ELA SECTION

Parent Guide

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELA STANDARDS' EXPECTATIONS
Get an in-depth look at the skills your child will learn in eighth grade

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of eighth grade in English Language Arts (ELA), as well as strategies and resources for learning outside of school.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES:

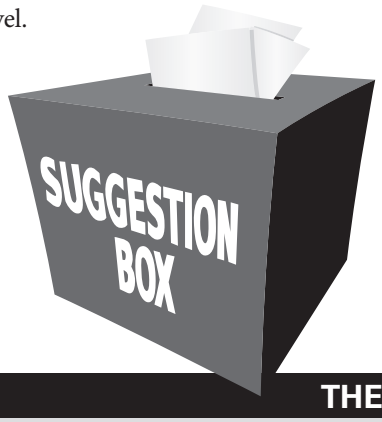
- an introduction to the NC English Language Arts Standard Course of Study
- an explanation of the skills your child is learning in eighth grade
- reading strategies for learning outside of school
- writing strategies for learning outside of school
- websites to support your child's learning

EIGHTH GRADE

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

INTRODUCTION TO THE NORTH CAROLINA STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY FOR ELA

In April 2017, the North Carolina State Board of Education adopted new ELA standards for grades K-12. The Standard Course of Study describes what students should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of each grade level. How these standards are taught is decided at a district level.



The NC Standard Course of Study was developed based on feedback provided from the following:

- Parents
- Community Members
- Business/Industry Professionals
- Higher Education Faculty
- Educators (teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists)

THE NC STANDARDS ARE DIVIDED INTO 4 STRANDS:

READING

– Foundational Skills (K-5)
– Reading Literature
– Reading Informational Text

WRITING

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

LANGUAGE

THE NC STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY HAS A NEW FORMAT THAT INCLUDES:

Standards with **bolded** terms

Clarification of the standards with suggestions for instruction, explanations, and examples

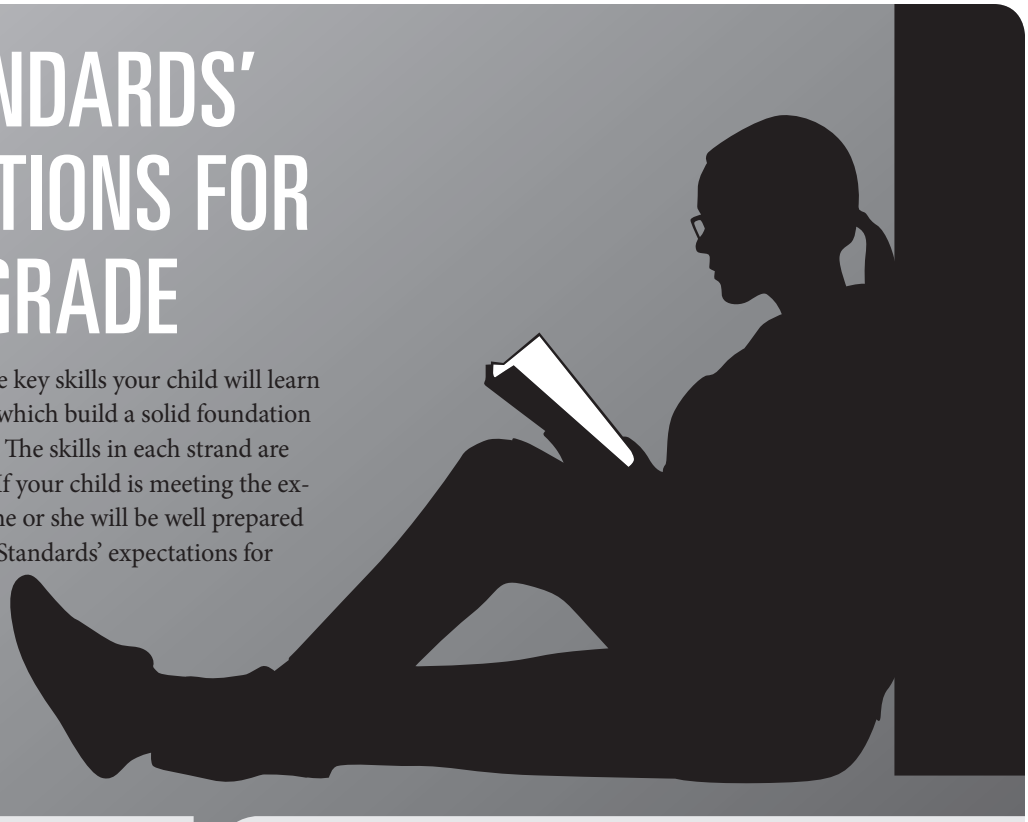
Glossary that defines the **bolded** terms from the Standards

EXAMPLE OF THE NEW FORMAT

STANDARD		CLARIFICATION	GLOSSARY
Cluster: Integration of Ideas and Analysis			
RI.8.7	**Evaluate** the advantages and disadvantages of using different **mediums** to present a particular **topic** or idea.	Students assess the pros and cons of utilizing different mediums to present a specific topic or idea. *In the Classroom:* The teacher displays examples of the various mediums, and the class takes Cornell notes on the benefits and pitfalls of each type of medium. The teacher then shows a presentation on a topic which implements various mediums, and the class identifies the benefits and pitfalls of the use of each medium through think-pair-share discussions.	**evaluate** – to determine quality or value after careful analysis or investigation **medium** – the form(s) or material(s) an artist or author uses to express his/her ideas (e.g., poem, oil paint, etc.) **topic** – the subject or matter being discussed or written about in a text, speech, etc.

ELA STANDARDS' EXPECTATIONS FOR EIGHTH GRADE

This section focuses on the key skills your child will learn throughout eighth grade, which build a solid foundation for success in later grades. The skills in each strand are broken down into topics. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined here, he or she will be well prepared for ninth grade. The ELA Standards' expectations for eighth grade include:



READING (LITERATURE)

KEY IDEAS AND EVIDENCE

Students:

- cite evidence from the text that most strongly supports analysis of what the text says
- cite evidence from the text that most strongly supports their inferences
- determine the theme and analyze how it is developed
- provide an objective summary of the text
- analyze how lines of dialogue or incidents propel the action, reveal aspects of the characters, or provoke a decision

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Students:

- understand the meaning of words and phrases in a text
- analyze how specific words impact the meaning and tone of the text (including analogies and allusions to other texts)
- compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts
- analyze how the differing structures of two or more texts contribute to meaning and style
- analyze how the differences in perspectives of characters and the audience/reader create effects such as humor or suspense

INTEGRATION OF IDEAS AND ANALYSIS

Students:

- analyze how different and similar a film or live production is to the original text
- analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on myths, traditional stories, or religious works

RANGE OF READING AND THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Students:

- read and understand texts appropriate for eighth grade independently and for a sustained period of time
- connect background knowledge and experiences to texts

READING (INFORMATIONAL TEXT)

KEY IDEAS AND EVIDENCE

Students:

- cite evidence from the text that most strongly supports analysis of what the text says
- cite evidence from the text that most strongly supports their inferences
- determine the central idea and analyze how it is developed
- provide an objective summary of the text
- analyze connections among and distinctions between individuals, events, or ideas

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Students:

- understand the meaning of words and phrases in a text
- analyze how specific words impact the meaning and tone of the text (including analogies and allusions to other texts)
- analyze the structure of a specific paragraph and how that paragraph develops and/or refines a key concept
- analyze the structure the author used to organize the text
- determine an author's point of view or purpose
- analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence and/or points of view

INTEGRATION OF IDEAS AND ANALYSIS

Students:

- evaluate the pros and cons of using different mediums (such as print, digital, video) to present a topic or ideas
- delineate and evaluate the argument and claims in a text
- tell if the claims are sound and if the evidence is relevant and sufficient
- recognize irrelevant evidence
- analyze two or more texts that present conflicting information on the same topic and identify which information is conflicting

RANGE OF READING AND THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Students:

- read and understand texts appropriate for eighth grade independently and for a sustained period of time
- connect background knowledge and experiences to texts

WRITING

TEXT TYPES, PURPOSES, AND PUBLISHING

Students:

• organize information and ideas based on a topic to plan and prepare to write
• write **argument** pieces that: introduce the claim, acknowledge and distinguish opposing claims, support the claim with organized, clear, logical, and relevant reasons/evidence, use credible sources, use words that create cohesion, use words that clarify the relationship between the claim, reasons, and counterclaims, maintain a formal style, and provide a concluding statement
• write **informative** pieces that: clearly introduce a topic, organize ideas, concepts, and information into broad categories, use relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, examples, and quotations to develop the topic, use appropriate transitions to clarify relationships and create cohesion, use precise language and vocabulary, maintain a formal style, and provide a concluding statement
• write **narrative** pieces that: develop real or imagined events, establish context and point of view, introduce the characters/narrator, organize the sequence of events, use dialogue, descriptions, pacing, and reflection to develop events and/or characters, use words that help sequence the events, show relationships, and/or signal a shift in time, use precise words/phrases, use descriptive details and sensory details to convey experiences, and provide a conclusion
• revise and edit based on peer and adult feedback (with some guidance and support)
• use digital tools to produce and publish their writing
• use digital tools to present the relationships between information/ideas, as well as collaborate and interact with others

RESEARCH

Students:

• conduct short research projects (using several sources) to answer a question, including questions they choose, and to generate questions for further research
• gather information from multiple print and digital sources
• use search terms
• assess the credibility of sources
• quote or paraphrase information from the sources (avoiding plagiarism)
• provide citations

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

Students:

• follow predetermined rules to discuss grade level texts and topics
• track progress towards specific goals/deadlines and define individual roles for discussions
• come prepared for discussions by having read or studied the material
• refer to the text and/or studied material when discussing the topic
• ask and answer questions that connect to others' ideas
• comment with relevant observations, ideas, and evidence
• acknowledge new information and justify their views when applicable
• analyze the purpose of information presented in different formats and evaluate the motives behind the presentation
• delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims
• evaluate the soundness, relevancy, and sufficiency of evidence
• recognize irrelevant evidence

PRESENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

Students:

• present claims and findings in a focused manner
• use sound and relevant evidence, reasoning, and details
• adjust their speech based on the context and task
• integrate multimedia components and visuals in presentations to clarify and strengthen claims

LANGUAGE

CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH

Students:

• demonstrate understanding of progressively more difficult standard grammar rules and parts of speech, expanding on their previous work with nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prepositions, etc.
• produce complete sentences and questions, as well as use conventions such as punctuation and spelling

KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE

Students:

• use verbs in the active or passive voice, as well as in the conditional mood for effect

VOCABULARY ACQUISITION AND USE

Students:

• determine the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words in eighth grade level books using context clues, word parts, reference materials, and noting how words are related
• interpret figures of speech found in a text
• distinguish the connotations of words with similar denotations such as firm, persistent, resolute
• use grade-appropriate words and phrases

Language Standards 1 and 2 include two continuums, one for grammar and one for conventions. The skills within each continuum are arranged by grade band rather than by individual grades so you will notice that your child will be working with the same skills in multiple grades, but the activities and texts will become more complex. In the lower grade of the band, the teacher is introducing and modeling the skill. In the higher grades of the band, students are applying the skill to more complex text as they work toward mastery. Students practice each skill and apply what they have learned to their writing.

PORTION OF THE CONTINUUM FOR LANGUAGE STANDARD 1

SKILL	K-1	2-3	4-5	6-8	9-12
Subject/Verb Agreement	• Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences	• Ensure subject/verb agreement	• Continue to ensure subject/verb agreement	• Continue to ensure subject/verb agreement	Students apply grammar and usage skills to create a unique style and voice when writing or speaking with increasing sophistication and effect in grades 9-12. Skills taught in previous grades should be reinforced and expanded.
Nouns	• Form frequently occurring nouns; form regular plural nouns (/s/ or /es/) • Use common, proper, & possessive nouns	• Explain the function of nouns • Use collective nouns (such as *group*) • Form and use frequently occurring regular and irregular plural nouns	• Use abstract nouns (such as *courage*) • Continue to use regular and irregular plural nouns		

READING STRATEGIES

Reading outside of school provides the additional support and encouragement that allows students to create a deep passion for reading, to deepen their comprehension skills, and to build a broad vocabulary knowledge. Reading strategies can be developed and used before, during, and after reading takes place. These strategies reinforce what your student is learning in eighth grade.

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT HOME:

• **Provide** a time and space for your child to read every day.

• **Read** about an event you and your child attended or write your own accounts of an event you shared. Read the two pieces and then compare the differences between them, like the perspectives from which they were written.

• **Read** to your child or have your child read to you every day. Reading aloud to children, of all ages, provides opportunities to discuss more challenging and complex plots and themes which builds critical thinking skills.

• **If** students are auditory learners, listening to audiobooks helps many students to comprehend and interact with the text. Various websites have collections of audiobooks that students can use. Public libraries also have collections of audiobooks students may checkout online or at a physical location

• **Slowly** and deliberately read and then re-read complex texts.

• **Start** a family book club. Let different members of the family pick the book. This could be a good way to enjoy quality family time while experiencing the joy of reading together!

• **Make** a short video book review of a book being read.

• **Ask** your child to summarize what he/she read and tell what he/she learned from what was read. This could be connected to something in real life, another reading, or to events happening in the world.

• **Talk** about current events together. Discuss with your child so he/she understands what is happening and how it connects to him/her, other events that he/she may have seen or read about, and other areas of the community.

• **Read** the same book as your child independently, together, or a combination of both. Talk about the books as you read them, reviewing main ideas and plots and expressing your opinions on the book. Then read an additional book or books on the same subject and compare and contrast how the books both dealt with the same issue. For example, read two fiction books about family, or two different texts about the same historical event or non-fiction topic.

• **Find** a series that interests your child and begin to read it together. You can read to your child, your child can read to you, and he/she can read a chapter independently. You and your child can interview each other as you read — ask about main ideas, events, and thoughts you each have about the books and characters.

• **Visit** the local library and make reading fun for the entire family.

• **Give** your child opportunities to participate in new experiences. Visit museums, the zoo, theaters, historical sites, aquariums, etc. to help build your child's vocabulary and speaking skills.

• **Consult** paraphrased/translated versions of complex texts. Students can find the original text and a corresponding modern translation online and in print. This will help students understand and appreciate the language and comprehend the plot, characters, and themes.

Regular trips to the library for books, not computer time, will encourage students to read, which will strengthen their comprehension skills.

• **Read** books/magazines for enjoyment outside of class. Regular trips to the library for books, not computer time, will encourage students to read, which will strengthen their comprehension skills.

• **Students** can annotate the actual text by jotting information in the margins if they have their own copies of the text or take notes on another sheet of paper. When annotating, students may note the following:

– A brief summary for each chapter or page to verify comprehension
– Questions about events, characters, and parts of the text the student did not understand
– Quotes that are important to the text or confusing
– Literary techniques that appear to recur in the text
– Predictions about what will happen in the text
– Opinions about characters, their choices, or other events in the text
– Connections to current events, other texts, movies, songs

• **Students** may develop graphic organizers themselves or receive them from teachers. Important information to include in the graphic organizers - sections for setting, characters, plot, summary, and questions. Students may use graphic organizers such as Cornell Notes, webs (circles or squares of information), or just a bulleted list of notes. Graphic organizers help students organize their thinking.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS/PROMPTS TO ASK AS OR AFTER YOUR CHILD READS:

Why did the author write this?

What can you infer from what you have read so far?

How does the plot unfold?

What do you think the author is trying to say when he/she uses the word/phrase ____?

Describe _____'s perspective.

What genres do you like to read? Why?

Summarize the text.

What is the central idea of the text?

What conflicting viewpoints does the text mention?

What does the word _____ mean in this sentence?

What textual evidence did you find to support your analysis of the text?

What is the theme of the story? What details help you understand the theme?

Describe the problem. How was it solved?

What clues can you find in the sentence or paragraph that help you figure out the meaning of _____?

Select an event from the book and compare it to a scene from the movie. How are they different?

Who is your favorite author? Why?

What evidence from the text explains or supports the inference you made?

How is this paragraph organized? What is the key concept?

What argument is presented? What claims support that argument?

What did you do to help you figure out an unknown word?

What strategies can you use when you don't understand the text?

WRITING STRATEGIES

Writing to express opinions, provide information, and/or create a story goes far beyond letter formation and spelling rules. In school, students are learning the writing process. Out of school, help is needed to reinforce, encourage, and support students in their writing process. Writing out of school provides a connection between writing and everyday experiences. These strategies reinforce what your student is learning in eighth grade.

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT HOME:

- **Keep** a notebook of ideas for use in future writings.
- **Write** in a journal to record events and thoughts.
- **Keep** a response journal to record short responses to things read or watched. These journals may include one or more of the following about what was read or watched:
  - Summary (Try to write a summary with key details)
  - Questions (I wonder about … What would happen if …)
  - Predictions (I think … will happen, because …)
  - Connections (This made me remember a time … This was similar to something else I read or watched. This took place in a similar location to …)
  - Quotes (The quote that seemed important to me was … because …)
- **Write** for a real purpose and/or audience:
  - Thank you notes
  - Quick note or email to relatives about family news
  - Contributing to a family website
- **When** available, suggest that your child participate in a writing contest. Local and national contests are often found online with submission details.
- **Discuss** family stories and history. Encourage your child to ask questions. Work together with your child to create a book, magazine, poem, short story, newspaper article, pamphlet, or other written narrative of your family's history.
- **Encourage** your child to draw and/or write his/her own version of a favorite story. Or, encourage your child to create or write a next chapter (or page) for his/her favorite book.
- **When** your child asks a question, research the answer together using books or computers (under your supervision). Then create an informative poster or collage which tells the question, the answer, and uses both texts and illustrations to show what they learned.
- **Help** your child choose something that he/she wants to do or learn to do. Work with your child to research information related to the topic chosen. Ask your child to create a brochure, flyer, or "How To" manual or guide describing/explaining the topic, or how to do something. Then, together, you and your child can follow the guide to do or learn to do the chosen topic.
- **Urge** your child to use logical arguments to defend his/her opinion. If your child wants a raise in allowance, ask him/her to research and then based on that research, explain reasons why he/she should have a raise in allowance.
- **Under** your supervision, begin to help your child use a computer to research a topic or communicate with friends and family. Your child can also use the computer to write his/her own pieces or pieces you write together.

RESOURCES FOR LEARNING OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

At home, you play an important role in your student's academic success. You are a valuable resource for your child. The websites provided below are not an all-inclusive list, but are intended to provide quality resources for you to support your child's learning.

- **www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/grade/7-8/**
— a language arts resource for both in and out of school; parent and afterschool resources are provided by grades

- **www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/collection/milestones-expectations/raise-reader-parent-guide-to-reading-ages-11-13**
— a parent guide to reading for ages 11-13

- **www2.ed.gov/parents/read/resources/edpicks.jhtml**
— reading resources for parents

- **www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/more-reading-resources/reading-tips-parents**
— reading tips for parents; 7 tips to keep reading exciting and enjoyable for children

- **www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/help-child-choose-book-30320.html**
— tips on how to help children choose a book

- **www.newsela.com/**
— free sign-in; choose from current news (4 new articles are uploaded each day – some in Spanish)

- **www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/milestones-expectations/enhancing-comprehension-reading-skills-middle-school**
— key components of middle school reading

- **www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/modeling-good-reading-habits-30112.html**
— provides innovative ways for parents to model good reading habits with teens

- **www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/motivating-teen-readers-30110.html**
— provides practical suggestions parents can use to help motivate their teen to read

- **www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/languagearts/parents/**
— NCDPI ELA Parent page