



8th GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS COURSE OF STUDY



Standard 2: Acquisition of Vocabulary

Students acquire vocabulary through exposure to language-rich situations, such as reading books and other texts and conversing with adults and peers. They use context clues, as well as direct explanations provided by others, to gain new words. As students progress through the grades, they become more proficient in applying their knowledge of words (origins, parts, relationships, meanings) to acquire specialized vocabulary that aids comprehension.

BENCHMARKS Indicators

- A. Use context clues and text structures to determine the meaning of new vocabulary.
 1. Define unknown words through context clues and the author's use of comparison, contrast and cause and effect
 2. Apply knowledge of connotation and denotation to determine the meaning of words
- B. Examine the relationships of analogical statements to infer word meanings.
 3. Identify the relationships of pairs of words in analogical statements (e.g., synonyms and antonyms) and infer word meanings from these relationships
- C. Recognize the importance and function of figurative language.
 4. Infer the literal and figurative meaning of words and phrases and discuss the function of figurative language including metaphors, similes and idioms
- D. Explain how different events have influenced and changed the English language.
 5. Examine and discuss the ways that different events (e.g., cultural, political, social, technological, and scientific events) impact and change the English language
- E. Apply knowledge of roots and affixes to determine the meanings of complex words and subject area vocabulary.
 6. Use knowledge of Greek, Latin and Anglo-Saxon roots, prefixes and suffixes to understand complex words and new subject-area vocabulary (e.g., unknown words in science, mathematics and social studies)
- F. Use multiple resources to enhance comprehension of vocabulary.
 7. Determine the meanings and pronunciations of unknown words by using dictionaries, thesauruses, glossaries, technology and textual features such as definitional footnotes or sidebars

Standard 3: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies, and Self-Monitoring Strategies

Reading and learning to read are problem-solving processes that require strategies for the reader to make sense of written language and remain engaged with texts. Beginners develop basic concepts about print (e.g., that print holds meaning) and how books work (e.g., text organization). All students develop and learn to apply strategies, such as predicting and recalling, that help them to comprehend and interpret informational and literary texts. As strategic readers, students learn to analyze and evaluate texts to demonstrate their understanding of text. Additionally, students learn to self-monitor their own comprehension by asking and answering questions about the text, self-correcting errors, and assessing their own understanding. They apply these strategies effectively to assigned and self-selected texts read in and out of the classroom.

BENCHMARKS Indicators

- ♦ establish and adjust purpose for reading
 - ♦ determine key ideas and supporting details
 - ♦ understand text may be interpreted differently by different readers
 - ♦ use graphic organizers to interpret information
- A. Apply reading comprehension strategies to understand grade-appropriate text.
 1. Apply reading comprehension strategies, including making predictions, comparing and contrasting, *questioning*, recalling and summarizing and making inferences and drawing conclusions
 - B. Demonstrate comprehension of print and electronic text by responding to questions (e.g., literal, inferential, evaluative, and synthesizing).
 2. Answer literal, inferential, evaluative and synthesizing questions to demonstrate comprehension of grade-appropriate print texts, electronic and visual media
 - C. Use appropriate self-monitoring strategies for comprehension.
 3. Monitor own comprehension by adjusting speed to fit the purpose, or by skimming, scanning, reading on, looking back, notetaking or summarizing what has been read so far in text
- Independent Reading
 4. Use criteria to choose independent reading materials (e.g., personal interest, knowledge of authors and genres, or recommendations from others)
 5. Independently read books for various purposes (e.g., for enjoyment, for literary experience, to gain information or to perform a task)

Standard 4: Informational, Technical, and Persuasive Text

Students gain information from reading for purposes of researching a subject, doing a job, making decisions, and accomplishing a task. Students need to apply the reading process to various types of informational texts, including magazines, newspapers, instruction manuals, consumer and workplace documents, reference materials, and multimedia and electronic resources. They learn to attend to text features, such as titles, subtitles, and visual aids, to make predictions and build text knowledge. They learn to read diagrams, charts, graphs, maps, and displays in text as sources of additional information. Students use their knowledge of text structure to organize content information, analyze it, and draw inferences from it. Strategic readers learn to recognize arguments, bias, stereotyping and propaganda in informational text sources.

BENCHMARKS Indicators

A variety of nonfiction genres should be examined

- A. Evaluate how features and characteristics make information accessible and usable, and how structures help authors achieve their purposes.
 1. Compare and contrast text features including format and headers of various informational texts in terms of their structure and purpose
 2. Identify and use the organizational structure of a text such as chronological, compare-contrast, cause-effect, problem-solution and evaluate its effectiveness
 3. Distinguish the characteristics of consumer materials (e.g., warranties, product information, instructional materials), functional or workplace documents (e.g., job-related materials, memoranda, instructions) and public documents (e.g., speeches or newspaper editorials)
- B. Identify examples of rhetorical devices and valid and invalid inferences and explain how authors use these devices to achieve their purposes and reach their intended audiences.

- 4. Assess the adequacy, accuracy and appropriateness of an author's details, identifying persuasive techniques (e.g., bandwagon, testimonial and emotional word repetition), and examples of bias and stereotyping
- 5. Analyze an author's argument, perspective or viewpoint and explain the development of key points
- C. Analyze whether graphics supplement textual information and promote the author's purpose.
 6. Analyze information found in maps, charts, tables, graphs, diagrams, cutaways and overlays
 - D. Explain and analyze how an author appeals to an audience and develops an argument or viewpoint in text.
 7. Identify the author's purpose and intended audience for the text
 8. Recognize how writers cite facts, draw inferences and present opinions in informational text
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 8. Recognize how writers cite facts, draw inferences and present opinions in informational text
 - E. Utilize multiple sources pertaining to a singular topic to critique the various ways authors develop their ideas (e.g., treatment, scope, organization).
 9. Compare and contrast the treatment, scope and organization of ideas from different sources on the same topic

Standard 5: Literary Text

Literary texts that represent a variety of authors, cultures, and eras help students to understand the human story. Students learn to apply the reading process to the various genres of literature, including fables, folk tales, short stories, novels, poetry and drama. They demonstrate their comprehension by describing and discussing the elements of literature (e.g., setting, character and plot), analyzing the author's use of language (e.g., word choice and figurative language), comparing and contrasting texts, inferring theme and meaning, and responding to text in critical and creative ways. Strategic readers learn to explain, analyze and critique literary text to achieve deep understanding.

BENCHMARKS Indicators

Genres to examine should include:

- ♦ fantasy
- ♦ historical fiction
- ♦ poetry
- ♦ fiction (short stories and novels)
- ♦ drama

- A. Analyze interactions between characters in literary text and how the interactions affect the plot.
 1. Identify and explain various types of characters (e.g., flat, round, dynamic, static) and how their interactions and conflicts affect the plot
 - B. Explain and analyze how the context of setting and the author's choice of point of view impact a literary text.
 2. Analyze the influence of setting in relation to other literary elements
 3. Compare and contrast different points of view (e.g., first person and third person limited, omniscient, objective and subjective) and explain how voice affects literary text
 - C. Identify the structural elements of the plot and explain how an author develops conflicts and plot to pace the events in literary text.
 4. Explain how authors pace action and use subplots, parallel episodes, climax
 - D. Identify similar recurring themes across different works.
 5. Identify and explain universal themes across different works by the same author and by different authors
 - E. Analyze the use of a genre to express a theme or topic.
 6. Explain how an author's choice of genre affects the expression of a theme or topic
 - F. Identify and analyze how an author uses figurative language, sound devices, and literary techniques to shape plot, set meaning and develop tone.
 7. Identify examples of foreshadowing and flashback in a literary text
 - G. Explain techniques used by authors to develop style.
 8. Explain ways in which the author conveys mood and tone through word choice, figurative language, and syntax
 9. Examine symbols used in literary text

Standard 6: Writing Process

Students' writing develops when they regularly engage in the major phases of the writing process. The writing process includes the phases of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. They learn to plan their writing for different purposes and audiences. They learn to apply their writing skills in increasingly sophisticated ways to create and produce compositions that reflect effective word and grammatical choices. Students develop revision strategies and editing skills that help them to improve their own writing and to use it as an effective means of conveying information to others.

BENCHMARKS Indicators

- A. Formulate writing ideas, and identify a topic appropriate to the purpose and audience.
 1. Generate writing ideas through discussions with others and from printed material, and keep a list of writing ideas
 2. Determine a purpose and audience and plan strategies (e.g., adapting focus, content structure and point of view) to address purpose and audience
 - B. Determine the usefulness and apply appropriate pre-writing tasks.
 3. Conduct background reading, interviews or surveys when appropriate
 4. Establish a thesis statement for informational writing or a plan for narrative writing
 5. Use organizational strategies (e.g., notes and outlines) to plan writing
 - Drafting*
 6. Organize writing with an effective and engaging introduction and a conclusion that summarizes, extends or elaborates on points or ideas in the writing
 7. Vary simple, compound and complex sentence structures
 8. Group related ideas into paragraphs, including topic sentences following paragraph form and maintaining a consistent focus reinforced by parallel structures across paragraphs
 9. Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, colorful modifiers and style as appropriate to audience and purpose
 10. Use available technology to compose text

- C. Use revision strategies to improve the style, variety of sentence structure, clarity of controlling idea, logic, effectiveness of word choice, and transitions between paragraphs, passages or ideas.
 11. Reread and analyze clarity of writing and consistency of point of view
 12. Add and delete information and details to better elaborate on a stated central idea and to more effectively accomplish purpose
 13. Rearrange words, sentences and paragraphs, and add transitional words and phrases to clarify meaning
 14. Use resources and reference materials (e.g., dictionaries and thesauruses) to select more effective vocabulary
 - D. Edit to improve sentence fluency, grammar and usage.
 15. Proofread writing, edit to improve conventions (e.g., grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization) and identify and correct fragments and run-ons
 - E. Apply tools to judge the quality of their writing.
 16. Apply tools (e.g., rubric, checklist and feedback) to judge the quality of writing
 - F. Prepare writing for publication that is legible, follows an appropriate format and uses techniques such as electronic resources and graphics.
 17. Prepare for publication (e.g., for display or for sharing with others) writing that follows a manuscript form appropriate for the purpose, which could include such techniques as electronic resources, principles of design (e.g., margins, tabs, spacing and columns) and graphics (e.g., drawings, charts and graphs) to enhance the final product

Standard 7: Writing Applications

Students need to understand that various types of writing require different language, formatting, and special vocabulary. Writing serves many purposes across the curriculum and takes various forms. Beginning writers learn about the various purposes of writing; they attempt and use a small range of familiar forms (e.g., letters). Developing writers are able to select text forms to suit purpose and audience. They can explain why some text forms are more suited to a purpose than others and begin to use content-specific vocabulary to achieve their communication goals. Proficient writers control effectively the language and structural features of a large repertoire of text forms. They deliberately choose vocabulary to enhance text and structure their writing according to audience and purpose.

BENCHMARKS Indicators

- A. Compose narratives that establish a specific setting, plot, and a consistent point of view, and develop characters by using sensory details and concrete language.
 1. Write narratives that:
 - ♦ sustain reader interest by pacing action and developing an engaging plot (e.g., tension and suspense);
 - ♦ use literary devices to enhance style and tone; and
 - ♦ create complex characters in a definite, believable setting
 - B. Write responses to literature that extend beyond the summary and support references to the text, other works, other authors or to personal knowledge.
 2. Write responses to literature that organize an insightful interpretation around several clear ideas, premises or images and support judgments with specific references to the original text, to other texts, authors and to prior knowledge
 - C. Produce letters (business, letters to the editor, job applications) that follow the conventional style appropriate to the text, include appropriate details and exclude extraneous details and inconsistencies.
 3. Write business letters, letters to the editor and job applications that:
 - ♦ address audience needs, stated purpose and context in a clear and efficient manner;
 - ♦ follow the conventional style appropriate to the text using proper technical terms;
 - ♦ include appropriate facts and details;
 - ♦ exclude extraneous details and inconsistencies; and
 - ♦ provide a sense of closure to the writing
 - D. Use documented textual evidence to justify interpretations of literature or to support a research topic.
 4. Write informational essays or reports, including research, that
 - ♦ pose relevant and tightly drawn questions that engage the reader;
 - ♦ provide a clear and accurate perspective on the subject;
 - ♦ create an organizing structure appropriate to the purpose, audience and context;
 - ♦ support the main ideas with facts, details, examples and explanations from sources; and
 - ♦ document sources and include bibliographies
 - E. Write a persuasive piece that states a clear position, includes relevant information and offers compelling evidence in the form of facts and details.
 5. Write persuasive compositions that:
 - ♦ establish and develop a controlling idea;
 - ♦ support arguments with detailed evidence;
 - ♦ exclude irrelevant information; and
 - ♦ cite sources of information
- Other
 6. Produce informal writings (e.g., journals, notes, poems) for various purposes

Standard 8: Conventions

Students learn to master writing conventions through exposure to good models and opportunities for practice. Writing conventions include spelling, punctuation, grammar and other conventions associated with forms of written text. They learn the purpose of punctuation: to clarify sentence meaning and help readers know how writing might sound aloud. They develop and extend their understanding of the spelling system, using a range of strategies for spelling words correctly and using newly learned vocabulary in their writing. They grow more skillful at using the grammatical structures of English to effectively communicate ideas in writing and to express themselves.

BENCHMARKS Indicators

- A. Use correct spelling conventions.
 1. Use correct spelling conventions
 - B. Use conventions of punctuation and capitalization.
 2. Use correct punctuation and capitalization
 - C. Demonstrate understanding of the grammatical conventions of the English language.
 3. Use all eight parts of speech (e.g., noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, conjunction, preposition, interjection)

- 4. Use all eight parts of speech (e.g., noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, conjunction, preposition, interjection)
- 5. Use clauses (e.g., main, subordinate) and phrases (e.g., gerund, infinitive, participial)
- 6. Use proper placement of modifiers
- 7. Maintain the use of appropriate verb tenses
- 8. Conjugate regular and irregular verbs in all tenses correctly

Standard 9: Research

Students define and investigate self-selected or assigned issues, topics and problems. They locate, select and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference and technological sources. They then use an appropriate form to communicate their findings.

BENCHMARKS Indicators

- A. Formulate open-ended research questions suitable for investigation and adjust questions as necessary while research is conducted.
 1. Compose open-ended questions for research (assigned or personal interest) and modify questions as necessary during inquiry and investigation
 - B. Evaluate the usefulness and credibility of data and sources.
 2. Identify appropriate sources and gather relevant information from multiple sources (e.g., school library catalogs, online databases, electronic resources, Internet-based resources)
 3. Explain the usefulness and accuracy of sources by determining their validity (e.g., authority, accuracy, objectivity, publication date, and coverage) and define primary and secondary sources
 - C. Organize information from various resources and select appropriate sources to support central ideas, concepts and themes.
 4. Select an appropriate structure for organizing information in a systematic way (notes, outlines, charts, tables, graphic organizers)
 5. Compile and organize the important information and select appropriate sources to support central ideas, concepts and themes
 - D. Use style guides to produce oral and written reports that give proper credit for sources (e.g., words, ideas, images, information) and include an acceptable format for source acknowledgement.
 6. Integrate quotations and citations into written text, maintaining a flow of ideas
 7. Use style guides to produce oral and written reports that give proper credit for sources and include an acceptable format for source acknowledgement
 - E. Communicate findings, reporting on the substance and processes orally, visually and in writing, or through multimedia.
 8. Use a variety of communication techniques including oral, visual, written or multimedia reports to present information that supports a clear position about the topic or research question and to maintain an appropriate balance between researched information and original ideas

Standard 10: Communication: Oral and Visual

Students learn to communicate effectively through exposure to good models and opportunities for practice. By speaking and listening and providing and interpreting visual images, they learn to apply their communication skills in increasingly sophisticated ways. Students learn to deliver presentations that effectively convey information and persuade or entertain audiences. Proficient speakers control language and deliberately choose vocabulary to clarify points and adjust presentations according to audience and purpose.

BENCHMARKS Indicators

- A. Use a variety of strategies to enhance listening comprehension.
 1. Apply active listening strategies (e.g., monitoring message for clarity, selecting and organizing essential information, noting cues such as changes in pace)
 - B. Analyze the techniques used by speakers and media to influence an audience, and evaluate the effect this has on the credibility of the speaker or media message.
 2. Identify and analyze the persuasive techniques (e.g., bandwagon, testimonial, glittering generalities, emotional word repetition and bait and switch) used in presentations and media messages
 3. Determine the credibility of the speaker (e.g., hidden agendas, slanted or biased material) and recognize fallacies of reasoning used in presentations and media messages
 - C. Evaluate the content and purpose of a presentation by analyzing the language and delivery choices made by the speaker.
 4. Identify the speaker's choice of language and delivery styles (e.g., repetition, appeal to emotion, eye contact) and how they contribute to meaning
 - D. Demonstrate an understanding of effective speaking strategies by selecting appropriate language and adjusting presentation techniques.
 5. Demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the English language and select language appropriate to purpose and audience
 6. Adjust volume, phrasing, enunciation, voice modulation and inflection to stress important ideas and impact audience response
 7. Vary language choices as appropriate to the context of the speech
 8. Deliver informational presentations (e.g., expository, research) that:
 - ♦ demonstrate an understanding of the topic and present events or ideas in a logical sequence;
 - ♦ support the controlling idea or thesis with well-chosen and relevant facts, details, examples, quotations, statistics, stories and anecdotes;
 - ♦ include an effective introduction and conclusion and use a consistent organizational structure (e.g., cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution);
 - ♦ use appropriate visual materials (e.g., diagrams, charts, illustrations) and available technology; and
 - ♦ draw from multiple sources including both primary and secondary sources and identify sources used
 9. Deliver formal and informal descriptive presentations that convey relevant information and descriptive details
 10. Deliver persuasive presentations that:
 - ♦ establish and develop a logical and controlled argument;
 - ♦ include relevant evidence, differentiating between evidence and opinion to a support position and to address counter-arguments or listener bias; and
 - ♦ consistently use common organizational structures as appropriate (e.g., cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution)