Massachusetts English Language Arts and Literacy

Grade 8

Adopted 2017

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. RL.8.1
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 a text. RL.8.2
3. Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story, poem, or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. RL.8.3

Craft and Structure

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, tone, or mood, including the impact of allusion and irony. RL.8.4
5. Compare and contrast the structures of two or more texts, analyzing how structure contributes to meaning and style in each text. RL.8.5
6. Analyze how differences in point of view between characters and audience (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor. RL.8.6

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Analyze the extent to which an audio, filmed, or staged production of a story, drama, or poem stays faithful to or departs from the original text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or performer(s). RL.8.7
8. Not applicable. RL.8.8
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. RL.8.9

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 8. RL.8.10

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Reading Standards for Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. RI.8.1
2. Determine a text's central idea(s) and analyze its/their development over the course of the text, including relationships to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of a text. RI.8.2
3. Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories). RI.8.3

Craft and Structure

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. RI.8.4
5. Analyze in detail the structural elements of a text, including the role of specific sentences, paragraphs, and text features in developing and refining a key concept. RI.8.5
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. RI.8.6

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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. RI.8.7
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. RI.8.8
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. RI.8.9

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary nonfiction representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 8. RI.8.10

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

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1. Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. 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 in paragraphs and sections. W.8.1.A
    b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. W.8.1.B
    c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. W.8.1.C
    d. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing). W.8.1.D
    e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. W.8.1.E
2. Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. W.8.2
    a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; use paragraphs and sections to organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include text features (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. W.8.2.A
    b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. W.8.2.B
    c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. W.8.2.C
    d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. W.8.2.D
    e. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing). W.8.2.E
    f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented. W.8.2.F

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3. Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured sequences. 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 appropriate narrative sequence. W.8.3.A

    b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. W.8.3.B

    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. W.8.3.C

    d. Use precise words and phrases and relevant descriptive details to convey a tone (the writer's attitude toward the subject: e.g., humorous, serious, or ironic) and to convey experiences or events. W.8.3.D

    e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events. W.8.3.E

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. W.8.4

5. 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. W.8.5

    a. Demonstrate command of standard English conventions. W.8.5.A

    b. Demonstrate the ability to select accurate vocabulary appropriate for audience and purpose. W.8.5.B

6. Use technology, including current web-based communication platforms, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others. W.8.6

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained 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. W.8.7

8. When conducting research, 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. W.8.8

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 8 standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed. W.8.9

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ange of Writing

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. W.8.10

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

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. 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. SL.8.1.A
   b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. SL.8.1.B
   c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. SL.8.1.C
   d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented. SL.8.1.D
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. SL.8.2
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. SL.8.3

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

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 vocabulary, eye contact, volume, and pronunciation. SL.8.4
5. Integrate multimedia components and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest. SL.8.5
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. SL.8.6

Language

Conventions of Standard English

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1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; retain and further develop language skills learned in previous grades. L.8.1
    a. Coordinate phrases and clauses in simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, with emphasis on agreement of pronouns and their antecedents. L.8.1.A
    b. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voices and the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive moods to communicate a particular meaning. L.8.1.B
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. L.8.2
    a. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break. L.8.2.A
    b. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission. L.8.2.B
    c. Spell correctly, recognizing that some words have commonly accepted variations (e.g., donut/doughnut). L.8.2.C

Knowledge of Language

3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. L.8.3
    a. Maintain appropriate consistency in style and tone while varying sentence patterns for meaning and audience interest. L.8.3.A
    b. Recognize variations from standard or formal English in writing and speaking, determine their appropriateness for the intended purpose and audience, and make changes as necessary. L.8.3.B

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

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. 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. L.8.4.A
    b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). L.8.4.B
    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. L.8.4.C
    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). L.8.4.D

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5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. L.8.5
    a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context. L.8.5.A
    b. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. L.8.5.B
    c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations. (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute). L.8.5.C
6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; independently research words and gather vocabulary knowledge. L.8.6

Reading Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas: History/Social Studies

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. RCA-H.6-8.1
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. RCA-H.6-8.2
3. Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered). RCA-H.6-8.3

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies. RCA-H.6-8.4
5. Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally), including how written texts incorporate features such as headings. RCA-H.6-8.5
6. Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts). RCA-H.6-8.6

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate visual information (e.g., charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts. RCA-H.6-8.7
8. Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text. RCA-H.6-8.8
9. Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic. RCA-H.6-8.9

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend history/social studies texts exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course. RCA-H.6-8.10

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Reading Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas: Science and Career and Technical Subjects

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. RCA-ST.6-8.1

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of general academic vocabulary as well as symbols, notation, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific or technical context relevant to grades 6–8 texts and topics. RCA-ST.6-8.4
5. Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to an understanding of the topic. RCA-ST.6-8.5
6. Analyze an author's purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text. RCA-ST.6-8.6

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text with a version of that information expressed visually (e.g., in a flowchart, diagram, model, graph, or table). RCA-ST.6-8.7
8. Distinguish among facts, reasoned judgment based on research findings, and speculation in a text. RCA-ST.6-8.8
9. Compare and contrast the information gained from experiments, simulations, video, or multimedia sources with that gained from reading a text on the same topic. RCA-ST.6-8.9

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend science/technical texts exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course. RCA-ST.6-8.10

Writing Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas

Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content. WCA.6-8.1
    a. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims/critiques, and organize the reasons and evidence logically in paragraphs and sections. WCA.6-8.1.A
    b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources. WCA.6-8.1.B
    c. Use words, phrases, and clauses with precision to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims/critiques, reasons, and evidence. WCA.6-8.1.C
    d. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing). WCA.6-8.1.D
    e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. WCA.6-8.1.E

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2. Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes. WCA.6-8.2
    a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; use paragraphs and sections to organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include text features (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. WCA.6-8.2.A
    b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. WCA.6-8.2.B
    c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas, concepts, or procedures. WCA.6-8.2.C
    d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. WCA.6-8.2.D
    e. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing). WCA.6-8.2.E
    f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented. WCA.6-8.2.F
3. Not applicable as a separate requirement. WCA.6-8.3

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. WCA.6-8.4
5. 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. WCA.6-8.5
6. Use technology, including current web-based communication platforms, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently. WCA.6-8.6

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained 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. If you could go back to ancient Greece, would you rather live in Athens or in Sparta? In a paired set of arguments posted on Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action, two students make separate cases for the superiority of Athens and Sparta respectively, supporting their arguments with what they have read about the city states in social studies classes. (WCA.6–8.1, WCA.6–8.7, L.6.3, L.6.6) WCA.6-8.7

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8. When conducting research, 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. For example, in a science unit, students explore ecosystem dynamics as seen through a study of invasive species. They research how invasive species are introduced, the impacts they have on local food webs, and how ecosystems react to invasives. The unit involves reading and research, vocabulary development, models, data analysis and writing. (RCA-ST.6–8.4, WCA.6–8.8, WCA.6–8.9) WCA.6-8.8
9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research. WCA.6-8.9

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for 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. WCA.6-8.10

Speaking and Listening Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on discipline-specific topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. SLCA.6-8.1
    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. SLCA.6-8.1.A
    b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. SLCA.6-8.1.B
    c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. SLCA.6-8.1.C
    d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented. SLCA.6-8.1.D
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. SLCA.6-8.2
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. For example, after an author of science books on endangered animal species visits their class to talk about her research and writing, students write reports on what she said, summarizing important points and arranging them in a logical order. (WCA.6–8.2, SLCA.6–8.3) SLCA.6-8.3

resentation of Knowledge and Ideas

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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 vocabulary, eye contact, volume, and pronunciation. SLCA.6-8.4
5. Integrate multimedia components and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest. SLCA.6-8.5
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. SLCA.6-8.6