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# A Parent's Guide to ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE LEVEL CONTENT EXPECTATIONS

WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS  
TO KNOW BY THE END OF

## EIGHTH GRADE



## Welcome to Our School!

This school year promises to be an exciting time for your child, filled with learning, discovery, and growth. It is also a time to share a new guide the Michigan Department of Education has developed for you. *A Parent's Guide to Grade Level Content Expectations* outlines the types of literacy and mathematics skills students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade.

Please feel free to share this guide with your family and friends. Use it when you talk with your child's teacher. Ask what *you* can do to support learning in the classroom and reinforce learning at home. You can find more ideas and tools to help you stay involved in your child's education at [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde).

Your School Principal (Customize)

## Notes:

## QUESTIONS

### **A Parent's Guide to the Grade Level Content Expectations**

#### **Michigan Sets High Academic Standards – for ALL**

This booklet is a part of Michigan's Mathematics and English Language Arts Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE). It is just one in a series of tools available for schools and families. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) provides similar booklets for families of children in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Teacher versions of the Grade Level Content Expectations are finished for grades Kindergarten through eight. They state in clear and measurable terms what students in each grade are expected to know and be able to do. They also guide the design of the state's grade level MEAP tests required in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) legislation.

Educators and classroom teachers from Michigan school districts have been involved in the development and/or review of Michigan's GLCE. The expectations were designed to ensure that students receive seamless instruction, from one grade to the next, leaving no gaps in any child's education. More importantly, they set high expectations in literacy and mathematics so we can better prepare all K-12 students for the challenges they will face in a global 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To learn more about the Michigan Curriculum Framework, visit [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde) and click on "K-12 Curriculum".

**Eighth Grade English Language Arts (ELA)** develops strength in reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing skills. Your child should increase his/her ability to analyze and synthesize information, increase their reading ability and become a more proficient writer.

### **Glossary Terms**

Words that have asterisks(\*) are defined in the Glossary section located in the back of this booklet.

*By the end of the eighth grade, your child should be able to do the following:*

## **READING**

### **Word Study**

- Use word structure, sentence structure, and prediction to aid in decoding and understanding the meanings of words.
- Use structural\*, syntactic\*, and semantic\* analysis to recognize unfamiliar words in context such as idioms\*, analogies\*, metaphors\*, and similes\* to infer\* the history of the English language, common word origins or syllabication.
- Recognize frequently encountered words automatically.
- Know the meaning of frequently encountered words in written and oral contexts (research to support specific words).
- Apply strategies to construct meaning and identify unknown words.
- Fluently\* read eighth grade materials (read increasingly demanding texts as the year proceeds).
- Use strategies, such as prior knowledge, text features, structures and authentic content-related resources to determine the meaning of words and phrases in context (examples: historical terms, content area vocabulary, literary terms).

## **QUESTIONS**

## GLOSSARY TERMS, continued

**metaphor** – a figure of speech that compares two things without using the words *like* or *as* (Example: The cup of hot tea was the best medicine for my cold.)

**Modern Language Association (MLA)** – style of writing used for documentation

**persuasive essay** – a written paper characterized by the writer’s intention to convince the reader to agree with the writer’s message

**personification** – a figure of speech in which a non-human thing or quality is talked about as if it were human

**participial phrases** – a phrase that uses the verb form ending in *-ing* or *-ed*. A participle is used as an adjective. (Example: The idea of the earth shaking and splitting both fascinates and frightens me.)

**propaganda** – information that is meant to mislead or persuade

**rhetorical** – concerned with effect or style of writing and speaking; a rhetorical question is one asked solely to produce an effect (especially to make an assertion) rather than to elicit a reply

**semantic analysis** – reader studies the meaning of words

**simile** – a figure of speech that compares two things using the words *like* or *as* (Examples: The dog danced around like a clown at the circus. The ice was smooth as glass before the skaters entered the rink.)

**stereotype** – regarded as embodying or conforming to a set image or type

**structural analysis** – reader studies the way writing is organized

**symbolism** – the practice of representing things by means of symbols or of attributing symbolic meanings or significance to objects, events, or relationships

**syntactic analysis** – reader examines the way words are put together in a sentence

## Narrative Text

- Investigate through classic and contemporary literature recognized for quality and literary merit various examples of distortion\* and stereotypes\* such as those associated with gender, race, culture, age, class, religion, and other individual differences.
- Analyze elements and style of narrative genres (examples: historical fiction, science fiction, realistic fiction).
- Analyze the role of rising and falling actions, and minor characters in relation to conflict, and credibility of the narrator.
- Analyze how authors use symbolism\*, imagery\*, and consistency to develop credible narrators, rising and falling actions and minor characters.

## Informational Text

- Analyze elements and style of informational genre.  
Examples:
  - comparative essays\*
  - newspaper writing
  - technical writing
  - persuasive essays\*
- Analyze organizational patterns such as theory, evidence, and sequence.
- Explain how authors use text features such as illustrations, author’s pages, prefaces and marginal notes to enhance the understanding of central, key, and supporting ideas.

## Comprehension

- Connect personal knowledge, experience, and understanding of the world to themes and perspectives in the text.
- Read, retell, and summarize grade level appropriate narrative and informational texts.
- State global themes, universal truths, and principles within and across texts to create a deeper understanding.
- Apply significant knowledge from what has been read in grade level appropriate science and social studies texts.



### Metacognition

- Independently self-monitor comprehension when reading or listening to text by automatically using and discussing the strategies used by mature readers to increase comprehension and engage in interpretative discussions.  
Examples:
  - predicting
  - constructing mental images representing ideas in text
  - questioning
  - rereading or listening again if uncertain about meaning
  - inferring
  - summarizing
- Plan, monitor, regulate, and evaluate skills, strategies, and processes for his/her reading comprehension by applying appropriate metacognitive skills.
- Apply significant knowledge from what has been read in grade level appropriate science and social studies texts.

### Critical Standards

- Evaluate the appropriateness of shared, individual, and expert standards based on purpose, context, and audience in order to assess his/her work and the work of others.

### Reading Attitude

- Be enthusiastic about reading and do substantial reading on his/her own.



### Glossary Terms

- analogies (pl.)** – comparisons of similar objects. An analogy suggests that since objects are alike in some ways, they will probably be alike in other ways. (Example: Pets are like plants. If you give the pets proper care and attention, they grow strong and healthy. If you neglect them, they become weak and sickly.)
- annotations (pl.)** – remarks, or explanations added to a written piece to give further information
- argumentation** – a discussion in which reasons are advanced for and against some proposition or proposal
- autobiography** – the story of a real person's life, written or told by that person
- bias** – an attitude that always favors one way of thinking over any other
- biography** – the story of a real person's life, written or told by another person
- comparative essay** – a written paper characterized by the systematic comparison of ideas or things, especially of their likenesses and dissimilarities
- distortion** – A statement that twists fact; a misrepresentation
- discourse** – To engage in conversation or discussion
- ellipsis** – a series of marks (example: ... or \* \* \*) used in writing or printing to indicate an omission, especially of letters or words
- enunciation** – to pronounce clearly
- gerunds** – verbs that end with ing that are being used as nouns (Example: We enjoyed the glee club's *singing*.)
- idioms** – words used in a special way that may be different from their literal meaning. (Example: Rush-hour traffic moves at a *snail's pace*. This idiom means "very slowly.")
- inference (infer)** – to arrive at a conclusion with the material you have read, an educated guess
- imagery** – the use of vivid or figurative language to represent objects, actions, or ideas

## LISTENING AND VIEWING

### Conventions

- ❑ Listen to and view a variety of peer speeches and presentations to analyze for key factors (Example: main idea, significant details, fact and opinion, bias, propaganda\*, argumentation\*, or support).
- ❑ Demonstrate the appropriate social skills of audience behavior and critically examine the verbal and non-verbal strategies in the communication process.

### Response

- ❑ React to a speaker's intent and apply a speaker's reasoning to other situations and topics.
- ❑ Respond thoughtfully to both classic and contemporary texts recognized for quality and literary merit.
- ❑ Paraphrase a speaker's main ideas, purpose, and point of view, and ask relevant questions about the content, delivery, and purpose of the presentation.
- ❑ Analyze oral interpretations of literature such as language choice, delivery, and the effect of the interpretations on the listener.
- ❑ Respond to multiple texts when listened to or viewed by speaking, illustrating, and/or writing in order to anticipate and answer questions, to determine personal and universal themes, and to offer opinions or solutions.
- ❑ Evaluate the credibility of a speaker by determining whether the speaker may have hidden agendas or be otherwise biased.
- ❑ Interpret and analyze the various ways in which visual image-makers such as graphic artists, illustrators communicate information and affect impressions and opinions.

## WRITING

### Writing Genres

- ❑ Write a narrative piece that includes appropriate conventions\* for genres such as historical fiction, science fiction, realistic fiction and contains literary and plot devices (examples: narrator credibility, rising and falling actions, and/or conflict, transitional language, and imagery).
- ❑ Write an historical expository piece such as a journal, biography or simulated memoir that includes appropriate organization, illustrations, marginal notes, and/or annotations\*.
- ❑ Formulate research questions that demonstrate critical evaluation of multiple resources and perspectives and arguments/counterarguments that end in a presented, final project.

### Writing Process

- ❑ Set a purpose, consider audience, and replicate authors' styles and patterns when writing narrative or informational text.
- ❑ Apply a variety of pre-writing strategies for narrative text (example: story maps designed to depict rising and falling actions, roles of minor characters, credibility of narrator) and informational text (examples: compare/contrast, cause and effect, sequential text patterns).
- ❑ Experiment with various ways of sequencing information such as ordering arguments, sequencing ideas chronologically or by importance.
- ❑ Review and revise compositions for coherence and consistency regarding word choice, cause and effect, and style, then read his/her own work from another reader's perspective in the interest of clarity.
- ❑ Edit his/her writing both individually and in peer editing groups, using proofreaders' checklists.



### Personal Style

- Exhibit individual style to enhance the written message (example: in narrative text: personification, humor, element of surprise; in informational text: emotional appeal, strong opinion, credible support).

### Grammar and Usage

- Use style conventions such as the Modern Language Association\* (MLA) and a variety of grammatical structures in his/her writing including infinitives\*, gerunds\*, participial phrases, and dashes or ellipsis\*.

### Spelling

- Use correct spelling conventions.

### Handwriting

- Be legible in compositions.

### Writing Attitude

- Be enthusiastic about writing.

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## SPEAKING

### Conventions

- Use enunciation\* and stress to emphasize key ideas and concepts when presenting.
- Use body language such as gestures, posture, and facial expressions, along with tone of voice, and pace of speaking to enhance meaning and influence interpretation when presenting.
- Present work in standard American English or his/her developing version of standard American English if in the process of learning the language.

### Discourse\*

- Engage in interactive, extended discourse to socially construct meaning by participating in book clubs, literature circles, partnerships or other types of conversation groupings.
- Discuss multiple text types in order to explore problems and pose solutions, take a stand on an issue and support it, and identify personally with a universal theme.
- Discuss written narratives such as biographies\* and autobiographies\* which contain a variety of literary and plot devices (examples: description of relevant situations, well-chosen details, relevant dialogue, specific action, physical description of characters).
- Plan and deliver an informational presentation that incorporates precise, interesting and vivid language. The presentation is organized logically to deliver the message, includes persuasive non-verbal techniques such as voice modulation, expression, tone, appropriate pace, and makes use of rhetorical\* strategies to support the purpose and to positively impact the intended audience.  
Examples:
  - supportive narratives
  - key information
  - vivid descriptions

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