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## English Language Arts: Grade 8

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*During the eighth-grade year, students begin to look forward to high school. Grade 8 standards get students ready for the challenges and transition to come. Students begin to study the history and the development of English vocabulary. They continue to read a variety of grade-level-appropriate classic and contemporary literature, nonfiction, poetry, and plays, and they begin to compare and contrast the different types of writing as well as different perspectives on similar topics or themes. They evaluate the logic of informational texts and analyze how literature reflects the backgrounds, attitudes, and beliefs of the authors. They not only write or deliver research reports (750-1,000 words or more) but also conduct their own research. They use the conventions of Standard English correctly. They deliver a variety of types of presentations and effectively respond to questions and concerns from the audience.*

*By the end of grade 8, students are expected to be reading “At the Standard” (See the DoDEA ELA Addendum 1: Reading Performance Levels). The quality and complexity of materials read should reflect the grade level appropriate Lexiles.*

**Strand: 8E1: Reading**

**Standard: 8E1a: Word Recognition, Fluency, and Vocabulary Development**  
*Students use their knowledge of word parts and word relationships, as well as context (the meaning of the text around the word), to determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and to understand the precise meaning of grade-level-appropriate words.*

**Components Vocabulary and Concept Development**

**8E1a.1:** Analyze idioms (such as analogies, metaphors, and similes) to infer the literal and figurative meanings of phrases

**8E1a.2:** Understand the influence of history and culture on English word meaning and vocabulary expansion.

*Example: Recognize how the early influences of Spanish explorers in North America expanded American English vocabulary by adding words such as “tornado,” “tomato,” and “Patio.”*

**8E1a.3:** Verify the meaning of a word in its context when its meaning is not directly stated or implied through the use of definition, restatement, example, comparison, or contrast.

*Example: Understand the meaning of “pickle” in a sentence, such as “The pickle was an important part of metal working.” Use a dictionary to help clarify the use of the word “pickle” in this context.”*

**Standard: 8E1b: Comprehension and Analysis of Nonfiction and Informational Text**  
*Students read and understand a variety of grade-level-appropriate nonfiction, such as biographies, autobiographies, books in many different subject areas, magazines, newspapers, reference and technical materials, and online information.*

**Component: Structural Features of Informational and Technical Materials**

**8E1b.1:** Compare and contrast the features and elements of consumer materials to gain meaning from documents.

*Examples:*

1. Compare examples of a variety of instructional or technical manuals brought to class by different students such as those for a computer, hair appliance, camera, or electronic game.

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2. Describe what features make certain instructions easier than others to understand and follow.

**8E1b.2:** Analyze text that uses proposition (*statement of argument*) and support patterns.  
*Example: Read and analyze the organization of “pro” and “con” editorials on a topic of interest in USA Today. In each, decide if the argument is simply and clearly stated. Decide if there are at least three major points in support of the argument, with the strongest argument given first.*

**8E1b.3:** Analyze the structure, format, and purpose of informational materials.  
*Example: Compare examples of textbooks, newspapers, instructional or technical manuals, and public documents.*

Component:

**Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Nonfiction and Informational Text**

**8E1b.4:** Find similarities and differences between texts in the treatment, amount of coverage, or organization of ideas.

*Example: Read articles or biographies about cultural or historical figures with local connections and compare the amount of or types of coverage such figures received.*

**8E1b.5:** Compare the original text to a summary to determine whether the summary accurately describes the main ideas, includes important details, and conveys the underlying meaning.

*Example: After writing summaries or creating graphic organizers on an informational text read for class, exchange the summary or organizer with another student. Evaluate this classmate’s summary, based on how well the student describes the most important elements of the text.*

**8E1b.6:** Use information from a variety of consumer and public documents to explain a situation or decision and to solve a problem.

*Example: Decide which is the most practical and economical wireless telephone to purchase by reading articles, brochures, web pages, and other consumer sources, such as Consumer Reports.*

**8E1b.7:** Understand and explain the use of simple equipment by following directions in a technical manual.

**8E1b.8** Make reasonable statements and draw conclusions about a text, supporting them with accurate examples.

Component:

**Expository (Informational) Critique**

**8E1b.9:** Evaluate the logic (*inductive or deductive argument*), internal consistency, and structural patterns of text.

*Example: Read The Brooklyn Bridge: They Said It Couldn’t Be Built by Judith St. George and evaluate the techniques and the effectiveness of the development of the main idea of the book.*

Standard:

**8E1c: Comprehension and Analysis of Literary Text**

*Students read a wide variety of grade-level appropriate fiction, such as classic and contemporary literature, historical fiction, fantasy, science fiction, mystery, adventure, folklore, mythology, poetry, short story, drama, and other genres.*

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- Component:**
- 8E1c.1:** **Structural Features of Literature**  
Determine and articulate the relationship between the purposes and characteristics of different forms of poetry (*such as a ballad, lyric, couplet, epic, elegy, ode, and sonnet*).  
*Example: Describe the different forms of poetry. Compare poems such as John Ciardi's "Elegy for Jog," Pablo Neruda's "Odes to Things," and Edgar Allen Poe's sonnet "To Science" and hypothesize why each author chose the particular form in order to achieve the poem's purpose.*
- Component:**
- 8E1c.2:** **Analysis of Grade-Level Appropriate Text**  
Evaluate the structural elements of the plot (*such as subplots, parallel episodes, and climax*), the plot's development, and the way in which conflicts are or are not addressed and resolved.  
*Example: Read the book Holes by Louis Sachar, and discuss how the plot is developed, including the climax and its resolution, and how different subplots are incorporated into the story.*
- 8E1c.3:** Compare and contrast the motivations and reactions of literary characters from different historical eras who confront similar situations and conflicts or similar hypothetical situations.  
*Example: Compare and contrast the motivations and reactions of literary characters from works that deal with the theme of the impact of war, both on those who fight in the battles and those who remain at home. Works could include Walt Whitman's poem "Drum Taps" from the Civil War period, John Hersey's novel A Bell for Adano from World War II, or Graham Green's novel The Quiet American, set at the beginning of the Vietnam conflict.*
- 8E1c.4:** Analyze the importance of the setting to the mood, tone, and meaning of the text.  
*Example: Discuss the importance of the setting, including the place, the time period, and the custom) to books such as Friendly Persuasion by Jessamyn West or Stranded by Ben Mikaelson.*
- 8E1c.5:** Identify and analyze recurring themes (*good versus evil*) that appear frequently across traditional and contemporary works.  
*Example: Read classic myths such as those found in Alice Low's The MacMillan Book of Greek Gods and Myths or dramatic literature such as Rod Serling's television play Requiem for a Heavyweight, to identify and explore the theme that heroism demands unusual courage and risk-taking.*
- 8E1c.6:** Identify significant literary devices to include metaphor, symbolism, dialect, quotations, and/or irony, which define a writer's style and use those elements to interpret the work.  
*Examples:*
1. Read several short stories by Mark Twain, discuss his use of dialect, and explain how it enhances character development.
  2. Watch Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe's musical "My Fair Lady", an adaptation of Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, and discuss how the musical presents dialect and how it is important to the conflict in the story.

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- 8E1c.7:** Contrast points of view (*such as first person, third person, third person limited and third person omniscient, and subjective and objective*) in narrative text and explain how they affect the overall theme of the work.
- **First Person:** The narrator tells the story from the “I” perspective.
  - **Third Person:** The narrator tells the story from an outside perspective.
  - **Limited Narration:** The narrator does not know all thoughts of all characters.
  - **Omniscient Narration:** The narrator knows all thoughts of all characters.
  - **Subjective:** The point of view involves a personal perspective.
  - **Objective:** the point of view is from a distanced, informational perspective, as in a news report.

- 8E1c.8:** Analyze the relevance of setting (to include places, times, and customs) to mood, tone, and meaning of text.

Component:

***Literary Criticism***

- 8E1c.9:** Analyze a work of literature, showing how it reflects the heritage, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs of its author.
- Example: Read a short biography of Edgar Allen Poe, Jack London, Shirley Jackson, Helen Keller, or Maya Angelou. Read one or more selections by the author. Then, analyze how the author’s experiences are reflected in his or her writings.*

Strand:

**8E2: Writing**

Standard:

- 8E2a: Processes and Features**  
*Students discuss, list, and graphically organize writing ideas. They write clear, coherent, and focused essays. Students progress through the stages of the writing process and proofread, edit, and revise writing.*

Component:

- 8E2a.1:** Discuss ideas for writing, keep a list or notebook of ideas, and use graphic organizers to plan writing.
- 8E2a.2:** Develop and use thesis and introductory statements to organize writing.
- 8E2a.3:** Create compositions that have a clear message, a coherent thesis, and an end with a clear and well-supported conclusion.
- 8E2a.4:** Support theses or conclusions with analogies, paraphrases, quotations, opinions from experts, and similar devices.
- 8E2a.5:** Create an organizational structure that balances all aspects of the composition and uses effective transitions between sentences to unify important ideas.

Component:

- 8E2a.6:** Plan and conduct multiple-step information searches using computer networks.

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**8E2a.7:** Achieve an effective balance between researched information and original ideas.

**8E2a.8:** Use a computer to create documents by using word-processing skills and publishing programs; and develop simple databases and spreadsheets to manage information and prepare reports.

**Component:**

***Evaluation and Revision***

**8E2a.9:** Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.

**8E2a.10:** Identify topics; ask and evaluate question; and develop ideas leading to inquiry investigation, and research.

**8E2a.11:** Edit and proofread one's own writing, as well as that of others, using an editing checklist or set of rules, with specific examples of corrections of frequent errors.

**8E2a.12:** Revise writing for word choice, appropriate organization, consistent point of view, and transitions among paragraphs, passages and ideas.

**Standard:**

**8E2b: Applications (Different Types of Writing and Their Characteristics)**

*Students continue to write narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive texts (research reports of 750–1,000 words or more.) Students are introduced to writing technical documents. Student writing demonstrates a command of Standard English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in standard 8E2a: Process and Features. Writing demonstrates an awareness of the audience and purpose for writing. In addition to producing the different forms of writing introduced in earlier grades, such as letters, grade eight students use the writing strategies outlined in Standard E2a- Writing Processes and Features.*

**Component:**

***Different Types of Writing and Their Characteristics***

**8E2b.1:** Write using precise word choices to make writing interesting and exact.

**8E2b.2:** Write for different purposes and to a specific audience or person, adjusting tone and style as necessary.

**8E2b.3:** Write biographies, autobiographies, and short stores that:

- Tell about an incident, event, or situation, using well-chosen details.
- Reveal the significance of, or the writer's attitude about the subject.
- Use narrative and descriptive strategies, including relevant dialogue, specific action, physical description, background description, and comparison of characters.

*Example: Write an autobiographical account of one of your most memorable first days of school. Describe the day and its importance clearly enough so the reader can see and feel the day from your perspective.*

**8E2b.4:** Write responses to literature that:

- Demonstrate careful reading and insight into interpretations.
- Connect response to the writer's techniques and to specific textual references.

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- c. Make supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience.
- d. Support judgments through references to the text, other works, other authors, or to personal knowledge.

*Example: After reading The Giver by Lois Lowry, write a final chapter to the book describing what happens to the main character after the point where Lowry ends the book. Then, plan a class presentation explaining the new ending and how it is supported by the rest of the book.*

**8E2b.5:** Write persuasive compositions that:

- a. Include a well-defined thesis that makes a clear and knowledgeable appeal.
- b. Present detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning to support effective arguments and emotional appeals.
- c. Provide details, reasons, and examples, arranging them effectively by anticipating and answering reader concerns and counterarguments.

*Example: Using the research completed on public transportation write a persuasive letter to the mayor on why the community should or should not invest more resources into public transportation.*

**8E2b.6:** Write technical documents that:

- a. Identify the sequence of activities needed to design a system, operate a tool, or explain the bylaws of an organization's constitution or guidelines.
- b. Include all the factors and variables that need to be considered.
- c. Using formatting techniques, including headings, and changing the fonts to aid comprehension.

*Example: Write a report of a science experiment that was conducted in class, describing both the process and the scientific conclusions. Describe the steps clearly, using precise scientific vocabulary, so that another reader could follow exactly what the experiment involved and could understand the reasoning behind the conclusion. Add graphics and text design to make the content clearer and easier to follow.*

### **Research Applications**

**8E2b.7:** Write or deliver research reports developed using a systematic research process that:

- a. Define the topic, gathers information, determines credibility, and reports findings.
- b. Use information from a variety of sources (*such as books, technology, multimedia, online databases*) and documents sources independently by using a consistent format for citations.
- c. Demonstrate information has been summarized and that the topic has been refined through this process.
- d. Demonstrate that sources have been evaluated for accuracy, bias, and credibility.
- e. Organize information by categorizing and sequencing.
- f. Demonstrate the distinction between one's own ideas from the ideas of others.
- g. Include a bibliography (*Works Cited*).

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*Examples:*

1. *Research the topic of the benefits and drawbacks of public transportation.*
2. *Conduct research to learn why some experts argue that we should use more public transportation.*
3. *Survey parents and friends to find out how often they use public transportation for school, business, or pleasure travel.*
4. *Summarize the findings and write a report on the pros and cons of public transportation, including charts and graphs to support your findings.*

<b>Standard:</b>	<b>8E2c: English Language Conventions</b> <i>Students write using Standard English conventions appropriate to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level and produce legible work that can read by others.</i>
<b>Component:</b>	<b>Sentence Structure</b>
	<b>8E2c.1:</b> Use correct and varied sentences types ( <i>to include simple, complex, and compound-complex</i> ) and sentence openings to present a lively and effective personal style.
	<b>8E2c.2:</b> Identify and use parallelism in all writing to present items in a series and items juxtaposed for emphasis.
	<b>8E2c.3:</b> Use subordination, coordination, noun phrases that function as adjectives ( <i>such as These gestures—acts of friendship—were noticed but not appreciated</i> ) and other devices to indicate clearly the relationship between ideas.
<b>Component:</b>	<b>Grammar</b>
	<b>8E2c.4:</b> Edit written manuscripts to ensure that correct grammar is used.
	<b>8E2c.5:</b> Identify and use infinitives and participles.
	<b>8E2c.6:</b> Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate and colorful modifiers ( <i>describing words, such as adverbs and adjectives</i> ) and the active ( <i>I recommend that you write drafts.</i> ) rather than the passive voice ( <i>The writing of drafts is recommended.</i> ) in ways that enliven writing.
<b>Component:</b>	<b>Punctuation</b>
	<b>8E2c.7:</b> Use correct grade-level-appropriate punctuation.
<b>Component:</b>	<b>Capitalization</b>
	<b>8E2c.8:</b> Use correct grade-level-appropriate capitalization.
<b>Component:</b>	<b>Spelling</b>
	<b>8E2c.9:</b> Use correct grade-level-appropriate spelling conventions.
<b>Strand:</b>	<b>8E3: Listening and Speaking</b>
<b>Standard:</b>	<b>8E3a: Skills, Strategies, and Applications</b> <i>Students deliver focused, coherent presentations that convey ideas clearly and relate to the background and interests of the audience. Students evaluate the content of oral communication. Students deliver</i>

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*well-organized formal presentations using traditional speech strategies, including narrations, exposition, persuasion, and description. Students will participate in formal and informal group interactions. Students use the same Standard English conventions for oral speech that they use in their writing.*

**Component:**

**Comprehension**

**8E3a.1:** Paraphrase a speaker's purpose and point of view and ask questions concerning the speaker's content, delivery, and attitude toward the subject.

**Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication**

**8E3a.2:** Match the message, vocabulary, voice modulation, expression, and tone to the audience and purpose.

**8E3a.3:** Outline the organization of a speech, including an introduction, transitions, previews and summaries, a logically developed body, and an effective conclusion.

**8E3a.4:** Use precise language, action verbs, sensory detail, appropriate and colorful modifiers, and the active (*I recommend that you write a first draft.*) rather than the passive (*Writing a first draft is recommended.*) in ways that enliven oral presentations.

**8E3a.5:** Use appropriate grammar, word choice, enunciation, and pace during formal presentations.

**8E3a.6:** Use audience feedback, including both verbal and nonverbal cues, to reconsider and modify the organizational structure and/or to rearrange words and sentences for clarification of the meaning.

**Component:**

**Analysis and Evaluation of Oral and Media Communication**

**8E3a.7:** Analyze oral interpretations of literature, including language choice and delivery, and the effect of the interpretations on the listener.

**8E3a.8:** Evaluate the credibility of a speaker, including whether the speaker has hidden agendas or presents slanted or biased material.

**8E3a.9:** Interpret and evaluate the various ways in which visual makers (*such as graphic artists, illustrators, and news photographers*) communicate information and effect impressions and opinions.

**Component:**

**Speaking Applications**

**8E3a.10:** Deliver narrative presentations such as biographical or autobiographical information that:

- a. Relate a clear incident, event or situation using well-chosen details.
- b. Reveal the significance of the incident, event, or situation.
- c. Use narrative and descriptive strategies to support the presentation, including relevant dialogue specific action, physical description, background description, and comparison or contrast of characters.

**8E3a.11** Deliver descriptive presentations that:  

- a. Establish a clear point of view on the subject of the presentation.
- b. Contain effective, factual descriptions of appearance, concrete images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.



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- c. Establish the presenter's relationship with the subject of the presentation whether the presentation is made as an uninvolved observer or by someone who is personally involved.
- 8E3a.12** Deliver oral responses to literature that:
- a. Interpret a reading and provide insight.
  - b. Connect personal responses to the writer's techniques and to specific textual references.
  - c. Make supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience.
  - d. Support judgments through references to the text, other works, other authors, or personal knowledge.
- 8E3a.13:** Deliver research presentations that:
- a. Define a thesis with a clear position on the topic.
  - b. Use a variety of research sources to distinguish the nature and value of each.
  - c. Research important ideas, concepts, and direct quotations from significant information sources.
  - d. Paraphrase and summarize important perspectives on the topic.
  - e. Present information on charts, maps, and graphs.
- 8E3a.14:** Deliver persuasive presentations that:
- a. Include a well-defined thesis with a clear position on the topic.
  - b. Differentiate fact from opinion and support arguments with detailed evidence, examples, reasoning, and persuasive language.
  - c. Anticipate and effectively answer listener concerns and counterarguments through the inclusion and arrangement of details, reasons, examples, as well as other elements.
  - d. Maintain a reasonable tone.
- 8E3a.15:** Recite poems (*of four to six stanzas*), sections or speeches, or dramatic soliloquies (*sections of plays in which characters speak out loud to themselves*) using voice, modulation, tone, and gestures expressively to enhance the meaning.