Milford Public Schools Curriculum

Department: English Language Arts
Course Name: Grade 8 English Language Arts
Course Description:

The goal of the English language arts is to provide students multiple opportunities to read, create, discuss, and analyze varied text through multiple genres. Students in the Milford Public Schools engage in a balanced literacy approach to reading and writing. Through the readers and writers workshop students participate in interactive read alouds, independent reading and writing, book clubs, targeted small group instruction, and reading and writing conferences.

Organization and Rationale for ELA Middle School Units of Study
Each unit supports components of the CCS (Connecticut Core Standards) in Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, Speaking and Listening, and Language.

Concept- Based Units of Study
Based on the work of H. Lynn Erickson (2002) and Louis Lanning (2013), concept based units of study allow students and teachers to explore literature and informational text under a common universal theme, or concept. The concept units of study are centered around broad concepts that are timeless, for example Diversity, Identity, and Resilience.

Genre Study Units of Study
Based on the work of Fountas and Pinnell (2012), genre study allows students to explore varied genres and to develop a deep understanding of specific genres as both a reader and a writer.

UNIT 1
Unit Title: Launching the Readers and Writers Workshop (Mini Unit) Unit Description: The focus of this unit is for students to create an identity as readers through understanding their interests and ability. Students will explore their personal strengths, interests, and motivations and apply the knowledge to find appropriate texts. Students will demonstrate their skills and strategies through journal entries, reading an independent book and conferences with the teacher. Students will write book reviews to share their reading experience with the larger reading community.
LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding(s):	Essential Question(s):
- Readers in a community learn how to discuss, analyze, and compare multiple texts independently and with other readers. - Readers employ a variety of comprehension strategies to gain deeper insight into the text. - Readers generate higher level thinking questions to guide their reading, thinking, and writing surrounding texts. - Readers reflect on their own practices on reading and writing and construct learning	- How do I see myself as a critical reader? - How do I become a more critical reader? - How do we become a reading and writing community that develops routines and goals? - What strategies do readers and writers use to help them read, understand, and engage in conversations when responding to texts? - How do we build a reading and writing community that is supportive and collaborative?

| goals.
 • Readers will examine the author's intention and purpose for writing.
 • Writers in a community use the writing process for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. | • What is the writing process?
 • What techniques and strategies do authors use to craft their writing? |

Content and Skills:

Students will be able to:
- Create a reading identity within a larger reading community in the classroom.
- Establish routines and expectations of Readers and Writers Workshop.
- Independently select an appropriate text.
- Explore the different genres of literature.
- Respond to text clearly and cohesively.
- Apply reading strategies to strengthen reading and build comprehension.
- Employ strategies and techniques to write and respond to texts.

Standards Addressed:

Connecticut Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1
Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2
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 the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

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

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.7
Conduct short 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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1
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.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.b
Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.c
Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with

relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.d
Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4
Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

UNIT 2

Unit Title: Concept: Identity

Unit Description:

The focus for this unit is for students to understand how characters' identities are shaped by their desires, personal motivations, conflicts, experiences, and interactions with others. Students will analyze the elements of literature that will serve as the foundation for the rest of the year. Students will understand the craft of writing and the way an author uses it to engage the reader. Ultimately, students will use their knowledge to write their own original short story after analyzing multiple short stories.

LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding(s):

- Fiction allows authors to present a vast and colorful array of human lives and experiences to their readers.
- Authors use realistic details to create believable characters, plot, setting, and conflicts.
- A person's identity is shaped by their choices, experiences, and relationships.

Essential Question(s):

- How do authors use their craft to engage their readers?
- How does fiction allow us to understand everyday problems?
- What is the relationship between fiction and truth?
- How do a person's choices, experiences, and relationships shape their identity?

Content and Skills:

Students will be able to
- Utilize the methods of characterization to evaluate the character's actions in the story.
- Identify the different types of conflict in a story and analyze how they propel the action and reveal aspects of a character.
- Identify a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.
- Identify figurative language and explain its meaning in a text.
- Cite and explain textual evidence that supports their analysis of theme, character, conflict, etc. using appropriate MLA citations.

Standards Addressed:

Connecticut Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1
Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2
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 the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3
Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4
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 and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.5
Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.5
With some guidance and support from peers and adults, 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.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1
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.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4
Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.6
Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4
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.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.6
Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

UNIT 3

Unit Title: Concept: Stereotypes and Perceptions

Unit Description: The focus of this unit is for students to understand that realistic fiction enables readers to learn from the struggles and experiences of others. Students will analyze realism, stereotypes, perceptions, point of view, the importance of primary and secondary characters, conflict, the elements of plot, and theme. Furthermore, students will analyze how the main character in the novel overcomes stereotypes. Ultimately, students demonstrate their knowledge by writing an argumentative essay, either based on the mentor text or their book club novel.

LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding(s):

- Realistic fiction enables readers to learn from the struggles and experiences of others.
- Characters and plot development are essential aspects of realistic fiction.
- Realistic fiction challenges readers to identify, relate, and connect to common themes.

Essential Question(s):

- How do author's turn realistic ideas and experiences into interesting stories?
- How do stereotypes and perceptions shape characters?
- What can we learn from the experiences of others?
- How do social and economic status influence language, dress, and opportunity for characters?
- How are we similar or different from the characters we read about?

Content and Skills:
Students will be able to:
- Determine a theme or central idea of an entire novel and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.
- Analyze the different types of conflicts and how they impact the characters and plot.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings.
- Identify how characters are impacted by social class, economic status, stereotypes, and peer pressure.

Standards Addressed:

Connecticut Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2
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 the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4

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 and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1
Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.5
With some guidance and support from peers and adults, 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.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.5
Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.6
Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

UNIT 4
Unit Title: Genre Study: Drama Unit Description: The focus of this unit is for students to interact with text and understand that plays are written to be performed. Students will analyze elements of drama: characters, scenery, stage direction, action, monologue and dialogue. Students will understand that plays can be realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy fiction, mystery, crime, or romance. They will also be introduced to the time period of William Shakespeare and *Midsummer Night's Dream*.
LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding(s):

- A play is written to be performed rather than just read.
- Genre influences the way readers engage with and interpret a play.
- Setting and audience influence the use of language.
- Playwrights employ structure, figurative language, and images to elicit an intended response from the audience.
- Playwrights utilize precise language to reveal a

Essential Question(s):

- What elements make a play well written and enduring?
- How are historical, economic, and cultural aspects of society reflected in a play?
- How does a playwright use the conventions of drama to convey universal themes?

character's traits.

Content and Skills:

Students will be able to:
- Identify the key elements of a play.
- Explain the difference between comedy and tragedy.
- Identify the tone and mood of scenes in the play.
- Explain how authors use figurative language.
- Explain how a play is different from other genres.
- Recognize humor and puns in the play.
- Summarize different plot lines in a play.
- Determine themes and analyze its development over the course of the play.
- Explain how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a play propel the action and reveal aspects of a character.

Standards Addressed:

Connecticut Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2
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 the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3
Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4
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 and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6
Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.7
Conduct short 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.

UNIT 5

Unit Title: Concept: Resilience

Unit Description: The focus of this unit is for students to learn about the theme of resilience by reading different texts revolving around the time period of WWII the Holocaust. Students will work in book clubs to analyze the characters, conflicts, and theme while identifying examples of resilience. Students will also be introduced to Anne Frank and read excerpts of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Students will write an expository essay exploring connections across multiple narrative and informational texts.

LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding(s):

- Themes in literature reflect worldwide social and economic change.
- People's experiences impact their ability to be resilient and overcome adversity
- People have responsibilities as human beings to protect the rights of others
- An individual's actions can have a greater impact on their community
- It is important to learn about historical events and how they impact the future

Essential Question(s):

- How does learning about a person's experience with adversity change the way you live your life?
- How are people influenced by society?
- How can individuals and societies remember and commemorate difficult events in history?
- What motivates people to persevere in the face of adversity?

Content and Skills:

Students will be able to:

- Understand how a setting influences character's behavior and motivations
- Identify Character v. society conflicts and analyze how conflict influences a plotline
- Research and gain background knowledge of historical events to set a context for historical fiction (The Holocaust)
- Identify the difference between non-fiction (informational text) and historical fiction (narratives that are influenced by historical events, time period, or major social event)
- Explain how the character v. society conflict in their novel impacts the main character.
- Explain how the characters in the novel demonstrate resilience.
- Analyze how the setting of the novel impacts the character's actions and decisions.
- Analyze how the character's relationships within the novel influence the plotline and move the novel forward.

Standards Addressed:

Connecticut Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2
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 the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3
Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6
Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1
Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2
Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its

relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.3
Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.6
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.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.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.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.5
With some guidance and support from peers and adults, 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.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.6
Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.3
Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

UNIT 6

Unit Title: Genre Study: Dystopia

Unit Description: The focus of this unit is for students to understand that science fiction raises questions about life and society. Students will analyze works in this genre, focusing on theme, tone, mood, symbolism and structure. Furthermore, students will utilize their knowledge of characterization to investigate the concept of morality in the novels they read. Students will assign and create an independent project based on the themes taught through the genre of dystopian literature.

LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding(s):

- Dystopian and Utopian literature uses realistic details to create a sense of urgency within the novel
- Science fiction raises questions about human behavior questioning ethics and humanitarianism.
- Communities and individuals within communities need a moral compass in order to live in a community peacefully.

Essential Question(s):

- What questions does science fiction raise about life itself?
- Is creating a "perfect community" possible? Why or why not?
- How does science fiction disprove the possibility of a utopia existing?
- How is morality integral to society?

Content and Skills:

- Engage in critical discourse with peers asking and answering complex questions about text (as modeled in the essential questions)
- Closely read text and use reading strategies to document thinking
- Explore how context and setting influence a novel
- Analyze character development throughout a novel
- Using a mentor text, engage in text analysis individually and with peers
- Analyze the development of theme over the course of an extended text
- Use textual evidence to support claims made about a novel
- Engage in small group discussions around a text
- Analyze and discuss conflict (concentration on man vs. society
- Identify the characteristics of dystopian and utopian literature
- Analyze how the setting of the science fiction novel affects the plot and conflicts.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the society in their science fiction novel.
- Students will be able to define, identify, and analyze the symbolism and tone/mood as literary devices

Standards Addressed:

Connecticut Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2
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 the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3
Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4
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 and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6
Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.