

READINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Eighth Grade Literacy Curriculum

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I. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

The Readington School District middle school literacy program provides a balanced instructional approach which includes study of authentic and rich literature, and experience and practice in effective writing traits within a workshop approach. By the time our students are in eighth grade they are able to handle independently difficult texts. Students will focus on reading texts in the 6-8 grade band level (70 percent) independently as well as sustained practice with texts in the 9-10 grade band level as “stretch” texts (30 percent), which will require scaffolding by teachers. Students will read a wide variety of genres; narratives, dramas, poetry, and informational text. At this grade level students will read subgenres of adventure stories, biographies, memoirs, historical fiction, mysteries, folktales, legends, fables, tall tales, myths, fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction, and graphic novels. Students will be exposed to dramas at this level that include one-act and multi-act plays both as text and as film. Poetry in the form of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free verse, odes, ballads, and epics will be read. At this level, students will read expository as well as argument in the form of essays, opinion pieces as well as other documents and digital media sources on a range of topics.

In writers workshop students focus on specific text types: narrative, informative and explanatory text, and argument. In the study of vocabulary students focus both on understanding words and their nuances and on acquiring new words through conversation and reading and by being taught them directly. Students will grow to understand the proper meanings of words, with the means (context, word analysis, and so on) so that they can select words based on the situation. Our curriculum is designed to be responsive to the developmental stages. Our differentiated workshop approach allows students to be engaged with reading and writing experiences appropriate to their point in development, and our teachers assess students at regular intervals to inform their instructional decisions. Instruction focuses on assisting students to build independence as readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and language users. Students will build a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with words of quality and substance. They will respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.

II. COMPONENTS OF BALANCED LITERACY

The components of a successful balanced literacy program in the middle school setting include the following:

- Reading Workshop
- Writing Workshop
- Word Study/Vocabulary Instruction

Reading Workshop: (Approximately 40 minutes daily)

The reading workshop is one component of a balanced literacy program. The reading workshop is comprised of four parts; the mini-lesson, independent reading time with conferring, a mid-workshop teaching point, and finally a teaching share, partnership, or book club discussions.

Mini-Lesson- The mini lesson takes place at the beginning of the reading workshop and should last about 10 minutes (no longer than 15). Students should be gathered at a central location for the mini-lesson. During this time, the teacher clearly states the teaching point for that lesson. The teacher then models the skill or strategy they are teaching and involves the students in thinking with them as the teacher demonstrates exactly what they want students to learn to do as readers. Students then have an opportunity to practice the skill or strategy during the mini-lesson, while receiving support. Later, readers will draw on this strategy independently, as needed. Finally, the students are given a chance to practice the skill or strategy while still gathered together.

Student Independent Reading Time with Conferring and Small Group Work- In most forty-five minute reading workshops, teachers divide the work time between private time, when students read quietly to themselves, (20 min.) and partner time, when students meet to talk with their reading partners (5-10 min.) or book clubs (5-10 min.). After the mini-lesson students read self-selected just-right books that match the specified unit of study being studied. Students read privately and quietly while the teacher moves around the classroom, conferring with individuals, or meeting with partnerships or clubs. The teacher might also be leading a strategy small group reading lessons during this time.

Mid-Workshop Teaching Point- Many times as teachers are conferring with students, they notice that there is either a common difficulty students are having or that most students seem to grasp the concept and are ready to move on. Thus, the mid-workshop teaching point can be used either to clarify confusion, or to expand upon a strategy to push students to go further in their reading. It can also allow us to correct misconceptions, to remind students of a previous day's lesson that has special

relevance, to instruct students about their upcoming partner work, or to rally readers to work harder or longer. The mid-workshop teaching point is most often decided during the workshop and comes as a result of teacher observation. This should take no more than few minutes, during which students generally stay in their reading spots rather than reconvene in the meeting area.

Teaching Share/Partnerships/Book Clubs- At the end of a workshop, after reading time, the teacher takes a couple minutes to wrap up the day’s work with a teaching share. Many times the point a teacher makes in the share comes from specific student work from that days’ workshop. It’s used to share ways in which students have incorporated that day’s mini-lesson into their work and to share their new insights or discoveries. The teacher sometime retells a conference or asks a student to share his or her reading work. The share should last no more than a few minutes. This is also the time where students can meet in their partnerships or book clubs to discuss the reading work they have been doing (anywhere from 5-15 minutes).

Small Group Instruction- Small group reading instruction fits into the reading workshop curriculum framework. Often as students read, teachers confer with a couple of readers and them meet with a small group. In some classrooms, however, teachers have a separate time blocked for additional work with small groups of readers.

It’s important that small group work not substitute for reading workshop, but instead, offer additional opportunities for reading and instruction. One format for small group instruction in the middle school grades is in the form of book clubs.

Book Clubs- Book clubs in the middle school setting involve four or five readers who talk across a whole line of books. This structure allows a teacher to teach reading skills while small groups of students read, talk, and write about shared texts. Book clubs generally meet about two times a week, sometimes more, to discuss a text they are reading in sync with one another, usually about 15-20 minutes at a time. Since the conversation relies heavily on students having read to the same point in their texts, students assign themselves several chapters a night. Book clubs provide teachers with another opportunity to push readers to read more. Usually there is an expectation that club members will prepare for conversations by doing some writing about the issue that is at the forefront of the conversation. Members of any one club need to be fairly well-matched by reading level. The group profits if the group members reflect diversity of gender and ethnicity.

Interactive Read Aloud- Read aloud in 8th grade consists of mentor texts that are selected by the teacher in order to demonstrate a reading strategy. Teachers schedule an “anchor experience” that is an interactive read aloud to introduce a series of lessons or work. Short texts often work well for these read alouds, or excerpts that are self-contained enough to illustrate and prompt for good reading and interpretation. During this time, students discuss their thoughts and ideas about the text, either as a group or in a partnership. These partnerships may be informal (“turn to your neighbor”) or longer-lasting. When choosing read aloud texts, teacher aim to include a range of levels, genres, tones, and authors. Often the read aloud text is integral to many mini-lessons within a unit of study. The interactive read-aloud lessons provide instruction for students in reading strategies; thinking about the text, questioning, content, text type, purpose, and genre characteristics are just a few.

Close Reading- Another method of read aloud is to do a close reading session. Students do not do close reading all the time, but rather when the teacher wants them to closely examine the specific strategies of a writer or to mull over and rethink what a text is saying to them as a reader. In 8th grade close readings are often done as a class on a poem, primary document, book, article, etc. that is central to the theme of a unit. Teachers prompt students to look closely at one specific text, and connect the work with the larger work of studying the author’s craft.

A suggested schedule for an 80 block of literacy; 40 minutes in Readers Workshop is as follows:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Read-Aloud and Accountable Talk (about 20 minutes)	Mini-lesson (about 10 min)	Read-Aloud and Accountable Talk (about 20 min)	Mini-lesson (about 10 min)	Independent Reading (about 45 min; 10 minute mini lesson and 35 minutes reading)
Independent Reading (about 25 minutes)	Independent Reading (about 30 minutes)	Independent Reading (about 25 min)	Independent Reading (about 30 min)	Small-Group Work (about 10 minutes)
	Share and/or Partner Talk (about 5 min)		Share and/or Partner Talk (about 5 min)	

Writing Workshop: (Approximately 40 minutes daily)

Writing for different purposes in different forms for different audiences is something eighth graders need to be prepared to do. To understand what it means to write well students need time to study the art of writing and the time to write. Having a writing

workshop will afford students both of these things. Just like reading workshop, the writing workshop is comprised of 4 parts. It begins with a mini-lesson and is followed by independent writing within a specific genre of writing. During this time students write about self-selected topics as the teacher conferences or pulls together small groups of writers who need the same type of support. At times the teacher meets with individual students. At the end of the writing workshop, there is a teaching share led by the teacher, which often sets up partnership sharing. The teacher often stops conferencing time, mid-workshop teaching point, and a teaching share.

Mini-Lesson- The mini lesson takes place at the beginning of the writing workshop and should last about 10 minutes (no longer than 15). During this time, the teachers clearly state the teaching point for that day. The teacher then models the skill or strategy they are teaching through his/her own writing. Often times a mini-lesson will include a close reading using a mentor text in order to focus on a single skill or strategy. Teachers will model the skill or strategy and guide students as they practice the skill or strategy together. Modeled writing should be written 70% of the time using a topic/scenario that is relevant to the age of the student and 30% of the time using a topic/scenario that is relevant to the age of the teacher. For example, in 8th grade teachers are modeling their own writing with topics that are relevant, and in the moment for 8th graders. In addition, anchor charts are often created as a tool to further model the teaching point. Finally, the students are given a chance to practice the skill or strategy in their own independent writing.

Independent Writing Time/Conferring- At this time, students are working independently, most often practicing the skill or strategy that has been taught in that days' mini-lesson. During this time, the teacher is conferencing with students about the work they are doing as writers. This is also time for small group strategy lessons.

Mid-Workshop Teaching Point- Many times as teachers are conferring with students, they notice that there is either a common difficulty students are having, or that most students seem to grasp the concept and are ready to move on. Thus, the mid-workshop teaching point can be used either to clarify confusion, or to expand upon a strategy to push students to go further in their writing. The mid-workshop teaching point is most often decided during the workshop and comes as a result of teacher observation. This should take no more than 5 minutes.

Share/Partnerships - At the end of a workshop, the teacher takes a couple minutes to wrap up the day's work with a teaching share. Many times the point a teacher makes in the share comes from specific student work from that days' workshop. The share should last no more than 5 minutes. This is also the time where students can meet in their partnerships to discuss the work they are doing as writers.

Interactive Read-Alouds – Units of study sometimes begin with immersion using picture books or text excerpts as a strategy tool. Interactive read-aloud lessons provide writers with models of fluent reading, thinking about a text, questioning, content, text type, purpose, and genre characteristics.

A suggested schedule for an 80 block of literacy; 40 minutes in Writers Workshop is as follows:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Read-Aloud and Accountable Talk (about 20 minutes)	Mini-lesson (about 10 min)	Read-Aloud and Accountable Talk (about 20 min)	Mini-lesson (about 10 min)	Independent Writing (about 30 min; about 30 minutes total; 10 minute mini lesson and 20 minutes of writing)
Writing About Reading (about 25 minutes)	Independent Writing (about 30 minutes total; 10 minute mini lesson and 20 minutes of writing)	Writing About Reading (about 25 min)	Independent Writing (about 30 minutes total; 10 minute mini lesson and 20 minutes of writing)	Small-Group Work (about 10 minutes)
	Share and/or Partner Talk (about 5 min)		Share and/or Partner Talk (about 5 min)	

Vocabulary/Word Study:

Vocabulary instruction is part of a balanced literacy program where vocabulary is focused on and specifically taught. The language arts curriculum in 8th grade encourages the appreciation and curiosity for words and their meanings, as well as direct instruction to help students learn essential academic vocabulary terms used throughout the units of study. Vocabulary instruction is a component for each grade and every level of reader and writer. In grade 8, this instruction can be limited to 15-20 minutes. In 8th grade students continue to make use of a range of strategies to determine and clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words. The repertoire includes considering the word's use in a broader context that includes the content of the paragraph in which the word appears and the overarching structure of the text. Students will develop their abilities to interpret a variety of figurative language found in what they read, verify their inferences with word meanings, and make distinction among words based on connotation. Students will acquire new words through interactive language use,

including informal talk, discussion, and responding to text as well as being taught words directly. This includes a continuing focus on “Tier 2” word and phrases (those that most commonly appear in spoken language), “Tier 3” words and phrases (those that are specific and important to particular disciplines). It is important for word study and vocabulary development to transfer into students’ independent reading and writing. To do this, teacher coach students to draw on what they’ve learned during word study as they read or write on their own.

An alternative readers/writers workshop schedule for an 80-85 minutes block of literacy while incorporating time for vocabulary/word study instruction is as follows:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
30 minutes Extended Read Aloud with Whole Class Discussion	10 minute mini-lesson	30 minutes Extended Read Aloud with Whole Class Discussion	10 minutes mini-lesson	10 minutes mini-lesson
30 minutes Independent Reading	30 Minutes Independent Reading	25 minutes Independent Reading	25 Minutes Independent Reading	25 Minutes Independent Reading
15 minutes Writing about Reading	35 minutes Writing (10 minute mini lesson and 25 minutes of writing)	20 minutes Writing about Reading	40 minutes Writing (10 minute mini lesson and 25 minutes of writing)	40 minutes Writing (10 minute mini lesson and 25 minutes of writing)
5-10 minutes Vocabulary/Word Exploration	5-10 minutes Vocabulary/Word Exploration	5-10 minutes Vocabulary/Word Exploration	10 minutes Vocabulary/Word Exploration	10 minutes Vocabulary/Word Exploration

III. GOALS (Linked to Core Curriculum Content Standards)

Reading Standards for Reading Literature:

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5

Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6

Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.7

Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.8

(RL.8.8 not applicable to literature)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.9

Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Reading Standards for Reading Informational Text:

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.3

Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.5

Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.7

Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.8

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.9

Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Writing Standards:

Text Types and Purposes:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.A

Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.B

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CCSS.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.A

Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.B

Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.C

Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.E

Establish and maintain a formal style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.F

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

CCSS.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.A

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.B

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.C

Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.D

Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.E

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.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. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade [8](#) here.)

CCSS.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.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

CCSS.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.

CCSS.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9.A

Apply *grade 8 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., "Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new").

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9.B

Apply *grade 8 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced").

Range of Writing:

CCSS.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.

Speaking and Listening Standards:

Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.B

Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.C

Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.D

Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

CCSS.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.3

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

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.5

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 8 Language standards 1 and 3 [here](#) for specific expectations.)

Language Standards:

Conventions of Standard English:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.1

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.1.A

Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.1.B

Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.1.C

Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.1.D

Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.*

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.2

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.2.A

Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.2.B

Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.2.C

Spell correctly.

Knowledge of Language:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.3

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.3.A

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).

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4.B

Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *precede, recede, secede*).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4.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).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5.A

Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5.B

Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5.C

Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute*).

CCSS.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.

IV. ASSESSMENT

Student learning will be assessed through:

- Student/ teacher conferences
 - One-to-one writing and reading conferences are especially important to assess where writers and readers are in their learning. Teachers will meet with students to provide teaching opportunities. Watch with a record sheet in hand, and if children do something you regard as significant to the unit, make a note of it. If you teach a child a particular skill or strategy then record that teaching point.
 - Conferring with a writer always begins with a teacher pulling alongside a writer and asking, “What are you working on as a writer?” and “What are you trying to do?” and “What are you planning to do next?” (Calkins)
 - When conferring with a reader a teacher sits alongside a reader and reads over the shoulder of the student for a few seconds then asks, “Tell me about what you’re reading” or “How’s it going today?” or “What are you working on? Show me a place in the text where you tried this” or “What can I help you with? Is there anything you want help with?” or “Can you tell me some of the thinking you recorded on post-its or in your notebook? Will you walk me through some of the thinking you have been doing?” or “Can you read aloud from where you were a bit?” Any of these starting questions are a great beginning in order to research a little about the reader. Teachers then decide what to teach, compliment the reader, and teach a tip to the reader that will help them as a reader, not just with the book, then link the teaching point to what the student is reading.
 - Teachers generally use some type of system to record notes about readers, either in their own readers notebook, a journal, or an electronic device. These anecdotal notes provide evidence needed for upcoming conferences.
- Reading response journals/Readers Notebooks
- Reading Logs
 - Reading pace and stamina- Students will *reflect* on their statistics as a reader, keeping track of their reading pace and stamina. “How is the reading going for me? What conditions seem to help me get the most reading done? What fix-up strategies might I use to improve my reading?”
 - Students should be able to read approximately three-quarters of a page to a page per minute, a little less when the pages become denser. In grade 8 students should read between 235-270 words per minute to be considered in the average range of adequate reading rate. (Harris and Sipay, 1990)
- Contributions to book clubs
- Teacher’s College Reading Level Assessment conducted at least three times a year for students that are below benchmark at the beginning of 8th grade. A student that is on reading benchmark for comprehension, pace, and accuracy at the beginning of 8th grade does not need to have a running record in order to assess reading skills, other methods may be utilized.
- Teacher’s College Scored Common Assessment Student Writings in Narrative, Argument and Information
- Writing samples and student writing portfolios
- Student presentations
- Writer’s Notebooks
- Student Performance Checklists
- Student self-reflection
- Standards Based Writing Rubrics
- Writing Pathways Performance Assessments
- Learning Progressions
 - Students will collect moments and experiment with writing craft. They’ll rehearse stories, gather research, reflect, and make plans. Some entries are evaluated using a rubric. In class students will collect towards a genre of study, such as in this unit of memoir.
- Rubrics
 - Used to evaluate the published piece in a unit of study

V. SCOPE AND SEQUENCE (See details of units of study on subsequent pages.)

	Writer’s Workshop	Reader’s Workshop
Unit 1	Personal Essay Crafting Powerful Life Stories- Writing to Reflect Experience and Suggest Thematic Connections September (3-4 weeks)	Memoir (September 3-4 weeks)

Unit 2	Writing Investigative Journalism ~ (6 weeks October/November)	Non-Fiction Reading (Expository and Narrative Non-Fiction & Journal Articles) (6 weeks October/November)
Unit 3	Historical Fiction: Weaving Together Fact and Fiction and/or Literary Essay (4 weeks November/December)	Historical Fiction (4 weeks November/December)
Unit 4	Argument Research Writing (Position Paper) January (3-4 weeks)	Shared Reading January (3-4 weeks)
Unit 5	Writing Prompted Essays for the PARCC Exam (PARCC Test Prep) February (2-3 weeks)	Reading Test Preparation for the PARCC Exam (PARCC Test Prep) February (2-3 weeks)
Unit 6	Science Fiction Narratives 3-4 weeks March/April	Science Fiction & Short Stories March/April (3-4 weeks)
Unit 7	Literary Analysis through Essays April (4-6 weeks)	Children of War (April 4-6 weeks)
Unit 8	Writing Powerful Speeches, This I Believe May/June (4 weeks May/June)	Changing the World with Words: Powerful Speeches and Their Effects on History (4 weeks May/June)

8th GRADE READING
Readers Workshop: Unit 1 Memoir (3-4 weeks September)
First Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: The unit will be approximately 3-4 weeks long and includes an introduction to the course as well as lessons on the Memoir genre. Students will create a series of vignettes around topics or themes of their lives. Key topics of this unit will include ways writers develop and organize ideas, use concrete and appropriate details, and employ proper conventions. The first part of the unit will be on helping students to write with volume—both in their writing notebooks and in essays. They will collect entries and idea-based writing. Students will research the structure of memoir and notice that there are different forms of memoir; essay-like structure, list-like structure, and narrative with reflection. This unit will ask students to transfer what they already know about opinion and narrative writing to form a bridge between the two.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration • Transitioning • Incorporating narrative elements • Writing with Reflection and Purpose • Synthesis of events and moments • Notice the qualities of Memoir • Ways to collect and develop ideas • How to choose a writing structure • How to craft leads and conclusions • How to find a writing territory or universal theme • Ways to revise for organization of ideas • Ways to edit for conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting books to read that are appropriate for the student as a reader. • Pay attention to characters and to story elements in stories read. • Envision • Predict • Develop theories • Think across texts • Monitor for comprehension • Strategies for easy-to-solve methods when the book gets hard. • Social book clubs • Reading partnerships • Literary conversations • Keeping track of reading using sustainable adult systems • Creating a reading life • Analyzing a story • Keeping track of complex story lines and various characters • Synthesizing narrative lines in order to retell a story to a partner • Investigate themes that arise in books 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>House on Mango Street</u> • <u>Growing Up</u> by Russell Baker • <u>Big Russ and Me</u> by Tim Russet • Excerpt from <u>Black Boy</u> by Richard Wright • <u>Chicken Soup for the Writer’s Soul</u> by Canfield, Hansen, and Gardner • <u>Walking on the Boundaries of Change</u> by Sara Holbrook • <u>Crow Call</u> by Lois Lowry • <u>Writing Down the Bones Freeing the Writer Within</u> by Natalie Goldberg • <u>How Reading Changed My Life</u> by Anna Quindlen • <u>The Same Sky</u> by Naomi Shihab Nye • <u>145th Street: Short Stories</u> by Walter Dean Myers <p>Unit Texts (Texts for students to read in book clubs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Chinese Cinderella</u> (GR Level Z+) (Lexile Level: 960) Honors Only Text • <u>Marley & Me</u> (GR Level: Z) (Lexile 1050) • <u>Tuesdays With Morrie</u> (GR Level: U Lexile Level: 1050) • <u>Knots in My Yo-Yo String</u> (GR Level: U Lexile Level 980) • Memoir Excerpts: <u>Marshfield Dreams: When I was a kid, etc.</u> • <u>Great Essayists’ writings</u> by Joan Didion, Malcolm Gladwell, Barbara Kingsolver • <u>Starting with I</u> published by Youth Communications (essay by an adolescent) • <u>The Struggle to Be Strong</u> by Youth Communications (essay by an adolescent) <p>The following Memoir style fiction books are available in the Leveled Literacy Intervention Gold Kit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Double Double Trouble Trouble</u>

		<p>(Level O)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>The Great Debate</u> (Level Q)• <u>The Robopoet 2000</u> (Level S)• <u>The Great Tug of War</u> (Level M) <p>Teacher Resources: <u>Writing a Life</u> by Katherine Bomer <u>50 Tools for Writers</u> by Roy Peter Clark <u>Crafting Authentic Voice</u> by Tom Romano <u>Boy Writers by Ralph Fletcher</u> <u>Write Like This</u> by Kelly Gallagher <u>Shaping Texts From Essay and Narrative to Memoir</u> by Lucy Calkins</p> <p>Common Assessment: Teachers College Running Record Assessment for any student not on benchmark from the end of the year in 7th grade.</p> <p>Teachers College Running Records (Reading Benchmark: Level Z)</p>
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Readers Workshop Unit 2
Non-Fiction Reading (Expository and Narrative Non-Fiction & Journal Articles)
(6 weeks October/November)
First/Second Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: The unit consists of three bends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Students will learn that journalists discern small dramas around them and shape newscasts to bring the new concisely. Students will be on the lookout for story lines that occur underneath the obvious stream of events. ✓ Students will continue to read non-fiction texts in the form of news articles, periodicals, expository and narrative non-fiction texts, blogs, reports, and on-line reports that will stir readers to action. Students will study how journalists use tension and multiple perspectives to reveal complicated stories. ✓ Students will learn how journalists conduct in-depth research necessary to support a complex piece of investigative journalism. Students will research the context and causes of underlying issues by reading multiple texts on a single issue. They will trace possible implications, collect facts, statistics, and expert quotes to support their stories and read interviews, surveys, and print and digital texts to gather information for their writing. <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text. • Determine a central idea or a text and analyze its development over the course of a text. • Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events. Students will make comparisons, analogies and/or categories. • Introduce a claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize reasons and evidence logically. 	<p>See individual unit plans for non-fiction reading.</p> <p>Readers Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1: Reading like a journalist • Part 2: Reading deeply to study how mentor authors develop action, dialogue, setting and details to tell a compelling true story • Part 3: Researching a topic to discover underlying issues, implications, discover facts, find statistics, and quotes 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Gulp!</u> By Mary Roach • <u>When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Small Pox, AIDS</u> by James Cross Giblin (Caution; sexual content) • <u>Gone A Whaling: The Lure of the Sea and the Hunt for the Great Whale</u> by Jim Murphy (Electronic Text in Library) • <u>Independent Dames</u> by Laurie H. Anderson • <u>Lincoln's Last Days</u> by Bill O'Reilly & J. Zimmerman • <u>Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet Out of Idaho</u> • <u>Guts: The True Story Behind Hatchet and the Brian Books</u> • <u>LeBron's Dream Team: How Five Friends Make History</u> <p>Unit Texts (Texts for students to read in book clubs): (Reading Benchmark: Level Z+)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Omnivore's Dilemma</u> (Lexile 930) (Level Z) • <u>Animal, Vegetable, Miracle</u> (Unleveled) • <u>We are the Weathermakers</u> (Level Z) • <u>Going Blue: A Teen Guide to Saving Our Oceans</u> (Level Y) • <u>Fast Food Nation</u> (Level Z) • <u>Chew on This</u> (Level Y/Z) <p>The following non-fiction books are available in the Leveled Literacy Intervention Gold Kit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Super Silk</u> (Level P) • <u>The Egg: Nature's Perfect Package</u> (Level P) • <u>Glow-in-the-Dark Animals</u> (Level M) • <u>Kangaroos in Trees</u> (Level M) • <u>The Thorny Dragon</u> (level M) • <u>The Amazing Gecko</u> (Level N) • <u>The Rock Garden</u> (Level P)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use words or phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>A Young Hero with a Big Heart: The Story of Ana Dobson</u> (level P) <u>Mission: Dog Rescue</u> (Level P) <u>Stranded! A Marine Mammal Mystery</u> (Level P) <u>Animal Warnings</u> (Level P) <u>The Mystery of Anting</u> (Level P) <u>Alone in the Jungle</u> (Level Q) <u>The Peculiar Platypus</u> (Level Q) <u>Octopus: Escape Artist of the Sea</u> (Level Q) <u>Sapporo: A Snow Sculpture City</u> (Level Q) <u>Snowmobiles: A Life Saving Invention</u> (Level Q) <u>Ice Climbing: The Frozen Challenge</u> (Level Q) <u>Basketball: Changing the Game</u> (Level Q) <u>The Story of Naismith's Game</u> (Level Q) <u>Rescuing Orangutans</u> (Level R) <u>The Heroes of Pea Island</u> (Level R) System <u>The Secret World of Caves</u> (Level R) <u>Geysers</u> (Level R) <u>Shadow Magic: The Ancient Art of Shadow Puppetry</u> (Level R) <u>Amazing Brick Artists</u> (Level R) <u>Accidental Inventions</u> (Level R) <u>Joining Hands with a Village</u> (Level R) <u>Strange Rain</u> (Level R) <u>The Mimic Octopus: A Master of Disguise</u> (Level S) <u>Crabs on the Run</u> (Level S) <u>Hero Rats</u> (Level S) <u>Messages to the World: Art from Cape Dorset</u> (Level T) <u>Jon Brooks: Art from Nature</u> (Level T) <p>Teacher Resources: http://readingandwritingproject.com Core Curriculum Content Standards http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards Visit the website above for common core anchor papers in writing.</p> <p>Assessment: Teachers College Running Record Assessment for any student not on benchmark in September. (Reading Benchmark: Level Z)</p>
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Readers Workshop Unit 3 ~ Historical Fiction
(6 weeks November/December)
Second Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: The study of Historical Fiction allows students to read texts built around a time and place in history that the reader has never inhabited. Readers become entangled in characters whose lives are affected by historical events. The unit includes opportunities for students to tackle complicated texts with their peers. Students will be learning how to build collective interpretations, listen closely to each other, carry ideas across time during book club discussions and across more than one text. During the first part of this unit students will focus on “deep comprehension and synthesis of complex story elements, as well as launching book clubs with high levels of engagement and independence. During the second part of this unit students will focus on interpretation, especially focusing on paying attention to perspective and point of view and on carrying ideas across a text—supporting the Common Core State Standards expectations that students will be able to 1) determine themes or central ideas of texts and how they are conveyed through the particular details and 2) explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.” (Common Core State Standards) During this unit students will be writing about their reading developing ideas and ways to collect and develop their thoughts as a reader and a writer. Students will choose a writing structure, craft leads and conclusions, find a writing territory or universal theme, revise for organization of ideas, and edit for conventions.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerge from the unit as more knowledgeable readers. • Extended confidence in tackling complicated literature • Build collective interpretations • Closely listen to peers in book clubs and engage in collegial discussions, pose and respond to questions with elaboration • Demonstrate multiple perspectives 	<p>See individual unit plans for Historical fiction reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep comprehension and synthesis of complex story elements • Interpretation of text through reader perspective and point of view • Moving across texts to develop readers’ thematic understanding and potential as social activists building on cross-textual analysis • Honors level students will continue with the bends of the unit to focus on reading as a writer and thinking about writer’s craft. • Authors of historical fiction use the past to reveal lessons of the present. • Universal truths about human nature are found in literature. • The historical fiction writers use literary elements to illuminate history. • Analyze historical fiction texts for literary elements • Cite textual evidence • Explain the historical content of a story • Determine how time, place and character develop a perspective • Compare and contrast the historical facts versus the fictional elements in a historical fiction piece • Summarize informational text • Interpreting an essential question and forming a position • Compose an articulate thesis statement • Group related information in a logical order using topic and closing sentence structure • Provide opening and closing sections • Reference direct quotes and integrate appropriately • Use transitional phrases and words 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Other Side</u> by J. Woodson • <u>Pink and Say</u> by Patricia Polacco • <u>Fire in the Streets</u> by Kekla MaGoon • <u>From Slave Ship to Freedom Road</u> • <u>Eleanor Roosevelt, Quiet No More</u> • <u>Promises to Keep</u> • <u>A Wreath for Emmett Till</u> • <u>The Drummer Boy of Shiloh</u> • <u>The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere, John, Paul, George and Ben</u> <p>Unit Texts (Texts for students to read in book clubs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Bomb</u> (GR Level Z) Honors Only • <u>Johnny Tremain</u> (GR Level Z) (Honors Only) • <u>Warriors Don’t Cry</u> (GR Level Z) Honors Only • <u>To Kill a Mockingbird</u> (GR Level Z) Honors Only • <u>Fever 1793</u> (GR Level Z) • <u>The Witch Child</u> (GR Level Z) • <u>Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry</u> (GR Level W) • <u>The Witch of Blackbird Pond</u> (GR Level W) • <u>The Legend of Buddy Bush</u> (GR Unleveled) • <u>The Watsons go to Birmingham</u> (GR Level U) • <u>Chains</u> (GR Level Z) • <u>Forge</u> (GR Level Z) • <u>Mississippi Trial, 1955</u> (GR Level Z+) • <u>The Lions of Little Rock</u> by Kristin Levine (GR Level X) Lexile: 630 • <u>I Survived...</u> (GR Level N) • <u>Bound for Oregon</u> (Level P) • <u>Pedro’s Journal</u> (GR Level Q) • <u>The Cabin Faced West</u> (GR Level R) • <u>Sarah: Plain and tall</u> (GR Level R) • <u>Watson’s Go to Birmingham</u> (GR Level T)

<p>through reflection and paraphrasing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry ideas across time—both across days of their book club and discussions about more than one text. • Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. • Develop comprehension by keeping track of plotlines, unfamiliar characters, and shifts in time and place • Discussion of main character’s problems 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sounder</u> (GR Level T) • <u>Ballad</u> (GR Level T) • <u>Lilly’s Crossing</u> (GR Level S) • <u>Letters from Rifka</u> (GR Level S) • <u>Bud, Not Buddy</u> (GR Level T) • <u>Sadako and the Thousand Paper</u> (GR Level R) • <u>Jar of Dreams</u> (GR Level R) <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various historical images, movie clips, social studies text • <u>Writing a Life</u> by Katherine Bomer • <u>50 Tools for Writers</u> by Roy Peter Clark • <u>Crafting Authentic Voice</u> by Tom Romano • <u>Boy Writers by Ralph Fletcher</u> • <u>Write Like This</u> by Kelly Gallagher <p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers College Running Record Assessment for any student not on benchmark in October. <p>(Reading Benchmark: Level Z)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader’s Notebook Responses
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Readers Workshop Unit 4 Shared Reading

3-4 weeks January

Third Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: The goal of this unit of study is to push students to think about their understanding as they read. Many 8th graders balk at the idea of stopping along the way while reading, partly because it feels like an interruption and partly because students are plot junkies—reading to find out what happens in the story and never slowing down while in the middle of a great scene. Throughout this unit of study students will annotate their thinking during their reading. Students might use the note section in their electronic readers or a simple post-it note to stop and jot or write in their readers notebook about their thinking while reading. The goal of writing about their reading is not to create busy work, but rather to lift the level of thinking while reading so that the quality and purpose of their writing about reading is increased. During this unit of study students will self-select independent books to use in this unit of study and read short stories from mentor texts.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerge from the unit as more knowledgeable readers. • Extended confidence in tackling complicated literature • Build collective interpretations • Closely listen to peers in book clubs and engage in collegial discussions, pose and respond to questions with elaboration. • Demonstrate multiple perspectives through reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping track of stories and thinking in order to develop new thinking. • Keeping notes on electronic readers or by using post-it notes to record thinking about a text. • Annotating one’s thinking while reading. • Investigating what is interesting in their reading. • Determining the parts of a text that really merit time and energy to write about. • Themes in a text that are worthy of writing about. • How one’s own life intersects with that of characters’ lives. • Ways in which characters act foolishly and why. • Carry ideas across time—both across days of their book club and discussions about more than one text. 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Honeybee</u> by Naomi Shihab Nye • <u>There is no Long Distance Now</u> by Naomi Shihab Nye <p>Assessment: Teachers College Running Record Assessment for any student not on benchmark in December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader’s Notebook Responses (Reading Benchmark: Level Z+)

Readers Workshop Unit 5
Reading Test Preparation for the PARCC Exam (PARCC Test Prep)
February (2-3 weeks)
Third Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: The best preparation for any reading test is to be a strong reader with stamina to read long and strong and having the comprehension to understand what is being read. The major aim of this unit is to support students in bringing forward strategies for each genre that they have been taught during the year. This unit is also about supporting students in thinking logically and flexibly and in transferring all they know to their test-taking. The PARCC exam will ask students to read multiple texts on a wider variety than in previous standardized tests. Students will need to maintain focus and use a repertoire of strategies across many texts over sixty to seventy minutes. Students in grade 8 will be asked to read longer texts with the average of two to three pages, accumulate and synthesize information, and bridge ideas from across these longer texts. Eighth grade students will have a reading/test-prep workshop, in which they practice how to read, talk about and answer questions about short test-like texts, as well as multiple-choice strategies.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice with PARCC-like test questions. • Holding onto meaning of passages while reading longer texts • Review of strategies already known for each genre • Identification strategies to identify each genre and predictable questions for each type • Reading flexibly across multiple genres • Marking up of texts, writing answers, and matching answers to choices. • Previewing texts to ascertain the subject and structure, making a quick reading plan and breaking the text into manageable chunks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement of reading strategies • Predictable Questions • Strategies for answering multiple-choice questions • Strategies for reading too-hard texts; skimming, summarizing, underlining, jotting, and using pictures and headings • Reading question stems and predicting answers before looking at the answer choices. • Writing answers to questions before seeing the answers • Determining the meaning of vocabulary words by reading them in context • Determining the main idea or theme by referring to a big lesson the character learns or that we learn as readers • Together, the class works on reading one text and answering the questions. The teacher leads the class by providing the students with prompts and strategies that will help them navigate and hold on to the text, as well as demonstrating think-alouds. • Underline important places where information is learning and annotate when they learn something about a character, jot in margins any problems the character may face, note instances when characters change, identify big ideas of article sections. <p>Other possible mini-lessons: Stamina and Resilience Reading Passages Actively Introducing Students to Questions Wrong-Answer Types Teaching Students to Deal with Difficulty Things to Work On with Struggling Test Takers</p>	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <p>Short texts that are stories, poems, articles from multiple sources:</p> <p><i>Highlights</i> <i>Cricket</i> <i>Cobblestone</i> <i>Read and Rise</i> <i>Story Works</i> <i>Sports Illustrated for Kids</i></p> <p>Unit Texts (Texts for students to read in book clubs):</p> <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.achievethecore.org • Mini-assessment for 1984 by George Orwell • Mini-assessment for Chapter III from “The Open Boat” by Stephen Crane • A Curricular Plan for Readers Workshop, Teachers College Units of Study Unit 7 March/April, 2011-2012

Readers Workshop Unit 6 Science Fiction and Short Stories

3-4 weeks March/April

Third Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: Students will increase their facility with complex texts and continue their collaborative interpretation skills in book clubs. Students will read closely, paying close attention as they read to details. Students will notice patterns, archetypes, and themes. This unit is designed to be a book club unit. Since science fiction novels are inherently complex, readers will benefit from the intellectual support of book club conversations. This unit of study aims to support students in developing into more powerful readers of complicated texts.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining character change or a resolution. • Investigating narrative craft in fantasy novels to clarify dialogue, time, change, shifts in setting or mood, and for dramatic impact. • Read fluently a narrative structure that may offer shifts in time or parallel narratives. • Comprehend action, dialogue, details and inner thinking of characters in order to decipher an issue, idea, moral, or lesson or theme. • Analyze a central character and the character's relationship to minor characters. • Find textual evidence of characters' pressures, as well as their hopes and dreams. Relate actions to what they want and how they tend to behave. • Summarize how characters are complicated and the changes they go through. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the setting by investigating the atmosphere of the setting in a science fiction novel. • Understanding cuing systems in complex novels: Learning alongside the main character. • Keeping track of complicated narratives. • Using pencils when we read to support reading work and conversations. • Thinking metaphorically about the problems characters have. 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud): Picture Books:</p> <p><i>The Rain Babies</i> by Laura Krauss Melmed <i>Merlin and the Dragons</i> by Jane Yolen <i>Stranger in the Mirror</i> by Allen Say <i>Raising Dragons</i> by Jerdine Nolen <i>Nobody Rides the Unicorn</i> by Adrian Mitchell</p> <p>Possible Read-Aloud Texts: <i>The Moonchild</i> by Eloise McGraw <i>Ella Enchanted</i> by Gail Carson Levine</p> <p>Short Stories: <i>Fire and Wings; Dragon Tales from East and West</i> by Jane Yolen <i>But That's Another Story</i> by Sandy Asher <i>A Glory of Unicorns</i> by Bruce Coville</p> <p>Unit Texts (Texts for students to read in book clubs):</p> <p>TBD</p> <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment: Teachers College Running Record Assessment for any student not on benchmark in January. <p style="text-align: right;">(Reading Benchmark: Level Z+)</p> <p>Assessment:</p> <p>Reader's Notebook Response Entries Conferring with readers Reading journals</p>

Readers Workshop Unit 7 Children of War
(4-6 weeks April)
Fourth Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: This unit of study continues to prepare students for the reading they will do in high school. Students will prepare for work in high school reading by the experience, reading ability, and strategies they need to succeed as readers and by reading shared texts through read-alouds, shared reading, and small book club groups. At the beginning of the unit students will learn strategies to utilize when they encounter a tough text. Students will be partnered up with other readers, at least one peer who can help him or her to clarify and discuss the text as they go through the book. Students will retell what has happened in the book with partners to ensure that everyone in the group has the story straight. Partners and book clubs will help each other dig deep, unpack the lines of the text, and interpret the book as they go.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect to texts that involve characters that are very different from one's own self. • Connect to texts that have a setting that are foreign or from the past. • Read with empathetic imagination. • Read with volume and intensity. • Use notebooks to keep track of thinking. • Read deeply. • Infer constantly. • Think big and interpret the books that are being read. • Retell the reading from the night before, clarifying misunderstandings, and posing questions to book club partners. • Make an action plan when assigned a book to assist a reader in getting through tough texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character interpretation • Responding in readers notebooks about their thinking. • Literature can have parts where terrible things happen, but they can still be beautiful. • Writers force a readers mind to linger on haunting images--- and how that is a powerful tool. • Envision while reading, noticing places that beg for prediction, and stopping to infer about character's personalities, relationships, and choices. • Analyze author's choices around literary devices, orders of events, manipulation of time, and the effects these have on texts. • Reasons to reread a text. • How to use the summary and the blurb of the book to get the gist of the theme and how to use the Internet search engines, classmates, and/or librarians to help build action plans for comprehension. <p>Part 1: Investigating Narrative Structure, Theme, and Craft</p> <p>Part 2: Dealing with Difficulty While Focusing on Interpretation</p> <p>Part 3: Reading Across Texts for Allusions, Context, and Criticism</p> <p>Part 4: Readers Become Experts at Literature, Authors, and Reading Practices</p>	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Milk of Birds</u> • <u>Brothers in Hope</u> by M. Williams & G. Christie • <u>Four Feet, Two Sandals</u> by K. L. Williams & K. Mohammed • <u>Blood Diamonds</u> by G. Campbell (Mentor Text) (Caution; language and violence) • <u>A Long Way Gone</u> by Ishmael Beth • <u>The Yellow Star The Legend of King Christian X of Denmark</u> by Carmen Agra Deedy • <u>Crow Call</u> by Lois Lowry • <u>Pink and Say</u> by Patricia Polacco <p>Unit Texts (Texts for students to read in book clubs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Persimmon Tree</u> (Y) (Honors Only) • <u>God Grew Tired of Us</u> (Level Z+) (Honors only) • <u>The Day the World Came to Visit</u> • <u>Long Walk to Water</u> (Level W) • <u>Broken Memory</u> (Level Y) • <u>Hare in the Elephant's Trunk</u> (Level Z) • <u>Journey to Jo'Burg</u> (GR Level Unleveled) • <u>Night</u> by Elie Weisel • <u>The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</u> by J. Boyne (Level Z) • <u>Summer of My German Soldier</u> by Bette Greene (Level Z) • <u>Book Thief</u> by • <u>I am a Star: Child of the Holocaust</u> by I. Auerbacher (Level Y) • <u>The Devil's Arithmetic</u> by J. Yolen (Level Y)

		<p>Teacher Resources:</p> <p><i>A Curricular Plan for the Reading Workshop, Grade 8, 2011-2012 Unit Reading For High School Unit 6 pages 83-92 (Electronic Version)</i></p> <p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers College Running Records for any student not on benchmark in September (Reading Benchmark: Level Z+)• Reader's Response Notebook entries
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Readers Workshop Unit 8
Changing the World with Words: Powerful Speeches and Their Effects on History
(4 weeks May/June)
Fourth Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: By now the 8th graders have deeply analyzed literature and literary nonfiction. This unit aims to further challenge their abilities to analyze texts - pushing them to new levels by deeply engaging them in close reading of multiple speeches from differing perspectives around a variety of topics and issues. This unit is intended for 8th grade students enrolled in Language Arts. The unit will be approximately 6 weeks long and includes opportunities for students to listen to famous speeches and independently read famous speeches in order to look for author’s purpose and point of view as well as the reasons and evidence. During this unit students will also continue to read in unit texts. This unit also fosters students to maintain independent reading – as we know that children become better readers with a high volume of words. While speeches will massage the muscles of analysis and close reading – speeches will not expose students to sustained periods of reading.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read for author’s purpose • Uncover author’s point of view • Compare author’s points of view • Synthesize texts • Close read for complex ideas • Supplement nonfiction reading to understand context of speech • Extract reasons and evidence author uses to support claim • Summarize speeches • Determining important ideas from less important ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readers think about the author’s opinion and then look for reasons the author uses to support his or her claim. • Readers decide what the topic of a speech is and then ask themselves: What is the author saying about this topic? What does he want me to know or believe? • Readers analyze speeches to learn about complex ideas. • Readers often want to build a richer perspective on a speech by digging further for more information. • Readers analyze how authors use rhetorical devices to make their arguments more convincing. • Readers compare and contrast how different authors use rhetoric to drive their points home. • Readers notice that sometimes speechwriters incorporate quotes from famous people in order to make their point resonate. 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Life Lessons from Navy SEAL Training” Adm. William H. McRaven (All Students) • “Farewell to Baseball Address” by Lou Gehrig (All Students) • “The Third Phillipic” by Demosthenes (Honors Only) • “Funeral Oration” by Pericles (Honors Only) • “Inaugural Address, 1801” by President Thomas Jefferson • “Is It a Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote?” by Susan B. Anthony • “Blood, Sweat, and Tears” by Winston Churchill • “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July” by Frederick Douglass • “The Decision to Go to the Moon” by President F. Kennedy • “40th Anniversary of D-Day” by President Ronald Reagan • “Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech” by William Faulkner • “Resignation Speech” by George Washington • “Address to the Nation on the Challenger” by President Ronald Reagan • “We Shall Fight on the Beaches” by Winston Churchill • “Surrender Speech” by Chief Joseph • “Inauguration Speech” by John F. Kennedy • “Duty, Honor, Country” by General Douglas MacArthur • “Quit India” by Mahatma Gandhi

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Their Finest Hour” by Winston Churchill • “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” by Patrick Henry • “I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King, Jr. • “The Gettysburg Address” by President Abraham Lincoln <p>Unit Texts (Texts for students to read in book clubs):</p> <p><u>7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens</u> by S. Covey (Unleveled) (All students)</p> <p><u>What Are My Rights?</u> By Judge Tom Jacobs (parent permission letter required prior to student reading text)</p> <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers College Running Record Assessment for any student not on benchmark in March. (Reading Benchmark: Level Z+) • Reader’s Response Notebook Entries
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8th GRADE WRITING

Writers Workshop ~ Personal Essay Crafting Powerful Life Stories- Writing to Reflect Experience and Suggest Thematic Connections

~Unit 1 September (3-4 weeks)

First Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: The unit includes an introduction to the course as well as lessons on the Memoir genre. Students will create a series of vignettes around topics or themes of their lives. Key topics of this unit will include ways writers develop and organize ideas, use concrete and appropriate details, and employ proper conventions. The first part of the unit will be on helping students to write with volume—both in their writing notebooks and in essays. They will collect both entries and idea-based writing. Students will research the structure of memoir and notice that there are different forms of memoir; essay-like structure, list-like structure, and narrative with reflection. This unit will ask students to transfer what they already know about opinion and narrative writing to form a bridge between the two.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration • Transitioning • Incorporating narrative elements • Writing with Reflection and Purpose • Synthesis of events and moments • Notice the qualities of Memoir • Ways to collect and develop ideas • How to choose a writing structure • How to craft leads and conclusions • How to find a writing territory or universal theme 	<p>Bend 1: <i>Generating ideas about our lives and finding depth in the moments we choose</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use notebooks to research our lives. Collect entries and ideas-based writing. • Try out different small moment stories • Discover meaningful topics • Write big and small: large ideas and theories and zooming in on one time when that idea was true • Amass lots of material. • Write to find depth in already uncovered ideas. • Re-read collection to investigate patterns or themes: reoccurring emotions, or objects and relationships that pre-occupy them. • Ask ourselves, “What other times in my life fit this same theme?” • Explore the unknown in a topic. “Where is the mystery in this?” <p>Bend 2: <i>Structuring, Drafting, and Revising a Memoir</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn ideas into drafts: revising, • Highlight the importance of structure • Focus the story on you - “What am I trying to say about myself?” • Use mentor text to adjust structure • Set goals for revision • Re-read with a focus on editing <p>Bend 3: <i>A Second Memoir with the focus of bringing out meaning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tinker with structure. • Elaborate with figurative language, word relationships, nuances in word meaning, metaphorical imagery • Choose writing techniques and strategies that apply. • Read with a new lens to interpret one’s own story. • Grow theories about one's own self. • Uncover images • Plan drafts and flash draft • Revise expository portions of a memoir 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>House on Mango Street</u> • <u>Growing Up</u> by Russell Baker • <u>Big Russ and Me</u> by Tim Russer • Excerpt from <u>Black Boy</u> by Richard Wright • <u>Chicken Soup for the Writer’s Soul</u> by Canfield, Hansen, and Gardner • <u>Walking on the Boundaries of Change</u> by Sara Holbrook • <u>Crow Call</u> by Lois Lowry • <u>Writing Down the Bones Freeing the Writer Within</u> by Natalie Goldberg • Memoir Excerpts: <u>Marshfield Dreams: When I was a kid, etc.</u> • <u>Great Essayists’ Writings</u> by Joan Didion, Malcolm Gladwell, Barbara Kingsolver • <u>Starting with I</u> published by Youth Communications (essay by an adolescent) • <u>The Struggle to Be Strong</u> by Youth Communications (essay by an adolescent) • <u>Chicken Soup for the Soul: Inspiration for Writers</u> • <u>Crow Call</u> • <u>Writing Down the Bones</u> <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If... Then... Curriculum by Lucy Calkins pgs. 44-58 • <u>Writing a Life</u> by Katherine Bomer • <u>50 Tools for Writers</u> by Roy Peter Clark • <u>Crafting Authentic Voice</u> by Tom Romano • <u>Boy Writers</u> by Ralph Fletcher • <u>Write Like This</u> by Kelly Gallagher • <u>Shaping Texts From Essay and Narrative to Memoir</u> by Lucy Calkins • <u>Memoir: The Art of Writing Well</u>, Lucy Calkins and Mary Chiarella • <u>How Writers Work</u>, Grade 8 Published by Writing Fundamentals

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Units of Study for Argument, Narrative, and Informational Writing</u> published by Heineman and Teachers College• <u>Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, Grades 6-8</u> <p>Assessment: Narrative/Memoir Essay scored with Teachers College Rubric (Scores recorded into Genesis)</p>
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Writers Workshop Unit 2 Writing Investigative Journalism
(6 weeks October/November)
First Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: Writers will look closely at the world around them and illuminate social issues on newscasts and investigative reports. Students will report real stories, write about social issues, and do investigative reporting and research on issues. Students will call on previous learning of narrative writing to craft deliberate attention to issues and moments of social significance. Students will hone their nonfiction writing craft to convey meaning in the social issues of school. This unit is a bridge for all the writing that The Common Core calls literary nonfiction. Students will write narrative non-fiction with a journalistic flair.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observing for context, listening for quotes • Recognizing news stories have tight, terse, fact based style. • Using different tone and length for news style stories. Learning to get to the point • Conferencing to improve newscast to be lean, efficient, and incisive. • Writing different versions of the same news cast • Creating a journalistic voice. You are the eyes and ears for others. Describing with tone • Capturing quotes to enliven and provide perspective • Angling for social significance. Delve deeply to reveal underlying issues • Asking the right questions • Accessing and analyzing information • Finding and documenting stories to anchor investigations- telling anecdotes. • Additional research beyond the story: interviews, surveys, statistics, expert quotes • Turning research into writing – using professional mentor texts to help with structural transitions and organization • Using narrative craft to stir empathy in the central idea of the piece: using dialogue, action, setting to evoke compassion. • Write compelling leads. 	<p>Bend 1: Reporting Real Stories: writing efficiently and accurately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding stories and real dramas everywhere. • Recognize small life events spark ideas for newscasts • Reporting the 5 w's: who, what, where, when, why, and how <p>Bend 2: Writing to Inform/Illuminate issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating in depth on shared social issues: local, school, teen specific • Shifting from first person to third person-journalist as narrator • Using mentor text to exemplify stringing scenes together for impact. • Being dramatic but truthful-writing to pack a punch. • Making short writing powerful: specific, vivid physical details. • Keep it focused • Tucking quotes into narration/explanation • Using checklists to revise and edit Bend 3: Investigative Reporting and Research • Using small groups to evaluate and give feedback on writing that builds tension. • Elaborating and giving perspective while remaining truthful. • Working to meet deadlines <p>Using writing partners effectively to observe, recap, summarize, and note techniques.</p>	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud): <i>The Blind Side</i> by Michael Lewis <i>Long Way Gone</i> by Ishmael Beah <i>What the Dog Saw</i> by Malcolm Gladwell <i>Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul</i></p> <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Investigative Journalism</i> by Lucy Calkins, Mary Ehrenworth, and Cornelius Minor • <i>Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, Grades 6-8</i> • Writing Narrative Checklist • <i>Writing a Life</i> by Katherine Bomer • <i>50 Tools for Writers</i> by Roy Peter Clark • <i>Crafting Authentic Voice</i> by Tom Romano • <i>Boy Writers</i> by Ralph Fletcher • <i>Write Like This</i> by Kelly Gallagher • <i>How Writers Work</i>, Grade 8 Published by Writing Fundamentals • <i>Units of Study for Argument, Narrative, and Informational Writing</i> published by Heinnean and Teachers College <p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Narrative Checklist

Writers Workshop Unit 3 Historical Fiction: Weaving Together Fact and Fiction
(4 weeks November/December)
Second Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: One goal of this unit is to expand on students skills in narrative writing. Students will rely on prior learning in narrative writing to now better engage the reader, provide an organizational structure that sequences events, develop characters, and provide closure. In this unit students will focus on pivotal moments in characters' lives and to apply the same close reading strategies to their own writing that they do to reading literature. In the parallel readers workshop unit students are reading with an awareness of the craft moves that authors make while writing historical fiction.</p> <p>Another goal within this unit of study, depending on the students' needs, is for students to write a literary essay about their reading. This learning will lay the foundation for the upcoming unit of study on literary essay.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate possible story ideas while drawing upon previous experiences generating ideas for fiction stories. • Develop characters by placing them inside everyday scenes. • Attend to the time period of the setting when writing. • Reveal characters' struggles and motivations • Draft multiple possible plans for stories, checking and revising for historical accuracy before drafting a piece. • Revise with an eye for craft and historical accuracy. • Attend to conclusions and historical settings • Attempt symbolism, prefaces, and/or endnotes. 	<p>Weaving Together Fact and Fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice how writers write to evoke strong connections to characters • Study what the author has done in his/her writing to make moments matter. • Write to include prefaces or endnotes that supply historical context to stories. • How to use a writers notebook in a variety of ways in order to make webs of information about a time period, list possible story ideas, sketch details about setting. <p>Literary Essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write an essay based on the theme of the text. • Write an essay analyzing an author's writing craft. • Write an essay comparing two texts. • How to develop strong claims about a text they are reading. • Reflect and analyze in complex, sophisticated ways the texts they are already reading. • Collect ideas and think for future essays. 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud): <i>Goin' Someplace Special</i> by Patricia C. McKissack <i>The Other Side</i> by Jacqueline Woodson <i>Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-Ins</i> by Carole Boston Weatherford <i>The Bat Boy and His Violin</i> by Gavin Curtis <i>Through My Eyes</i> by Ruby Bridges <i>Dream of Freedom</i> by Diane McWhorter <i>"Letter From Birmingham City Jail"</i> by Martin Luther King, Jr.</p> <p>Teacher Resources: <i>If... Then... Curriculum Guide Grade 6-8</i> pages 59-74 <i>The Literary Essay Analyzing Craft and Theme</i> by Lucy Calkins, Kate Roberts, and Katy Wischow</p> <p>Assessment: Literary Essay Writers Notebook Entries Flash Drafts</p>

**Writers Workshop Unit 4 Argument Research Writing (Position Paper)
January (3-4 weeks) Second Marking Period**

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: Students will write fair and principled arguments. This unit of study mirrors the readers workshop unit of study in shared reading because students will be reading critically to make decisions, decide how they accept or reject positions, and how to motivate others to believe as they believe. Students will learn about logical appeals, involve claims, evidence, warrants, backing, and rebuttals. Students will tackle real-world issues, beginning with real-life questions such as whether role-playing and video games containing fictional violence are diverting or harmful. In this unit of study writers will read critically and write argumentatively.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using specific language to enhance tone. Writing to help the reader be judgmental. • Gather, sort, and rank evidence for a position. • Mining evidence from various sources • Annotating articles/evidence to support a position • Evaluate and cite references. • Write powerful conclusions that offer insights, connections, or future actions and solutions. • Making a clear plan including the lead, context, position or claim, arguments, reasoning and evidence, counter claims. • Providing historical, geographical, or cultural background and context to help readers understand the claim in a position paper. • Channel emotional responses to compose arguments that are fair and principled as well as impassioned. 	<p>Bend 1: Writing a Position Paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debating and discussing positions to reveal and develop complex arguments • Figuring out ethical stances, claims, and developing reasoning • Finding evidence from texts to defend a position • Recognize and use effectively topic specific terms • Arguing the opposing position for perspective. • Being fair to other points of view, addressing counter claims • Accessing more texts angling for additional evidence. • Learning to question texts as they relate to your argument • Adopting proper techniques for framing quoted, researched, and paraphrased evidence. <p>Bend 2: Positions papers on Complicated and Intense Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop initial understanding of a global complex issue • Conferring in small group to share ideas, understand issues, and develop positions • Considering multiple sides of an issue. Research other points of view • Use logic to qualify your arguments - acknowledge strengths and weaknesses of the argument. • Using transitions to help clarify for the reader the relationships between arguments, reasons, evidence and the claim. • Use writing craft to add detail and figurative language • Identify and envision different structural/organizational choices for the paper • Edit for powerful and accurate language • Edit for accurate source citations • Craft the argument into a letter addressing an expert in the field • Giving dramatic speeches for impact (optional) 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <p><i>“High Jinks: Shoot Out”</i> from <i>The New Yorker</i></p> <p><i>Olivia’s Letter to Mayor Bloomberg</i></p> <p><i>“Speech to a School Board”</i></p> <p><i>“A Child Soldier on Trial at Guantanamo”</i></p> <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <p><i>Upfront</i>, the <i>New York Times Magazine for Teens</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position Papers Research and Argument by Lucy Calkins, Mary Ehrenworth, Cornelius Minor. And Julie Shepherd • Grade 8 Argument Checklist <p>Assessment:</p> <p>Say to your students, “Our unit was all about argument writing. I would love to know what you know about writing an argument essay. Please select a topic that you feel strongly about and persuade me to believe as you believe.”</p> <p>Common Assessment in Argument Writing Scored with Teachers College Argument Rubric</p>

**Writers Workshop Unit 5 ~
Writing Prompted Essays for the PARCC Exam (PARCC Test Prep)
February (2-3 weeks)
Third Marking Period**

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: Students will be taught quick, purposeful writing, especially writing about reading and writing for a test. This unit is also about supporting students in thinking logically and flexibly and in transferring all they know to their test-taking. Students will analyze literature during the readers workshop parallel unit of study and practice writing a narrative writing task. During this unit of study students will read short texts and write several pieces to demonstrate they can read and understand sufficiently complex texts independently; write effectively when using and analyzing sources; and build and communicate knowledge by integrating, comparing, and synthesizing ideas.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience with sample items and prototypes • Experience with PARCC tutorial for students at http://practice.parcc.testnav.com/# • Effective and comprehensive development of a claim, topic and/or narrative elements by using clear and convincing reasoning, details, and text-based evidence, and/or description • Purposeful coherence, clarity, and cohesion with a strong introduction and a logical, well-executed progression of ideas. • Effective style while attending to the norms of conventions of grammar. • Preparation for the ELA/Literacy PBAs at the 8th grade level which includes three tasks: a research simulation task, a literary analysis task, and a narrative task. • Practice with both literary and informational (including social science/historical, scientific, and technical texts at grade 8). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement of writing strategies • Determining the meaning of vocabulary words by reading them in context • Determining the main idea or theme by referring to a big lesson the character learns or that we learn as readers • Underline important places where information is learning and annotate when they learn something about a character, jot in margins any problems the character may face, note instances when characters change, identify big ideas of article sections. • Narrative writing using a text stimulus • Reading of one or more texts, answer several short, comprehension and vocabulary questions, and then write an essay that requires students to draw evidence from the text(s). <p>Other possible mini-lessons: Wrong-Answer Types Teaching Students to Deal with Difficulty Things to Work On with Struggling Test Takers</p>	<p>Mentor Texts:</p> <p>Short texts that are stories, poems, articles from multiple sources:</p> <p><i>Highlights</i> <i>Cricket</i> <i>Cobblestone</i> <i>Read and Rise</i> <i>Story Works</i> <i>Sports Illustrated for Kids</i></p> <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.achievethecore.org • http://parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/Grade6-11-ELACondensedRubricFORANALYTICALANDNARRATIVEWRITING.pdf • Mini-assessment for 1984 by George Orwell • Mini-assessment for Chapter III from “The Open Boat” by Stephen Crane • A Curricular Plan for Readers Workshop, Teachers College Units of Study Unit 7 March/April, 2011-2012

Writers Workshop Unit 6 Science Fiction Narratives
March/ April (3-4 weeks)
Fourth Marking Period

<p>Goals: This writers workshop unit of study parallels a science fiction unit of study in readers workshop. Students will once again return to the narrative unit of study in order to more closely analyze author's craft and structure as readers and emulate an author's craft as writers. Students will better understand how to shift perspectives, use symbolism and metaphors, and develop minor characters. For this round of narrative writing students will consider the stories they've read, with the lens of writers. Writers will try some of the crafts they move—the description of fantastical worlds, the insertion of magical objects or characters, the use of symbolism to guide the reader toward interpretations, and so forth. In many ways, fantasy fiction writing can be one of the most challenging genres that students write in.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a narrative with complex characters, tension, change, and an idea/lesson • Establish a situation and place and hint at a bigger context for the story (issues that have been brewing, a time in history, one out of many points of view). • After starting the story, hint at what will come later in the story, including not just the plot but the ideas. • Use transitional phrases to alert readers to the passage of time, to connect parts of the story, to imply cause and effect, to raise questions. • Write an ending that continues to develop the meaning and that suggests a stance on the issue, idea, moral, lesson, or theme. • Develop a sequence of events that is carefully managed and clear. 	<p>Possible Mini-Lessons</p> <p>Bend 1: Collecting Ideas for Fantasy Writing: Finding Story Ideas that Have Depth and Significance</p> <p>Bend 2: Developing Your Story: Shaping Fantastical Yet Believable Characters and Plots</p> <p>Bend 3: Editing and Publishing the Fantasy Story for Readers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to give the readers a sense of closure by showing character change or a resolution of one of the problems. • Use narrative paragraphs to clarify dialogue, time, change, shifts in setting or mood, and for dramatic impact. Write with narrative structure that may offer shifts in time or parallel narratives. • Write to elaborate action, dialogue, details and inner thinking to develop an issue, idea, moral, or lesson or theme. • Develop a central character, as well as the setting and the character's relationship to the setting. • Convey the pressures that are felt by characters as well as their hopes and dreams. Relate actions to what they want and how they tend to behave. • Develop characters that are complicated and who change. • Use specific details to show a place and its atmosphere and how it changes or feels to the characters. • Vary pacing to increase tension and manage time. • Match language and sentence structure to the tone of parts of the story and to different characters. • Use punctuation to help to change the mood of the story, convey meaning and/or build tension in the story as well as develop dialogue and characterization. • Punctuate complex dialogue 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <p>Picture Books: <u><i>The Rain Babies</i></u> by Laura Krauss Melmed <u><i>Merlin and the Dragons</i></u> by Jane Yolen <u><i>Stranger in the Mirror</i></u> by Allen Say <u><i>Raising Dragons</i></u> by Jerdine Nolen <u><i>Nobody Rides the Unicorn</i></u> by Adrian Mitchell</p> <p>Possible Read-Aloud Texts: <u><i>The Moonchild</i></u> by Eloise McGraw <u><i>Ella Enchanted</i></u> by Gail Carson Levine</p> <p>Short Stories: <u><i>Fire and Wings; Dragon Tales from East and West</i></u> by Jane Yolen <u><i>But That's Another Story</i></u> by Sandy Asher <u><i>A Glory of Unicorns</i></u> by Bruce Coville</p> <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <p><u><i>Writing Fiction: Big Dreams, Tall Ambitions</i></u> <u><i>Writing Magic</i></u> by Gail Carson Levine <u><i>Writing Fiction</i></u> by Calkins and Cruz</p> <p>Assessment: Say to your students, "Our unit was all about fantasy writing. I would love to know what you know about writing fantasy stories. Please write a fantasy Small Moment story, including everything you know about writing strong narratives and everything you know about fantasy."</p> <p>Common Assessment in Narrative Writing Scored with Teachers College Narrative Rubric</p>
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Writers Workshop Unit 7 Literary Analysis through Essays
April (4-6 weeks)
Third/Fourth Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: This unit of study leads students to become more independent with essay-writing skills that have been acquired across elementary and middle school grades while learning new, high-leveraging strategies that will meet and exceed the expectations of high school communities. Eighth graders will focus on deep understanding of at least two unit texts and an outside text (article, web source, etc.). They will write long and strong collecting possible themes they see in a text. Students will pay attention to small details in critical scenes to help them refine their thinking about the themes they originally named.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding central problems in text • Interpreting other possible themes • Writing with personal voice about theme • Reading closely to note critical scenes where theme is evident • Read closely for purposeful craft and what it reveals about theme • Annotate from text • Adopt a literary scholar's voice • Use conferences to guide revisions-search for what's not working • Generate a claim about the text • Returning to the text for details where theme is evident in a scene • Reading closely to identify what in the text helps the reader interpret central problem, message, and theme. 	<p>Bend 1: Thematic essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying theme all around us and in all the texts we read • Finding messages in the central problems in text." What is the author intending to teach us?" • Study authors craft through mentor texts: literary devices, figurative language. • Study author's craft of structure choices and textual development of setting and character. • Study author's craft in word choice and sentence variation • Observe how craft makes a reader think deeply about theme. <p>Bend 2: Authors Craft Essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching for craft in the txt • Identifying author's deliberate choices • Read closely for excellent craft moments in text. • Analyzing craft for patterns • Writing about powerful craft such as symbolism • Finding enduring relevance for theme • Apply an essayists tone <p>Bend 3: Comparative Essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting a text to serve as a comparative text • Search for theme as well as craft in the new text. • Compare craft as well as theme • Generate comparative claims • Highlight steps for writing comparative essays on demand. 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Writing Down the Bones Freeing the Writer Within</u> by Natalie Goldberg • <u>Honeybee</u> by Naomi Shabib Nye • <u>All Summer in a Day</u> by Ray Bradbury <p>Teacher Resources: <i>The Literary Essay Analyzing Craft and Theme</i> by Lucy Calkins, Kate Roberts, and Katy Wischow</p> <p>Assessment:</p> <p>Literary essay scored with the Argument progression and rubric.</p> <p>Checklist for argument writing</p> <p>See Roman numeral page ix for assessment in <i>The Literary Essay Analyzing Craft and Theme</i> by Lucy Calkins, Kate Roberts, and Katy Wischow.</p>

Writers Workshop Unit 8 Powerful Speeches: This, I Believe
May/June (4 weeks)
Fourth Marking Period

Understandings	Teaching Points (Possible Mini-Lessons)	Mentor Texts/Resources
<p>Goals: Students will write in more sophisticated ways by incorporating strategic writing craft and technique into their own speeches entitled “This I Believe...” Speeches can be written to persuade, inform or explain and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Speeches cover a wide range of topics. Through this unit students will acknowledge the great changes that have been made in societies due to the writing of courageous leaders and authors. Writers will investigate and use several strategies to elaborate ideas such as stretching ideas, adding details and facts, and adding anecdotes and examples. Writers of persuasive essays usually leave a reader thinking with a powerful conclusion. Eighth grade writers will write as a speechwriter; attempting to change someone’s mind or connect with the audience.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a speech • Write a speech • Create a strong lead • Create a strong conclusion – offering the reader a sense of closure • Use author’s craft and take literary risks • Use literary devices and figurative language • Elaborate ideas • Reflect and find big themes in their own lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good writers reflect on their lives to find out what is important • Good writers use prompts to collect ideas • Good writers know and name their positive personal beliefs • Good writers organize their ideas • Good writers add audience appeal • Good writers choose words carefully to convey meaning clearly • Good writers make a personal connection to emphasize authenticity • Good writers support their personal philosophies with dialogue, rhetorical questions, anecdotes, personal experiences, examples and statistics • Good writers can eloquently deliver the speech • Good writers use quotes and insights expressed by others to compose and express what they believe. 	<p>Mentor Texts (Instructional Read Aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Chicken Soup for the Writer’s Soul</u> by Canfield, Hansen and Gardner • <u>Nothing But the Truth</u> by Avi • <u>The Great Kapok Tree</u> by Lynne Cherry • <u>Smoky Night</u> by Eve Bunting • <u>Remember: The Journey to School Integration</u> by Toni Morrison • <u>The Yellow Star</u> by Carmen Agra Deedy • <u>A Long Way Gone</u> by Ishmael Beth • <u>Faithful Elephants</u> by Yukio Tsuchiya • <u>A River Ran Wild</u> by Lynne Cherry • <u>One Well The Story of Water on Earth</u> by R. Strauss • Written Text to the song: <i>Wings</i> by Ryan Macklemore <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <p>“This, I Believe” Curriculum (google drive) http://readingandwritingproject.com/</p> <p>Core Curriculum Content Standards http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards</p> <p>Assessment: 8th Grade Speech</p>