

# LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

## EIGHTH GRADE

### Goal

Language arts in the eighth grade is designed to encourage students to develop strategies that deal with language in real life situations. Writing focuses on prewriting, composing, and editing with emphasis on narratives, exposition, and persuasion. Reading comprehension and vocabulary stresses development of reading and thinking skills that enables students to comprehend and react critically to various genres. The student will continue to develop an appreciation for literature through a study of literary elements contained in classic works as well as contemporary selections. Language objectives stress mechanics, language expression, and organization of ideas. Information and research skills emphasize collection and organization to analyze information.

### Reading

- 1. Comprehension – The student will identify and apply strategies and skills to comprehend text.**
  - a. Skim text for an overall impression. Scan text for specific information.
  - b. Identify and apply comprehension strategies through the critical thinking of summarizing, interpreting, evaluating, critiquing, and analyzing what is read.
  - c. Make, confirm, and revise predictions as needed when reading.
  - d. Recognize words that signal transitions to determine sequence (e.g. first of all, furthermore, finally).
  - e. Determine the purpose for reading a specific text (e.g. for entertainment, to gain information, to inform).
  - f. Adjust reading rate and determine appropriate strategies to match the purpose, difficulty, and characteristics of the text.
  
- 2. Literary Response and Analysis – The student will demonstrate familiarity with a variety of literature.**
  - a. Use setting, plot, characterization, and style to determine a text's genre (e.g., science fiction, folktale).
  - b. Interpret meaning from the author's use of figurative language and other literary devices within the text (e.g. metaphor, simile, alliteration, onomatopoeia, personification, symbolism, dialect, and idiom).
  - c. Identify literary techniques used in literature (e.g. irony, understatement, exaggeration, foreshadowing, etc).

- d. Determine types of conflict in a short story (e.g. man vs. man, man vs. society, man vs. nature, man vs. self).
- e. Identify elements of plot in a short story (e.g. exposition, setting, complications, suspense, climax, and resolution).
- f. Compare and contrast archetypal characters in literary text (e.g. heroes/heroines, villains).
- g. Analyze the relationship between the information in text and historical and/or current events (e.g. period, ideas, and customs).
- h. Compare and contrast the use of the poetic elements of word choice, dialogue, rhyme, rhythm, and voice.

**3. Vocabulary – The student will demonstrate knowledge of words and word meanings.**

- a. Determine the meaning of words from their use in context.
- b. Analyze idioms, analogies, metaphors, and similes to infer the literal and figurative meanings of phrases.
- c. Recognize the origins and meanings of foreign words frequently used in English and use these words accurately in speaking and writing.
- d. Determine the meaning of unknown words and vary word choice by using a glossary, dictionary, and thesaurus.

**Listening and Speaking**

**1. Listening – The student will listen and respond to oral communication.**

- a. Use appropriate listening skills in various settings. Show respect for others.
- b. Ask questions to seek elaboration and clarification of the speaker's ideas and opinions and to comprehend and recall information.
- c. Determine the purpose(s) for listening (e.g. gain information, solve problems, enjoyment).
- d. Recognize and understand barriers to effective listening (e.g. distractions, biases, conflicting demands).
- e. Evaluate the speaker's message in terms of content, credibility, and delivery.

**2. Speaking – The student will communicate effectively.**

- a. Organize information to achieve particular purposes by matching the message, vocabulary, voice modulation, expression, and tone to the audience and purpose.
- b. Prepare a speech outline based upon a chosen pattern of organization, which generally includes an introduction; transitions, previews, and summaries; a logically developed body; and an effective conclusion.
- c. Use appropriate delivery (e.g. volume, rate, enunciation, pacing, and movement).

- d. Use appropriate grammar, word choice, enunciation, and pace during formal presentations.
- e. Use expressive language (e.g. action verbs, sensory details, colorful modifiers, active voice) to enliven oral presentations.
- f. Use appropriate nonverbal skills when speaking (e.g. eye contact, postures, and gestures).
- g. Speak responsibly to present accurate, truthful, and ethical messages.
- h. Use audience feedback to modify the organizational plan and/or to clarify meaning.

## **Grammar and Usage**

### **1. Grammar and Usage – The student will develop a command of standard English conventions.**

- a. Define and give examples of indefinite, interrogative, relative, reflexive, and demonstrative pronouns.
- b. Categorize verbs as to voice and mood.
- c. Conjugate regular and irregular verbs.
- d. Use the correct subject-verb agreement with a compound subject.
- e. Differentiate the use of adjectives and adverbs.
- f. Define and give examples of intensifiers.
- g. Identify and correct faulty parallel sentence structure.
- h. Avoid misplaced modifiers.
- i. Use correct pronoun antecedent in sentences.

### **2. Capitalization – The student will capitalize correctly.**

- a. Capitalize historical events and periods, special events, and calendar events.
- b. Capitalize nationalities, races, religions, academic courses, and languages.
- c. Capitalize particular places, things, events, and awards.

### **3. Punctuation – The student will use correct punctuation.**

- a. Use a comma with an introductory phrase.
- b. Use commas with a conjunction between independent clauses.
- c. Use commas with appositives.
- d. Use commas to separate items in a series.
- e. Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives preceding a noun.
- f. Use commas to set off sentence interrupters (e.g. appositives, nonessential phrases and clauses).
- g. Use a semicolon between independent clauses.
- h. Use a colon to introduce a list of items.
- i. Use a colon after the salutation of a business letter and in time.
- j. Correctly use hyphens, dashes, and parentheses.

- 4. Spelling – The student will develop spelling strategies and skills.**
- Use correct spelling conventions.
  - Identify Latin and Greek words that form common roots (e.g. locus, phobos, scio).
  - Use reference materials and technology to check and correct spelling.

## **Writing**

- 1. Process – The student will develop writing skills.**
- Use prewriting and drafting strategies to generate topics and plan approaches.
  - Develop a composition that is focused, coherent, has a clear and logical progression of ideas and has a beginning, middle, and end.
  - Support the thesis with analogies, paraphrases, quotations, opinions from authorities, and comparisons.
  - Use vivid, varied, precise, and economical word choices.
  - Revise writing for word choice, appropriate organization, consistent point of view, and transitions between paragraphs, passages, and ideas.
  - Edit final copies to correct errors in usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- 2. Composition – The student will write for various audiences and purposes, including, narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive texts.**
- Use techniques of writing to learn (e.g. take notes, outline, and learning logs).
  - Write responses to literature.
  - Write a research report with a bibliography.
  - Make use of functional types of writing (e.g. book reports, letters, essay questions, outlining).
  - Demonstrate the use of personal writing for pleasure (e.g. journals, friendly letters).

## **Information and Research**

- 1. Reference – The student will identify and use sources of different types of information.**
- Demonstrate use of functional print (e.g. schedules, letters, directories, charts, maps, graphs, tables, diagrams, and directions).
  - Demonstrate appropriate use of informational sources (e.g. reference books, almanacs, atlases, encyclopedias, dictionaries, thesauruses, and tables of contents, glossaries, indexes, magazines, and newspapers).

- 2. Research – The student will explore and analyze information.**
- a. Analyze, synthesize, evaluate, summarize, and paraphrase information from multiple sources.
  - b. Organize information to classify, compare, and contrast.
  - c. Evaluate resources by gathering and evaluating evidence to make appropriate conclusions about information.
  - d. Develop skills in outlining main points, summarizing, and noting important examples to evaluate information.