

Norwood Public Schools

Grade 8 English Curriculum Overview

Description (including primary objectives and outcomes)

The 8th grade ELA curriculum strives to prepare students for their endeavors at the high school. As in the previous two grades, there are FIVE units of preparation. Each unit engages the student's acquisition of the fundamental skills of reading comprehension, writing, and language; but they also engage the students' application of critical thinking and analysis skills, understanding of multicultural genres and diverse authors, and the real world connections to literature.

Learning Experiences:

The 8th grade ELA curriculum covers a Short Story Unit, Responses and Connections to Literature, Novel Unit, MCAS and MCAS Based Open Response Unit, Nonfiction Unit, Drama Unit introducing the works of William Shakespeare, and a Poetry Unit. The elements of literature as well as grammar and writing, with particular attention to open response writing, are incorporated into each unit of study.

Content Outline:

Literary Genre Units:

- **Fiction:** An introductory unit of short stories, prefaced with an overview of the elements of literature needed to successfully explore fiction is introduced with a particular focus on plot, character, theme, point of view, and figurative language. The short story unit is followed by lengthy novel units where a deeper understanding of the elements and writing is learned.
- **Nonfiction:** Various selections of multicultural pieces of nonfiction are explored with a focus on the elements of nonfiction, author's purpose, and connection to student life.
- **Drama:** Exposure to various forms of drama from stage and film with an overview of the elements of drama are incorporated through reading, analyzing, and performance.
- **Poetry:** Building upon students' knowledge of the elements of poetry and figurative language from 7th grade, students explore various styles and forms of traditional and modern poetry while focusing on the process of writing their own poetry with self-reflection and personal analysis.

Writing:

- Formal and informal writing assessments include the five-paragraph essay (expository); journaling; creative writing (narrative) emphasizing literary elements and devices/craft; poetry; analysis and synthesis of literary genres and texts; and MCAS-based essay organization and writing.
- Review and further instruction of the writing process, topic development, and incorporation of grammatical and structural concepts are explored through student writing.

Resources Used:

Common Grade-Wide Reading Selections:

Short Stories: “The Lottery” and “Charles” by Shirley Jackson; “Cask of Amontillado” and “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe; “Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut; “A Retrieved Reformation” by O. Henry; and “The Scarlet Ibis” by James Hurst

Nonfiction: Excerpt of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou

A Midsummer Night’s Dream (drama) by William Shakespeare

A Separate Peace (fiction) by John Knowles

Poem (Used in synthesis with *A Separate Peace*): “Dulce Et Decorum Est”

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