

Eighth Grade Communication Arts

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Grade 8 Communication Arts is designed to further develop the students' interest and competency in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and information literacy. The major emphasis of this course is on the implementation of the writing process to further develop their composition skills. In addition to writing for a variety of purposes and audiences, the students will be given opportunities to develop skills and knowledge in reading literature for understanding and enjoyment. An emphasis is also placed on study skills and critical thinking.

MAJOR INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

READING

Goal 1: Develop and apply skills and strategies to the reading process

Objectives:

Fluency: Read grade-level instructional text

- a) with fluency: accuracy and expression
- b) adjusting reading rate to difficulty and type of text

Vocabulary: Develop vocabulary through text, using

- a) roots and affixes
- b) context clues
- c) glossary, dictionary, thesaurus, and online resources

Pre-Reading: Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension

- a) access prior knowledge
- b) preview
- c) predict with evidence
- d) question
- e) set a purpose and rate for reading
- f) infer genre

During Reading: During reading, utilize strategies to

- a) determine meaning of unknown words
- b) self-monitor comprehension
- c) question to clarify
- d) infer
- e) visualize
- f) paraphrase
- g) summarize
- h) identify and describe genre
- i) identify author's use of 6+1 Traits of Writing[®]: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Presentation

Post-Reading: Apply post-reading skills to comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate text

- a) identify and explain the relationship between the main idea and supporting details
- b) question to clarify
- c) reflect
- d) analyze
- e) identify and describe genre
- f) draw conclusions
- g) summarize
- h) paraphrase
- i) evaluate author's use of 6+1 Traits of Writing[®]: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Presentation

Making Connections: Compare, contrast and analyze connections

- a) text-to-text (information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works)
- b) text-to-self (text ideas and own experiences)
- c) text-to-world (text ideas and the world by identifying how literature reflects a culture and historic time frame)

Purpose for Reading: Develop habits of reading

- a) by selecting appropriate level materials for independent reading
- b) through sustained independent reading

Goal 2: Develop and apply skills and strategies to comprehend, analyze and evaluate fiction, poetry and drama from a variety of cultures and times

Objectives:

Text Features: Use grade level text to

- a) interpret and analyze information in title
- b) recognize and interpret the text features of fiction, poetry and drama

Literary Techniques: Identify and explain literary techniques, in text emphasizing

- a) jargon
- b) dialect
- c) slang
- d) symbolism
- e) analyze literary techniques previously introduced (e.g. simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration, hyperbole, propaganda, imagery)

Literary Elements: Use details from text(s) to

- a) demonstrate comprehension skills previously introduced
- b) identify and explain mood, flashback and theme
- c) analyze point of view
- d) determine how an incident foreshadows a future event
- e) interpret behaviors, motives, and consequences of characters' actions
- f) evaluate problem-solving processes of characters
- g) evaluate effectiveness of solutions

Goal 3: Develop and apply skills and strategies to comprehend, analyze and evaluate nonfiction (such as biographies, newspapers, technical manuals) from a variety of cultures and times

Objectives:

Text Features: Explain, analyze and evaluate the author's use of text features to clarify meaning

Literary Techniques: Identify and explain literary techniques and figurative language in nonfiction text, emphasizing

- a) jargon
- b) dialect
- c) slang

Text Structures: Use details from text to

- a) evaluate adequacy of evidence presented by author
- b) determine author's purpose based on text analysis
- c) analyze the text for word choice and connotation, organizational effectiveness, accuracy of information, comparison and contrast, determining the importance of information
- d) analyze the text to compare and contrast, determine importance of information, determine authors' viewpoints
- e) identify problem-solving processes and explain effectiveness of solutions
- f) analyze two or more texts

Understanding Directions: Read and follow multi-step directions to complete a complex task

WRITING

Goal 1: Apply a writing process in composing text

Objectives:

Writing Process: Follow a writing process to

- a) use appropriate prewriting strategies
- b) generate a draft using 6+1 traits
- c) reread, revise for audience and purpose, ideas and content, organization and sentence structure, and word choice
- d) edit for conventions (W2E)
- e) share writing

Goal 2: Compose well-developed text

Objectives:

Audience and Purpose: Compose text

- a) showing awareness of audience
- b) choosing a form and point of view appropriate to purpose and audience

Ideas and Content: Compose text with

- a) strong, controlling idea
- b) relevant, specific details
- c) complex ideas
- d) freshness of thought

Organization and Sentence Structure: Compose text with

- a) an effective beginning, middle, and end
- b) a logical order
- c) effective paragraphing
- d) a variety of sentence structures, including compound-complex sentences
- e) cohesive devices, especially transitions (e.g. repetition, pronoun, antecedent and parallel structure)

Word Choice: Compose text using

- a) precise and vivid language
- b) writing techniques such as figurative language, sensory detail, and purposeful dialogue

Conventions: In written text

- a) use conventions of capitalization
- b) use colon to introduce lists
- c) use correct pronoun case
- d) use dictionary, spell-check and other resources to edit for correct spelling

Goal 3: Write effectively in various forms and types of writing

Objectives:

Forms/Types/Modes of Writing: Compose a variety of texts

- a) using narrative, descriptive, expository, and/or persuasive features
- b) in various formats including workplace communication (e.g. business letter with a correctly addressed envelope, email communication)
- c) including a summary
- d) responding to literature

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Goal 1: Develop and apply effective listening skills and strategies

Objectives:

Purpose for Listening: Listen

- a) for enjoyment
- b) for information
- c) for directions
- d) use clarifying strategies for understanding (e.g. questioning, summarizing and paraphrasing)
- e) recognize how colloquialisms and jargon reflect context, regions and cultures

Listening Behavior: Use active listening behaviors (e.g., ask questions of speaker and use appropriate body language and facial expressions to indicate agreement, disagreement, or confusion)

Goal 2: Develop and apply effective speaking skills and strategies for various audiences and purposes

Objectives:

Discussion and Presentation: In discussions and presentations,

- a) use appropriate body language
- b) incorporate media or technology
- c) respond to questions

Giving Directions: Give clear and concise multi-step oral directions to complete a complex task

INFORMATION LITERACY

Goal 1: Develop and apply effective research process skills to gather, analyze, and evaluate information

Objectives:

Research Plan: Develop a research plan to guide investigation and research of focus questions

Acquire Information: Locate and use primary and secondary sources to

- a) investigate research topics
- b) acquire relevant information
- c) evaluate reliability of information

Record Information: Record relevant information using a self-selected note-taking organizational strategy

Sources Consulted: Document research sources using a given citation format

Goal 2: Develop and apply effective skills and strategies to analyze and evaluate oral and visual media

Objective:

Media Messages: Analyze and synthesize two or more messages conveyed in various media (e.g., videos, pictures, web-sites, artwork, plays, and/or news programs)

Technology: Use technology sources and devices to facilitate learning