



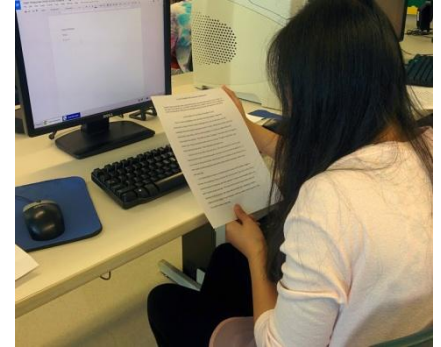
Bedford Public Schools

Grade 8 – English Language Arts

The eighth grade program is an integrated study of communication skills that includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The focus is on reading both interpretively and inferentially using a variety of literary genres as well as nonfiction material. These readings offer insights into the human condition and serve as models for students' own thinking and writing. There is an expectation for greater independence than in prior grades as students craft multiparagraph responses that demonstrate originality, insight and the application of more formal and structured analytical skills.

Students use all stages of the writing process with targeted focus on the organizational and drafting stages. They learn to write for a specific audience, task and purpose in order to produce clear and coherent writing that fully answer the question that is asked. There is specific exposure to writing a thesis statement, organizing well-chosen facts, using appropriate and varied transitions to create coherence and unity, and creating a supportive and logical conclusion. Students also engage in thoughtful revision and editing of their writing and organization of their ideas to show claims and counterclaims. While the emphasis is on analytical writing, additional modes of expression such as description, narrative storytelling, and poetry are also studied. Students receive continued instruction on understanding and applying vocabulary, built through their study of literature and independent reading expectations, which, in turn, will guide them as they approach more complex texts and engage in more purposeful writing. Further, in order to write with greater fluency and sophistication, students continue their study and application of essential, grade- specific grammar and conventions, rules of written and spoken English.

Active reading skills are reinforced through independent reading projects and through challenging short stories and novels including well-known and classic works of literature. Students analyze and evaluate the characteristics of "good" stories and novels. Common literary devices and their applications are reviewed and studied in greater depth. Through investigating themes and authors' stylistic choices, students also increase their own self-awareness and their understanding of society. Non-fiction materials accompany literature studies and serve to augment students' understanding.



Learning Expectations

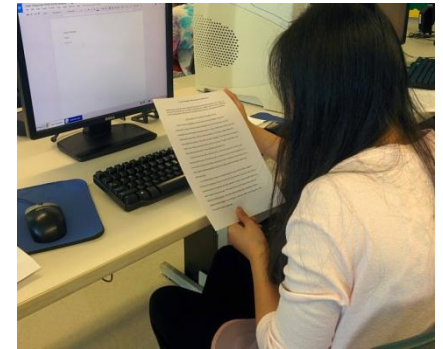
[Reading: Literature and Informational Text](#)

[Writing: Argument, Informational/Expository and Narrative Writing Skills](#)

[Speaking and Listening](#)

[Language Standards](#)

Students speak in both formal presentations and informal discussions with greater sophistication and depth as they consider topic, audience, purpose and the art of persuasion. They are simultaneously developing mature listening skills that allow them to participate and contribute more effectively and purposefully.



Learning Expectations

Reading: Literature and
Informational Text

Writing: Argument,
Informational/Expository and
Narrative Writing Skills

Speaking and Listening

Language Standards

Reading: Literature and Informational Text

Enduring Understandings In order to meet the standards, the students will need to understand that . . .	Essential Questions In order to understand, students will need to consider questions such as . . .	Knowledge and Skills Learning this material will require students to . . . <i>*Boldface type indicates emphasis</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors use a variety of styles and literary techniques. • Literature can teach truths about life. • Examining literature from diverse cultures and different time periods teaches us about the human experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes a “good” short story? • Does appearance always match reality? • How can an individual shape his world? • How does learning about characterization help me to understand people in real life? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. • Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. • Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. • Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. • Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

Enduring Understandings In order to meet the standards, the students will need to understand that . . .	Essential Questions In order to understand, students will need to consider questions such as . . .	Knowledge and Skills Learning this material will require students to . . . <i>*Boldface type indicates emphasis</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors. • Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new. • Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea. • Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced. • Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. • Analyze plot details and make logical inferences • Draw comparisons and contrasts between characters or between text to text or text to world connections. • Analyze how a character evolves. • Identify and trace the development of theme.

Enduring Understandings In order to meet the standards, the students will need to understand that . . .	Essential Questions In order to understand, students will need to consider questions such as . . .	Knowledge and Skills Learning this material will require students to . . . <i>*Boldface type indicates emphasis</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize symbols and allusions and their impact on plot development and/or theme.• Recognize how literary devices, such as irony, point of view, mood, and tone add to the interpretation and enjoyment of literature.• Identify elements of dramatic literature in a Shakespearean play and contrast to film interpretations.

Writing: Argument, Informational/Expository and Narrative Writing Skills

Enduring Understandings In order to meet the standards, the students will need to understand that . . .	Essential Questions In order to understand, students will need to consider questions such as . . .	Knowledge and Skills Learning this material will require students to . . . <i>*Boldface type indicates emphasis</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective writers communicate ideas, clarify thinking, and connect us to the world. • Routine and procedures are important in effective writing. • Writing is a recursive process that involves multiple revisions. • Persuasion can be used to influence the opinions, beliefs, and actions of others, and even to change the world. • An understanding of language is essential for effective writing and speaking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What writing techniques will work best for my audience and purpose? • How do writers support a claim? • How does the writing process allow us to organize our thoughts? • How do persuasive devices and rhetoric impact our willingness to change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence • Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. • Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. • Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. • Establish and maintain a formal style. • Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. • Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. • Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.) • With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. • Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others. • Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration. • Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Enduring Understandings In order to meet the standards, the students will need to understand that . . .	Essential Questions In order to understand, students will need to consider questions such as . . .	Knowledge and Skills Learning this material will require students to . . . <i>*Boldface type indicates emphasis</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.• Use all steps of the writing process.• Create a clear, defensible claim.• Craft an argument that takes a position and develop it using supporting evidence.• Produce an oral or written coherent response that is appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

Speaking and Listening

Enduring Understandings In order to meet the standards, the students will need to understand that . . .	Essential Questions In order to understand, students will need to consider questions such as . . .	Knowledge and Skills Learning this material will require students to . . . <i>*Boldface type indicates emphasis</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaking, listening and discussing allows one to communicate ideas, clarify thinking and make connections to the world and each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have persuasive speeches prompted change? What techniques can be used to make persuasive speeches more powerful? How do persuasive devices and rhetoric impact our willingness to change? What are critical rules that promote and enhance focused discussion? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political)

Enduring Understandings In order to meet the standards, the students will need to understand that . . .	Essential Questions In order to understand, students will need to consider questions such as . . .	Knowledge and Skills Learning this material will require students to . . . <i>*Boldface type indicates emphasis</i>
		<p>behind its presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced • Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. • Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest. • Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. • Present findings using appropriate eye contact, adequate volume and clear pronunciation. • Produce an oral or written coherent response that is appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

Language Standards

Enduring Understandings In order to meet the standards, the students will need to understand that . . .	Essential Questions In order to understand, students will need to consider questions such as . . .	Knowledge and Skills Learning this material will require students to . . . <i>*Boldface type indicates emphasis</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conventions are rules that have been established to standardize written communication. A writer or speaker needs to use Standard English conventions to get his message across effectively, clearly and purposefully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the Standard English conventions? What are the benefits of correctly applying grammar and conventions when writing and speaking? What are the benefits of using resources to improve your spelling and editing? How can I write and speak skillfully? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.* Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission. Spell correctly. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).

Enduring Understandings In order to meet the standards, the students will need to understand that . . .	Essential Questions In order to understand, students will need to consider questions such as . . .	Knowledge and Skills Learning this material will require students to . . . <i>*Boldface type indicates emphasis</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on <i>grade 8 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. • Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. • Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., <i>precede</i>, <i>recede</i>, <i>secede</i>). • Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech. • Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary). • Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. • Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context. • Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

Enduring Understandings In order to meet the standards, the students will need to understand that . . .	Essential Questions In order to understand, students will need to consider questions such as . . .	Knowledge and Skills Learning this material will require students to . . . <i>*Boldface type indicates emphasis</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., <i>bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute</i>).• Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.