

GRADE 8 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Performance Criteria

Overview

In 8th grade, students read and understand a variety of informational texts including essays, speeches, biographies, and other types of historical, scientific, and technical material. Students also read and understand a wide range of literature such as stories, plays, and poems from across cultures and time periods. In writing and class discussions, 8th graders continue to gather information from multiple sources, and evaluate whether the sources are credible and accurate. Students write both short, focused compositions, and longer papers that involve research, reflection, and revision over time.

READING:

Rich and Challenging Texts

Read rich and challenging 8th grade level texts closely, proficiently, and independently.

Citing Evidence

Cite evidence that best supports what a literary or informational text says, as well as what it implies or suggests.

Analyzing Themes

Analyze the way an author develops the theme or central idea of a text, noting how the characters, setting, and plot are connected. Summarize the text objectively.

Outlining Arguments

Outline the argument and specific claims in a text. Evaluate whether the reasoning is sound and whether there is enough relevant and meaningful evidence to support the claims. Note when evidence may be irrelevant or misleading.

Understanding Vocabulary

Read and understand 8th grade vocabulary, and determine how an author's word choices, including the use of analogies and allusion, impact the meaning and tone of a text.

- An analogy is a comparison of two different things that have some similarities. (*When he moved to town, he was a fish out of water.*)
- An allusion is a reference to a person, place, or event. (*He has a Midas touch* is a reference to the Greek myth of King Midas, whose touch turned everything to gold.)

Learning New Word and Phrases

Use different strategies to understand new words and phrases; for example, use context as a clue; use common Greek and Latin roots as a clue; consult a dictionary online or in print.

- Examples of common Greek roots: *biblio* (book) as in bibliography; *therm* (heat) as in thermometer.
- Examples of common Latin roots: *aqua* (water), as in aquarium; *cent* (hundred), as in century.

WRITING:

Making Supported Arguments

Write arguments that state a claim, differentiate the claim from alternate or opposing views, and support the claim with reasons and evidence from accurate and credible sources.

Informative Papers

Write informative or explanatory papers that examine a topic and express ideas by carefully selecting and analyzing information. Use facts, details, and other information to develop the topic.

Creating Stories

Write stories or narratives about real or imaginary experiences. Establish a context and point of view, and develop story elements such as characters, a well-sequenced plot, and descriptive details.

Including Evidence

Include evidence from text to support thinking and research.

Producing and Publishing

Use technology to produce and publish writing, and to work with others on writing.

Basic Rules of English

Use basic rules of English grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling in written work.

- For example, use a comma, dash, or ellipsis (...) to indicate a pause.
- Use verbs in the active and passive voices (Active: *He is eating chicken.* Passive: *Chicken is being eaten by him.*)

SPEAKING & LISTENING:

Class Discussion

Participate in class discussions about complex 8th-grade topics, texts, and issues. Be prepared to refer to evidence in a text when discussing ideas, and be open to explaining and modifying a viewpoint in response to the ideas of others.

Evaluating Others' Arguments

Listen to another speaker's argument and evaluate whether the claims are based on sound reasoning and evidence, identifying evidence that is irrelevant or unrelated.

Giving a Presentation

Give a well-organized presentation to construct an argument or explain a research finding, highlighting the key points and supporting with evidence clearly.

RESEARCH & INQUIRY:

Research Projects

Conduct short research projects to answer a research question, including a self-created question. Gather information from print and online sources, and generate additional questions for further exploration.

Locating Information

Locate information efficiently; use effective search terms online.

Evaluating Sources

Evaluate whether sources are accurate and can be trusted. Quote or paraphrase material correctly without plagiarizing or copying. Cite sources appropriately.