

## Curriculum at a Glance

### English - Grade 8

The Grade 8 English curriculum builds off the skills, strategies, and classroom practices developed in grades 6 and 7. In reading, we emphasize personal choice, reading volume and complexity, and abstract thinking about literature. Building off previous work, students dive deeper into theme development and analysis of symbolic elements. In writing, students are once again exposed to the three major modes (narrative, informational, and argument), but a greater emphasis is put on literary essay (response to literature) as students prepare to transition to the high school. A high instructional focus is put on writing structure, elaboration, fluency, and craft. Since the work in both reading and writing tends to happen in unison, the units are designed together to help maintain a sense of cohesion.

Reading Units & Content	Writing Units & Content
<p><u>Unit 1:</u> Developing Agency in Reading (Independent Reading Routines &amp; Strategies) (Standards: RL 8.1, RL 8.2, RL 8.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Readers use summer reading to initiate conversations about literature.</li><li>● Readers develop quality summaries about literature.</li><li>● Readers enhance their ability to respond to literature in analytical paragraphs.</li><li>● Readers develop strategies for finding quality literature (starting with memoirs).</li></ul>	<p><u>Unit 1:</u> Developing Memoir With Meaning (Enhancing Narrative Craft) (Standards: W8.3, A through E, W8.4, W8.5, W8.6, W8.10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Writers review Writer’s Workshop routines.</li><li>● Writers deepen their understanding of narrative structure.</li><li>● Writers analyze mentor texts for craft and style.</li><li>● Writers analyze characteristics that differentiate memoir and traditional narrative.</li><li>● Writers enhance their ability to work with narrative elaboration strategies.</li></ul>
<p><u>Unit 2:</u> Developing Meaning From Historical Thinkers (Transcendental Genre Study) (Standards: RI 8.1, RI 8.3, RI 8.4, RI 8.6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Readers identify basic traits of transcendental thinking.</li><li>● Readers study the life and times of transcendental thinkers (Emerson &amp; Thoreau).</li><li>● Readers develop a deeper understanding of core transcendental works.</li><li>● Readers experiment with Transcendental living</li></ul>	<p><u>Unit 2:</u> Developing Personal Insight in Writing (Personal Essay) (Standards: W8.2, A through E, W8.4, W8.5, W8.6, W8.10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Writers develop structure for capturing personal experiences that connect to meaning.</li><li>● Writers analyze differences between memoir (narrative), informational, and personal writing genres.</li><li>● Writers analyze mentor texts (college essay style writing) for craft and style.</li><li>● Writers develop complex connections between personal experiences and transcendental insight.</li></ul>

<p>techniques.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Readers compare and contrast elements of their personal lives to Transcendental principles.</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Unit 3: Reading Literature with a Historical Lens (American Revolution) (Standards: RL 8.1, RL 8.2, RL 8.3, RL 8.5, RL 8.6, RL 8.10)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Readers analyze how authors use setting and historical conflict to shape their narrative.</li> <li>● Readers analyze how authors use historical figures to develop their narrative.</li> <li>● Readers compare and contrast literature with the lens of how authors develop theme and perspective.</li> <li>● Readers develop close-reading skills to find and refine theme.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Unit 3: Literary Essay - Bend 1 (Developing Interpretations in Theme) (Standards: W8.1, A through E, W8.4, W8.5, W8.6, W8.9A W8.10)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Writers learn to write long and revise original thinking about literature.</li> <li>● Writers develop writing about theme using specific details.</li> <li>● Writers learn to move away from motifs towards more complex themes.</li> <li>● Writers identify and write about author's craft to enhance understanding of theme.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Unit 4: Dystopian Literature as Symbols for Modern Conflicts (Standards: RL 8.1, RL 8.2, RL 8.3, RL 8.4, RL 8.5, RL 8.6, RL 8.7, RL 8.9, RL 8.10)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Readers identify and analyze core elements of the genre (structure, archetypes, etc.).</li> <li>● Readers deepen their understanding of symbolism and connections to modern social issues.</li> <li>● Readers deepen thematic understanding within texts and across texts.</li> <li>● Readers develop an understanding of how literary tradition, specifically archetypes, live in a variety of texts.</li> <li>● Readers deepen their understanding of how stories evolve based on different character perspectives.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Unit 4: Literary Essay - Bends 2 &amp; 3 (Author's Craft &amp; Compare/Contrast) (Standards: W8.1, A through E, W8.4, W8.5, W8.6, W8.9A W8.10)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Writers refine use of author's craft to support thinking about a text.</li> <li>● Writers deepen their understanding of how to select the most appropriate text to support their thinking.</li> <li>● Writers refine analytical writing strategies to support their claims about literature.</li> <li>● Writers refine their sentence structure development and use of sophisticated vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Unit 5: Critical Non-Fiction Reading Across Text Sets (Standards: All Informational Reading Standards Met)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Readers develop critical lens for identifying fact and opinion in nonfiction texts.</li> <li>● Readers evaluate key information and rank evidence.</li> <li>● Readers debate positions to develop complex arguments.</li> <li>● Readers deepen their perspective of complex issues</li> </ul>	<p><u>Unit 5: Research-Based Argument Essays (Standards: W8.1, A through E, W8.4, W8.5, W8.6, W8.7, W8.8, W8.9B, W8.10)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Writers learn to angle evidence to support specific points.</li> <li>● Writers deepen their understanding of argument structure, particularly the ability to write more complex introductions and conclusions.</li> <li>● Writers learn to use connotative language to convey a particular tone in argument.</li> </ul>

<p>around the world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Readers develop a critical lens for identifying alternative arguments and points of view.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Writers deepen their understanding of counterargument through oral debate, note-taking, and drafting.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Unit 6: Getting Ready for High School: Reading and Analyzing Classic Texts (Shakespeare) (Standards: RL 8.1, RL 8.2, RL 8.3, RL 8.4, RL 8.5, RL 8.6, RL 8.7, RL 8.9, RL 8.10)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Readers are introduced to the life and times of William Shakespeare.</li> <li>● Readers develop an understanding of Shakespearean language and structure.</li> <li>● Readers develop an understanding of dramatic reading and writing structure.</li> <li>● Readers develop an understanding of how a film version of a text compares to a drama.</li> <li>● Readers deepen their understanding of character perspectives in a dramatic text.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Unit 6: Writing about Classical Literature (Teacher Genre Choice)</u> (Standards dependent on teacher choice.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Writers learn to capture character perspective based on complex, overlapping conflicts.</li> <li>● Writers learn to apply Shakespeare language and structure in their own writing to capture voice.</li> <li>● Writers learn to cite Shakespeare text properly.</li> <li>● Writers deepen their understanding of author's craft in order to mimic Shakespeare's writing style.</li> </ul>