



## 8th Grade Reading and Writing Curriculum and Common District Assessments

Weeks	Reading Curriculum	District Assessment	Key Concepts and Vocabulary
3 weeks	<p>Unit #1: <a href="#">Launching Writer's Notebook</a></p> <p>Overarching Questions How do writers use readers'/writers' notebooks to find the stories that matter? How do writers express, through narrative poetry, stories that matter?</p> <p>Enduring Understanding People have stories that matter. They record and craft the stories of their lives by paying attention to the world around them.</p>	<p>Pre-Unit Assessment Task The teacher will share a narrative poem aloud with students while displaying it in some visual manner. Students will discuss what they notice about the writer's craft. They will also analyze the poem's meaning, using prior knowledge and previously learned strategies. Students will explore habits, strategies, and attitudes of narrative poetry writers. Each student will use imitation strategies as he or she plans and drafts a narrative poem, based on an event from his or her life.</p> <p>Mid-Unit Formative Assessment Task At the end of session 6, students select one of their narrative poems to concentrate on; they will reflect on the strengths of that piece. Use the reflection to determine to determine students' understanding of the poetic elements as well as their own writing process.</p> <p>Post-Unit Summative Assessment Task What are the six most important elements of a narrative poem? How do the combinations of these elements help influence the overall impact of students' narrative poems? Students will select one of the mentor poems and compare it to their final, published narrative poems. Students will answer the question: How did the mentor poem impact your writing decisions, generating strategies, and thought processes? Students will explain how they feel about writing poetry, as they think about themselves as writers and poets.</p>	<p>Analyzing mentor poems independently and with help from others Collaborating with others to evaluate written narrative poems Identifying literary devices in narrative poetry Understanding the complexity of narrative poetry</p> <p>alliteration, analogies, complexity, evaluation, exploration, generation, imitation, metaphor, poetry patterns, research, simile, themes</p>
2 weeks	<p>Unit #2: <a href="#">Independent Reading</a></p> <p>Overarching Question In what ways can independent reading be used to emphasize interactions between readers and texts?</p> <p>Enduring Understandings The independent reading workshop provides a systematic method to support students as they read on their own. Students will learn to organize their thinking through the use of reading-strategy tools, kept in reading folders. Teachers begin each session with a mini-lesson that targets a specific reading skill or strategy. Students are then encouraged to silently read books of their own choosing while the teacher monitors and confers with individuals. At the closure of each session, students share in partnerships or whole-group discussions to identify strategies and their new learning.</p>	<p>Pre-Unit Assessment Task Have students complete a quick review of a book that they have recently read. They are to include a short summary of the book as well as their opinion of the story. Store in reading folders so that students can track their learning progression from unit start to unit completion. A question for the students to keep in mind as they are writing is, "Why did I choose this book?"</p> <p>Mid-Unit Assessment Task Spot check all reading folders and hold conversations with groups of students to ensure comprehension of assignments. Students should have a wide variety of reading tools gathered and completed within their reading folders. As teacher, you should notice shifts in student thinking. Encourage all readers to continue on a thoughtful path, noticing explicit details about texts and how stories are woven into pieces of literature.</p> <p>Post-Unit Assessment Task Using the reading knowledge collected during the course of this unit, students will write a critique of their independent reading novels. Students will include a summary of the story, opinions on the story, and the theme, without giving the end away. In addition, students will be reading each other's final critiques to make a decision about what book to read next. This summative task is threefold; students will be writing, sharing, and making an educated choice.</p>	<p>Exploring genre elements and structures Identifying as readers Interacting with texts Self-monitoring</p> <p>conflict, critique, dialogue, "Just Right" books, narration, perspective, plot, point-of-view, scenes, setting, tension, theme, tone, word choice</p>
4 weeks	<p>Unit #3: <a href="#">Argument Paragraph</a></p> <p>Overarching Questions How do you construct a persuasive argument? What constitutes effective evidence? How do you revise?</p> <p>Enduring Understandings Argument writers must support their ideas with effective evidence to persuade their readers. The evidence a writer provides must be explained in commentary to persuade the reader to agree with the argument. Revising a piece of writing improves idea clarity, persuasiveness, and organization.</p>	<p>Pre-Unit Assessment Task - In order for teachers to assess students' skills as writers of argument paragraphs, students will respond to a constructed prompt by writing an argument paragraph that makes a debatable claim that is supported by a variety of evidence types and complex commentary. Teachers will assess the results of the pre-unit performance task using the Argument Paragraph Rubric, focusing on students' understanding of the concepts of claim, evidence, commentary, organization, and transitions. This performance task will help teachers assess how much depth they need to go into regarding argument concepts and paragraph parts. In addition, they will be able to identify students who need remediation or curricular compacting.</p> <p>Mid-Unit Formative Assessment Task - Drafting Complex Commentary for Your Argument Paragraph •Instruct students to revisit the commentary they wrote during the pre-writing phase (session 4) and to highlight or underline any sentences they think could be useful for this draft of the paragraph to prove the debatable claim and explain evidence. •Revisit the Drafting Commentary Anchor Chart - Strong Commentary Verbs list with students and encourage them to use these verbs as they write commentary for their evidence. •Instruct students to freewrite answers for the Drafting Commentary Anchor Chart – Complex Commentary Questions for each piece of evidence they have selected to support their argument. •Circulate to assist students who have questions, to push individual student thinking further, and to read what students are writing. •As you check in and/or conference with students, formatively assess their understanding of evidence and complex commentary using the rubric below.</p> <p>Post-Unit Summative Assessment Task - We all have plenty of opinions, but can you support yours to create a strong argument? For this writing task, you will identify and build an argument in response to a prompt by crafting a debatable claim, supporting it with the most effective evidence, and explaining that evidence with complex commentary to persuade your reader. You will also select the block or alternating organizational format for your paragraph and include transitions between sentences to improve the flow and logic of your argument. Whether you're arguing to abolish school uniforms or to institute more nutritious school lunches, you must show your reader how you arrived at this conclusion by laying out your thinking in the form of a claim and supporting evidence. Your argument will be one paragraph in length, so it should be focused on one central idea and provide enough evidence to persuade your reader that your argument is strong. Two pieces of evidence should be from a credible secondary source.</p>	<p>Determining the credibility of sources Drafting a claim based on evidence Drafting complex commentary Pre-writing to discover an argument Researching to find further evidence Revising to strengthen claim, evidence, and commentary clarity</p> <p>argument/persuasion, audience block organizations vs., alternating organization, commentary, credible source, debatable claim, evidence - factual and anecdotal, reflection, revision, topic sentence, transition</p>

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4 weeks	<p>Unit #4: <a href="#">Narrative Reading</a></p> <p>Overarching Question Why are specific and intended elements so important within a historical fiction text?</p> <p>Enduring Understanding When reading historical fiction, readers become researchers and must balance that with the learning of the elemental structures of historical fiction.</p>	<p>Pre-Unit Assessment Task The journal prompt “What does historical fiction mean to me?” and/or the ABC Organizer on what students know about the time period of _____ may be used to assess students’ prior knowledge and set a base for the unit.</p> <p>Mid-Unit Formative Assessment Task Spot check all notebook entries and hold conversations with groups of students to ensure comprehension of assignment tasks. As teacher you should notice shifts in student thinking, as well as, shifts in the questioning and exploration of the time period. Encourage connections to themselves and the value of reading historical fiction. The goal is for all readers to continue on a thoughtful path noticing explicit details about text and how history is woven into pieces of literature.</p> <p>Post-Unit Assessment Task Students will embody a character from the novel NightJohn and create a historical journal. Students will need to include characterization, details, and scenes to make the entries believable and realistic for the time period. The entries will demonstrate a student’s understanding of the complexities involved in historical fiction and the juggling of storytelling, entertainment, and historical accuracy.</p>	<p>Exploring genre elements and structures Identifying as members of a reading community Interacting with texts ; Self-monitoring</p> <p>analysis, central idea, character, drama, fiction, inference, motivation, multimedia, narrator, plot, point of view, repetition, scenes, setting, textual evidence</p>
4 weeks	<p>Unit #5: <a href="#">Literary Essay</a></p> <p>Overarching Question How do writers respond to literature?</p> <p>Enduring Understandings Literary essayists read a text for meaning. They track ideas, notice the author’s decisions and gather details as they read. They create theories about the author’s decisions and the text’s meaning. They reread for a deeper meaning, to test their theories, and to create a claim. They present their claim in an essay with examples from the text that serve as evidence. They understand that there are multiple theories and claims that may be presented. They make decisions about which types of evidence and organization best support their claim.</p>	<p>Pre-Unit Assessment Task Use the post-unit assessment from the previous reading unit on literature. Use the assessment to gauge students’ abilities to analyze literary texts.</p> <p>The prompt for that unit was: Students will embody a character from the novel NightJohn and create a historical journal. Students will need to include characterization, details, and scenes to make the entries believable and realistic for the time period. The entries will demonstrate a student’s understanding of the complexities involved in historical fiction and the juggling of storytelling, entertainment, and historical accuracy.</p> <p>Mid-Unit Assessment Task Students will complete the “Literary Essay: Rough Plan” handout as a mid-unit assessment.</p> <p>Post-Unit Assessment Task Use students’ self-reflection responses and final essays as the post-unit assessment. Rubrics are included.</p> <p>The prompt for the final essay is: After reading a text, study and consider the themes presented by the author throughout the text. After making inferences about what the author wanted readers to understand, determine how the author reveals a theme through character development. Then, determine a relationship between theme and character development to create an arguable claim about the theme. Use textual evidence to support the claim(s) as you construct a literary essay. Utilize the writing process, especially drafting, revision and conferencing, in order to create a cohesive argument worthy of sharing with others.</p>	<p>Analysis of mentor literary essays Application of literary essay writing strategies Formulating claims that can be proven through textual evidence Identifying and employing various types of evidence Identifying and using writing conventions of a mode Sifting and sorting valid evidence Synthesizing multiple claims related to the development of theme</p> <p>analysis of literature, author intent, direct quotes, drafting, essay structure, formal style, multiple claims, paraphrasing revising, textual evidence, theme, transitions, valid reasoning</p>
4 weeks	<p>Unit #6: <a href="#">Informational Reading</a></p> <p>Overarching Question How do readers of informational text read closely to compare and contrast text written by different authors on the same topic?</p> <p>Enduring Understanding Informational text is not just limited to print, as in magazine or newspaper articles. Informational text includes video clips, blogs, multimedia presentations, infographics and other forms of information sharing.</p>	<p>Pre-Unit Assessment Task Working in groups or pairs, students will read through an Informational text piece and label the text features. Students will also attempt to label the author’s purpose for writing the piece. Students will then report out. This may be done in a reader’s/writer’s notebook or as an exit slip for the teacher to assess.</p> <p>Mid-Unit Formative Assessment Task Check reading/work folders and hold conversations with groups of students to ensure comprehension of nonfiction/informational text reading strategies. Students will maintain their Reader’s/Writer’s Notebook for notes, observations and reflections. Exit slips may also provide quick assessment for student comprehension. Students will have tools gathered in their reading/work folders that demonstrate their comprehension, evaluation and noticing in the reading of informational text.</p> <p>Post-Unit Summative Assessment Task •Students will select a topic they are interested in learning more about. The topic could be as simple as polar bears or as complex as global warming. •They will research and read two informational texts—one traditional print article and one multimedia piece. •They will analyze the two texts using the “Text Analyzer.” •They may choose to read more than two pieces of informational text. If that is the case they will just need to fill out a second “Text Analyzer” and staple them together. •Students can have the option of presenting their research to the class.</p>	<p>Exploring genre elements and structures Developing strategies for close reading Identifying key ideas and details Interacting with multiple texts Integrating knowledge and ideas</p> <p>analysis, author’s purpose, central idea, claim, compare/contrast, evaluation, evidence, inference, point of view, supporting ideas, text features, text structures</p>
4 weeks	<p>Unit #7: <a href="#">Informational Essay</a></p> <p>Informational/explanatory writing allows the writer to share information on a topic s/he is passionate about and to teach readers in order to boost their knowledge and understanding on that topic. Examining key moments in an historical event involves both summary writing descriptive writing. Information must be carefully organized and formatted to allow readers to deepen their knowledge and comprehension of a topic. Analysis of information helps the reader understand how to interpret the facts and details they are given and make connections between different pieces of information.</p>	<p>Pre-Unit Performance Task - To assess students’ skills as writers of informational texts that chronicle key moments in an historical event, students will write such an essay. Students should write on a topic that they have prior knowledge of and that interests them significantly. Teachers will assess the results of the pre-unit performance task using the Informational Essay Rubric, focusing on students’ understanding of the chronological text structure and use of summary and description writing. This performance task will help determine skill strengths and deficits of the class as a whole and of individual students and will help the teacher determine how much depth to go into regarding text structure, central idea, analysis, and essay organization.</p> <p>Summative Assessment Task - Is there an historic event you are interested in and would like to know more about? Now is your chance to show what you know and deepen your understanding of a particular historical event. For this informational essay, you will craft a chronological account of key moments in an historical event. After deciding on a topic, you will devise a research question, find credible sources, and sift and sort information to determine a central idea. You will draft body paragraphs that include summary, description, and analysis to convey the key moments and impact of this event, organizing them in chronological sequence. After writing a first draft, you will engage in peer review and revise to strengthen the clarity of your ideas, organization of your essay, and completeness of your analysis.</p>	<p>Brainstorming to identify topics of interest Categorizing information Citing information sources Developing a research question Identifying a central idea Organizing sections and paragraphs Pre-writing to record all prior knowledge Providing constructive feedback during peer review Reflecting on the research and writing process Researching to fill in information gaps Revising to clarify ideas, strengthen organization, and deepen analysis Selecting relevant facts, quotations, and concrete details during the research and drafting process</p> <p>analysis, audience (the reader), central idea, concluding paragraph, headings and sub-headings, organization of information, reflection/meta-cognition, research question, transitions between ideas and paragraphs</p>
4 weeks	<p>Unit #8: <a href="#">Writing the Argument</a></p> <p>Overarching Question How do I voice my opinion about a pressing local, state, national, or international issue?</p> <p>Enduring Understandings Op-eds, if written effectively and persuasively, have the power to change people’s minds and spur them to action. Discovering the best topic, argument, and structure for a writing task requires exploration and experimentation (brainstorming, discussion, drafting). Effective arguments require a balance of logos, ethos, pathos, and kairos. Refuting counter arguments serves to strengthen a writer’s argument. Opinions must be supported with substantive evidence to be persuasive. Research requires selecting credible sources, sifting information to find the most effective evidence, and fluidly incorporating that evidence into the argument. The tone of a writing piece should be influenced by the intended audience. Engaging in all steps of the writing process increases clarity and complexity. Reflecting on the writing process helps writers improve the quality of their thinking and writing.</p>	<p>Post-Unit Assessment Task: What community, state, national or international problems would you like to raise newspaper readers’ awareness of? Write a newspaper op-ed piece or magazine op-ed piece in which you persuade readers to see an issue from your perspective. Define the broader issue and explain how it manifests concretely in society. Identify facts, details, and implications to persuade your reader to agree with your point of view and use both logical and emotional appeals. To strengthen your argument, provide a counter argument in which you present the other side of the problem and then refute it. End with a call to action, explaining to readers what they can do about this problem if they have been persuaded by your argument.</p>	<p>Determining the credibility of a source Determining topic viability Formulating a debatable claim Identifying and employing counter arguments Identifying and using writing conventions of a mode Identifying, sifting, sorting, and using evidence Pinpointing effective search terms Reflecting on one’s cognition (metacognition)</p> <p>appropriate tone and diction, audience and purpose, counter argument, creating a debatable claim, determining key search terms, devising research questions, evaluating the credibility of sources, evidence, pathos, ethos, logos, kairos, research, revision, viability of a topic</p>