Learning.

- [LINK- Grade 8 Understanding the Standards- Writing](#)
- [LINK- Grade 8 Understanding the Standards- Language Usage](#)

Teacher’s Note:

- Use the Grade 8 Understanding the Standards.
- In Grade 8, students continue to develop their writing skills as they write narratives and expository, persuasive, and reflective texts. While there is no prescribed model of writing (e.g., five paragraphs), students should construct multi-paragraph, well-developed writing for a variety of reasons.
- Facilitate opportunities for students to write creatively and clearly, defend viewpoints and arguments, and express personal ideas.
- Model the writing process (e.g., planning, drafting, revising, editing) and how to use incorporate textual evidence and relevant details when writing.
- Encourage students to utilize anchor texts, previous writing samples, and teacher models of the writing process to construct responses.

- Students may need explicit instruction, support, and scaffolds at each stage of the writing process.
 - Provide students with opportunities to construct writing in response to a variety of literary and informational texts. Constructed responses are important to provide students with authentic, integrated reading and writing opportunities. These opportunities should include practice with the grammatical expectation in Language Usage for Grade 8.
 - When teaching and evaluating student writing, teachers should focus on the three domains of writing: composing, written expression, and language usage/mechanics.
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Writing

8.W The student will compose various works for diverse audiences and purposes, linked to grade eight content and texts.

8.W.1 Modes and Purposes for Writing

- A. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or to alter an existing text, using well-structured event sequences, precise words and phrases, and transitional words to develop the characters, convey sequence, and capture the action.
- B. Write expository texts to examine a topic or concept that conveys ideas and information by maintaining a clear focus with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and examples from multiple credible sources, using structures and patterns (e.g., description, enumeration, classification, comparison, problem-solution, or cause-effect) to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts.
- C. Write persuasively, supporting well-defined points of view effectively with relevant evidence and clear reasoning in ways that logically advance the claim(s) made.
- D. Write reflectively in response to reading to demonstrate thinking with details, examples, and other evidence from the text(s).

8.W.2 Organization and Composition

- A. Generate and organize ideas using the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing) to develop multi-paragraph texts. This includes: OBJ
 - i. Composing a thesis statement that states a position or explains the purpose.
 - ii. Establishing a central idea that aligns with the thesis and maintaining an organized structure and formal style to fit form and topic, providing elaboration and unity throughout the writing and maintaining a consistent point of view.

- iii. Stating and defending conclusions or positions with reasons and precise, relevant evidence and complete explanation of how evidence and details support a position addressing counterclaims when appropriate.
- iv. Using appropriate and varied transitions to signal shifts in writing to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- v. Developing voice and tone by using language that provides vivid and precise vocabulary to enhance the meaning of the writing.
- vi. Expanding and embedding ideas to create sentence variety.
- vii. Providing a concluding statement or section.

8.W.3 Usage and Mechanics

- A. Revise writing for clarity of content, word choice, sentence variety, and transition among paragraphs.
- B. Self- and peer-edit writing for capitalization, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraphing, and Standard English (See Language Usage for grade level expectations).

Language Usage

8.LU The student will use the conventions of Standard English when speaking and writing, differentiating between contexts that call for formal English and situations where informal discourse is more appropriate.

8.LU.1 Grammar

- A. Construct simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to communicate ideas clearly and add variety to writing.
- B. Recognize and use pronoun-antecedent agreement, including indefinite, reflexive, and relative pronouns, when speaking and writing.
- C. Use specific adjectives and adverbs to enhance speech and writing.
- D. Arrange phrases and clauses within a sentence to improve meaning reader/listener interest, and style in writing.
- E. Maintain consistent verb tense across paragraphs in writing.

8.LU.2 Mechanics

- A. Construct complete sentences with appropriate punctuation, avoiding comma splices and run-ons in writing.
- B. Use and punctuate dialogue and direct quotations appropriately in writing.
- C. Recognize and consistently spell frequently used words accurately.
- D. Consult reference materials to check and correct spelling.

Planning for Literacy Instruction + Integration of Standards

Standard	Considerations for Planning	Instructional Approaches for Integrating Strands
<p>Select an Exemplar of the Type of Writing <i>8.DSR.B – Proficiently read and comprehend a variety of literary and informational texts that exhibit complexity at the lower range of the grades 6-8 band.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis chart for determining text complexity (Appendix of the 2024 <i>English Standards of Learning</i>-p.105). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select mentor texts that are connected by concept or theme and are appropriately complex at the higher end of the 6-8 grade band (<i>8.DSR.B</i>). Select a wide range of mentor texts and related to the themes and concepts in the texts chosen that exposes students to a variety of writing styles, sentence structures, dialogue, and grammar/language usage standards. Select texts that are rich in content and allow students opportunities to read and engage with a variety of writing types (e.g., narrative, expository, persuasive, and reflective) (<i>8.DSR.D</i>). When applicable, exemplar text choices should align with other course content (e.g., History, Science, Math, the Arts).
<p>Demands of the Text* <i>8.DSR.E – Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the knowledge demands (literary knowledge, background knowledge, vocabulary knowledge) of the text? Examine the text(s) to locate authentic opportunities to highlight, apply, or integrate additional standards to enhance students’ understanding of the text(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annotate exemplar writing models for characteristics of various writing styles (e.g., narrative, expository, persuasive, and reflective writing) (<i>8.W.1A, 8.W.1B, 8.W.1C, 8.W.1D</i>). Provide examples of elements needed to draft a written response that is strong in both organization and composition (e.g., thesis statements, transition words, sentence structures) (<i>8.W.2</i>).

<p>Connect to Previously Read/Related Text to Build Knowledge and Vocabulary Understanding <i>8.DSR.D – Regularly engage in reading (independently, with peers, or with modest support) a series of conceptually related texts organized around topics of study to build knowledge and vocabulary. Use this background knowledge as context for new learning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will new learning connect to previously learned skills and/or concepts? • How will students build background knowledge or context to understand and be able to form thoughts about the topic and text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide research opportunities to build knowledge of the historical and cultural context surrounding the chosen topics and themes, making natural connections to other disciplines (<i>8.DSR.D</i>). • Students can build their own written responses on previously read texts, using the exemplar texts to support their writing structures, styles, and themes (<i>8.DSR.C</i>). • Edit and revise previously written assignments to incorporate newly learned Writing and Language Use standard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students might also combine previously written pieces or extend previously written pieces to extend writing and to emphasize that writing is a recursive process (<i>8.W.3</i>). • Connect written responses and writing prompts to previously read literary or informational texts to emphasize text structures and/or author techniques (<i>8.DSR.C</i>). • Review and reinforce earlier lessons on grade level standards to ensure students continue to build their knowledge of Grade 8 Language Use standards (<i>8.LU.2</i>).
<p>Skills in Practice <i>8.DSR.C – When responding to text through discussions and/or writing, draw several pieces of evidence from grade-level complex texts to support claims, conclusions, and inferences, including</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can teachers model application of the selected skills and standards? • How can teachers demonstrate ways authors make purposeful decisions when writing? • How will students show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model explicitly using examples and textual evidence to support writing exercises (<i>8.DSR.C, 8.RL.3, 8.RI.1C</i>). • Compose writing for a variety of audiences and purposes that includes relevant evidence (<i>8.W.1C, 8.W.1D, 8.W.2Aiii</i>). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Think-aloud planning with the audience in mind, showing students how various modes of writing fit various purposes (e.g., narrative, expository,

<p><i>quoting or paraphrasing from texts accurately and tracing where relevant evident is located.</i></p> <p><i>8.DSR.E – Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text.</i></p>	<p>knowledge of the selected skills and standards?</p>	<p>persuasive, or reflective) (8.W.1A, 8.W.1B, 8.W.1C, 8.W.1D).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Model specific details and word choice in the planning or brainstorming graphic organizer that considers the audience and purpose for writing. ● Think-aloud the close reading of a mentor text to look for purposeful choices the author made and how they impacted the reader’s experience and understanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Write reflectively to express personal thoughts and feelings to themes, concepts, or events in literary and/or informational text sets (8.W.1D). ● Use a mentor historical, scientific, or technical text as a model to annotate and analyze how the author unfolds a perspective or events with attention to the organizational pattern or text structure (8.RI.1B). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guide students in applying their own knowledge of text structures in their writing to match the audience and purpose. ○ Provide timely feedback on how the ideas are structured and connected. ● Allow students multiple opportunities to work through the writing process (e.g., planning, drafting, revising, editing) before finalizing their work (8.W.2A). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emphasize the cycle of writing by having students revisit the same piece of writing multiple times to edit and revise for clarity, word choice, sentence variety, and transitions (8.W.3A). ● Engage in peer-editing with a focus on Grade 8 Writing standards (e.g., thesis statements, transitions, sentence variety) (8.W.3).
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitate group or partner discussion around ways to improve errors in mechanics, grammar, punctuation, and usage.
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Connections	
Sample Text Sets	Disciplinary Connections
<p>Theme: <i>Mutual Relationships in Nature and Human Life</i> Informational: “Symbiosis: The Art of Living Together” (1080L)– National Geographic Society Informational: “What does a Healthy Relationship Look Like?” (9.99 ATOS)– Psychology Today Informational: “‘My Octopus Teacher’ Shows a Rare Bond Between a Human and a Sea Creature” (1110L)– Heather Junga Literary (Poem): <i>Knock Knock</i> – Daniel Beaty Literary (Poem): <i>The Raincoat</i> – Ada Limon Literary (Poem): <i>Love and Friendship</i> – Emily Bronte</p> <p>Theme: <i>Space Exploration: Goals, Teamwork, and Perseverance</i> Informational: “Diversity Mission: How NASA is Selecting the Next Astronauts to Walk on the Moon” (1180L)– Smithsonian Institute Informational: “The ISS: The Ultimate Group Project” (1060L)- Marie Droual Literary (Poem): <i>High Flight</i> – John Magee Jr. Literary (Poem): <i>Space</i>– William Burford Literary (Poem): <i>Success</i> – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When reading texts connected to the theme, “Space Exploration: Goals, Teamwork, and Perseverance,” students can look at models of the Mars rover missions and determine distances traveled. ● Connecting to History/Geography: When reading texts and working through thematic units, teachers can make natural connections to the historical events across texts such as investigating the historical alliances and partnerships between nations as it relates to the sample text sets. ● Some of the sample text sets may require additional background knowledge from other content areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, students may need to research or learn more about the history of space exploration to build context needed to understand thematic connections (e.g., students can explore the moon landing, the space race during the Cold War, modern achievements); students can also read about marginalized communities in space exploration and the timeline of progress toward inclusion (e.g., Katherine Johnson). ● When reading texts connected to the theme, “Historical Investigations,” students can analyze historical documents to draw parallels between different time periods and activism/movements (e.g., abolitionist movement, suffragette movement, Civil Rights Movement).

<p>Theme: <i>Historical Investigations</i></p> <p>Literary nonfiction (Speech): “I Have a Dream” (1130L)– Martin Luther King</p> <p>Literary nonfiction (Speech): “RFK’s Speech Following the Death of MLK” (1180L)– Robert F. Kennedy</p> <p>Informational: “The Sit-In Movement” (1020L)– USHistory.org</p> <p>Informational: “Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott” (920L)– USHistory.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When reading texts and working through thematic units, teachers can help students situate the events in the text within geographical locations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Map the routes of freedom movements and draw conclusions on how geography (setting) impacted these movements. ○ When reading texts connected to the theme, “Historical Investigations,” students can determine how scientific advancements have influenced social justice (e.g. advances in communication technology). • Connecting to the Arts: Teachers can provide opportunities for students to study visual, auditory, or media representations of concepts and themes within thematic units. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When reading texts connected to the theme, “Historical Investigations,” students can study artistic expressions of freedom (e.g., protest songs, political cartoons) and how they impacted the movement.
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COMMUNICATION & MULTIMODAL LITERACIES AND LANGUAGE USE | GRADE 8 - INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

Prior to teaching the Grade 8 Communication & Multimodal Literacies and Language Use standards, review:

- [Progression Chart - Communications & Multimodal Literacies](#)
- [Progression Chart - Language Usage](#)
- [Grades 7-9 Side-By-Side](#)

Critical for successful planning and implementation of grade level expectations for Communication & Multimodal Literacies and Language Usage in the 2024 English *Standards of Learning*.

- [LINK- Grade 8 Understanding the Standards- Communication & Multimodal Literacies](#)
- [LINK- Grade 8 Understanding the Standards- Language Usage](#)

Teacher's Note:

- Use the Grade 8 Understanding the Standards.
 - Grade 8 students will continue to develop oral communication and collaboration skills by participating in sustained discussions with diverse groups, engaging with various perspectives, and practicing active listening. Students should be provided opportunities to paraphrase, summarize, and communicate agreement or disagreement respectfully, fostering comprehension and critical thinking during communication.
 - Emphasize teamwork, problem-solving, and valuing peer contributions while encouraging students to refine their ideas and self-reflect on their group participation.
 - Give students opportunities to present ideas in both formal and informal formats, they should be instructed on appropriate language and vocabulary use and how to tailor that usage to different audiences.
 - Provide opportunities for students to create multimodal presentations, allowing students to sequence ideas logically, support their claims with relevant evidence, and incorporate multiple communication modes.
 - Ensure students reference and cite sources properly to demonstrate academic integrity.
 - Guide students in crafting audience-specific media messages that include claims supported by evidence, ensuring students are prepared for effective communication across different contexts.
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Communication and Multimodal Literacies

8.C The student will develop effective oral communication and collaboration skills to build a community of learners that process, understand, and interpret content together.

8.C.1 Communication, Listening, and Collaboration

- A. Facilitate and contribute to a range of sustained collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade eight topics and texts. This includes:
- i. Listening actively, offering and seeking ideas, and setting guidelines for presentations and discussions.
 - ii. Working effectively and respectfully by actively contributing relevant and well-supported ideas and opinions and sharing responsibility for the collaborative work.
 - iii. Asking clarifying questions and responding appropriately to others' questions to encourage discussion, foster understanding, and maintain focus on the topic.
 - iv. Communicating agreement or tactful disagreement with others' ideas, using carefully constructed responses.
 - v. Thoughtfully paraphrasing and summarizing ideas made during discussions.
 - vi. Acknowledging new insights expressed by others, and, when justified, modifying their own views.

- vii. Valuing contributions made by each group member while exhibiting a willingness to make necessary concessions to accomplish a common goal.
- viii. Using self-reflection to evaluate one’s own role in preparation and participation in small-group activities.

8.C.2 Speaking and Presentation of Ideas

- A. Deliver collaborative and individual formal and informal interactive presentations This includes:
 - i. Clearly communicating information in an organized and succinct manner.
 - ii. Incorporating pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples to support the main ideas.
 - iii. Using language and vocabulary appropriate to the audience, topic, and purpose, including speaking clearly at an understandable pace with appropriate tone and volume.
 - iv. Responding to audience questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
 - v. Referencing source material as appropriate during the presentation.

8.C.3 Integrating Multimodal Literacies

- A. Plan and present a multimodal presentation that
 - i. Sequences ideas logically.
 - ii. Uses pertinent descriptions, facts, and details.
 - iii. Uses two or more communication modes to make meaning (e.g., still or moving images, gestures, spoken language, and written language).
 - iv. Emphasizes different points of view.
- B. Craft and publish audience-specific media messages that present claims and findings with relevant evidence and reasoning.

8.C.4 Examining Media Messages

- A. Examine how the media can influence beliefs, behaviors, and interpretations by using persuasive techniques (e.g., name calling, innuendo, glittering generalities, card stacking, bandwagon, testimonials, appeal to prestige, snobbery or plain folks, appeal to emotions).
- B. Analyze how similar information is presented in diverse media formats by examining electronic, print, propaganda, and mass media.
- C. Evaluate sources for their relationships, motives, intent, and content (e.g., social, emotional, commercial).

LANGUAGE USAGE

8.LU The student will use the conventions of Standard English when speaking and writing, differentiating between contexts that call for formal English and situations where informal discourse is more appropriate.

8.LU.1 Grammar

- A. Construct simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to communicate ideas clearly and add variety to writing.
- B. Recognize and use pronoun-antecedent agreement, including indefinite, reflexive, and relative pronouns, when speaking and writing.
- C. Use specific adjectives and adverbs to enhance speech and writing.
- D. Arrange phrases and clauses within a sentence to improve meaning reader/listener interest, and style in writing.
- E. Maintain consistent verb tense across paragraphs in writing.

8.LU.2 Mechanics

- A. Construct complete sentences with appropriate punctuation, avoiding comma splices and run-ons in writing.
- B. Use and punctuate dialogue and direct quotations appropriately in writing.
- C. Recognize and consistently spell frequently used words accurately.
- D. Consult reference materials to check and correct spelling.

Planning for Literacy Instruction + Integration of Standards

Standard	Considerations for Planning	Instructional Approaches for Integrating Strands
<p>Select Engaging Discussion Protocols to Respond to Texts <i>8.DSR.B – Proficiently read and comprehend a variety of literary and informational texts that exhibit complexity at the lower range of the grades 6-8 band.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis chart for determining text complexity (Appendix of the 2024 <i>English Standards of Learning</i>-p.105). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose grade-level appropriate discussion protocols for students to engage in when responding to text, while considering how different protocols match various thematic units. When selecting exemplar texts, consider how to practice and prepare for discussion, feedback models and resources, and communication strategies needed to relate discussions to exemplar texts (8.C.1A). When applicable, align topics, concepts, or themes to other course content such as history and Social sciences, Science, Math, or the Arts (See Connections for examples for interdisciplinary opportunities).
<p>Demands of the Strand* <i>8.DSR.E – Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will the teacher help students develop effective communication skills to share ideas and articulate personal viewpoints with appropriate tone and delivery? How will the teacher support students when responding to texts in both informal and formal discussions or presentations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce and review discussion norms and collaborative strategies by modeling active listening and appropriate ways to agree/disagree (8.C.1Ai, 8.C.1Aiv). Provide explicit instruction how to ask questions related to a presentation and how to respond to audience questions with evidence, observations, and ideas (8.C.1Aiii). Review presentation structures and skills, focusing on the components of a presentation (e.g., introduction, body, conclusion, main ideas, supporting evidence) and specific components related to presentation communication (e.g., voice, pace, gestures, eye contact) (8.C.2A). Review persuasive techniques and their impact (e.g., bandwagon, testimonials, generalities), using real-world media examples such as advertisements or social media

		<p>campaigns (8.C.4A).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model the presentation planning process using appropriate graphic organizers for the presentation style and purpose (8.C.3A).
<p>Connect to Previously Read/Related Text to Build Knowledge and Vocabulary Understanding <i>8.DSR.D – Regularly engage in reading (independently, with peers, or with modest support) a series of conceptually related texts organized around topics of study to build knowledge and vocabulary. Use this background knowledge as context for new learning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will new learning connect to previously learned skills and/or concepts? How will instruction build on previously read text or previously learned communication protocols? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to previously read and familiar texts, discussing the audience, topic, and purpose of the text to support students as they begin developing their own presentations for specific purposes (8.C.3B). Build on students’ previous persuasive or informative essays and have them transform their writing into presentations, utilizing the written work to enhance the organization of presentations; students can also transform narratives or expository texts in multimodal presentations (8.W.1) (8.C.2). Use media messages that connect with previously read texts or studied themes to build off students’ background knowledge (8.DSR.D). Revisit previously read texts where students have found evidence for a variety of purposes and reference those skills as students develop presentations that require evidence, reasoning, and research (8.DSR.C).
<p>Skills in Practice <i>8.DSR.C – -When responding to text through discussions and/or writing, draw several pieces of evidence from grade-level complex texts to support claims, conclusions, and inferences, including</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can teachers model application of the selected skills and standards? How will students show knowledge of the selected skills and standards? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ongoing opportunities for students to practice using academic, content-specific, and newly learned vocabulary words while reading, writing, and discussing concepts from texts (8.DSR.D) (8.RV.1H). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate discussions that allow students to explain vocabulary-based concepts connected to author’s purpose (e.g., connotation, diction, figurative language), connecting these conversations to students’ own presentations

<p><i>quoting or paraphrasing from texts accurately and tracing where relevant evident is located.</i></p> <p><i>8.DSR.E – Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text.</i></p>		<p><i>(8.C.1A) (8.RL.2B) (8.RI.2B).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate whole-group or small-group discussions that allow students opportunities to listen, paraphrase, and respond to peers’ ideas while also contributing to large groups discussions <i>(8.C.1.Ai, 8.C.1.Aii, 8.C.1.Av).</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use reflective prompts, allowing students to assess their contributions to the conversation and potential shifts in their viewpoints. • Discuss different modes of communication and how these add meaning to presentations (e.g., written text, visuals) and introduce digital tools that support the use of various communication modes <i>(8.C.3A).</i> • Compare different media sources on the same topic and evaluate the effectiveness of each media source (e.g., bias, persuasive techniques, intent) drawing on compare and contrast activities done when reading <i>(8.C.4, 8.RL.3, 8.RI.3B).</i>
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Connections

Sample Text Sets	Disciplinary Connections
<p>Theme: <i>Transformation and Redemption</i> Literary: <i>A Christmas Carol</i> – Charles Dickens (940L) Literary: <i>Contents of a Deadman’s Pocket</i>– Jack Finney (1070L) Informational: “Why Dickens Wrote: A Christmas Carol” – J.E. Luebering (1070L) Literary nonfiction (Interview): “Interview with a former child laborer in the Industrial Revolution” – Michael Sadler Literary (Poem): <i>I am Offering this Poem</i>– Jimmy Santiago Baca Literary (Poem): <i>Ring Out, Wild Bells</i>– Alfred Lord Tennyson (1060L)</p> <p>Theme: <i>Perseverance, Resilience, and Overcoming Adversity</i> Literary: <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> (1020L) Informational: “Opinion: Why Kids can be Leaders and Send Power Messages” – Karen Leggett (880L) Literary nonfiction (Speech): “Malala Yousafzai’s Address to the United Nations, July 2013” – Malala Yousafzai (1100L) Literary nonfiction (Speech): “Cesar Chavez’s Lesson of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.” – Cesar Chavez (980L) Literary (Poem): <i>Still I Rise</i> – Maya Angelou (590L) Literary (Poem): <i>Hurricane</i> – Mary Oliver (880L)</p> <p>Theme: <i>Facing Fears and Overcoming Challenges</i> Literary: <i>Full Tilt</i> – Neal Shusterman (740L)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When working through the thematic unit, “Transformation and Redemption,” students can explore the historical context of the Industrial Revolution (e.g., child labor, workhouses) and how this influenced social reforms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This unit also connects to science standards by studying the impact of industries on the environment and natural resources. ○ Read multiple information sources on the topic of transformation to compare and contrast the standard of living, quality of life, government, and economic opportunity at that time compared to now (<i>WG. 12c</i>). • If working through the thematic unit, “Facing Fears and Overcoming Challenges,” students can investigate the science behind fear and how humans react to stress and danger, connecting this with the characters in the novel <i>Full Tilt</i>; teachers can also incorporate scientific vocabulary (e.g., centripetal force and momentum) into discussions of the challenges the characters face. • Students can make their own multimodal presentations based on the themes and topics explored in the sample thematic units or units chosen by teacher.

<p>Literary: <i>The Maze Runner</i> – James Dashner (770L)</p> <p>Literary: “The Pit and the Pendulum” – Edgar Allan Poe (830L)</p> <p>Literary nonfiction (Speech): “What Fear Can Teach Us” – Karen Thompson Walker (1090L)</p> <p>Informational: “Voices on the Trail: Women Moving West”—Marcia Amido Lusted (1110L)</p> <p>Literary (Poem): <i>Sonnet</i>—James Weldon Johnson</p>	
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RESEARCH | GRADE 8 - INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

Prior to teaching the Grade 8 Research standards, review:

- [Progression Chart - Research](#)
- [Grades 7-9 Side-By-Side](#)

Critical for successful planning and implementation of grade level expectations for Research in the 2024 English Standards of Learning.

- [LINK- Grade 8 Understanding the Standards- Research](#)

Teacher’s Note:

- Use the Grade 8 Understanding the Standards.
- In Grade 8, students build knowledge on various topics by conducting research and reading conceptually related texts.
- They learn to evaluate, synthesize, and organize information from diverse sources as they formulate and refine research questions and analyze and evaluate the quality of sources.
- While working with diverse sources, students should quote, summarize, and paraphrase findings within different formats (e.g., essays, reports, presentations).
- Students should also learn citation techniques (e.g., MLA, APA) to avoid plagiarism.
- Teachers should emphasize the importance of crafting well-developed research questions to help guide students' research objectives and direct their efforts.
- Teachers should also assist and support students' abilities to assess the authority, accuracy, objectivity, and relevance of sources, as well as helping develop the skills needed to identify bias and conflicting information.

- Students should be given opportunities to work with various source formats (e.g., print, digital, primary, secondary).
 - Students should also be taught ethical use and practice responsible use of new technologies, including AI. Teachers should encourage honesty and integrity in students' academic work and research.
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Research

8.R. The student will conduct research and read a series of conceptually related texts on selected topics to build knowledge on grade-eight content and texts, solve problems, and support cross-curricular learning.

8.R.1 Evaluation and Synthesis of Information

- A. Formulate and revise questions about a research topic, broadening or narrowing the inquiry as necessary.
- B. Collect, organize, and synthesize information from multiple sources using various notetaking formats.
- C. Evaluate and analyze the relevance, validity, and credibility of sources (primary, secondary, digital, and print) identifying main and supporting ideas, conflicting information, points of view, and any biases.
- D. Quote, summarize, and paraphrase research findings from primary and secondary sources, avoiding plagiarism by using own words and following ethical and legal guidelines.
- E. Organize and share findings in formal and informal oral or written formats.
- F. Cite primary and secondary sources using the Modern Language Association (MLA) or American Psychological Association (APA) style.
- G. Demonstrate ethical and responsible use of all sources, including the Internet, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and new technologies, as they develop.

Planning for Literacy Instruction + Integration of Standards

Standard	Considerations for Planning	Instructional Approaches for Integrating Strands
<p>Select a Purpose for Research <i>8.DSR.B– Proficiently read and comprehend a variety of literary and informational texts that exhibit complexity at the lower range of the grades 6-8 band.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis chart for determining text complexity (Appendix of the 2024 <i>English Standards of Learning</i>-p.105). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select texts that encourage research to gain a deeper understanding such as texts with historical or social contexts. Strategically select paired texts to evaluate how different writers/texts approach similar topics to evaluate texts for their credibility, reliability, accuracy, usefulness, and limitations, identifying main points, points of view, conflicting information, and any misconceptions or biases. Exemplar text choices and pairings should include a variety of text types (e.g., literary, informational, poetry, dramas) (<i>8.DSR.D</i>). When applicable, select texts that align with other course content (e.g., History, Science, Math, the Arts).
<p>Connect to Previously Read/Related Text to Build Knowledge and Vocabulary Understanding <i>8.DSR.E – Regularly engage in reading (independently, with peers, or with modest support) a series of conceptually related texts organized around topics of study to build knowledge and</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will new learning connect to previously learned skills and/or concepts? How will students build background knowledge or context to understand the text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize videos, discussions, or short excerpts to provide background knowledge on historical, cultural, or social contexts that may be needed to understand concepts within texts or the overall research process (<i>8.DSR.D</i>). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate students’ prior knowledge on research topics and concepts from text. Connect research topics to previously read/studied content and thematic units. Provide opportunities for students to ask and answer questions before, during, and after research projects to better understand the research process and how comprehension and evaluation of texts is critical for developing a completed research project (<i>8.DSR.E</i>).

<p>vocabulary. Use this background knowledge as context for new learning.</p>		
<p>Skills in Practice <i>8.DSR.C—When responding to text through discussions and/or writing, draw several pieces of evidence from grade-level complex texts to support claims, conclusions, and inferences, including quoting or paraphrasing from texts accurately and tracing where relevant evident is located.</i></p> <p><i>8.DSR.E—Use reading strategies as needed to aid and monitor comprehension when encountering challenging sections of text.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will teachers model application of the selected skills and standards? • How will students show understanding of the research process and present their findings? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build research activities around texts connected to a common theme to support students in developing research questions around a general topic (8.DSR.D). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Model how to develop a research question from a provided theme. Use think-aloud strategy to model how to move from a broad topic to a specific question (8.R.1A). • Review the research process to students, explaining how research can be broken into manageable steps (e.g., formulate a question, gather sources, evaluate credibility, synthesize information, cite sources) (8.R.1). • Before, during, or after close reading texts, formulate research questions; model revising these questions for clarity and inquiry (8.R.1A). • Explicitly model the research process (collect, organize, and synthesize information) with an exemplar text connected to the provided research theme, showing the progression towards the final product (8.R.1B). • Students in Grade 8 are being introduced to citing using MLA or APA style (8.R.1F). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explicitly teach MLA or APA format explaining when and how to cite sources in these styles; emphasize the importance of citing information to avoid plagiarism and legal/ethical consequences (8.R.1G). ○ Incorporate mentor texts that use MLA or APA

		<p>citations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilize writing conferences and regular checkpoints to provide ongoing feedback and corrective instruction as needed (8.R.1).• Engage in peer-review activities, reviewing each other’s research questions, sources, and citation; rubrics and checklists can be provided to guide this process and foster accountability in the research process (8.C.1).• Organize and share findings in formal and informal oral or written formats (8.W.3).<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Craft audience-specific media messages using claims, findings, and relevant evidence from research (8.C.3B).• Provide scaffolded assistance as needed.
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Connections

Sample Text Sets	Disciplinary Connections
<p>Theme: <i>American Heroes-Courage in Action</i> Informational: “General Eisenhower’s Order of the Day” (860L)– General Dwight D. Eisenhower Literary (Poem): “O Captain! My Captain” – Walt Whitman (1100L) Literary (Poem): “Invictus” – William Ernest Henley (1050L)</p> <p>Theme: <i>Mystery and Legends</i> Literary (Poem): <i>Places and Names: A Traveler’s Guide</i> – J. Patrick Lewis (950L) Literary (Poem): <i>The Lost Colony</i>– Susan Stewart Informational: “Indus Valley Mysteries”—USHistory.org, CommonLit (1160L) Informational: “Don’t Fear the Bermuda Triangle” — Kathryn Hulick (990L)</p> <p>Theme: <i>Technological Innovations and Their Social Impact</i> Informational: “How Video Games Are Getting Inside your Head and Wallet”—Steve Henn, NPR (1020L) Literary: Excerpts from <i>Frankenstein</i> (800L-1100L)– Mary Shelley Literary: <i>There Will Come Soft Rains</i>(970L)– Ray Bradbury Literary: <i>Autumntime</i> (1050L)– Anthony Lentini Literary (Poem): <i>Ode to a Spellchecker</i> – Jerrold H. Zar Literary (Poem): <i>Technology Haiku</i> – John P. Curtin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students in Grade 8 should have experience selecting and synthesizing evidence from information sources (e.g., artifacts, primary/secondary sources, charts, graphs, and diagrams) to understand various concepts from History and the Social Sciences (<i>WGa</i>). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider collaborating with History teachers to incorporate the same or similar information sources to deepen students’ understanding of a concept or thematic unit. ● Guide students in collecting information from multiple sources to compare and contrast historical, cultural, economic, and political perspectives. ● Use previously read or explored concepts from History to evaluate sources for credibility, propaganda, and bias to understand the world (<i>WGj</i>). ● Incorporate themes and topics that relate to previously covered topics in History and Social Sciences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, when exploring the thematic unit, “<i>Technological Innovations and Their Social Impact</i>,” students can explain the role/influence of media and social media on the different levels of government (CE.9). ○ Also connect to the Arts by researching how artists have responded to technological changes and/or how advancements in technology changed the creation and distribution of art.

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