

ELA 8- Year-at-a-Glance

M/J Language Arts 3- Standard and Advanced Levels

From the FLDOE Course Description:

This course defines what students should understand and be able to do by the end of 8th grade. Knowledge acquisition should be the primary purpose of any reading approach as the systematic building of a wide range of knowledge across domains is a prerequisite to higher literacy. At this grade level, students are building their facility with rhetoric, the craft of using language in writing and speaking, using classic literature, essays, and speeches as mentor texts.

The benchmarks in this course are mastery goals that students are expected to attain by the end of the year. To build mastery, students will continue to review and apply earlier grade-level benchmarks and expectations.

English Language Arts is not a discrete set of skills, but a rich discipline with meaningful, significant content, the knowledge of which helps all students actively and fully participate in our society.

Standards should not stand alone as a separate focus for instruction, but should be combined purposefully.

The texts students read should be meaningful and thought-provoking, preparing them to be informed, civic-minded members of their community.

Curricular content for all subjects must integrate critical-thinking, problem-solving, and workforce-literacy skills; communication, reading, and writing skills; mathematics skills; collaboration skills; contextual and applied-learning skills; technology-literacy skills; information and media-literacy skills; and civic-engagement skills.

Honors and Advanced Level Course Note: Advanced courses require a greater demand on students through increased academic rigor. Academic rigor is obtained through the application, analysis, evaluation, and creation of complex ideas that are often abstract and multi-faceted. Students are challenged to think and collaborate critically on the content they are learning. Honors level rigor will be achieved by increasing text complexity through text selection, focus on high-level qualitative measures, and complexity of task. Instruction will be structured to give students a deeper understanding of conceptual themes and organization within and across disciplines. Academic rigor is more than simply assigning to students a greater quantity of work.

What is the purpose of this course?

The purpose of this course is to provide eighth grade students with an integrated study of English-Language Arts using reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language for college and career preparation and readiness.

The content should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- active reading of varied texts for what they say explicitly, as well as logical inferences that can be drawn
- analysis of literature and informational texts from varied literary periods to examine:
 - text craft and structure
 - elements of literature
 - arguments and claims supported by textual evidence
 - power and impact of language
 - influence of history, culture, and setting on language
 - personal critical and aesthetic response
- writing for varied purposes
 - developing and supporting argumentative claims
 - crafting coherent, supported expository texts
 - responding to literature for personal and analytical purposes
 - writing narratives to develop real or imagined events
 - writing on sources (short and longer research) using text-based claims and evidence
- effective listening, speaking, and viewing strategies with emphasis on the use of evidence to support or refute a claim in multimedia presentations, class discussions, and extended text discussions
- collaboration amongst peers

What will eighth grade students be expected to do?

In the 2026-2027 school year, SJCS D will continue to use the Florida B.E.S.T. Standards as the tool to guide ELA instruction in our schools.

According to the [Florida's B.E.S.T. Standards: English Language Arts](#) (p. 78),

In grades 6-8, analysis and writing are the primary foci. Rhetoric is introduced in 6th grade [and continued to be studied in 7th and 8th]. In this grade band, students go from explaining theme to analyzing it. Students progress from examining character perspective to working with complex narrator types. Students are also being introduced to literature from historic time periods. This framework should help students in building a body of knowledge useful in being able to interpret multiple layers of meaning. In middle school, those periods are as follows:

- Colonial and Early National Period (1600–1830) American Literature
- Romantic Period (1790–1870)
- Realism and Naturalism Period (1870–1930)
- Modernist Period (1910–1945)
- Contemporary Period (1945–present)

The FLDOE’s “Parent Guide for Eighth Grade English-Language Arts” is an excellent resource for the specifics of the ELA standards as they pertain to this grade level. You can access that document via this link: <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7539/urlt/pgg-8-standards.pdf>.

What will eighth grade students be reading and discussing?

The standards below will be covered by ALL eighth grade ELA teachers in SJCS D through the use of some or all of these spotlight texts. Moreover, teachers have autonomy to use additional, appropriate supplemental texts, lessons, and projects to address the quarter's spotlight standards as well as to introduce and review the other standards for the grade-level.

	Spotlight B.E.S.T. Standards	Spotlight Texts
Quarter 1	Reading Strand: ELA.8.R.1.1: Literary Elements ELA.8.R.1.2: Theme ELA.8.R.1.3: Perspective and Point of View ELA.8.R.2.2: Central Idea ELA.8.R.1.4: Poetry ELA.8.R.3.3: Comparative Reading Communication Strand- Writing: ELA.8.C.1.4: Expository (Informational) Writing Communication Strand- Grammar ELA.8.C.3.1: Conventions - active and passive voice; verb mood; main and subordinate clauses Vocabulary Strand: ELA.8.V.1.1: Academic Vocabulary ELA.8.V.1.2: Morphology ELA.8.V.1.3: Context and Connotation	• “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allen Poe—short story • “The Monkey’s Paw” by W.W. Jacobs—short story • “There Will Come Soft Rains” by Ray Bradbury—short story • “There Will Come Soft Rains” by Sara Teasdale—poetry • <i>Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science</i> (excerpt) by John Fleischman—biography • <i>Children of Blood and Bone</i> (excerpt) by Toni Adeyemi - novel
Quarter 2	Reading Strand: ELA.8.R.1.4: Poetry ELA.8.R.3.1: Interpreting Figurative Language ELA.8.R.3.2: Paraphrasing and Summarizing ELA.8.R.3.3: Comparative Reading Communication Strand- Writing: ELA.8.C.1.4: Expository (Informational) Writing Communication Strand- Grammar: ELA.8.C.3.1: Conventions - consistent verb voice and mood; types of phrases and clauses; commas and run-on sentences Vocabulary Strand: ELA.8.V.1.1: Academic Vocabulary ELA.8.V.1.2: Morphology ELA.8.V.1.3: Context and Connotation	• “The Invisible One—folktale retold by Idries Shah • “Slam, Dunk, and Hook” by Yusef Komunyakaa—poetry • “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost—poetry • School-based teacher teams may also select a novel study; please contact your student’s teacher for specifics.

Quarter 3	Reading Strand: ELA.8.R.2.1: Structure ELA.8.R.2.3: Author’s Purpose and Perspective ELA.8.R.2.4: Argument ELA.8.R.3.4: Understanding Rhetoric Communication Strand- Writing: ELA.8.C.1.3: Argumentative (Persuasive) Writing Communication Strand- Grammar: ELA.8.C.3.1: Conventions - semicolons; parallel structure; dashes and ellipses Vocabulary Strand: ELA.8.V.1.1: Academic Vocabulary ELA.8.V.1.2: Morphology ELA.8.V.1.3: Context and Connotation	• “Address to the Nation on the Explosion of the Space Shuttle <i>Challenger</i>” by Ronald Reagan—speech • “Gaming Communities”—opposing viewpoint articles • “Speech to the Ohio Women’s Conference: Ain’t I a Woman?” by Sojourner Truth—speech • “Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech” by Elie Wiesel- speech • “A Kenyan Teen’s Discovery: Let There Be Lights to Save Lions” by Nina Gregory – informational text
Quarter 4	Reading Strand: All B.E.S.T. Standards for the eighth grade year will be reviewed and/or covered in this quarter. Communication Strand- Writing: ELA.8.C.1.2: Narrative Writing and/or ELA.8.C.4.1: Researching and Using Info Communication Strand- Grammar: ELA.8.C.3.1: Conventions - spelling rules; commonly misspelled words; capitalization; writing for effect; sentence fragments; and spiral review Vocabulary Strand: ELA.8.V.1.1: Academic Vocabulary ELA.8.V.1.2: Morphology ELA.8.V.1.3: Context and Connotation	School-based teacher teams will decide on the works they use in this quarter; please contact your student’s teacher for specifics.

What longer works might eighth grade students study?

Teachers may choose to teach longer works in their entirety. The list below comprises those works approved by the Florida Department of Education for eighth grade study. Any work outside the District's adopted resource, Florida StudySync, or the B.E.S.T. Sample Text List goes through the District's novel-approval process before instructional use. Teachers are expected to share information with families about studies of longer works at least two weeks before each study begins. This list is not comprehensive; see the Florida B.E.S.T. Standards for English Language Arts for more information.

Florida StudySync Novel Studies	B.E.S.T. Sample Extended-Length Texts from B.E.S.T. Sample Titles of Complex Texts by Grade Level list
• <i>A Night to Remember</i>, Lord • <i>A Wizard of Earthsea</i>, Le Guin • <i>Across Five Aprils</i>, Hunt • <i>Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl</i>, Frank * • <i>Children of Blood and Bone</i>, Adeyemi • <i>Code Talker</i>, Bruchac • <i>I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives</i>, Alifirenka, Ganda, Welch * • <i>Inside Out & Back Again</i>, Lai • <i>Legendary Frybread Drive-In: Intertribal Stories</i>, Smith • <i>Long Walk to Freedom</i>, Mandela * • <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>, Douglass *(7th grade B.E.S.T. list) • <i>Poe's Great Tales and Poems</i>, Poe • <i>Refugee</i>, Gratz • <i>Ten Days in a Mad-House</i>, Bly • <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i>, Twain *(7th grade B.E.S.T. list) • <i>The Call of the Wild</i>, London* • <i>The Dark is Rising</i>, Cooper • <i>The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play</i>, Goodrich, Hackett, Kesselman • <i>The Hobbit</i>, Tolkien * • <i>The Last Cuentista</i>, Higuera • <i>The Martian Chronicles</i>, Bradbury • <i>The Outsiders</i>, Hinton • <i>The Swiss Family Robinson</i>, Wyss * • <i>The War of the Worlds</i>, Wells	• <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>, Stevenson • <i>Shane</i>, Schaefer • <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> • <i>Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon</i>, Thimmesh • <i>The Chosen</i>, Potok • <i>The Princess and the Goblin</i>, MacDonald • <i>The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane</i>, Freedman • <i>Trapped: How the World Rescued 33 Miners from 2,000 Feet Below the Chilean Desert</i>, Aronson
*Text is also located on B.E.S.T. Sample Titles of Complex Texts by Grade Level list	