

## Course/Grade Level: Eighth Grade Language Arts Curriculum

**Focus:** Students will demonstrate expository writing skills. They will utilize research skills to produce a complete research product. They will develop their speaking and listening skills.

Writing and Spelling support materials: *Lessons That Change Writers* (Atwell)

### LA.8.1 Students will write **expository** text using the writing process.

Students will...

- LA.8.1.1 ▲ use *ideas and content* that are well developed, clear, and interesting (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- develop one main idea and/or a thesis statement
  - clearly define the main idea with selection of relevant, logical details that meet the reader's informational needs
  - use (1) personal experience, (2) observations, (3) prior knowledge, and (4) research to provide information using an appropriate point of view for the piece (e.g., 3rd person pronouns in research)
  - express information in own words, by paraphrasing and summarizing, and use explicit techniques to appeal to the backgrounds and interest of the audience
  - analyze and understand implications of plagiarism (e.g., ethical, legal)
  - cite references for all information used or reproduced from any source
- LA.8.1.2 ▲ use *organization* that enhances the reader's understanding (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- understand and independently use appropriate strategies to generate expository text (e.g., brainstorming, listing, webbing, working in pairs or cooperative groups, and identifying information from print sources)
  - develop a cohesive piece that contains an engaging introduction, a body that provides information, and a conclusion that reinforces the thesis statement and leaves the reader with a sense of completion
  - arrange information within each paragraph in a logical and effective sequence to meet the informational needs of the reader (typically 5-8 sentences)
  - select appropriate transitions to connect ideas within and between paragraphs
- LA.8.1.3 ▲ use authentic and appropriate *voice* (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- select original and compelling vocabulary and/or figurative language to inform the reader
- LA.8.1.4 ▲ use effective *word choice* (prewriting, drafting, and revising) .
- select words that are suitable and precise creating appropriate imagery (e.g., explicit nouns, vivid verbs, natural modifiers)
  - define and use **specialized vocabulary** particular to the subject/topic to provide ease of understanding

\*see appendix for writing process

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▲: state-tested indicator

- LA.8.1.5 ▲ use *sentence fluency* (drafting and revising).
- vary sentence structures and lengths making the reading pleasant and natural (e.g., simple, compound, complex, compound-complex)
  - create a variety of sentence beginnings that build upon previous sentences and guides the reader from one sentence to another
  - discriminate between the effective and ineffective use of sentence fragments
- LA.8.1.6 ▲ use standard American English *conventions* (drafting and proofreading).
- use correct mechanics and punctuation (e.g., hyphens, dashes, ellipsis)
  - use correct grammar and usage, which may be manipulated for stylistic effect, contributing to clarity
  - spell familiar and most unfamiliar words correctly utilizing available resources (e.g., dictionary, spell check)
  - use correct paragraph division to reinforce the organizational structure of the text

**LA.8.2 Students will write *narrative* text using the writing process.\***

Students will...

- LA.8.2.1 use *ideas and content* that are well developed, clear, and interesting (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
  - understand and develop a focused written piece that includes **plot elements** (e.g., **initiating event, rising and falling action, climax, conflict, setting, character development, resolution**)
  - clearly define the main idea with selection of relevant details from a variety of sources
- LA.8.2.2 use *organization* that enhances the reader's understanding (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- LA.8.2.3 use authentic and appropriate *voice* (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- LA.8.2.4 use effective *word choice* (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- LA.8.2.5 use *sentence fluency* (drafting and revising).
  - write using **dialogue effectively, sounding conversational, and natural**
- LA.8.2.6 use standard American English *conventions* (drafting and proofreading).

**LA.8.3 Students will write *technical* text using the writing process.\***

Students will...

- LA.8.3.1 use *ideas and content* that are well developed, clear, and interesting (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- LA.8.3.2 use *organization* that enhances the reader's understanding (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- LA.8.3.3 use authentic and appropriate *voice* (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
  - write with an awareness of purpose and audience (e.g., **letters, reports, directions, graphics, charts, maps, tables, brochures, electronic presentations, newsletters, job searches, memos, fliers, e-mails**)
- LA.8.3.4 use effective *word choice* (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
  - select words that convey the writer's message plainly and concisely (e.g., **technical terms, jargon**)
- LA.8.3.5 use *sentence fluency* (drafting and revising).
- LA.8.3.6 use standard American English *conventions* (drafting and proofreading).

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**LA.8.4 Students will write *persuasive* text using the writing process.\***

Students will...

- LA.8.4.1 use *ideas and content* that are well developed, clear, and interesting (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- assert an arguable proposition or opinion (thesis statement)
  - develop details necessary to expand the main topic in a balanced format supporting the writer's position
  - practice building a focused argument that uses logical thinking and appeals to reason, authority, and/or emotion
- LA.8.4.2 use *organization* that enhances the reader's understanding (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- develop a cohesive piece that contains an engaging introduction, an appropriate body that reinforces the thesis statement and the original proposition
- LA.8.4.3 use authentic and appropriate *voice* (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- select vocabulary and figurative language that conveys a particular tone and personality (e.g., humor, suspense, cynicism, sarcasm, originality, and liveliness)
- LA.8.4.4 use effective *word choice* (prewriting, drafting, and revising).
- **use language that is appropriate for persuasive writing and easy for audience to understand**
- LA.8.4.5 use *sentence fluency* (drafting and revising).
- include convincing dialogue if appropriate
- LA.8.4.6 use standard American English *conventions* (drafting and proofreading).

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## **LA.8.5 Students will use effective research practices.**

Students will...

- LA.8.5.1 form and revise questions for investigations, including questions arising from readings, assignments, and units of study in order to create a thesis/hypothesis.
- LA.8.5.2 use knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels of questioning.
- LA.8.5.3 locate appropriate print and non-print information using text and technical resources, including databases.
- LA.8.5.4 distinguish between accurate and inaccurate or misleading information.
- LA.8.5.5 compile and organize information and select appropriate sources to support central ideas, concepts, and themes.
- LA.8.5.6 present findings and defend conclusions through a variety of media.
- LA.8.5.7 select an appropriate structure for organizing and recording information in a systematic way (e.g., notes, outlines, charts, tables, graphic organizers).
- LA.8.5.8 categorize relevant information from multiple sources into major components (e.g., topics, subtopics).
- LA.8.5.9 document sources of information using standard format.

## **LA.8.6 Students will use ethical research practices.**

Students will...

- LA.8.6.1 analyze and understand implications of plagiarism (e.g., ethical, legal).
- LA.8.6.2 express information in own words using explicit techniques to appeal to the background and interests of the audience.
- LA.8.6.3 cite references for all information used or reproduced from any source.
- LA.8.6.4 construct a bibliography (using a website such as [www.easybib.com](http://www.easybib.com)) with author, title, publisher, year, website name and address, and copyright date.

## **LA.8.7 Students will speak and listen effectively for a variety of purposes.**

Students will...

- LA.8.7.1 stay focused on the topic while speaking.
- LA.8.7.2 use authentic voice that shows their personalities.
- LA.8.7.3 use effective delivery skills while speaking.
- LA.8.7.4 focus attention on the speaker and/or message, such as eye contact or responsive facial expressions.
- LA.8.7.5 respect others' right to have differences in attitudes, behaviors, values, and beliefs.
- LA.8.7.6 utilize proper note-taking skills.

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## APPENDIX - THE WRITING PROCESS

The process of writing occurs in several stages:

- 1 PRE-WRITING: The pre-writing step includes, but is not limited to, exploring topics, brainstorming, webbing, choosing a topic, gathering details, and organizing before beginning to write.
- 2 DRAFTING: The drafting step involves getting ideas down on paper in a rough format.
- 3 REVISING: The revising step involves reworking and rewriting the draft to improve its content and structure. Any work with ideas and content, sentence fluency, voice, organization, and word choice falls under this step.
- 4 PROOFREADING: The proofreading step includes correcting errors in grammar, spelling, and mechanics. It may involve a prescribed set of proofreading marks. Correcting conventions falls under this step.
- 5 PUBLISHING: The publishing step is the sharing of prepared work with others in oral and/or written form.

**Note: Both the revising and proofreading steps encompass editing, but the specific terms "revising" and "proofreading" are preferable to the more vague "editing."**