

Literature and Language 8B

Literature and Language 8B—like the first semester course—parallels English 9B. Both courses center on the study of language and literature as the vehicle of creative and critical thought that enables students to think about and understand the world. The focus shifts in second semester to a careful study of how professional writers create stories and use language in thoughtful and deliberate ways. Students read short stories, novels, nonfiction, drama, and poetry and explore how writers use the same techniques students have practiced in their own writing. Through careful reading of both print and non-print texts, students search for understanding and sometimes learn to be comfortable with ambiguity in a world of people who have both common and diverse experiences.

Students engage in the study of language and literature through three six-week units. In Unit 1—Literature as Craft—students read short stories and narrative fiction to explore how authors construct texts in deliberate ways to give life to their stories. In Unit 2—Literature in Context—students read historical narratives, nonfiction, and essays to examine how social and historical forces play a role in shaping an author’s work. In Unit 3—Literature as Art—students read drama and poetry to consider how audiences respond to imaginative language and intense expression in print texts and live performances. Throughout the semester, students have opportunities to choose some texts based on their own interests and curiosities, to imitate the techniques of the writers they study, and to continue to hone their writing skills. As in Writing and Language 8A, the course is designed to help students realize the promise of language and literature for their own authentic purposes.

A Note About This Guide:

This document is intended as a resource and supplement for the English 8 course page in the Instruction Center. It contains hyperlinks to webpages both inside and outside MCPS. It will be updated and revised frequently, with all updates announced through the English Forum. While this document may certainly be printed, it is perhaps better used electronically, to take advantage of its dynamic nature. Please note the date on the title page to ensure that you have the most up-to-date version.

COMMON TASKS — ENGLISH 8B

Throughout the three units the focus should be to engage students in creative and critical thinking and to provide opportunities to practice the skills they need to be literate adults. At the end of the course and beyond, students should remember more than the stories they have enjoyed reading: They should understand the importance of being careful readers, thinkers, and writers in a world where less careful readers are vulnerable.

While this is a literature course, teachers should first consider what literature will best prepare students to engage with language no matter what they read. Teachers should plan instruction with their grade level team to ensure that students read a broad range of diverse texts and authors to prepare for the common tasks. The primary goal of each task is to ensure that students transfer important concepts and skills when they encounter new and unfamiliar texts.

Unit 1: Literature as Craft

Rewrite a passage from a different point of view.

Analyze the significance of a character for the work as a whole.

Unit 2: Literature in Context

Explain how a work draws on themes or patterns from literature or history.

Research a nonfiction story or passage, explain the context, and deliver an interpretive reading.

Unit 3: Literature as Art

Present a creative interpretation of a scene to demonstrate your understanding of the playwright's intent.

Write an analysis of how the language of a poem contributes to its meaning or purpose.

Unit 1: Literature as Craft

Unit 1 provides the transition between Writing and Language 8A and Literature and Language 8B. Just as students make choices in their own writing, they now consider more carefully the choices the authors make in the works they read. Students read short stories and narrative fiction to explore how authors shape their texts in deliberate ways to give life to their stories.

This unit focuses on all the elements that go into crafting a good story—compelling characters, a well-chosen setting, complex relationships, colliding desires, and, ultimately, a resolution of conflict that allows the author to imply a truth about human nature or the human

condition. Unit 1 in English 8B gives particular attention to how the author creates characters and uses point of view to create meaning, while in Unit 1 of English 9B students will examine in more depth the elements an author uses to achieve a certain style. Teachers should choose reading selections that illustrate a variety of types of characters and narrators to prepare students for the common tasks.

Enduring Understandings

- Authors use stylistic techniques to give life to their stories.
- The structure of a text contributes to its meaning.
- Authors make deliberate choices to create the effects they want.

Essential Questions

- How do various literary techniques create meaning?
- How do authors vary narrative elements to serve their purposes?
- What factors influence the choices an author makes in a story?

Common Tasks

- [Rewrite a passage from a different point of view.](#)
 - [Analyze the significance of a character for the work as a whole.](#)
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Unit 1 Texts

During the unit students read at least one core text and a robust selection of short stories. Teachers emphasize the craft of each writer, using the text as a vehicle to focus on the Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions of the unit. Once teachers choose a core text, they should choose shorter works that ensure a range of authors that cross gender and culture.

Teachers may consider other works that are appropriate for the objectives of the unit, including non-print texts or essays when appropriate. A literature circle approach should be used at least once during the semester—more often, if possible—to give students choices and provide opportunities for independent reading and group discussion. Texts for literature circles can be chosen from among core texts that are not being used instructionally and from the literature circles list on page 24 of this guide.

Core Texts

Annie John

The Giver

The Hobbit

Oliver Twist

The Pearl

Return to Sender

The Secret Life of Bees

Jamaica Kincaid

Lois Lowry

J.R.R. Tolkien

Charles Dickens

John Steinbeck

Julia Alvarez

Sue Monk Kidd

Recommended Anthologies

Junior Great Books/Great Books Roundtable

The Language of Literature

A Multicultural Reader, Collection One

A Multicultural Reader, Collection Two

Will of the People: Readings in American Democracy

Great Books Foundation

Arthur N. Applebee, et. al.

Rebecca Christian, ed.

Rebecca Burke, ed.

Great Books Foundation

Unit 2: Literature in Context

Unit 2 explores how authors' works are shaped by the world in which they live and write. While any great work must stand on its own as a well-crafted story, knowledge of the context in which the work is written enhances the reader's understanding of the author's story and purpose. Though the context is more important in some works than others, no work is written in a vacuum. The author's ideas and motivations for writing are shaped by social and historical forces.

Essential Questions

- How do authors manipulate historical events to get at larger truths?
- What effects can a work of literature have on the present and the future?
- How do historical and social factors affect the creation of a work of literature?

Enduring Understandings

- While literature is not history, stories help readers understand the past.
- Social and historical forces shape an author's work.
- Literature that engages with the issues of its time may lead to social change.

In this unit students read historical narratives, nonfiction, and essays. They continue to analyze the author's craft, but they also explore how works draw on events and issues from history and society—and sometimes how the authors attempt to bring about change in their world of influence through the stories they tell. Students research and read texts related to the subject of the core text, including some primary documents when possible, to gain a fuller understanding of the significance of literature and language in the world.

Common Tasks

[Explain how a work draws on themes or patterns from literature or history.](#)

[Research a nonfiction story or passage, explain the context, and deliver an interpretive reading.](#)

Unit 2 Texts

During the unit students read at least one core text and a selection of nonfiction. Teachers emphasize the way a work is shaped by the context in which it is written, using the text as a vehicle to focus on the Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions of the unit. Teachers may consider other works that are appropriate for the objectives of the unit, including non-print texts or essays when appropriate. A literature circle approach should be used at least once during the semester—more often, if possible—to give students choices and provide opportunities for independent reading and group discussion. Texts for literature circles can be chosen from among core texts that are not being used instructionally and from the literature circles list on page 24 of this guide.

Core Texts

<i>Animal Farm</i>	George Orwell
<i>Chasing Lincoln’s Killer</i>	James Swanson
<i>Lafayette and the American Revolution</i>	Russell Freedman
<i>The Light in the Forest</i>	Conrad Richter
<i>The Narrative Life of Frederick Douglass</i>	Frederick Douglass
<i>Out of the Dust</i>	Karen Hesse
<i>The Prince and the Pauper</i>	Mark Twain

Recommended Anthologies

<i>Junior Great Books/Great Books Roundtable</i>	Great Books Foundation
<i>The Language of Literature</i>	Arthur N. Applebee, et. al.
<i>A Multicultural Reader, Collection One</i>	Rebecca Christian, ed.
<i>A Multicultural Reader, Collection Two</i>	Rebecca Burke, ed.
<i>Will of the People: Readings in American Democracy</i>	Great Books Foundation

Unit 3: Literature as Art

In Unit 3 students consider what makes an author’s work rise above writing that is intended primarily for entertainment to a level that is acknowledged as art. These lasting works have a creativity, a wisdom, a power that transcend time and place. These works move readers, both intellectually and emotionally, so they gain a place of permanence in the literary canon, calling readers to return to them again and again—to participate in the experience, to consider the truths of those who came before us.

Enduring Understandings

- The lyric or dramatic poet uses incisive language to express ideas and emotions.
- Poetry and drama depend on sound and metaphor to create meaning.
- Performance adds an interpretive dimension to both poetic and dramatic texts.

Essential Questions

- How do readers respond to the imaginative language and intense expression of poetry?
- How do sound techniques and metaphorical language contribute to meaning?
- How is the written text transformed when it is performed?

While many of the works read during the previous units are considered art, the works in this unit spring from early genres that first lured audiences to story and song. Poetry and drama came to us in the oral tradition, carried by bards who recited or sang the stories to audiences of all social classes. Because poetry and drama began in the oral tradition, the sound of the language was key in evoking a response in the audience. Though the printed word has given rise to other genres, poetry and drama still rely on sound, imagery, and metaphor to mesmerize audiences.

Common Tasks

Present a creative interpretation of a scene to demonstrate your understanding of the playwright’s intent.

Write an analysis of how the language of a poem contributes to its meaning or purpose.

Unit 3 Texts

During the unit students read at least one core text and a wide range of poetry. Teachers emphasize the characteristics that set the works in this unit apart from poetry and drama that have a fleeting appeal to audiences, using the text as a vehicle to focus on the Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions of the unit. A literature circle approach could be used during this unit to have students reconsider prose texts that have artistic value and to continue to give students choices and provide opportunities for independent reading and group discussion.

Core Texts

As You Like It

Twelve Angry Men

William Shakespeare

Reginald Rose

Selected Poetry from Anthologies

Recommended Anthologies

Junior Great Books/Great Books Roundtable

The Language of Literature

A Multicultural Reader, Collection One

A Multicultural Reader, Collection Two

Great Books Foundation

Arthur N. Applebee, et. al.

Rebecca Christian, ed.

Rebecca Burke, ed.

Language Conventions

Teachers plan instruction to incorporate language instruction into writing; the goal is for students to think clearly about ways to improve their own writing. Exercises in sentence combining, expansion, and imitation offer ways students can compose more sophisticated and effective sentences. *Separated* and *simulated* instruction may be used to introduce concepts; include *integrated* instruction to ensure that students apply these and other skills in their writing.

Common Core Language Standards for Grade 8

- L.8.1 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.
- L.8.2 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.
- L.8.3 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).
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Teachers should consult the list of [Language Progressive Skills](#) to identify concepts initially taught in earlier grades that are most likely to require review and re-teaching, based on students' needs. The portfolio provides an opportunity to individualize instruction on these skills. The most relevant to improving student writing may include the following:

- Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting fragments and run-ons (L.4.1f).
- Correctly use frequently confused words (L.4.1g).
 - The document [Commonly Confused Words](#), found in the Course Materials section of the Instruction Center course page for English 8B, outlines the expected sequence for teaching and reviewing the most common of these terms. Teachers should address those words identified at grade 8 but also use student writing samples and portfolios to review words that may need further instruction and practice from earlier years.
 - The [words listed for English 8](#), which may appear on second semester formative and final assessments, include the following:

among/between	peace/piece
cite/sight/site	principal/principle
good/well	vary/very
loose/lose	

- Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language (L.6.1e).
 - [Vary sentence patterns](#) for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style (L.6.3a).
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Vocabulary acquisition continues to be a necessary and vital part of the English curriculum. Vocabulary study not only enhances understanding of the writer’s craft—how word choice creates character, defines mood, and sets tone—but also is the key to a richer reading of all texts. Determining meaning and understanding word structure give students the tools to become independent, strategic readers of challenging texts. As students learn about the variety and richness of English, they should be encouraged to use language that is both precise and expressive.

Common Core Language Standards for Grade 8

- L.8.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on *grade 8 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- a) 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.
 - b) Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *precede*, *recede*, *secede*).
 - c) 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.
 - d) 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).
- L.8.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- a) Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
 - b) Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
 - c) Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *bullheaded*, *willful*, *firm*, *persistent*, *resolute*).
- 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.
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Course Terms

The list below is **not** comprehensive; it is intended as a guideline for establishing a foundation of knowledge and common language for instruction. This page lists concepts that students should work with throughout the semester. Also, the categories overlap; while a term may be listed under a particular heading, students may encounter it in several different contexts.

Students should also review and continue to use the terms from Writing and Language 8A as they become effective practitioners and users of domain-appropriate language.

READING AND WRITING

Allusion
 Analysis
 Annotation
 Argument
 Audience
 Characterization
 Close reading
 Complex character
 Connotation
 Context
 Denotation
 Dialogue
 Diction
 Evaluation
 Evidence
 Figurative language
 Hyperbole
 Metaphor
 Personification
 Simile
 Understatement
 Flashback
 Foreshadowing
 Inference
 Irony
 Dramatic
 Situational
 Verbal
 Mood
 Motif
 Multimedia
 Narrator
 Pacing
 Paraphrase

Perspective/point of view

First person
 Third person
 Limited
 Omniscient
 Plot structure
 Exposition
 Inciting incident
 Rising action
 Climax
 Falling action
 Resolution
 Self-reflection
 Sensory imagery
 Setting
 Summary
 Symbol
 Syntax
 Theme
 Thesis
 Tone
 Voice
 Writer's purpose

POETRY

Alliteration
 Free verse
 Meter
 Repetition
 Rhyme
 Rhythm
 Speaker
 Stanza
 Structured verse

DRAMA

Act
 Antagonist
 Aside
 Cinematic elements
 Camera angle
 Film shot
 Conflict
 Dramatic elements
 Scene description
 Stage directions
 Monologue
 Protagonist
 Scene
 Secondary character
 Subtext

LANGUAGE

Active and passive voice
 Ellipsis to indicate an omission
 Moods of verbs (indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, subjunctive)
 Precise language
 Punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) that indicates a pause or break
 Verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives)
 Language Progressive Skills

English 8 Literature Circles Texts

The works listed below are all approved for English 8, but most do not need the same level of instructional support as the core texts. Throughout the year, consider giving students the opportunity to read some of these works independently and to use them for student-guided discussion. During the Writing and Language course first semester, such a literature circles approach would give students more models for their own writing.

<i>Across Five Aprils</i>Irene Hunt	<i>Life as We Knew It</i>Susan Beth Pfeffer
<i>Beauty</i>Robin McKinley	<i>The Mostly True Adventures.... Rodman Philbrick of Homer P. Figg</i>
<i>Brian’s Song</i> William Blinn	<i>Mother Jones: The Most..... Elliott Gorn Dangerous Woman in America</i>
<i>Canyons</i>Gary Paulsen	<i>My Brother Sam.....James Lincoln Collier Is Dead</i> and Christopher Collier
<i>Chains</i>Laurie Halse Anderson	<i>Nation</i> Terry Pratchett
<i>Chinese Cinderella</i> Adeline Yen Mah	<i>Of Nightingales That Weep.. Katherine Paterson</i>
<i>The Contender</i>Robert Lipsyte	<i>Pedro’s Journal</i>Pam Conrad
<i>Cuba 15</i>Nancy Osa	<i>The Pigman</i> Paul Zindel
<i>Deathwatch</i>Robb White	<i>Red Moon at Sharpsburg</i>Rosemary Wells
<i>Dacey’s Song</i> Cynthia Voigt	<i>The Red Pony</i> John Steinbeck
<i>The Girl Who Owned a City</i> O. T. Nelson	<i>The River Between Us</i> Richard Peck
<i>The Good Earth</i> Pearl Buck	<i>The Road to Memphis</i> Mildred Taylor
<i>Growing Up</i>Susan Campbell Bartoletti <i>in Coal Country</i>	<i>Ship Breaker</i> Paolo Bacigalupi
<i>Harriet Tubman: Conductor on</i> Ann Petry <i>the Underground Railroad</i>	<i>Solitary Blue</i> Cynthia Voigt
<i>Herland</i>Charlotte Perkins Gilman	<i>Thunder Rolling</i> Scott O’Dell and <i>in the Mountains</i> Elizabeth Hall
<i>Homecoming</i> Cynthia Voigt	<i>Treasure Island</i>Robert Louis Stevenson
<i>House of Dies Drear</i>Virginia Hamilton	<i>Trouble</i>Gary D. Schmidt
<i>The House of the Scorpion</i> Nancy Farmer	<i>Uglies</i> Scott Westerfeld
<i>I Heard the Owl Call My Name.</i> Margaret Craven	<i>Z for Zachariah</i> Robert C. O’Brien
<i>Jane Eyre</i>Charlotte Brontë	
<i>Kim/Kimi</i>Irwin Hadley	