

GRADE 8 LANGUAGE ARTS

Writing

The purpose of the eighth grade writing program is to develop and apply their own voice in writing and use it in various writing styles and genres throughout the curriculum. Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.

Imaginative writing:

Students will:

- write stories or scripts containing the basic elements of fiction (characters, dialogue, setting, plot with a clear resolution).
- write stories or scripts with well-developed characters, setting, dialogue, clear conflict and resolution, and sufficient descriptive detail.
- write poems using poetic techniques (alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme scheme), figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification), in graphic elements (capital letters, line length, word position).

Informational/expository writing:

Students will:

- write brief research reports with clear focus and supporting detail.
- write reports based on research that include quotations, footnotes or endnotes, and a bibliography.
- write a short explanation of a process that includes a topic statement, supporting details, and a conclusion.
- write and justify a personal interpretation of literary, informational, or expository reading that includes a topic statement, supporting details from the literature, and a conclusion.
- write multi-paragraph compositions that have clear topic development, logical organization, effective use of detail, and variety in sentence structure.

Consideration of Audience and Purpose

Students will:

- write for different audiences and purposes
- make distinctions among fiction, nonfiction, dramatic literature, and poetry, and use these genres selectively when writing for different purposes.
- select and use appropriate rhetorical techniques for a variety of purposes, such as to convince or entertain the reader.

Revising.

Students will:

- demonstrate improvement in organization, content, paragraph development, level of detail, style, tone, and word choice(diction), in their compositions after revising them.
- revise writing to improve level of detail and precision of language after determining where to add images and sensory detail, combine sentences, vary sentences, and rearrange text.
- improve word choice by using a dictionary or thesaurus.
- revise writing to improve organization and diction after checking the logic underlying the order of ideas, the precision of vocabulary used, and the economy of editing.
- improve word choice by using a variety of references.

Standard English Conventions.

Students will:

- use knowledge of standard English conventions in their writing, revising, and editing.
- use additional knowledge of correct mechanics (apostrophes, quotation marks, comma use in compound sentences, paragraph indentations), correct sentence structure (elimination of fragments and run-ons), and correct standard English, spelling (commonly used homophones) when writing, revising, and editing.
- use knowledge of types of clauses (main and subordinate), verbals (gerunds, infinitives, participles), mechanics (semicolon, colons, hyphens), usage (tense consistency), sentence structure (parallel structure), and standard English spelling when writing and editing.

Organizing Ideas in Writing

Students will:

- organize ideas in writing in a way that makes sense for their purpose.
- decide on the placement of descriptive details about setting, characters, and events in stories.
- group related ideas and place them in logical order when writing summaries or reports.
- organize information about a topic into a coherent paragraph with a topic sentence, sufficient supporting detail, and a concluding sentence.
- integrate the use of organizing techniques that break up strict chronological order in a story (starting in the middle of the action, then filling in background information using flashbacks).
- organize ideas for writing comparison-and-contrast essays.

Research

Students will:

- gather information from a variety of sources, analyze and evaluate the quality of the information they obtain, and use it to answer their own questions.
- apply steps for obtaining information from a variety of sources, organize information, documenting sources, and presenting research in individual and group projects:
 - use an expanded range of print and non-print sources (atlases, databases, electronic, on-line resources)
 - follow established criteria for evaluating information
 - locate specific information within resources by using indexes, tables of content, electronic search key words
 - organize and present research using the grade 7-8 Learning Standards in the Composition Strand as a guide for writing
 - provide appropriate documentation in a consistent format
- apply steps for obtaining information from a variety of sources, organizing information, documenting sources, and presenting research in individual projects:
 - differentiate between primary and secondary source materials
 - differentiate between paraphrasing and using direct quotes in a report
 - organize and present research using the grade 7-8 Learning Strands in the Composition Strand as a guide for writing
 - document information and quotation and use a consistent format for footnotes or endnotes
 - use standard bibliographic format to document sources

Evaluation of Writing and Presentations

Students will:

- develop and use appropriate rhetorical, logical, and stylistic criteria for assessing final versions of their compositions or research projects before presenting them to varied audiences.
- use prescribed criteria from a scoring rubric to evaluate composition recitation, or performances before presenting them to an audience.
- as a group, develop and use scoring guides or rubrics to improve organization and presentation of written and oral projects.

Analysis of Media

Students will:

- identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the conventions, elements, and techniques of film, radio, video, televisions, multimedia productions, the Internet, and emerging technologies, and provide evidence from the works to support their understanding.
- identify techniques used in educational reference software and websites and describe how these techniques are the same as or different from techniques used by authors and illustrators of print material.
- analyze the effect on the reader's or viewers emotions of text and image in print journalism, and images, sound, and text in electronic journalism, distinguishing techniques used in each to achieve these effects.

Media Production

Students will:

- design and create different media productions (audio, video, television, multimedia, Internet, emerging technologies) with a clear controlling idea, adequate detail, and appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and medium.
- create a media production using effective images, text, music, sound, effects, or graphics.
- create media presentations and written reports on the same subject and compare the difference in effects of each medium.
- use criteria to assess the effectiveness of media presentations.

Materials

- Wordly Wise
- Houghton Mifflin English

Instruction:

- Student portfolios
- Assigned writing with rubrics
- Vocabulary collection sheets
- Book reports
- Book reviews
- Multi genre research paper
- Creative writing
- Mini lessons
- Alternate story endings
- Peer editing
- Group work
- Presentations
- Teacher guided instruction
- Conferencing
- Writer's Workshop

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