

8th grade ELA 2025-2026 YEAR-AT-A-GLANCE									
ESSENTIAL UNITS OF STUDY	EUS #1 - Setting Up Shop: Establishing Our Workshop Community	EUS #2 - Where Themes Come True: The Literary Essay	EUS #3 - The Past, Today: Historical Fiction	EUS #4 - Taking Sides: Research and Argumentation	EUS #5 - The Best of Both Worlds: Literary Nonfiction	EUS #6 - From Stanza to Stage: A Comparative Lens	EUS #7 - Testing as a Genre	EUS #8 - Investigative Journalism	EUS #9 - Launching into Summer: A Study of Independent Reading and Writing
TIMEFRAME	1st Grading Cycle	1st/2nd Grading Cycles	2nd/3rd Grading Cycles	3rd Grading Cycle	4th Grading Cycle	4th/5th Grading Cycles	5th Grading Cycle	6th Grading Cycle	
	Aug 13 - Aug 29 13 days	Sep 2 - Oct 3 23 days District Assessment #1 window: Sep 29 - Oct 3 Scores due by Oct 10	Oct 6 - Nov 14 25 days	Nov 17 - Dec 19 19.5 days District Assessment #2 window: Dec 8 - Dec 12 Scores due by Dec 19	Jan 6 - Feb 11 26 days District Assessment #3 window: Feb 4 - Feb 11* Scores due by Feb 20	Feb 17 - Apr 2 27 days District Assessment #4 window: Mar 30 - Apr 2 Scores due by Apr 10	Apr 7 - Apr 17 8 days + 1 testing day STAAR testing window Apr 7-17**	Apr 20 - May 15 20 days	May 18 - May 29 8.5 days
CONTENT TOPICS	What are we reading?				What are we reading?				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample Reader's/Writer's Notebooks Variety of personal narratives Independent reading/ choice book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of literary texts in multiple genres focusing on the various ways that authors develop themes Optional whole-group book study #1 chosen from the Whole-Class Approved Book List Independent reading/ choice book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book club #1 selection: Students form into book clubs focusing on setting, plot development, and theme Variety of excerpts from historical fiction texts focusing on genre characteristics and author's craft Independent reading/ choice book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of print, multimodal, and digital argumentative texts focusing on how arguments are constructed and supported Independent reading/ choice book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book club #2 selection: Students from into book clubs focusing on central ideas and supporting evidence Variety of literary nonfiction texts focusing on genre characteristics and author's craft Independent reading/ choice book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of poetry and drama (or drama excerpts) focusing on the effects of structural and graphical elements Optional whole-group book study #2 chosen from the Whole-Class Approved Book List Independent reading/choice book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of literary, informational, and argumentative texts STAAR testing blueprint Sample STAAR format questions Independent reading/ choice book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of investigative journalism pieces in multiple formats (feature articles, interviews, multimodal and digital storytelling, etc.) Independent reading/ choice book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book reviews and book trailers Choose and begin summer reading book
	What are we writing?				What are we writing?				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader's/Writer's Notebook entries Response to text Flash draft of a personal narrative on topic of choice Experiment with semicolons and compound sentences using the <i>Patterns of Power</i> process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader's/Writer's Notebook entries Response to text Literary analysis essay on theme Experiment with “nor” and sentence interrupters using the <i>Patterns of Power</i> process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader's/Writer's Notebook entries Response to text Students track evidence of author's craft and theme development throughout their book club selection Experiment with subordinating conjunctions and sentence interrupters using the <i>Patterns of Power</i> process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader's/Writer's Notebook entries Response to text Research note-taking Argument/position papers on topics of choice Professional correspondence Experiment with dashes, parentheses, and essential vs. nonessential clauses using the <i>Patterns of Power</i> process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader's/Writer's Notebook entries Response to text Infographic Students write, record, or film a book or text recommendation for their peers Experiment with active voice, indicative mood, and imperatives using the <i>Patterns of Power</i> process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader's/Writer's Notebook entries Response to text Original poem that includes graphical elements or a drama scene Experiment with infinitives, participles, and gerunds using the <i>Patterns of Power</i> process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader's/Writer's Notebook entries Response to text Short Constructed Response Extended Constructed Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader's/Writer's Notebook entries Response to text Multiple original news articles and investigative journalism pieces Experiment with infinitives and colons using the <i>Patterns of Power</i> process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader's/Writer's Notebook entries Response to text Present a book talk and/or a book recommendation letter to next year's students
UNIT-SPECIFIC FOCUS TEKS	4A - independent reading 6A - describe personal connections to a variety of sources, including self-selected texts 11A - compose personal narrative	7A - infer multiple themes within and across texts 9E - identify the use of literary devices 9F - analyze author's use of language 11C - compose argumentative texts	7A - infer multiple themes within and across texts 7B - analyze how character's qualities influence events and resolution of the conflict 7C - analyze plot elements 7D - analyze how the setting influences character and plot development 8A - demonstrate knowledge of literary genres such as historical fiction	8E - analyze characteristics and structures of argumentative texts 8F -analyze characteristics of multimodal and digital texts 9G - explain the purpose of rhetorical devices 10ABCDE - writing process (plan, develop, revise, edit, and publish) 11C - compose argumentative texts	5E - make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society 5H - synthesize information to create new understanding 9A - analyze characteristics and structural elements of informational texts	8B - analyze the effect of graphical elements across a variety of poetic forms 8C - analyze how playwrights develop dramatic action through the use of acts and scenes 11A - compose literary texts	understand the testing framework practice test-taking skills	9A - explain the author's purpose, audience, and message 9B - analyze how the use of text structure contributes to the author's purpose 9C- analyze the author's use of print and graphic features 11B - compose informational texts	4A - Independent Reading 11D - compose correspondence
ON-GOING LITERACY TEKS	1ABCD, 2ABC, 3A, 4A, 5ABCDEFGHI, 6ABCEFGH, 9A, 10ABCDE, 12ABCDEFGHII								
RESOURCES	Lucy Calkins Reading Units of Study Lucy Calkins Writing Units of Study <i>StudySync</i> online by McGraw-Hill The New York Times <i>Upfront</i> Magazine <i>Patterns of Power: Inviting Adolescent Writers into the Conventions of Language (grades 6-8)</i> by Jeff Anderson, Travis Leech, and Melinda Clark				Lucy Calkins Reading Units of Study Lucy Calkins Writing Units of Study <i>StudySync</i> online by McGraw-Hill The New York Times <i>Upfront</i> Magazine <i>Patterns of Power: Inviting Adolescent Writers into the Conventions of Language (grades 6-8)</i> by Jeff Anderson, Travis Leech, and Melinda Clark				

*district assessment window begins and/or ends mid-week due to student/staff holiday

**STAAR online testing window for English (grades 6-10) is April 7-17, 2026. Campuses decide which day they will test within that window.