

English/Language Arts: Grade 8

Strand:

E1 Reading

Reading is a process which includes demonstrating comprehension and showing evidence of a warranted and responsible interpretation of the text.

“Comprehension” means getting the gist of a text. It is most frequently illustrated by demonstrating an understanding of the text as a whole; identifying complexities presented in the structure of the text; and extracting salient information from the text. In providing evidence of a responsible interpretation, students may make connections between parts of a text, among several texts, and between texts and other experiences; make extensions and applications of a text; and examine texts critically and evaluatively.

Standard:

E1a: The student reads at least twenty-five books or book equivalents each year. The quality and complexity of materials to be read is based on the lexile level for grade eight (900L-1150L). The materials should include traditional and contemporary literature (both fiction and non-fiction) as well as magazines, newspapers, textbooks, and on-line material. Such reading should represent a diverse collection of material from at least three different literary forms and from at least five different writers.

Examples:

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of reading twenty-five books include:

- *Maintain an annotated list of works read.*
- *Generate a reading log or journal.*
- *Participate in formal and informal book talks.*

Standard:

E1b: The student reads and comprehends at least four books (or book equivalents) about one issue or subject, or four books by a single writer, or four books in one genre, and produces evidence of reading that:

Components:

E1b.1: makes and supports warranted and responsible assertions about the texts;
E1b.2: supports assertions with elaborated and convincing evidence;
E1b.3: draws the text together to compare and contrast themes, characters, and ideas;
E1b.4: makes perceptive and well developed connections;
E1b.5: evaluates writing strategies and elements of the author’s craft.

Examples:

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of reading comprehension include:

- *Construct a book review.*
- *Participate in formal or informal book talk.*
- *Produce a literary response paper.*
- *Create an annotated book list organized according to author, theme, or genre.*
- *Produce a research report.*

Standard:

E1c: The student reads and comprehends informational materials to develop understanding and expertise and produces written or oral work that:

Components:

E1c.1: restates or summarizes information;
E1c.2: relates new information to prior knowledge and experience;
E1c.3: extends ideas;
E1c.4: makes connections to related topics or information.

Examples: *Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of reading informational materials include:*

- Use information to support or enhance a project.
- Incorporate expert opinions into a speech or position paper.
- Develop a proposal based on data obtained from reading informational texts.
- Write a report of information that draws from multiple sources.
- Write a report that analyzes several historical records of a single event and attempts to understand the reasons for the similarities and differences.

Standard: **E1d:** The student demonstrates familiarity with a variety of public documents (i.e., documents that focus on civic issues or matters of public policy at the community level and beyond) and produces written or oral work that does one or more of the following:

Components: **E1d.1:** identifies the social context of the document;
E1d.2: identifies the author’s purpose and stance;
E1d.3: analyzes the arguments and positions advanced and the evidence offered in support of them, or formulates an argument and offers evidence to support it;
E1d.4: examines or makes use of the appeal of a document to audiences both friendly and hostile to the position presented;
E1d.5: identifies or uses commonly used persuasive techniques.

Examples: *Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of familiarity with public documents include:*

- Summarize and critique two or more local newspaper articles related to the same topic or issue.
- Respond to a public address made by an adult, e.g., the principal, a PTA/PTO officer, a visiting author.
- Write a letter to the editor in response to an editorial or to an article of local or national importance.
- Explain a local document to someone who has never heard of it (e.g., a school related directive, a community related brochure, or an informational pamphlet).

Standard: **E1e:** The student demonstrates familiarity with a variety of functional documents (i.e. documents that exist in order to get things done) and produces written or oral work that does one or more of the following:

Components: **E1e.1:** identifies the institutional context of the document;
E1e.2: identifies the sequence of activities needed to carry out a procedure;
E1e.3: analyzes or uses the formatting techniques used to make a document user-friendly;
E1e.4: identifies any information that is either extraneous or missing in terms of audience and purpose or makes effective use of relevant information.

Examples: *Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of familiarity with functional documents include:*

- Write a memo or conduct a briefing on procedures to be followed in a given situation.

- *Produce a manual setting out school rules.*
- *Revise a set of instructions to improve their clarity.*

Strand:

E2 Writing

Writing is a process through which a writer shapes language to communicate effectively. Writing often develops through a series of initial plans and multiple drafts and through access to informed feedback and response. Purpose, audience, and context contribute to the form and substance of writing as well as to its style, tone, and stance.

Standard:

E2a: The student produces a report that:

Components:

- E2a.1:** engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- E2a.2:** develops a controlling idea that conveys a perspective on the subject;
- E2a.3:** creates an organizing structure appropriate to a specific purpose, audience and context;
- E2a.4:** includes appropriate facts and details;
- E2a.5:** excludes extraneous and inappropriate information;
- E2a.6:** uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as providing facts and details, describing or analyzing the subject, narrating a relevant anecdote, comparing and contrasting, naming, and explaining benefits or limitations;
- E2a.7:** provides a sense of closure to the writing.

Examples:

Examples of reports include:

- *An informative report (comparing and contrasting attributes, e.g., comparing and contrasting the attributes of two or more countries).*
- *A saturation report (a report that recounts substantial information on a topic gathered by a student over a period of time).*
- *A chapter book.*
- *A multimedia presentation using research gained from print and other media sources.*
- *A report produced as part of studies in subjects such as science, social studies, and mathematics.*
- *A report of information on an item of personal interest or experience.*

Standard:

E2b: The student produces a response to literature that:

Components:

- E2b.1:** engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- E2b.2:** advances a judgment that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective;
- E2b.3:** supports judgment through references to the text, references to other works, authors, or non-print media, or references to personal knowledge;
- E2b.4:** demonstrates an understanding of the literary work.
- E2b.5:** anticipates and answers a reader's questions;
- E2b.6:** provides a sense of closure to the writing.

Examples:

Examples of responses to literature include:

- *A literary response paper.*

- *A book or movie review.*
- *A literary analysis paper.*
- *A comparison of a piece of literature with its media presentation.*
- *An interpretation of a narrative poem.*
- *A pamphlet.*
- *A diary.*
- *A newspaper or magazine article.*

Standard: **E2c:** The student produces a narrative account (fictional or autobiographical) that:

- Components:
- E2c.1:** engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a point of view, and otherwise developing reader interest;
 - E2c.2:** establishes a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict (and for autobiography, the significance of events and of conclusions that can be drawn from those events);
 - E2c.3:** creates an organizing structure;
 - E2c.4:** includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character;
 - E2c.5:** excludes extraneous details and inconsistencies;
 - E2c.6:** develops complex characters;
 - E2c.7:** uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as dialogue, tension or suspense, naming, and specific narrative action, e.g., movement, gestures, expressions;
 - E2c.8:** provides a sense of closure to the writing.

Examples: *Examples of narrative accounts include:*

- *A biographical account.*
- *A problem-solution essay.*
- *A fiction or non-fiction story.*
- *A personal narrative.*
- *A historical account.*
- *A news account of an event, fiction or non-fiction.*

Standard: **E2d:** The student produces a narrative procedure that:

- Components:
- E2d.1:** engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
 - E2d.2:** provides a guide to action for a relatively complicated procedure in order to anticipate a reader's needs; creates expectations through predictable structures, e.g., headings; and provides transitions between steps;
 - E2d.3:** makes use of appropriate writing strategies such as creating a visual hierarchy and using white space and graphics as appropriate;
 - E2d.4:** includes relevant information;
 - E2d.5:** excludes extraneous information;
 - E2d.6:** anticipates problems, mistakes, and misunderstandings that might arise for the reader;
 - E2d.7:** provides a sense of closure to the writing.

Examples: *Examples of narrative procedures include:*

- *A set of rules for organizing a class meeting.*

- *A set of instructions for playing computer games.*
- *A set of instructions for using media technology.*
- *An explanation of a mathematical procedure.*
- *A report of information explaining steps and/or procedures for a familiar activity.*
- *A storyboard.*

Standard: **E2e:** The student produces a persuasive essay that:

Components: **E2e.1:** engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;

E2e.2: develops a controlling idea that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment;

E2e.3: creates and organizes a structure that is appropriate to the needs, values, and interests of a specified audience and arranges details, reasons, examples, and anecdotes effectively and persuasively;

E2e.4: includes appropriate information and arguments;

E2e.5: excludes information and arguments that are irrelevant;

E2e.6: anticipates and addresses reader concerns and counter-arguments;

E2e.7: supports arguments with detailed evidence, citing sources of information as appropriate;

E2e.8: provides a sense of closure to the writing.

Examples: *Examples of persuasive essays include:*

- *A position paper.*
- *An evaluation of a product or policy.*
- *An editorial on a current issue that uses reasoned arguments to support an opinion.*
- *A speech for a candidate for school or public office.*
- *A multimedia presentation based on a text read.*
- *An informational web site.*
- *A commercial script*

Strand: **E3 Speaking, Listening, and Viewing**

Speaking, listening, and viewing are fundamental processes which people use to express, explore, and learn about ideas. The functions of speaking, listening, and viewing include gathering and sharing information; persuading others; expressing and understanding ideas; coordinating activities with others; and selecting and critically analyzing messages. The contexts of these communication functions include one-to-one conferences, small group interactions, large audiences and meetings, and interactions with broadcast media.

Standard: **E3a:** The student participates in one-to-one conferences with a teacher, paraprofessional, or adult volunteer, in which the student:

Components: **E3a.1:** initiates new topics in addition to responding to adult-initiated topics;

E3a.2: asks relevant questions;

E3a.3: responds to questions with appropriate elaboration;

- E3a.4:** uses language cues to indicate different levels of certainty or hypothesizing, e.g., “what if...,” “very likely...,” “I’m unsure whether...”;
- E3a.5:** confirms understanding by paraphrasing the adult’s directions or suggestions.

Examples:

Examples of one-to-one interactions include:

- *Book Talks with a teacher or parent.*
- *Analytical discussions of a movie or television program with a teacher or parent.*
- *Student-teacher conferences regarding a draft of an essay, the student’s progress on a mathematics assignment or the status of a science project.*
- *Interviews with teachers or adults.*
- *Discussion with a teacher or parent about a portfolio of work.*

Standard:

E3b: The student participates in group meetings, in which the student:

Components:

- E3b.1:** displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors;
- E3b.2:** actively solicits another person’s comment or opinion;
- E3b.3:** offers own opinion forcefully without dominating;
- E3b.4:** responds appropriately to comments and questions;
- E3b.5:** volunteers contributions and responds when directly solicited by teacher or discussion leader;
- E3b.6:** gives reasons in support of opinions expressed;
- E3b.7:** clarifies, illustrates, or expands on a response when asked to do so; asks classmates for similar expansions;
- E3b.8:** employs a group decision-making technique such as a brainstorming or a problem-solving sequence (e.g., recognize problem, define problem, identify possible solutions, select optimal solution, implement solution, evaluate solution).

Examples:

Examples of activities involving group meetings include:

- *Create a plan for a group project (e.g., organize a presentation to be made to the class; plan a science project.)*
- *Develop and negotiate a class rubric.*
- *Engage in classroom town meetings.*
- *Take part in book talks with other students.*
- *Work as part of a group to solve a complex mathematical task.*
- *Role-play to better understand a certain historical event.*
- *Participate in peer writing response groups.*

Standard:

E3c: The student prepares and delivers an individual presentation in which the student:

Components:

- E3c.1:** shapes information to achieve a particular purpose and to appeal to the interests and background knowledge of audience members;
- E3c.2:** shapes content and organization according to criteria for importance and impact rather than according to availability of information in resource materials;
- E3c.3:** uses notes or other memory aids to structure the presentation;

- E3c.4:** develops several main points relating to a single thesis;
E3c.5: engages the audience with appropriate verbal cues and eye contact;
E3c.6: projects a sense of individuality and personality in selecting and organizing content, and in delivery.

Examples:

Examples of presentations include:

- *A presentation of project plans or a report for an Applied Learning project.*
- *A report that analyzes several historical records of a single event and attempts to understand the reasons for the similarities and differences.*
- *A report that presents data collected to prove/disprove a particular hypothesis, along with an appropriate conclusion.*
- *A talk that outlines a plan of action for implementing a new school policy and the reasoning supporting the selected plan over other options.*
- *A report that analyzes a trend running through several literary works.*

Standard:

E3d: The student makes informed judgments about television, radio, and film productions; that is, the student:

Components:

- E3d.1:** demonstrates an awareness of the presence of the media in the daily lives of most people;
E3d.2: evaluates the role of the media in focusing attention and in forming opinion;
E3d.3: judges the extent to which the media are a source of entertainment as well as a source of information;
E3d.4: defines the role of advertising as part of media presentation.

Examples:

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of making informed judgments about television, radio, and film productions include:

- *Present a paper or report on reasons for selecting one media choice over another.*
- *Prepare a report on the benefits obtained (including information learned) from media exposure.*
- *Summarize patterns of media exposure in writing or in oral reports.*
- *Analyze the appeal of popular television shows and films for particular audiences.*
- *Describe the appeal of particularly memorable commercials.*
- *Explain the use of “propaganda techniques” (e.g., bandwagon, glittering generalities, celebrity) in television commercials.*

Strand:

**E4 Conventions,
Grammar and
Usage of the
English Language**

Having control of the conventions and grammar of the English language means having the ability to represent oneself appropriately with regard to current standards of correctness (e.g., spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, capitalization, subject-verb agreement). Usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats.

Standard:

E4a: The student demonstrates an understanding of the rules of the English language in written and oral work, and selects the structures and features of language appropriate to the purpose, audience and context of the work. The student demonstrates control of:

Components:

E4a.1: grammar;

- E4a.2:** paragraph structure;
- E4a.3:** punctuation;
- E4a.4:** sentence construction;
- E4a.5:** spelling;
- E4a.6:** usage.

Examples:

Examples of activities through which students might demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the English language include:

- *Demonstrate in a piece of writing the ability to manage the conventions, grammar, and usage of English so that they aid rather than interfere with reading.*
- *Proofread own writing or the writing of others, using dictionaries and other resources, including the teacher or peers as appropriate.*
- *Observe conventions of language during formal oral presentations.*
- *Revise a piece of writing by combining sentences.*

Standard:

E4b: The student analyzes and subsequently revises work to clarify it or make it more effective in communicating the intended message or thought. The student's revisions should be made in light of the purposes, audiences, and contexts that apply to the work. Strategies for revising include:

Components:

- E4b.1:** adding or deleting details;
- E4b.2:** adding or deleting explanations;
- E4b.3:** clarifying difficult passages;
- E4b.4:** rearranging words, sentences, and paragraphs to improve or clarify meaning;
- E4b.5:** sharpening the focus;
- E4b.6:** reconsidering the organizational structure.

Examples:

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of analyzing and revising work include:

- *Incorporate into revised drafts, as appropriate, suggestions taken from critiques made by peers and teachers.*
- *Produce a series of distinctly different drafts that result in a polished piece of writing or a presentation.*
- *Describe the reasons for stylistic choices made as a writer or presenter.*
- *Critique the writing or oral presentation of a peer.*

Strand:

E5 Literature

Literature consists of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and essays as distinguished from instructional, expository, or journalistic writing.

Standards:

E5a: The student responds to non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama using interpretive, critical, and evaluative processes; that is, the student:

Components:

- E5a.1:** identifies recurring themes across works;
- E5a.2:** interprets the impact of authors' decisions regarding word choice and content, and literary elements;
- E5a.3:** identifies the characteristics of literary forms and genres;

- E5a.4:** evaluates literary merit;
- E5a.5:** identifies the effect of point of view;
- E5a.6:** analyzes the reasons for character's actions, taking into account the situation and basic motivation of the character;
- E5a.7:** identifies stereotypical characters as opposed to fully developed characters;
- E5a.8:** identifies the effect of literary devices such as figurative language, allusion, diction, dialogue, and description;
- E5a.9:** makes inferences and draws conclusions about fictional and non-fictional contexts, events, characters, settings and themes.

Examples:

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of responding to literature include:

- *Analyze stereotypical characters in a popular television production.*
- *Examine themes in the work (fiction or non-fiction) of one popular young-adult author.*
- *Compare the literary merits of two or more short stories, biographies of one individual, novels, or plays.*
- *Evaluate the effect of literary devices in a number of poems by one author or poems on a common topic.*
- *Write or perform a skit based on a story.*
- *Write a parody.*
- *Speculate about point of view in a work read by the class.*

Standard:

E5b: The student produces work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre.

Examples:

Examples of literary genres include:

- *A personal essay.*
- *A short story.*
- *A short play.*
- *A poem.*
- *A vignette.*

