



English Language Arts Grade 8

38 Benchmarks

Writing

Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

- ELA8.1.1 Uses a variety of prewriting strategies to generate ideas
- uses published pieces as writing models
 - brainstorms and generates ideas
 - builds and uses background knowledge
 - determines purpose
 - determines audience
 - develops working thesis
 - organizes ideas clearly (i.e. outlines, graphic organizers, etc.)
- ELA8.1.2 Uses a variety of strategies to draft written text
- chooses relevant evidence/details to support or explain thesis
 - explains significance of supporting evidence/details
 - uses organized structure, including a clear introduction and conclusion
 - uses consistent voice and point of view
 - uses coherence and logic to develop draft
- ELA8.1.3 Uses a variety of strategies to revise.
- adds sufficient, appropriate proof
 - deletes unclear, overused ideas
 - prioritizes ideas
 - uses precise language (i.e., word choice)
 - varies sentence structure
 - ensures composition coherence (i.e., transitions. etc.)
- ELA8.1.4 Uses a variety of strategies to edit and publish written work
- proofreads using reference materials, word processor and other resources
 - uses a word processor or other technology to publish written work whenever possible
 - uses appropriate conventions
 - maintains subject-verb agreement
 - uses consistent tense
- ELA8.1.5 Evaluates own and others' writing
- evaluates use of writing traits as listed in district writing rubric
 - self-assesses to set and achieve goals as a writer
 - participates in peer response
- ELA8.1.6 Writes a variety of compositions
- expository (could include an informative essay on an issue)
 - states a thesis
 - presents information that reflects knowledge about the topic
 - organizes and presents information in a logical manner
 - includes an introduction which has hook, background, thesis
 - includes conclusion which restates thesis, sums up main idea, and offers final insight

- paraphrases ideas (uses own words to develop ideas)
- uses common expository features, (such as compare-contrast, problem-solution or cause-effect)
- literary analysis (character analysis composition)
 - explains character traits using proof from text; may try quotation
 - includes an introduction with a hook, background, and thesis
 - includes a conclusion which restates the thesis, sums up the main idea, and provides a final insight about what these traits show about the character
- literary, expository, and persuasive prompts
 - restates key ideas from the prompt in the main idea sentence
 - explains ideas, does not just list them
 - concludes by restating main idea sentence using different words
- descriptive in prose and poetry
 - uses descriptive language to create images in prose
 - uses descriptive language to create poetry
 - creates images that form the heart of poetry
 - uses rhyme and rhyme appropriately
- persuasive
 - determines topic and gathers evidence following Standard 4
 - engages the reader by developing a controlling thesis that conveys a judgment/opinion
 - arranges details, reasons and examples persuasively
 - excludes information and arguments that are irrelevant
 - supports arguments with detailed evidence
 - explains significance of evidence
 - cites appropriate sources

Standard 2: Uses the stylistic to develop voice and tone

- ELA8.2.1 Uses word choice that clarifies and enhances ideas and voice
- uses figurative language
 - uses more sophisticated vocabulary
- ELA8.2.2 Uses effective organization to convey ideas
- arranges sentences in most appropriate order (i.e., cause/effect, compare/contrast, etc.)
 - uses supporting and follow-up sentences
 - establishes coherence within and among paragraphs
- ELA8.2.3 Uses variety of sentence structures to convey meaning
- writes simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences
 - uses transitional devices for unity and coherence

Standard 3: Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions

- ELA8.3.1 Knows and uses parts of speech
- verb-review simple tenses; verb phrases
 - noun- review all types; teach collective noun
 - pronoun- indefinite, reflexive, demonstrative
 - adjective-phrase
 - adverb-phrase
 - preposition-prepositional phrase
 - conjunction- coordinating, subordinating
- ELA8.3.2 Understands and uses basic sentence structures
- complex

- compound-complex
- ELA8.3.3 Identify and use parts of sentence structure
- indirect object
 - difference between a phrase and a clause
 - subordinating clauses - adjectival, adverbial
- ELA8.3.4 Applies appropriate usage
- agreement between subject and predicate
 - pronoun antecedent
 - consistent tense
- ELA8.3.5 Uses conventions of mechanics of punctuation and capitalization accurately
- uses end punctuation appropriately
 - uses comma appropriately- in a series, after an introductory remark, in dialogue, in a compound sentence
 - uses quotation marks appropriately when quoting
- ELA8.3.6 Understands and uses conventions of spelling

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information to develop formal compositions

- ELA8.4.1 Uses a variety of strategies to plan research
- develops questions to define the task
 - organizes prior knowledge about a topic
- ELA8.4.2 Uses a variety of resources to gather information for research topics (such as electronic card catalogs, appropriate print and other resources, internet, websites, and computer databases)
- ELA8.4.3 Determines the appropriateness of an information source for a research topic
- evaluates information and information sources in order to refine the research topic/thesis
 - uses most important and relevant information to the research topic/thesis
 - knows criteria for selecting sources to use or delete
 - determines the appropriateness of an information source for a research topic/thesis
- ELA8.4.4 Organizes information and ideas from multiple sources in systematic ways
- learns note-taking from multiple sources
 - paraphrases information for notes
 - separates information into main ideas, subtopics, and details
 - develops thesis
 - organizes ideas in an outline
- ELA8.4.5 Synthesizes information into an appropriate product
- incorporates notes into a finished product (e.g., speech or paper)
 - draws conclusions from data
 - uses visuals appropriately
 - uses appropriate methods to document reference sources
- ELA8.4.6 Evaluates own work based on criteria for clear communication
- assesses product for completeness and accuracy
 - uses rubric for quality level

Reading

Standard 5: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

- ELA8.5.1 Uses Active Reading Strategies to derive meaning from a text
- predicts what is going to happen and checks predictions, adjusting predictions as necessary based on new information
 - makes connections using background knowledge to self, other texts, and world events both during and after reading
 - visualizes while reading
 - asks questions to before, during, and after reading to help clarify and extend meaning
 - makes inferences during and after reading
 - tracks down information to support inferences and conclusions
 - summarizes expository text
 - synthesizes for new meaning and insights
- ELA8.5.2 Uses a variety of strategies to extend reading vocabulary and spelling consciousness
- uses Greek and Latin roots and affixes to infer meaning
 - understands word relationships, such as analogies or synonyms and antonyms
 - uses context clues to determine meaning (definition, restatement, example, comparison and contrast)
- ELA8.5.3 Reflects on what has been read to support and extend comprehension
- responds to reading (discussion, journals, literature circles, media)

Standard 6: Uses active reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts

- ELA8.6.1 Knows and applies the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres
- fiction
 - nonfiction
 - poetry
 - drama
- ELA8.6.2 Understands more complex elements of plot in specific literary works
- understands the role of setting in relation to plot
 - understands the plot line- exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution
 - understands internal and external conflict development
 - understands basic themes
- ELA8.6.3 Understands methods of characterization
- understands the development of characters through their speech and behavior, their physical traits, their thoughts and feelings, and the opinions and reactions of others
 - understands the relationships between character and plot development
 - understands protagonist and antagonist
- ELA8.6.4 Uses reading skills to make inferences and draws conclusions from a variety of literary pieces
- understands the relationships between the protagonist and antagonist
 - understands how the setting may affect the mood/atmosphere/tone
 - understands how the events of the plot fit together
 - understands what theme is; common themes; discusses theme within context of story
- ELA8.6.5 Reflects on and responds to the author's purpose in using a specific literary genre or device
- continues to understand genres which may include realistic fiction, historical fiction, science fiction, and fantasy
 - understands foreshadowing

- understands flashback
- understands mood
- understands use of sensory description and figurative language (imagery, metaphor, simile)
- understands power of repetition especially in poetry
- understands sound devices (rhyme, onomatopoeia, alliteration) used in poetry
- understands how poetic structures work (free verse and specific formats ie: haiku)
- understands unique features of drama: dialogue, dramatic license, stage directions

ELA8.6.6 Understands point of view in a literary text

- recognizes first person/personal (told by a character in the story)
- recognizes third person limited (limited to one character's thoughts and feelings)
- recognizes third person omniscient (thoughts and feelings of all characters)

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

ELA8.7.1 Summarizes and paraphrases information in texts

- arranges information in chronological, logical or sequential order
- conveys main ideas, critical details and underlying meaning
- uses own words or quoted materials
- takes notes

ELA8.7.2 Draws conclusions and makes inferences based on information in texts

- understands the difference between fact v. opinion
- understands how to identify explicit v. implicit ideas
- uses new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge

Listening and Speaking

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

ELA8.8.1 Uses strategies to enhance listening comprehension

- demonstrates understanding of speaker's ideas (notes, paraphrase, etc.)
- asks questions to seek elaboration and clarification of ideas
- evaluates speaker or presentation

ELA8.8.2 Makes formal and informal presentations to the class

- states main point clearly
- stays on topic
- uses level appropriate vocabulary and speech
- uses notes and outlines
- organizes and rehearses for a smooth presentation
- uses visual media appropriately to enhance and support presentation
- uses appropriate verbal and nonverbal techniques for oral presentations (inflection, tempo, grammar, expression, tone, volume, enunciation, eye contact, posture)

Viewing and Media

Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

ELA8.9.1 Uses a variety of criteria to interpret and evaluate visual media

ELA8.9.2 Understands techniques used in visual media to influence or appeal to a particular audience (e.g., persuasive techniques, such as exaggerated claims, portrayal of appealing lifestyles, bandwagon)

Standard 10: Understands the characteristics and components of the media

ELA8.10.1 Understands techniques used by the media to convey information

ELA8.10.2 Understands the different purposes of various media (e.g., to provide entertainment or information, to persuade, to transmit culture, to focus attention on an issue)

Addenda

Students need to have a working understanding the following grammatical terms and concepts prior to entering English 9

- parts of speech
 - nouns (common, proper, compound, collective)
 - verbs (action, linking, verb phrases, verb tense)
 - pronouns (personal, reflexive, antecedent)
 - adjectives (questions they answer, parts of speech they modify, articles)
 - adverbs (questions they answer, parts of speech they modify)
 - prepositions (prepositional phrases, object of preposition)
 - conjunctions (coordinating, correlative)
 - interjections
- parts of a sentence
 - subject
 - predicate
 - compounds (subject, predicate)