

# TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Trumbull, Connecticut

## GRADE 8 LANGUAGE ARTS

*Draft for Pilot 2017-18*  
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The Trumbull Board of Education will continue to take Affirmative Action to ensure that no persons are discriminated against in its employment.

## CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

The Trumbull School Community engages in an environment conducive to learning which believes that all students will **read** and **write effectively**, therefore communicating in an articulate and coherent manner. All students will participate in activities **that present problem-solving through critical thinking**. Students will use technology as a tool applying it to decision making. We believe that by fostering self-confidence, self-directed and student-centered activities, we will promote **independent thinkers and learners**. We believe **ethical conduct** to be paramount in sustaining the welcoming school climate that we presently enjoy.

Approved 8/26/2011

## INTRODUCTION & PHILOSOPHY

Grade eight language arts is a full-year course. Students actively engage in all aspects of language arts: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. Students explore these strands as they engage in the genres of reading, writing, and oral presentation, including meaningful discussions about what they read and write. Collaboration is a cornerstone of the classroom as students participate in small-group and large-group discussions and activities. Other media, such as film, art, and music, are also integrated within units of study. Complex texts offer students the challenges of grappling with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries, and the opportunity to use their works to build and extend their own writing. Students develop their writing skills as they engage in the processes of writing, and conventions of writing are integrated into all writing units.

Middle school literacy is dynamic and ever-changing. Traditionally, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing have been identified as the critical skills in literacy development. However, as information and technology shape our society, the definition of literacy and its relationship to education also must change. Middle school language arts teachers support students by teaching them the tools to construct and share meaning in a variety of contexts in today's world.

Texts, both those read by groups of students and those read by students independently, should meet grade-level-appropriate norms for text complexity, appreciating the confluence of qualitative, quantitative, and reader and task considerations. It is the assumption that students are reading grade-level-appropriate texts in each unit of study, with scaffolding as necessary to ultimately promote independent proficiency.

## COURSE GOALS

The following course goals derive from the 2010 Connecticut Core Standards.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1/RI.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2/RI.8.2	Use particular details to determine a theme or central idea of a text and to analyze how it is developed over the course of the text, including its relationship to characters, setting, plot, and/or supporting ideas; summarize the text.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3/RI.8.3	Analyze how ideas and themes develop and evolve over the course of a text via particular incidents in the text or particular connections among or distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4/RI.8.4	Understand the choices the author makes in words, sentences, and paragraph structure, including analogies or allusions to other texts, and how these choices contribute to the meaning and purpose of the text.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.5/RI.8.5	Understand the choices the author makes in paragraph, chapter, or section structure of two or more texts and how these choices contribute to the meaning and purpose of each text.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6/RI.8.6	Explain how an author develops the point of view of each narrator or speaker of a text, including how a particular point of view is distinguished from others, including that of the audience or reader, and the effects of the differences in points of view.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.7/RI.8.7	Analyze different media to compare, contrast, and evaluate ideas presented in texts and the different techniques used to convey and create those ideas.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.8	Understand and evaluate the arguments and claims presented in texts and analyze the supporting details.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.9/RI.8.9	Compare and contrast ideas and structures of texts in different forms or genres, including a fiction text and a myth, traditional story, or religious work treating the same topic.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.10/RI.8.10	Read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, and literary nonfiction, at the high end of the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.5	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.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.6	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.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.7	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.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.8	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.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time

frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1

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.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.2

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) behind its presentation.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.3

Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4

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.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.5

Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.3

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 8

reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.6

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.

## **COURSE ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS**

### **Reading**

Students will understand that . . .

- textual evidence is necessary to support analysis of central idea, inference, and summary.
- close reading will increase comprehension of text.
- there are similarities and differences between written text and other media.
- word meanings, structure, and point of view shape understanding of text.

### **Writing**

Students will understand that . . .

- each type of writing (argumentative, informative, and narrative) has its unique purpose, style, and structure.
- the production of clear, coherent writing is a process that requires planning, revising, editing, rewriting, and using technology as a means to publish, and to possibly find a new approach.
- effective research presents knowledge gained from the evaluation of multiple, credible, and reliable sources that will clearly support a claim or explain a topic.

### **Speaking & Listening**

Students will understand that . . .

- speakers use strategies and techniques for effective academic conversation and presentation.
- listeners need to analyze purpose and to evaluate information presented in different formats.
- listeners need to evaluate a speaker's argument/reasoning and determine relevance.

## COURSE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

### Reading

- How does a reader come to understand and appreciate what he/she reads?
- How does reading make me a better writer?
- What do reading and writing in all their forms teach us about life and being human?
- How do I unlock the power of words?

### Writing

- How do I effectively use the writing process?
- How does reading a variety of genres enhance my writing?
- What strategies can I use to write more effectively?
- How do I gather and use information to support my thinking and writing?

### Speaking & Listening

- How do I listen?
- How do I orally communicate ideas effectively to various audiences?
- How do I engage in collaborative discussion?
- How do I evaluate a speaker's argument and reasoning?

## COURSE KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

### Reading

Students will understand . . .

- the elements of fiction and nonfiction.
- the use of figurative language and connotative meaning.
- the impact of tone, word choice, and point of view on meaning.
- the varieties of text structures.
- the characteristics of different genres.
- the various types of media used for comparative study.
- key academic vocabulary.

Students will be able to . . .

- cite text evidence to support their analysis of a work.
- analyze the use of key details in informational text.
- describe the development of plot and character in a work.
- determine the theme/central idea of a work.
- summarize text.
- analyze elements of a given text structure.
- determine word meaning.
- distinguish fact from opinion.

- compare and contrast elements of different genres and media.
- analyze the use of text features.
- integrate information from different sources.
- evaluate claims and supporting details.

## **Writing**

Students will understand . . .

- the steps of process writing.
- the parts of an essay.
- the organizational structures and strategies for different types of writing.
- effective strategies to build fluency, elaboration, clarity, and interest.
- the use of figurative language.
- accurate and logical evidence necessary for elaboration of a topic.
- the characteristics of different genres.
- the various types of media used for comparative study.
- key academic vocabulary.

Students will be able to . . .

- introduce and support claims.
- acknowledge alternate or opposing claims.
- establish and maintain formal style.
- produce and develop writing mindful of task, purpose, and audience.
- use transitions.
- elaborate in a variety of ways.
- use precise language.
- conduct research.
- gather reliable information from reliable sources.
- paraphrase information.
- cite and document information according to MLA guidelines.
- peer-edit, self-edit, and revise their writing.
- publish writing.

## **Speaking & Listening**

Students will understand . . .

- collaborative group discussion as an opportunity to express ideas and gain insights and new understandings from others.
- viewing and listening to recordings as other ways to gather information and extend learning of a topic, text, or issue under study.
- organization, elaboration, and strategies necessary for effective communication of ideas in presentations.
- the use of visual displays and multimedia components to enhance presentations.

Students will be able to . . .

- participate in collaborative learning groups.

- prepare for collaborative discussion by completing required reading and/or written work that supports the focus of discussion and collaboration and/or their role(s) in that discussion/ group work.
- participate in group collaboration by posing and responding to questions with relevant and meaningful responses.
- present information in both formal and informal settings.
- produce and develop presentations mindful of task, purpose, and audience.
- interpret information presented by their peers, recordings, videos, and other multimedia.
- use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- include multimedia components and visual displays in their presentations.

# UNIT 1

## What Makes a Good Story Meaningful?

### Unit Goals

At the completion of this unit, students will:

CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1	Support textual understandings with the strongest, most compelling details from the text.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2	Identify themes of several short stories and how they are developed through the texts' plots, settings, and characters.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2	Publish a multi-paragraph informative essay focused on using text evidence to present a claim about a theme of one of the short stories read.
CCS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.5	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.

### Unit Essential Questions

- How can I best analyze a short story / novella?
- What does being in control of one's life really mean?

### Scope and Sequence

- Reviewing the major elements of fiction: plot, setting, character, and theme
- Reading, annotating, and discussing short texts to analyze literary elements, in particular based on analysis of textual evidence
- Reading closely to develop theme
- Developing strategies to create a claim
- Writing short analytical responses to focused text-based questions
- Reviewing elements of informative writing via mentor texts and models
- Finding and unpacking compelling text evidence
- Demonstrating command of language conventions in both writing and speaking

### Assured Assessments

Pre-Assessment for Text Annotation:

Using “Gate A-4” by Naomi Shihab Nye, a close-reading excerpt, students will complete a close-read of the final three paragraphs, answering *What is the message in the story? Use evidence to support your response.*

#### Formative Assessment:

To establish a grade-level-appropriate approach to active reading, to scaffold learning, and to check for understanding, teachers will have students will annotate short texts read, providing evidence of the ability to analyze specific text details. Teachers will provide feedback on students’ annotations via checklists and written/oral commentary. Text annotations will provide the basis for the unit summative assessment.

#### Summative Assessment:

Each student will publish an analytical paragraph focused on using text evidence to present a claim about *The Outsiders*. The paragraph should include and explain relevant evidence from the text. A common rubric will be used to assess the paragraph, and grades will be factored into the trimester grade as a major element in a manner common to all grade 8 language arts teachers at both middle schools.

#### Resources

\* All teachers will teach the two core short stories and the core novel. Each teacher will also select one supplemental short story.

#### Core

- Jackson, Shirley. “The Possibility of Evil.”
- Stockton, Frank R. “The Lady, or the Tiger?”
- Hinton, S.E. *The Outsiders*.

#### Supplemental

- Teacher-selected poetry to complement short stories read.
- Bagdasarian, Adam. “Popularity.”
- Bradbury, Ray. “The Town Where No One Got Off.”
- Connell, Richard. “The Most Dangerous Game.”
- Dahl, Roald. “The Landlady.”
- Lessing, Doris. “Through the Tunnel.”

#### Time Allotment

- Approximately five weeks

*Units 2-8 follow a “Draft for Pilot 2017” structure for the 2017-18 school year. Based on the draft Essential Questions, Scope and Sequence, and Time Allotment for each Unit, teachers will collaborate on an ongoing basis during the school year under the leadership of the middle schools’ English Language Arts Team Leaders and the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments to develop each Unit based on articulated*

*standards, common assessment expectations, the most appropriate resources for student growth, and best practices for the English language arts.*

## **UNIT 2**

### **Looking Ahead: School-to-Career Mini-Unit**

#### **Unit Essential Questions**

- How do my natural talents and interests lead me to exploring potential careers?
- What sources of information aid my research regarding careers?

#### **Scope and Sequence**

- Exploring career options through Naviance
- Choosing and attending Career Night presentations
- Researching selected career using and documenting multiple sources of information
- Orally presenting information to classmates about selected career
- Completing a written reflection regarding the information gathered and the process used

#### **Time Allotment**

- Approximately one week

## **UNIT 3**

### **Telling One's Story**

#### **Unit Essential Questions**

- How can narrative writing bring me to new perspectives and insights?
- What writing strategies and craft techniques can I use to help me compose a narrative piece?

#### **Scope and Sequence**

- Exploring strategies for generating and expanding narrative ideas
- Reading closely to learn from other authors
- Flash-drafting narrative pieces
- Elaborating important scenes and adding new ones
- Ending stories in meaningful ways

#### **Time Allotment**

- Approximately two weeks

## **UNIT 4**

### **Analyzing and Interpreting Historical Facts**

#### **Unit Essential Questions**

- How does a guiding question guide research?
- How can I use information and questioning to develop a thesis statement?
- How can I locate and present information relevant to an era's impact on society?
- How do certain individuals, events, and/or ideas come to impact society?

#### **Scope and Sequence**

- Developing ideas and insights about a historical topic
- Reviewing advanced research skills
- Researching a historical topic
- Reviewing advanced MLA documentation format
- Drawing conclusions and final thoughts on researched information and developing a thesis for use in a multi-paragraph informative essay
- Organizing strong research evidence in a multi-paragraph informative essay written in a formal style, revising and editing content based on peer and teacher feedback, and publishing the informative essay based on MLA format, including parenthetical citations

#### **Time Allotment**

- Approximately three weeks

## **UNIT 5**

### **Studying the Importance of Family, Faith, and Fear in Our Lives**

#### **Unit Essential Questions**

- How do family, faith, and fear affect human resiliency?
- What are the perils of indifference?
- What are our responsibilities in building better communities and a better world?
- How do people use different lenses to view the world?
- How can I develop and support my claims and counterclaims in a cohesive and organized manner?
- How can I prioritize relevant information to effectively support a claim?

#### **Scope and Sequence**

- Reading and discussing Brown's *Boys in the Boat* and Wiesel's *Night* in both small and large groups
- Analyzing central themes of the texts and their development over the course of the texts
- Incorporating and expanding upon text evidence to support claim
- Clarifying relationships between evidence and ideas
- Building counterarguments within literary essays
- Framing essays with relevance and context: introductions and conclusions
- Organizing strong text evidence in a multi-paragraph literary essay, revising and editing content based on peer and teacher feedback, and publishing the essay based on MLA format, including parenthetical citations

#### **Time Allotment**

- Approximately six weeks

## **UNIT 6**

### **Reviewing Writing and Language Skills and Analysis**

#### **Unit Essential Questions**

- How can I use the writing process to best convey my ideas?
- How do audience and purpose affect writing?
- How can I maintain the voice and style of another author?
- What are the components of a well-constructed written piece?
- How can I use effective test-taking strategies, including determining what a question is asking of me?
- How do I apply the conventions of writing correctly?

#### **Scope and Sequence**

- Completing multiple drafts of introductions, body paragraphs, and/or conclusions of narrative, informative, and/or argumentative pieces of writing, varying language and style toward adjusted purposes, and applying the conventions of writing correctly
- Answering multiple-choice and short-answer questions in discrete preparation for the Smarter Balanced assessment

#### **Time Allotment**

- Approximately three weeks

## **UNIT 7**

### **Analyzing the Impact of Society's Traditions and Rules**

#### **Unit Essential Questions**

- How does society play a role in influencing our values and beliefs?
- What does it take to stand up for what you know is right?
- How do a novel's themes relate to our own world?
- How do people use different lenses to view the world?
- How does author's craft contribute to the meaning of a story?

#### **Scope and Sequence**

- Reading and discussing Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* in both small and large groups
- Understanding the power of a symbol in a literary work
- Analyzing central themes of the novel and their development over the course of the text
- Incorporating and expanding upon text evidence to support claim
- Reviewing elements of literary analysis via mentor texts and models
- Understanding the tone of a literary essay
- Organizing strong text evidence in a multi-paragraph literary essay, revising and editing content based on peer and teacher feedback, and publishing the essay based on MLA format, including parenthetical citations.

#### **Time Allotment**

- Approximately six weeks

## **UNIT 8**

### **Understanding the Big Idea**

#### **Unit Essential Questions**

- Which theme(s) found in the course literature is(are) most important to society today?

#### **Scope and Sequence**

- Reviewing texts, annotations, and notes related to literature studied throughout the year
- Researching modern examples connected to the themes of that literature
- Choosing a theme common to at least two texts studied during the year
- Reviewing advanced oral presentation skills
- Organizing strong text and research evidence for a technology-enhanced oral presentation, revising and editing content based on peer and teacher feedback, and presenting the piece to the class
- Demonstrating command of language conventions in both writing and speaking

#### **Time Allotment**

- Approximately five weeks