

Grade Eight

Eighth graders are accustomed to the middle school routine. Self-awareness of physical and emotional changes is a significant part of the eighth grade experience and sometimes competes with academic concerns. Eighth graders are often more self-involved than younger students, and their reactions to academic and social situations are personal. In the eighth grade, students' appreciation of written and spoken language begins to extend beyond the school setting.

As readers, eighth graders continue to broaden their reading experiences through the study and analysis of compelling literature. Enthusiastic eighth-grade readers read texts by popular adult authors, such as John Grisham and Mary Higgins Clark.

Throughout the eighth grade, students continue to refine their skills in the production of quality essays and narratives. Students continue to develop their own writing styles; and they use strong verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Many enjoy writing in the first person. Students begin to embrace causes, and their writing reflects their developing social consciences. They often rely on arguments from emotion in their persuasive writing. The Middle Grades Grade Writing test and the CRCT serve as measures of what they have accomplished.

Eighth graders enjoy debating a variety of topics, even without proper preparation to support their stands on issues. Students like to work within a group setting on individual tasks. They are willing to share ideas, but prefer to be responsible for their own products. Viewing and listening skills vary according to an individual's maturity.

Eighth grade students deepen their study of Georgia history by identifying Georgia authors and examining texts these authors have created. Eighth grade students will be able to identify the connections between an author, their work, and Georgia, and can determine which of the following criteria an author meets: *a) born in Georgia, b) lives in Georgia, c) writes about Georgia, d) is or was a long time resident of Georgia, and this is reflected within their work.* They become aware of the ways Georgia is reflected within text through the study of setting, characterization, theme, historical context, and current events.

Reading and Literature

In reading a text closely, the student works carefully to discern the author's perspective and the particular facts and details that support it. The student reads thoughtfully and purposefully, constantly checking for understanding of the author's intent and meaning so that the interpretation will be sound.

ELA8R1 The student demonstrates comprehension and shows evidence of a warranted and responsible explanation of a variety of literary and informational texts.

For literary texts, the student identifies the characteristics of various genres and produces evidence of reading that:

- a. Identifies the difference between the concepts of theme in a literary work and author's purpose in an expository text.
- b. Compares and contrasts genre characteristics from two or more selections of literature.
- c. Analyzes a character's traits, emotions, or motivations and gives supporting evidence from the text(s).
- d. Compares and contrasts motivations and reactions of literary characters from different historical eras confronting similar situations or conflicts.
- e. Evaluates recurring or similar themes across a variety of selections, distinguishing theme from topic.
- f. Evaluates the structural elements of the plot (e.g., subplots, climax), the plot's development, and the way in which conflicts are (or are not) addressed and resolved.
- g. Analyzes and evaluates the effects of sound, form, figurative language, and graphics in order to uncover meaning in literature:
 - i. Sound (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, internal rhyme, rhyme scheme, meter)
 - ii. Figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, symbolism, imagery).
- h. Analyzes and evaluates how an author's use of words creates tone and mood and provides supporting details from text.

For informational texts, the student reads and comprehends in order to develop understanding and expertise and produces evidence of reading that:

- a. Analyzes and evaluates common textual features (e.g., paragraphs, topic sentences, concluding sentences, introduction, conclusion, footnotes, index, bibliography).
- b. Applies, analyzes, and evaluates common organizational structures (e.g., graphic organizers, logical order, cause and effect relationships, comparison and contrast).
- c. Recognizes and traces the development of an author's argument, point of view, or perspective in text.
- d. Understands and explains the use of a complex mechanical device by following technical directions.
- e. Uses information from a variety of consumer, workplace, and public documents (e.g., job applications) to explain a situation or decision and to solve a problem.

ELA8R2 The student understands and acquires new vocabulary and uses it correctly in reading and writing. The student

- a. Determines pronunciations, meanings, alternate word choices, parts of speech, or etymologies of words.
- b. Determines the meaning of unfamiliar words in content and context specific to reading and writing.
- c. Demonstrates an initial understanding of the history of the English Language.

ELA8R3. The student reads aloud, accurately (in the range of 95%), familiar material in a variety of genres, in a way that makes meaning clear to listeners. The student

- a. Uses letter-sound knowledge to decode written English and uses a range of cueing systems (e.g., phonics and context clues) to determine pronunciation and meaning.
- b. Uses self-correction when subsequent reading indicates an earlier miscue (self-monitoring and self-correcting strategies).
- c. Reads with a rhythm, flow, and meter that sounds like everyday speech (prosody).

ELA8R4 The student acquires knowledge of Georgia authors and significant text created by them. The student

- a. Identifies a variety of Georgia authors both male and female.
- b. Identifies authors' connections to Georgia through a variety of materials including electronic media.
- c. Identifies award winning Georgia authors.
- d. Examines texts from different genres (e.g. picture books, poetry, short stories, novels, essays, informational writing, and dramatic literature) created by Georgia authors.
- e. Relates literary works created by Georgia authors to historical settings and or events.
- f. Explains how Georgia is reflected in a literary work through setting, characterization, historical context, or current events.
- g. Evaluates recurring or similar themes across a variety of selections written by Georgia authors, distinguishing theme from topic.

Reading Across the Curriculum

After the elementary years, students are seriously engaged in reading for learning. This process sweeps across all disciplinary domains, extending even to the area of personal learning. Students encounter a variety of informational and fictional texts, and they read texts in all genres and modes of discourse. In the study of various disciplines of learning (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies), students must learn, through reading, the communities of discourse of those disciplines. Each subject has its own specific vocabulary; and for students to excel in

all subjects, they must learn the specific vocabulary of all subject areas *in context*. In the middle grades, students self-select reading materials based on personal interests established through classroom learning. Students become curious about science, mathematics, history, and literature as they form contexts for those subjects related to their personal and classroom experiences. As students explore academic areas through reading, they develop favorite subjects and become confident in their verbal discourse about those subjects.

Reading across curriculum develops students' academic and personal interests in different subjects, as well as their understanding and expertise across subject areas. As students read, they develop both content and contextual vocabulary. They also build good habits for reading, researching, and learning. The Reading Across the Curriculum standards focus on the academic and personal skills students acquire as they read in all areas of learning.

ELA8RC1 The student reads a minimum of 25 grade-level appropriate books or book equivalents (approximately 1,000,000 words) per year from a variety of subject disciplines. The student reads both informational and fictional texts in a variety of genres and modes of discourse, including technical texts related to various subject areas.

ELA8RC2 The student participates in discussions related to curricular learning in all subject areas. The student

- a. Identifies messages and themes from books in all subject areas.
- b. Responds to a variety of texts in multiple modes of discourse.
- c. Relates messages and themes from one subject area to those in another area.
- d. Evaluates the merits of texts in every subject discipline.
- e. Examines the author's purpose in writing.
- f. Recognizes and uses the features of disciplinary texts (e.g., charts, graphs, photos, maps, highlighted vocabulary).

ELA8RC3 The student acquires new vocabulary in each content area and uses it correctly. The student

- a. Demonstrates an understanding of contextual vocabulary in various subjects.
- b. Uses content vocabulary in writing and speaking.
- c. Explores understanding of new words found in subject area texts.

ELA8RC4 The student establishes a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas. The student

- a. Explores life experiences related to subject area content.
- b. Discusses in both writing and speaking how certain words and concepts relate to multiple subjects.
- c. Determines strategies for finding content and contextual meaning for unfamiliar words or concepts.

Writing

The student writes clear, coherent text that develops a central idea or tells a story. The writing shows consideration of the audience and purpose. The student progresses through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing successive versions).

ELA8W1 The student produces writing that establishes an appropriate organizational structure, sets a context and engages the reader, maintains a coherent focus throughout, and signals a satisfying closure. The student

- a. Selects a focus, organizational structure, and a point of view based on purpose, genre expectations, audience, length, and format requirements.
- b. Writes texts of a length appropriate to address the topic or tell the story.
- c. Uses traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).
- d. Uses appropriate structures to ensure coherence (e.g., transition elements, parallel structure).
- e. Supports statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.

ELA8W2. The student demonstrates competence in a variety of genres.

The student produces a narrative (fictional, personal, experiential) that:

- a. Engages readers by establishing and developing a plot, setting, and point of view that are appropriate to the story (e.g., varied beginnings, standard plot line, cohesive devices, and a sharpened focus).
- b. Creates an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.
- c. Relates a clear, coherent incident, event, or situation by using well-chosen details.
- d. Reveals the significance of the writer's attitude about the subject.
- e. Develops complex major and minor characters using standard methods of characterization.
- f. Includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot, setting, and character (e.g., vivid verbs, descriptive adjectives, varied sentence structures, and specific narrative action).
- g. Excludes extraneous and inappropriate information.
- h. Uses a range of strategies (e.g., suspense, figurative language, dialogue, expanded vocabulary, flashback, movement, gestures, expressions, foreshadowing, tone, and mood).
- i. Provides a sense of closure appropriate to the writing.

The student produces writing (multi-paragraph expository composition such as description, explanation, comparison and contrast, or problem and solution) that:

- a. Engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a speaker's voice, and otherwise developing reader interest.
- b. Develops a controlling idea that conveys a perspective on the subject.
- c. Creates an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.
- d. Develops the topic with supporting details.
- e. Excludes extraneous and inappropriate information.
- f. Follows an organizational pattern appropriate to the type of composition.
- g. Concludes with a detailed summary linked to the purpose of the composition.

The student produces technical writing (business correspondence: letters of application and letters of recommendation, résumés, abstracts, user guides or manuals, web pages).

- a. Creates or follows an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.
- b. Excludes extraneous and inappropriate information.
- c. Follows an organizational pattern appropriate to the type of composition.
- d. Applies rules of Standard English.

The student produces a response to literature that:

- a. Engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a speaker's voice, or otherwise developing reader interest.
- b. Demonstrates an understanding of the literary work.
- c. Supports a judgment through references to the text and personal knowledge.
- d. Justifies interpretations through sustained use of examples and textual evidence from the literary work.
- e. Supports a judgment through references to the text, references to other works, authors, or non-print media, or references to personal knowledge.
- f. Produces a judgment that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective (orally, graphically, in writing).
- g. Anticipates and answers a reader's questions.
- h. Provides a sense of closure to the writing.

The student produces a multi-paragraph persuasive essay that:

- a. Engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a speaker's voice, and otherwise developing reader interest.
- b. States a clear position or perspective in support of a proposition or proposal.
- c. Creates an organizing structure that is appropriate to the needs, values, and interests of a specified audience, and arranges details, reasons, and examples.
- d. Includes appropriate relevant information and arguments.
- e. Excludes information and arguments that are irrelevant.
- f. Provides details, reasons, and examples, arranging them effectively by anticipating and answering reader concerns and counter-arguments.
- g. Supports arguments with detailed evidence, citing sources of information as

- appropriate.
- h. Anticipates and addresses reader concerns and counter-arguments.
- i. Provides a sense of closure to the writing.

The student produces a piece of writing drawn from research that:

- a. Poses relevant and tightly drawn questions about the topic.
- b. Engages the reader by establishing a context.
- c. Conveys clear and accurate perspectives on the subject.
- d. States a thesis.
- e. Records important ideas, concepts, and direct quotations from significant information sources, and paraphrases and summarizes all perspectives on the topic, as appropriate.
- f. Uses a variety of primary and secondary sources and distinguishes the nature and value of each.
- g. Organizes and displays information on charts, maps, and graphs.
- h. Provides a sense of closure to the writing.
- i. Documents resources (bibliography, footnotes, endnotes, etc.).

ELA8W3 The student uses research and technology to support writing. The student

- a. Plans and conducts multiple-step information searches by using computer networks and modems.
- b. Achieves an effective balance between researched information and original ideas.
- c. Avoids plagiarism.

ELA8W4 The student consistently uses the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing. The student

- a. Plans and drafts independently and resourcefully.
- b. Revises writing for appropriate organization, consistent point of view, and transitions between paragraphs, passages, and ideas.
- c. Edits writing to improve word choice, grammar, punctuation, etc.

Conventions

Conventions are essential for reading, writing, and speaking. Instruction in language conventions will, therefore, occur within the context of reading, writing, and speaking, rather than in isolation. The student writes to make connections with the larger world. A student's ideas are more likely to be taken seriously when the words are spelled accurately and the sentences are grammatically correct. Use of Standard English conventions helps readers understand and follow the student's meaning, while errors can be distracting and confusing. Standard English conventions are the "good manners" of writing and speaking that make communication fluid.

ELA8C1 The student demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats. The student

- a. Declines pronouns by gender and case, and demonstrates correct usage in sentences.
- b. Analyzes and uses simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences correctly, punctuates properly, and avoids fragments and run-ons.
- c. Revises sentences by correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.
- d. Revises sentences by correcting errors in usage.
- e. Demonstrates appropriate comma and semicolon usage (compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, split dialogue, and for clarity).
- f. Analyzes the structure of a sentence (basic sentence parts, noun-adjectiveadverb clauses and phrases).
- g. Produces final drafts/presentations that demonstrate accurate spelling and the correct use of punctuation and capitalization.

Listening/Speaking/Viewing

The student demonstrates an understanding of listening, speaking, and viewing skills for a variety of purposes. The student listens critically and responds appropriately to oral communication in a variety of genres and media. The student speaks in a manner that guides the listener to understand important ideas.

ELA8LSV1 The student participates in student-to-teacher, student-to-student, and group verbal interactions. The student

- a. Initiates new topics in addition to responding to adult-initiated topics.
- b. Asks relevant questions.
- c. Responds to questions with appropriate information.
- d. Confirms understanding by paraphrasing the adult's directions or suggestions.
- e. Displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors.
- f. Actively solicits another person's comments or opinions.
- g. Offers own opinion forcefully without domineering.
- h. Responds appropriately to comments and questions.
- i. Volunteers contributions and responds when directly solicited by teacher or discussion leader.
- j. Gives reasons in support of opinions expressed.
- k. Clarifies, illustrates, or expands on a response when asked to do so.
- l. Employs a group decision-making technique such as brainstorming or a problem-solving sequence (e.g., recognizes problem, defines problem, identifies possible solutions, selects optimal solution, implements solution, evaluates solution).
- m. Develops a plan of action or agenda for written and/or verbal follow-up.

ELA8LSV2 The student listens to and views various forms of text and media in order to gather and share information, persuade others, and express and understand ideas. The student will select and critically analyze messages using rubrics as assessment tools.

When responding to visual and oral texts and media (e.g., television, radio, film productions, and electronic media), the student:

- a. Interprets and evaluates the various ways in which visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, illustrators, news photographers) communicate information and affect impressions and opinions.
- b. Analyzes oral communication by paraphrasing a speaker's purpose and point of view, and asks relevant questions concerning the speaker's content, delivery, and purpose.

When delivering and responding to presentations, the student:

- a. Gives oral presentations or dramatic interpretations for various purposes.
- b. Organizes information (e.g., message, vocabulary) to achieve particular purposes and to appeal to the background and interests of the audience.
- c. Shows appropriate changes in delivery (e.g., gestures, expression, tone, pace, visuals).
- d. Uses language for dramatic effect.
- e. Uses rubrics as assessment tools.
- f. Responds to oral communications with questions, challenges, or affirmations.
- g. Uses multimedia for presentations.