



LITERACY

WHAT 8TH GRADERS ARE LEARNING



Throughout the school year, 8th grade students will spend the most time working on the following topics. They should understand them well by the end of the year.

Reading, writing, speaking, and listening:

- Reading grade level texts smoothly and with expression, at a fluency rate of around 175 words per minute by the end of the year.
- Asking and answering questions about stories and texts read independently. Summarizing what happened in what was read; analyzing how a text makes connections or distinctions between ideas, characters, or events; and citing specific evidence to show how they know. Questioning the author's or speaker's assumptions. Determining the accuracy of statements they have heard or read.
- Citing the evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what is explicitly stated and/or implied from a book, article, poem, or play.
- Analyzing where materials on the same topic disagree on matters of fact, interpretation, or point of view.
- Determining or clarifying the meaning of unknown words, **synonyms**, **antonyms**, and **figures of speech** (irony, puns). Determining or clarifying the meaning of words with similar but not identical meaning (for example, "bullheaded," "willful," "firm," "persistent," "resolute") based on how they are used in context.
- Making and justifying a claim or argument in writing or discussion. Supporting claims with precise and relevant evidence from credible sources. Demonstrating a thorough understanding of the topic or text.
- Showing something new they have learned from a text or about a topic. This can be in any form – speaking and conversation, letters, journals, stories, diagrams, reports, or essays – and should include sufficient additional detail that fits the form they have chosen.
- Writing in response to text, including an introduction and **thesis statement**; examples that are linked, logically ordered, and grouped; a conclusion; and mostly accurate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.



TALKING ABOUT LITERACY WITH YOUR 8TH GRADER

- Encourage your 8th grader to choose a book they want to read on their own each day. Reading lots of books over time is more important than the type of text. Let your 8th grader pick based on their interests and what makes them excited to read.
- Pick a topic to learn about together. Read books, look online, or do short research projects together. Ask what they learned in their reading. Have them present or share with you, with friends, or with family members.
- Encourage regular writing: keeping a journal, writing letters or emails, and/or taking notes on what they are learning. Encourage your 8th grader to write to you, and then write back to them.
- Listen to podcasts together, or encourage your 8th grader to listen to podcasts of their choice and tell you about what they cover. There is a wide range of podcasts available. Consider the following sampling for a range of topics and types: "But Why: A Podcast for Curious Kids;" "Code Switch;" and "The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel."