

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA



Original Adoption:	August 2025
Created by:	Amy LaBarca and Dariaknna Yencer

OCEAN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL 8th Grade ELA Curriculum	
Content Area: English Language Arts	
Course Title: ELA	
Grade Level: 8th Grade	
Unit Title 8th Grade StudySync Pacing Guide	Pacing Guide in Days
Unit Plan 1: Everyone Loves a Mystery Diversity and Inclusion Narrative Writing	30 Days
Unit Plan 2: Past and Present Interdisciplinary Connections: Social Studies Civil Rights/Amistad, Diversity and Inclusion Argumentative Writing	30 Days
Unit Plan 3: No Risk, No Reward Interdisciplinary Connections: Social Studies Amistad, Climate Change, Diversity and Inclusion Literary Analysis Explanatory/Informational Writing	30 Days
Unit Plan 4: Hear Me Out Diversity and Inclusion, Amistad, Literary Analysis	30 Days

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

<u>Unit Plan 5:</u> Trying Times Holocaust/Genocide, Diversity and Inclusion, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders LGBTQ & Disabilities	30 Days
<u>Unit Plan 6:</u> Beyond Reality Diversity and Inclusion, Climate Change Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders Holocaust/Genocide,	30 Days

OCEAN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL Unit 1 Overview	
Content Area: English Language Arts	
Unit Title: Everyone Loves a Mystery	Duration: Days 30
Target Course/Grade Level: 8th Grade Honors	
Introduction/Unit Focus: This unit immerses students in the world of suspense fiction, guided by some of the most iconic masters of the genre. Students will encounter chilling short stories by Edgar Allan Poe, Shirley Jackson, and W.W. Jacobs-writers known for their ability to unsettle readers and build tension through psychological twists and shocking endings. The unit also features a personal essay by Alfred Hitchcock, the legendary filmmaker often called the “master of suspense,” who reveals his secrets for keeping an audience on edge. Adding a modern twist, students will read an excerpt of a suspenseful novel presented in screenplay format by award-winning YA author Walter Dean Myers, allowing them to explore suspense in multiple literary forms. Throughout the unit, students will participate in an independent reading assignment that complements the suspense and mystery themes present in both fiction and nonfiction selections. In addition to their reading and writing tasks, students will work toward a culminating Extended Project that showcases their understanding of suspense as a literary technique. Reading Skills: As they read a variety of suspense-driven texts, students will analyze how authors create tension, build atmosphere, and reveal plot twists. They will explore elements such as foreshadowing, pacing, and unreliable narration, comparing how these techniques are used across genres including short stories, screenplays, and personal essays. Students will be challenged to think critically about the role of setting, character development, and tone in developing suspense. Their independent reading assignments will allow them to apply these	

analytical skills to texts of their own choosing, strengthening their comprehension and literary analysis.

Writing Skills

Moving from readers to creators, students will apply what they've learned about suspense to their own narrative writing. They will plan and draft original suspense stories, incorporating literary techniques that they observed in the mentor texts. Emphasis will be placed on crafting effective openings, building tension through structure and detail, and delivering satisfying or surprising conclusions. By the end of the unit, students will share their narratives with peers as part of a culminating experience, demonstrating not only their understanding of the suspense genre but also their growth as creative writers.

Disciplinary Concepts for the Unit

Standard 9.1 Personal Financial Literacy

This standard outlines the important fiscal knowledge, habits, and skills that must be mastered in order for students to make informed decisions about personal finance. Financial literacy is an integral component of a student's college and career readiness, enabling students to achieve fulfilling, financially-secure, and successful careers.

Standard 9.2 Career Awareness, Exploration, Preparation and Training

This standard outlines the importance of being knowledgeable about one's interests and talents, and being well informed about postsecondary and career options, career planning, and career requirements.

Standard 9.4 Life Literacies and Key Skills

This standard outline key literacies and technical skills such as critical thinking, global and cultural awareness, and technology literacy* that are critical for students to develop to live and work in an interconnected global economy.

Standard 8.1 Computer Science

Computer Science outlines a comprehensive set of concepts and skills, such as data and analysis, algorithms and programming, and computing systems.

Standard 8.2 Design Thinking

Technology, outlines the technological design concepts and skills essential for technological and engineering literacy. The framework design includes Engineering Design, Ethics and Culture, and the Effects of Technology on the Natural world among the disciplinary concepts

Amistad Law: N.J.S.A. 18A 52:16A-88 Every board of education shall incorporate the information regarding the contributions of African-Americans to our country in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students.

Holocaust Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-28 Every board of education shall include instruction on the Holocaust and genocide in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary school pupils. The instruction shall further emphasize the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.

LGBT and Disabilities Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35 A board of education shall include instruction on the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, in an appropriate place in the curriculum of middle school and high school students as part of the district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (N.J.S.A.18A:35-4.36) A board of education shall have policies and procedures in place pertaining to the selection of instructional materials to implement the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35.

Diversity and Inclusion: C.18A:35-4.36a Curriculum to include instruction on diversity and inclusion.

The instruction shall:

- (1) highlight and promote diversity, including economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance;
- (2) examine the impact that unconscious bias and economic disparities have at both an individual level and on society as a whole; and
- (3) encourage safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students regardless of race or ethnicity, sexual and gender identities, mental and physical disabilities, and religious beliefs.
- (4) Investigate the roles and responsibilities of citizenship, including creating positive social change.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI)

Ensures that the contributions, history, and heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are included in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) for Social Studies in kindergarten through Grade 12 (P.L.2021, c.416).

21st Century Themes:

"Twenty-first century themes and skills" means themes such as global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy; learning and innovation skills, including creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration; information, media, and technology skills; and life and career skills, including flexibility. Career readiness, life literacies, and key skills education provides students with the necessary skills to make informed career and financial decisions, engage as responsible community members in a digital society, and to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities in an interconnected global economy."

[New Jersey Student Learning Standards-ELA](#)

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

Focus Standards	
Reading Literature	
(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	RL.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RL.CI.8.2. Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	RL.TS.8.4. Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	RL.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in	RL.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	in different mediums, including the representation/s or various perspectives of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	RL.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.

Reading Informational Text

(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RI.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene,	RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	RI.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	RI.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.
(AA) Analysis of an Argument: By the end of grade 12, evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning, the credibility and accuracy of each source as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	RI.AA.8.7. 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.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
Writing	
(AW) Argumentative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	W.AW.8.1. Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. A. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources. C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. D. Establish and maintain a formal or academic style, approach, and form. E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
(IW) Informative and Explanatory Writing: By the end of grade 12, write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. A. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension. B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. C. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. D. Use precise language and domain/grade-level-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. E. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form. F. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.
(NW) Narrative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write narratives to	W.NW.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique,

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. 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. D. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. E. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
(WP) Writing Process: By the end of grade 12, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, and publishing.	W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
(WR) Writing Research: By the end of grade 12, conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	W.WR.8.5. 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.
(SE) Sources of Evidence: By the end of grade 12, gather relevant information and evidence from multiple sources to support analysis, reflection, and research, while assessing the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrating the information while avoiding plagiarism.	W.SE.8.6. 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.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

(RW) Range of Writing: By the end of grade 12, 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 tasks, purposes, and audiences.	W.RW.8.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Speaking and Listening	
(PE) Participate Effectively: By the end of grade 12, prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	SL.PE.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. 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. B. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. C. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. D. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
(II) Integrate Information: By the end of grade 12, integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	SL.II.8.2. 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.
(ES) Evaluate Speakers: By the end of grade 12, evaluate a speaker's point of view,	SL.ES.8.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.	evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
(PI) Present Information: By the end of grade 12, present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	SL.PI.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.
(UM) Use Media: By the end of grade 12, make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.	SL.UM.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
(AS) Adapt Speech: By the end of grade 12, adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
Language	
Conventions of Standard English	L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking. A. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. B. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. C. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. D. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood. E. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break. F. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	G. Recognize spelling conventions.
(KL) Knowledge of Language: By the end of grade 12, apply knowledge of language and command of vocabulary to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. B. Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. C. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
(VL) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Literal Meaning: By the end of grade 12, determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words using analysis of word parts (morphemes), word solving strategies, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.	L.VL.8.3. 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. B. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. C. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). D. Consult 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. E. 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).
(VI) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Interpretative Meaning: By the end of grade 12, interpret figurative and connotative word meanings, including shades of meaning based on word relationships and context.	L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. B. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	C. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. D. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Interdisciplinary Connections <u>2020 NJSLS Social Studies</u>	
6.1 U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.	
Fundamental rights are derived from the inherent worth of each individual and include civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights	6.1.8.CivicsHR.4.a: Examine sources from a variety of perspectives to describe efforts to reform education, women's rights, slavery, and other issues during the Antebellum period
Governments have different structures which impact development (expansion) and civic participation	6.3.8.CivicsPI.3 Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to examine the role of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a local or global issue and share this information with a governmental or nongovernmental organization as a way to gain support for addressing the issue.
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills</u>	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and statement)
Individuals can use their talents, resources, and abilities to give back.	9.1.8.CR.2: Compare various ways to give back through strengths, passions, goals, and other personal factors.
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Computer Science and Design Thinking</u>	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
People use digital devices and tools to automate the collection, use, and transformation of data.	8.1.8.DA.1: Organize and transform data collected using computational tools to make it usable for a specific purpose.
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Climate Change Mandate</u>	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
Gathering and evaluating	9.4.8.CI.1: Assess data gathered on varying

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.	perspectives on causes of climate change (e.g., cross-cultural, gender-specific, generational), and determine how the data can best be used to design multiple potential solutions.
Multiple solutions often exist to solve a problem.	9.4.8.CT.1: Evaluate diverse solutions proposed by a variety of individuals, organizations, and/or agencies to a local or global problem, such as climate change and use critical thinking skills to predict which one(s) are likely to be effective. 9.4.8.CT.2: Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option (e.g., MS-ETS1-4, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.1).
Digital technology and data can be leveraged by communities to address effects of climate change.	9.4.8.DC.8: Explain how communities use data and technology to develop measures to respond to effects of climate change (e.g., smart cities).
Sources of information are evaluated for accuracy and relevance when considering the use of information.	9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8). 9.4.8.IML.8: Apply deliberate and thoughtful search strategies to access high-quality information on climate change (e.g., 1.1.8.C1b).

Knowledge and Skills

Unit Learning Targets (Objectives):

Students will be able to...

Reading Skills:

- Explore background information and research links to craft brief, insightful responses (e.g., 140-character format).
- Use reading comprehension strategies to understand and engage with increasingly complex texts.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Apply context clues (definition, comparison, contrast, examples) to determine word meanings.
- Make and confirm predictions to support comprehension.
- Generate questions before, during, and after reading to build understanding.
- Write annotations to ask questions, track ideas, and respond directly to the text.
- Identify and explain key ideas and details within a text.
- Determine a theme or central idea and analyze its development throughout a text, including connections to setting.
- Cite strong textual evidence to support explicit understanding and inferences.
- Analyze how an author's word choice and tone affect meaning and style in fiction.
- Examine the impact of setting and allusions on theme development in fiction.
- Understand how dialogue and story structure move the plot forward.
- Identify genre-specific elements of mystery, fantasy, and realistic fiction.
- Compare and contrast texts in terms of structure, meaning, and style.
- Analyze how modern fiction draws on traditional themes or archetypes and transforms them.
- Participate in collaborative conversations and reflect on discussions through written responses.
- Compare and contrast sources across genres to deepen comprehension.
- Understand and evaluate the author's purpose and point of view.
- Analyze the development of main ideas in informational texts and respond with textual evidence.
- Demonstrate comprehension by writing short responses that connect personally to texts, especially poetry.
- Understand how story elements (character, setting, events) contribute to plot and theme.
- Identify how setting details contribute to the tone or genre (e.g., suspense or mystery).

Writing Skills:

- Plan and write clear, organized responses to prompts, including brief written analyses and extended constructed responses.
- Analyze a sample student model to prepare a thoughtful narrative response.
- Organize narrative writing using descriptive details and logical sequence.
- Write engaging story beginnings that establish context and draw the reader in.
- Use precise and relevant sensory language to depict actions and events effectively.
- Use transition words, phrases, and clauses to show sequence and shifts in time or setting.
- Provide strong conclusions that reflect on the events and experiences in the narrative.
- Revise narrative drafts using a revision guide to enhance clarity, organization, sentence variety, and diction.
- Edit and publish polished final drafts.
- Respond to questions using clear textual support in both short and extended responses.
- Write short responses analyzing how setting and structure affect theme and tone.
- Participate in peer review using constructive, specific feedback strategies.

Language Skills:

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Recognize and apply academic vocabulary across contexts.
- Use newly acquired vocabulary words accurately and appropriately in speaking and writing.
- Practice using context clues and word relationships to define unfamiliar words.
- Understand and apply basic spelling rules.
- Use hyphens and dashes correctly in writing.
- Use commas appropriately, especially after transitions and introductory elements.
- Identify and apply various language structures in written and oral communication.
- Edit drafts for grammar, punctuation, and usage to ensure clarity and correctness.

Enduring Understandings:

Students will know...

- Collaborative learning techniques
- Literary elements: (theme or central idea, relationship of character, setting, or plot)
- Sequencing
- Compare/contrast methods
- Conflict/ resolution
- Academic and High Frequency vocabulary strategies
- Identify meaning of words based on context
- Close reading strategies for literature
- Prose-Constructed response format
- Oral presentation skills
- Conventions of electronic texts and other media
- How to integrate technology
- Conventions of standard English
- How to successfully incorporate writing strategies to develop narrative descriptive, and speculative writing
- Apply grammar conventions including functions of verbals, forms of verbs, verb active/passive voice and mood, punctuation (commas, ellipses and dash), and spelling

Unit Essential Questions:

- What attracts us to the mysterious?

Instructional Plan

Suggested Activities	Resources/Texts
➤ Literary Analysis Writing, ➤ Collaborative Conversations ➤ Introduce Independent reading assignment recognizing Genre: Fiction, Academic Vocabulary ➤ Character, ➤ Textual Evidence,	StudySync Anchor Texts: The Tell-Tale Heart Monster Let 'Em Play God Sympathy Ten Days in a Mad-House The Lottery The Graveyard Book

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

➤ Narrative Writing, ➤ Collaborative Conversations ➤ Textual Evidence ➤ Author's Purpose and Point of View ➤ Literary Analysis Writing ➤ Personal Response and Point of View, ➤ Compare and contrast, ➤ Textual evidence, ➤ Comparative Writing ➤ Collaborative Conversations ➤ Making and Confirming Predictions, ➤ Theme, ➤ Allusion, ➤ Textual Evidence ➤ Literary Analysis Writing, ➤ Collaborative Conversations ➤ Days Plot, Story ➤ Structure, Textual Evidence, ➤ Character, ➤ Comparative Writing, ➤ Collaborative Conversations ➤ Days Central or Main Idea, ➤ Textual Evidence, ➤ Write: Analyzing Genre, Author's Purpose and Point View ➤ Informative Writing ➤ Self-Selected Reading and Response ➤ Independent Reading, ➤ Personal Response Writing ➤ End-of-unit Assessment ➤ Extended Oral/Writing Project	The Conjure-Man Dies: A Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem The Monkey's Paw Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science Trade Books/Paired Reading for Book Clubs/Workshop Model : Monster Great Tales and Poems Ten Days in a Madhouse Additional Suggested Supplemental reading: The Raven Annabel Lee
--	---

Evidence of Student Learning

Formative Assessments:

- Think Questions,
- Close read skills focus question,
- Collaborative conversation,
- Peer review,
- Short-response questions: Blasts,
- Digital reading comprehension questions,
- Test-talk/turn and talk,
- Writers' notebook
- Core ELAR: Comparative Reading and Writing lessons
- "Beyond the Book" activities: Writing prompts
- Academic Vocabulary in Context
- Beyond Text Talk: Facilitate own discussions

- Connect to Extended Writing Project- Activities & Skills practice
- StudySync TV
- Analyze for Enrichment

Summative Assessments

- End of Unit Assessment
- Oral Presentation
- Literary Analysis Task
- Narrative Writing Task
- Explanatory/Informative Writing Task

Benchmark Assessments:

- Screening and Diagnostic
- StudySync Benchmarks are administered 3 times per year: fall, winter and spring
- Writing Benchmark
- Achieve 3000 Level Set Assessment (Basic Skills Only)
- DRA2 (Basic Skills Only)

Alternative Assessments:

- CommonLit
- Independent novel study
- Self-selected reading materials/vocabulary
- Stations and workshops
- Socratic Seminar
- Silent Seminar
- Discussion Board (Google Classroom)

Performance Tasks:

- Narrative writing
- Response to text-literary analysis

Suggested Options for Differentiation and Modifications

Special Education

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- Choral reading
- Chants, songs
- Preferential seating
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow all IEP modifications
- Scribe for students who can't write
- Augmentative communication system
- Shorten/modify number and types of questions
- Scaffolds tab within each unit
- Leveled texts
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio highlight tool
- Audio speed
- Visually stimulating multimedia content
- Summaries
- Visual glossaries
- Words Banks
- Differentiated questions

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Involve families in student learning
- Respect cultural traditions
- Provide students with necessary academic resources and materials
- Allow for alternative assignments
- Provide visuals
- Assign peer tutor
- Collaborate with language professionals and ESL teachers
- Encourage parents to help children maintain their native language at home, while the school helps the child attain proficiency in English.
- Establish a positive connection with parent
- Utilize closed captioning when available
- Provide road maps or outlines for difficult concepts
- Provide sufficient wait time before calling on any student to help keep students who may need more time engaged
- Display a word wall with current academic vocabulary in each subject
- Speak clearly and slowly, avoid slang and idiomatic expressions
- Create a nurturing environment with structured routines

Students with 504 Plan

- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow 504 plan
- Scribe for students who can't write

- Augmentative communication system

Students at Risk for Failure

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- choral reading
- chants, songs
- preferential seating

Gifted and Talented:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Encourage upper level intellectual behavior based on Bloom’s Taxonomy (analyzing, evaluating, creating)
- Do not always be explicit, allow for discovery
- Use centers and group students according to ability or interest
- Propose interest-based extension activities
- Use leveled texts and offer an advanced reader reading list
- Ask “why” and “what if” questions
- Use varied modes of pre-assessment and assessment
- Create an enhanced set of introductory activities (e.g. advance organizers, concept maps, concept puzzles)
- Provide options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum
- Organize and offer flexible small group learning activities
- Provide whole group enrichment explorations
- Teach cognitive and methodological skills
- Use center, stations, or contracts
- Organize integrated problem-solving simulations
- Debrief students
- Propose interest-based extension activities

Multilingual Learner:

- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Pre Teach vocabulary
- Label items in classroom
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio speed

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

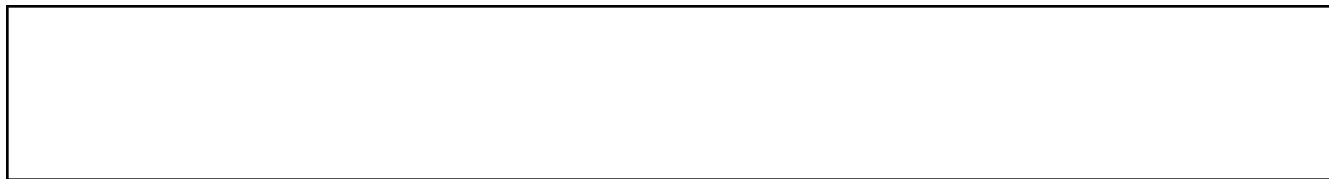
- Audio highlight
- Supplemental language
- Spanish cognates
- Visual glossaries
- Speaking frames
- Sentence frames

Supplemental Resources

- Instructional Materials
 - Skills/Standards Based Lessons as needed (Pacing Guide)
 - Introduction Blast: Blast Away!
 - Edgar Allan Poe Introduction Video:
 - Low Lexile Level Version of “Tell-Tale Heart”-
 - Blast: Everyone Loves a Mystery
 - Blast: Teen Talk
 - “Sympathy”- commonlit (Guided Reading Mode and Audio)
 - “The Lottery”- Commonlit (Guided Reading Mode and Audio)
 - “The Monkey’s Paw”- Commonlit (Guided Reading Mode and Audio)
 - “The Monkey’s Paw” (Lower Lexile Level) readinga-z.com
 - Blast: Life’s Great Mysteries
 - Additional Grammar Lessons:
 - Basic Spelling Rules II
 - Quotation Marks with Other Punctuation Marks
 - Collective Nouns
 - Main and Helping Verbs
- Supplemental Materials
 - Additional Blasts:
 - Poe, Evermore- If “The Tell-Tale Heart” spooked students, they will be inspired to read more about its author and to discuss the question, “Does Edgar Allan Poe still influence literature?”
 - Gone With the Wind- *The Conjure-Man Dies* may encourage students to explore a real-life mystery with this Blast that asks, “What explains the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle?”
 - R-E-S-P-E-C-T- Paul Laurence Dunbar’s plaintive evocation of an African American’s feelings in post-Civil War America predates the civil rights movement in this country. Students can read about a modern-day African American star of the entertainment world whose civil rights activism may surprise them in “How will Aretha Franklin be remembered?”
- Intervention Materials
 - Bridges to Literature/Interactive Reader Selections as Applicable
 - Scholastic/Scope Magazine as Applicable

Teacher Notes

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA



Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

OCEAN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL Unit 2 Overview	
Content Area: English Language Arts	
Unit Title: Past and Present	Duration: 30 Days
Target Course/Grade Level: 8th Grade ELA	
Introduction/Unit Focus: This unit invites students to explore how authors and speakers express themes of identity, community, and belonging across various literary forms. Through poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and speeches, students will examine how personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and social environments shape individual identity. Poets such as Yusef Komunyakaa, Robert Frost, and Natasha Trethewey use vivid imagery and figurative language to reflect on personal and collective experiences. Thanhha Lai offers a unique perspective on identity in her novel written in verse, while Swin Cash and Michelle Obama explore how mentors, challenges, and key moments have shaped their lives in a personal essay and speech, respectively. Fiction selections by Judith Ortiz Cofer and Sandra Cisneros further expand students' understanding by illustrating how fictional characters' identities are influenced by the world around them. Throughout the unit, students will engage in an independent reading assignment that connects to the core themes of the unit. They will also complete an Extended Project at the end of the unit, allowing them to synthesize their learning in a creative and reflective way. Reading Skills: Students will closely read a wide range of texts (poems, memoirs, essays, speeches, and short fiction) to analyze how authors use literary and rhetorical techniques to explore identity and belonging. They will focus on elements such as descriptive language, figurative devices, and tone, and will examine how point of view and structure contribute to a deeper understanding of each text. Students will also compare how different genres present similar themes, helping them make connections across texts and between literature and real life. Writing Skills: As students explore how identity is shaped and expressed, they will transition from analysis to argument. Drawing on the texts they've read, students will write a literary analysis essay that takes a clear stance on how identity is developed or influenced by external factors. They will learn how to support their claims with textual evidence from multiple sources, organize their arguments logically, and write with clarity and purpose. The writing process will include planning, drafting, revising, and finalizing a well-supported argumentative piece that demonstrates both critical thinking and personal insight.	
Disciplinary Concepts for the Unit	
Standard 9.1 Personal Financial Literacy	

This standard outlines the important fiscal knowledge, habits, and skills that must be mastered in order for students to make informed decisions about personal finance. Financial literacy is an integral component of a student's college and career readiness, enabling students to achieve fulfilling, financially-secure, and successful careers.

Standard 9.2 Career Awareness, Exploration, Preparation and Training

This standard outlines the importance of being knowledgeable about one's interests and talents, and being well informed about postsecondary and career options, career planning, and career requirements.

Standard 9.4 Life Literacies and Key Skills

This standard outline key literacies and technical skills such as critical thinking, global and cultural awareness, and technology literacy* that are critical for students to develop to live and work in an interconnected global economy.

Standard 8.1 Computer Science

Computer Science outlines a comprehensive set of concepts and skills, such as data and analysis, algorithms and programming, and computing systems.

Standard 8.2 Design Thinking

Technology, outlines the technological design concepts and skills essential for technological and engineering literacy. The framework design includes Engineering Design, Ethics and Culture, and the Effects of Technology on the Natural world among the disciplinary concepts

Amistad Law: N.J.S.A. 18A 52:16A-88 Every board of education shall incorporate the information regarding the contributions of African-Americans to our country in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students.

Holocaust Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-28 Every board of education shall include instruction on the Holocaust and genocide in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary school pupils. The instruction shall further emphasize the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.

LGBT and Disabilities Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35 A board of education shall include instruction on the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, in an appropriate place in the curriculum of middle school and high school students as part of the district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (N.J.S.A.18A:35-4.36) A board of education shall have policies and procedures in place pertaining to the selection of instructional materials to implement the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35.

Diversity and Inclusion: C.18A:35-4.36a Curriculum to include instruction on diversity and inclusion.

The instruction shall:

- (1) highlight and promote diversity, including economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance;
- (2) examine the impact that unconscious bias and economic disparities have at both an individual level and on society as a whole; and
- (3) encourage safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students regardless of race or ethnicity, sexual and gender identities, mental and physical disabilities, and religious beliefs.
- (4) Investigate the roles and responsibilities of citizenship, including creating positive social change.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI)

Ensures that the contributions, history, and heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are included in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) for Social Studies in kindergarten through Grade 12 (P.L.2021, c.416).

21st Century Themes:

“Twenty-first century themes and skills” means themes such as global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy; learning and innovation skills, including creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration; information, media, and technology skills; and life and career skills, including flexibility. Career readiness, life literacies, and key skills education provides students with the necessary skills to make informed career and financial decisions, engage as responsible community members in a digital society, and to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities in an interconnected global economy.”

[New Jersey Student Learning Standards-ELA](#)

Focus Standards

Reading Literature

(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

RL.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RL.CI.8.2. Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	RL.TS.8.4. Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	RL.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	RL.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums, including the representation/s or various perspectives of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build	RL.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	
Reading Informational Text	
(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RI.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or	RI.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	RI.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.
(AA) Analysis of an Argument: By the end of grade 12, evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning, the credibility and accuracy of each source as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	RI.AA.8.7. 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.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
Writing	
(AW) Argumentative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	W.AW.8.1. Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. F. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. G. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	H. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. I. Establish and maintain a formal or academic style, approach, and form. J. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
(IW) Informative and Explanatory Writing: By the end of grade 12, write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. G. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension. H. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. I. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. J. Use precise language and domain/grade-level-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. K. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form. L. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.
(NW) Narrative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	W.NW.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. F. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	G. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. H. 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. I. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. J. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
(WP) Writing Process: By the end of grade 12, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, and publishing.	W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
(WR) Writing Research: By the end of grade 12, conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	W.WR.8.5. 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.
(SE) Sources of Evidence: By the end of grade 12, gather relevant information and evidence from multiple sources to support analysis, reflection, and research, while assessing the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrating the information while avoiding plagiarism.	W.SE.8.6. 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.
(RW) Range of Writing: By the end of grade 12, write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time	W.RW.8.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Speaking and Listening	
(PE) Participate Effectively: By the end of grade 12, prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	SL.PE.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. E. 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. F. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. G. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. H. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
(II) Integrate Information: By the end of grade 12, integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	SL.II.8.2. 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.
(ES) Evaluate Speakers: By the end of grade 12, evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.	SL.ES.8.3. 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.
(PI) Present Information: By the end of grade 12, present information, findings, and	SL.PI.8.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
(UM) Use Media: By the end of grade 12, make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.	SL.UM.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
(AS) Adapt Speech: By the end of grade 12, adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
Language	
Conventions of Standard English	L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking. A. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. B. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. C. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. D. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood. E. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break. F. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission. G. Recognize spelling conventions.
(KL) Knowledge of Language: By the end of grade 12, apply knowledge of language and command of vocabulary to understand how language	L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	D. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. E. Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. F. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
(VL) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Literal Meaning: By the end of grade 12, determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words using analysis of word parts (morphemes), word solving strategies, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.	L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. F. 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. G. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. H. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). I. Consult 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. J. 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).
(VI) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Interpretative Meaning: By the end of grade 12, interpret figurative and connotative word meanings, including shades of meaning based on word relationships and context.	L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. E. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. F. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. G. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	H. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century: All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world	
Governments have different structures which impact development (expansion) and civic participation.	6.3.8.CivicsPI.3: Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to examine the role of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a local or global issue and share this information with a governmental or nongovernmental organization as a way to gain support for addressing the issue. Civil Rights/Amistad
Members of society have the obligation to become informed of the facts regarding public issues and to engage in honest, mutually respectful discourse to advance public policy solutions.	6.3.8.CivicsPD.3: Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues. Civil Rights/Amistad
In a democratic government, there are multiple processes by which individuals can influence the creation of rules, laws, and public policy	6.3.8.CivicsPR.3Take a position on an issue in which fundamental ideals and principles are in conflict (e.g., liberty, equality). Civil Rights/Amistad
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills</u>	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and statement)
The potential for building and using personal wealth includes responsibility to the broader community and an understanding of the legal rights and responsibilities of being a good citizen.	9.1.8.CR.3: Relate the importance of consumer, business, and government responsibility to the economy and personal finance. 9.1.8.CR.4: Examine the implications of legal and ethical behaviors when making financial decisions.
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Computer Science and Design Thinking</u>	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
People use digital devices and tools to automate the collection, use, and transformation of data.	8.1.8.DA.1: Organize and transform data collected using computational tools to make it usable for a specific purpose.
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Climate Change Mandate</u>	

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
Gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.	9.4.8.CI.1: Assess data gathered on varying perspectives on causes of climate change (e.g., cross-cultural, gender-specific, generational), and determine how the data can best be used to design multiple potential solutions.
Multiple solutions often exist to solve a problem.	9.4.8.CT.1: Evaluate diverse solutions proposed by a variety of individuals, organizations, and/or agencies to a local or global problem, such as climate change and use critical thinking skills to predict which one(s) are likely to be effective. 9.4.8.CT.2: Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option (e.g., MS-ETS1-4, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.1)
Digital technology and data can be leveraged by communities to address effects of climate change.	9.4.8.DC.8: Explain how communities use data and technology to develop measures to respond to effects of climate change (e.g., smart cities).
Sources of information are evaluated for accuracy and relevance when considering the use of information.	9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8). 9.4.8.IML.8: Apply deliberate and thoughtful search strategies to access high-quality information on climate change (e.g., 1.1.8.C1b).

Knowledge and Skills
Unit Learning Targets (Objectives): <i>Students will be able to...</i> Reading Skills: ➤ Respond to questions with concise, insightful answers using short responses. ➤ Identify and describe key characteristics and narrative elements of poetry and prose. ➤ Use reading comprehension strategies such as making inferences and visualizing to understand increasingly complex texts. ➤ Apply context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. ➤ Generate and answer questions before, during, and after reading to enhance understanding. ➤ Identify and restate the key ideas and details in a text.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Make inferences and support them using strong textual evidence.
- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or events in a story reveal character traits or move the plot forward.
- Cite the most relevant textual evidence to support both explicit and inferred meanings.
- Identify and describe how characters and setting contribute to plot development.
- Analyze how plot and theme are shaped by characters' decisions and responses to events.
- Identify details that support the development of the theme in a text.
- Compare and contrast how poetic structure contributes to meaning and style across multiple poems.
- Analyze how poetic elements such as figurative language, punctuation, line length, and structure contribute to theme and tone.
- Describe how poetic structure and allusions shape meaning in order to participate in discussions and written responses.
- Determine the main idea of an informational text and analyze how it is supported by specific details.
- Evaluate an author's argument and claims by analyzing the strength and relevance of supporting evidence.
- Participate in collaborative conversations using text-based evidence and critical thinking.
- Demonstrate comprehension by completing questions, joining discussions, and writing personal responses.

Writing Skills:

- Write short responses that analyze text structure, theme, character, and figurative language.
- Write a personal or analytical response to poetry, demonstrating understanding of poetic elements through a personal lens.
- Compose clear, organized literary analysis essays in response to prompts.
- Analyze a student writing model to guide planning and organization of literary analysis writing.
- Craft strong thesis statements that clearly state a central claim in response to a prompt.
- Introduce claims and distinguish them from opposing viewpoints in argumentative writing.
- Support claims with logical reasoning and relevant, credible textual evidence.
- Use transitions and linking words to show relationships among claims, counterclaims, and evidence.
- Maintain a formal style and objective tone in analytical writing.
- Write a conclusion that reflects and builds on the ideas presented in the body of the analysis.
- Apply a revision checklist to revise drafts for clarity, structure, diction, and sentence fluency.

Language Skills:

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Recognize and apply at least ten academic vocabulary words in multiple contexts.
- Analyze how authors use figurative language and word choice to achieve specific effects.
Describe how an author's use of language contributes to tone, meaning, and purpose.
- Use figurative language analysis as inspiration to write original short poems.
- Demonstrate understanding of proper punctuation, including hyphens, dashes, and commas following transitions.
- Apply correct spelling and grammar rules in writing.
- Use precise diction and sentence structures to enhance clarity and style.
- Edit and revise writing for language effectiveness and accuracy.

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- Collaborative learning techniques
- Literary elements: (theme or central idea, relationship of character, setting, or plot)
- Sequencing
- Compare/contrast methods
- Conflict/ resolution
- Academic and High Frequency vocabulary strategies
- Identify meaning of words based on context
- Close reading strategies for literature
- Prose-Constructed response format
- Oral presentation skills
- Conventions of electronic texts and other media
- How to integrate technology
- Conventions of standard English
- How to successfully incorporate writing strategies to develop narrative descriptive, and speculative writing
- Apply grammar conventions including functions of verbals, forms of verbs, verb active/passive voice and mood, punctuation (commas, ellipses and dash), and spelling)

Unit Essential Questions:

- What makes you, you?

Instructional Plan

Suggested Activities	Resources/Texts
➤ Recognizing Genre: Poetry , Academic Vocabulary, Write: Analyzing Genre ➤ Independent reading assignment ➤ Poetic Elements and Structure, Textual Evidence, Theme, Character, Poetry Writing ➤ Making inferences, Arguments and Claims, Textual Evidence, Author's Purpose and Point of View, Argumentative Writing	StudySync Anchor Texts: I'm Nobody! Who are you? Commencement Address to the Santa Fe Indian School Curtain Call, So Where are you From? The Outsiders Slam, Dunk & Hook

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

➤ Visualizing, Central or Main Idea, Textual Evidence, Comparative Writing ➤ Literary analysis Writing, Collaborative conversations ➤ Poetic Elements and Structure, Allusion, Textual Evidence, Discussion ➤ Plot, Theme, Textual Evidence, Narrative Writing ➤ Poetic Elements and Structure, ➤ Figurative Language ➤ Figurative Language, Summarizing, Write: Analyzing Genre, Textual Evidence, Argumentative Writing, Collaborative Conversations ➤ Self-Selected Reading and Response - Independent Reading, Personal Response Writing ➤ Skills Review - Complete one or more Spotlight skill lessons in order to improve understanding and further practice skills from the until that they found most challenging. ➤ End of Unit Assessment ➤ Extended Writing Project	Abuela Invents the Zero Inside Out and Back Again Theories of Time and Space The Road Not Taken The House on Mango Street Trade Books/Paired Reading for Book Clubs/Workshop Model : The Outsiders Inside Out & Back Again Additional Suggested Supplemental reading:
--	--

Evidence of Student Learning

Formative Assessments:

- Think Questions,
- Close read skills focus question,
- Collaborative conversation,
- Peer review, short-response questions: Blasts,
- Digital reading comprehension questions,
- Test-talk/turn and talk,
- Writers' notebook
- Core ELAR: Comparative Reading and Writing lessons
- "Beyond the Book" activities: Writing prompts
- Academic Vocabulary in Context
- Beyond Text Talk: Facilitate own discussions
- Connect to Extended Writing Project- Activities & Skills practice
- StudySync TV
- Analyze for Enrichment

Summative Assessments

- Summative Assessments
- End of Unit Assessment
- Oral Presentation
- Literary Analysis Task
- Research Simulation Task
- Writing Benchmark
- Argumentative Writing Task

Benchmark Assessments:

- Benchmark Assessments: Screening and Diagnostic
- StudySync Benchmarks are administered 3 times per year: fall, winter and spring
- Achieve 3000 Level Set Assessment (Basic Skills Only)
- DRA2 (Basic Skills Only)

Alternative Assessments:

- CommonLit,
- Independent novel study
- Self-selected reading materials/vocabulary
- Stations and workshops
- Socratic Seminar
- Silent Seminar
- Discussion Board (Google Classroom)

Performance Tasks:

- Argumentative Writing
- Literary Analysis

Suggested Options for Differentiation and Modifications

Special Education

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- Choral reading
- Chants, songs
- Preferential seating
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow all IEP modifications
- Scribe for students who can’t write
- Augmentative communication system
- Shorten/modify number and types of questions
- Scaffolds tab within each unit
- Leveled texts
- Screen reader
- Audio

- Audio highlight tool
- Audio speed
- Visually stimulating multimedia content
- Summaries
- Visual glossaries
- Words Banks
- Differentiated questions

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Involve families in student learning
- Respect cultural traditions
- Provide students with necessary academic resources and materials
- Allow for alternative assignments
- Provide visuals
- Assign peer tutor
- Collaborate with language professionals and ESL teachers
- Encourage parents to help children maintain their native language at home, while the school helps the child attain proficiency in English.
- Establish a positive connection with parent
- Utilize closed captioning when available
- Provide road maps or outlines for difficult concepts
- Provide sufficient wait time before calling on any student to help keep students who may need more time engaged
- Display a word wall with current academic vocabulary in each subject
- Speak clearly and slowly, avoid slang and idiomatic expressions
- Create a nurturing environment with structured routines

Students with 504 Plans

- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow 504 plan
- Scribe for students who can't write
- Augmentative communication system

Students at Risk for Failure

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Use a strong student as a "buddy" (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- choral reading
- chants, songs
- preferential seating

Gifted and Talented:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Encourage upper level intellectual behavior based on Bloom's Taxonomy (analyzing, evaluating, creating)
- Do not always be explicit, allow for discovery
- Use centers and group students according to ability or interest
- Propose interest-based extension activities
- Use leveled texts and offer an advanced reader reading list
- Ask "why" and "what if" questions
- Use varied modes of pre-assessment and assessment
- Create an enhanced set of introductory activities (e.g. advance organizers, concept maps, concept puzzles)
- Provide options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum
- Organize and offer flexible small group learning activities
- Provide whole group enrichment explorations
- Teach cognitive and methodological skills
- Use center, stations, or contracts
- Organize integrated problem-solving simulations
- Debrief students
- Propose interest-based extension activities

Multilingual Learner

- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Pre Teach vocabulary
- Label items in classroom
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio speed
- Audio highlight
- Supplemental language
- Spanish cognates
- Visual glossaries
- Speaking frames
- Sentence frames

Supplemental Resources 2

Instructional Materials

- The Big Idea Blast: Past and Present
- Blast: Your Six Words ("So Where are you from?")
- Blast: Poetry in Action ("Slam, Dunk and Hook")

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- *The Outsiders* Paired Reading “Herd Behavior” 6th Grade Reading Level
<https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/herd-behavior>
- Skills/Standards Based Lessons as Needed (Pacing Guide)

Supplemental Materials

- Additional Blasts
 - Protagonist Problem -Judith Ortiz Cofer’s short story about a Puerto Rican grandmother’s first visit to the United States, “**Abuela Invents the Zero,** ” provides students with context to think about the question, “What is the value of increasing the number of books about children of color?”
 - Speak No More -An emphasis on language and identity throughout the *Past and Present* Unit connects students with the question, “Why is it important to save endangered languages?”
 - Misunderstood Millennials - Reading S.E. Hinton’s *The Outsiders*, which focuses on the lives of teenagers in the 1950s, will provide students a natural jumping off point to discuss the question, “Why do people sometimes criticize younger generations?”
- Additional Grammar Lessons
 - [Irregular Verbs I](#)
 - [Irregular Verbs II](#)
 - [Consistent Verb Tenses](#)

Intervention Materials

- Bridges to Literature/Interactive Reader Selections as Applicable
- Scholastic/Scope Magazine as Applicable
- Studysyc provides scaffolding and foreign languages to students in need

Teacher Notes

OCEAN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL Unit 3 Overview

Content Area: English Language Arts

Unit Title: No Risk, No Reward

Duration: Days 30

Target Course/Grade Level: 8th Grade ELA

Introduction/Unit Focus:

This unit challenges students to explore the theme of risk-taking through a variety of nonfiction and fiction texts, each offering a different perspective on what it means to take a risk, and what can be gained or lost as a result. Through the lens of history, Walter Lord recounts a real-life event with an unexpected outcome that still resonates today. Authors Anya Groner and Nina Gregory present stories of modern individuals confronting environmental threats and searching for innovative solutions, while student activist Thomas Ponce makes a powerful case for environmental justice through his personal essay. President Ronald Reagan offers a solemn national perspective in response to a tragic moment in history, examining how a country processes collective loss and courage.

The unit also explores the historical risks taken by individuals in the face of oppression. Frederick Douglass shares the life-altering risks he faced as an enslaved person fighting for freedom before the Civil War. Poets Langston Hughes and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper express how taking bold action has long been a vital part of the African-American experience. Finally, students will read a fictional account by Jack London, who uses the journey of a courageous dog to reflect on survival, instinct, and the nature of risk.

Students will engage with these powerful texts while completing an independent reading assignment connected to the unit's themes. An Extended Project at the end of the unit will offer students the opportunity to synthesize their learning in a meaningful and creative way.

Reading Skills:

Throughout the unit, students will read and analyze nonfiction accounts, speeches, poetry, and fiction to deepen their understanding of how different authors present the idea of risk. They will evaluate arguments, assess the reliability of sources, and consider the historical and cultural contexts of the texts. Students will compare perspectives across genres and examine how authors use structure, figurative language, and tone to convey purpose and message. Close reading strategies will help students uncover deeper meanings and draw connections between personal, historical, and global acts of risk-taking.

Writing Skills:

Building on their reading experiences, students will transition into writing tasks that ask them to reflect critically and thoughtfully on the theme of risk. They will write evidence-based responses and extended analytical pieces that explore how individuals in various contexts have chosen to take risks. Students will develop thesis statements, organize their writing logically, support claims with strong textual evidence, and revise their work for clarity and impact. The unit will culminate in an Extended Project, allowing students to showcase their understanding through research, reflection, and writing that connects deeply with the unit's central theme.

Disciplinary Concepts for the Unit

Standard 9.1 Personal Financial Literacy

This standard outlines the important fiscal knowledge, habits, and skills that must be mastered in order for students to make informed decisions about personal finance. Financial literacy is an integral component of a student's college and career readiness, enabling students to achieve fulfilling, financially-secure, and successful careers.

Standard 9.2 Career Awareness, Exploration, Preparation and Training

This standard outlines the importance of being knowledgeable about one's interests and talents, and being well informed about postsecondary and career options, career planning, and career requirements.

Standard 9.4 Life Literacies and Key Skills

This standard outline key literacies and technical skills such as critical thinking, global and cultural awareness, and technology literacy* that are critical for students to develop to live and work in an interconnected global economy.

Standard 8.1 Computer Science

Computer Science outlines a comprehensive set of concepts and skills, such as data and analysis, algorithms and programming, and computing systems.

Standard 8.2 Design Thinking

Technology, outlines the technological design concepts and skills essential for technological and engineering literacy. The framework design includes Engineering Design, Ethics and Culture, and the Effects of Technology on the Natural world among the disciplinary concepts

Amistad Law: N.J.S.A. 18A 52:16A-88 Every board of education shall incorporate the information regarding the contributions of African-Americans to our country in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students.

Holocaust Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-28 Every board of education shall include instruction on the Holocaust and genocide in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary school pupils. The instruction shall further emphasize the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.

LGBT and Disabilities Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35 A board of education shall include instruction on the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, in an appropriate place in the curriculum of middle school and high school students as part of the district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (N.J.S.A.18A:35-4.36) A board of education shall have policies and procedures in place pertaining to the selection of instructional materials to implement the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35.

Diversity and Inclusion: C.18A:35-4.36a Curriculum to include instruction on diversity and inclusion.

The instruction shall:

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- (1) highlight and promote diversity, including economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance;
- (2) examine the impact that unconscious bias and economic disparities have at both an individual level and on society as a whole; and
- (3) encourage safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students regardless of race or ethnicity, sexual and gender identities, mental and physical disabilities, and religious beliefs.
- (4) Investigate the roles and responsibilities of citizenship, including creating positive social change.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI)

Ensures that the contributions, history, and heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are included in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) for Social Studies in kindergarten through Grade 12 (P.L.2021, c.416).

21st Century Themes:

“Twenty-first century themes and skills” means themes such as global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy; learning and innovation skills, including creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration; information, media, and technology skills; and life and career skills, including flexibility. Career readiness, life literacies, and key skills education provides students with the necessary skills to make informed career and financial decisions, engage as responsible community members in a digital society, and to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities in an interconnected global economy.”

[New Jersey Student Learning Standards-ELA](#)

Focus Standards

Reading Literature

(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

RL.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade

RL.CI.8.2. Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	RL.TS.8.4. Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	RL.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	RL.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums, including the representation/s or various perspectives of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	RL.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

Reading Informational Text	
(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RI.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	RI.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade	RI.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.
(AA) Analysis of an Argument: By the end of grade 12, evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning, the credibility and accuracy of each source as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	RI.AA.8.7. 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.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
Writing	
(AW) Argumentative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	W.AW.8.1. Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. K. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. L. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources. M. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. N. Establish and maintain a formal or academic style, approach, and form.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	O. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
(IW) Informative and Explanatory Writing: By the end of grade 12, write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. M. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension. N. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. O. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. P. Use precise language and domain/grade-level-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. Q. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form. R. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.
(NW) Narrative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	W.NW.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. K. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. L. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. M. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events. N. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. O. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
(WP) Writing Process: By the end of grade 12, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, and publishing.	W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
(WR) Writing Research: By the end of grade 12, conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	W.WR.8.5. 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.
(SE) Sources of Evidence: By the end of grade 12, gather relevant information and evidence from multiple sources to support analysis, reflection, and research, while assessing the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrating the information while avoiding plagiarism.	W.SE.8.6. 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.
(RW) Range of Writing: By the end of grade 12, 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 tasks, purposes, and audiences.	W.RW.8.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

(PE) Participate Effectively: By the end of grade 12, prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	SL.PE.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. I. 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. J. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. K. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. L. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
(II) Integrate Information: By the end of grade 12, integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	SL.II.8.2. 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.
(ES) Evaluate Speakers: By the end of grade 12, evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.	SL.ES.8.3. 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.
(PI) Present Information: By the end of grade 12, present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	SL.PI.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.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

(UM) Use Media: By the end of grade 12, make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.	SL.UM.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
(AS) Adapt Speech: By the end of grade 12, adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
Language	
Conventions of Standard English	L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking. A. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. B. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. C. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. D. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood. E. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break. F. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission. G. Recognize spelling conventions.
(KL) Knowledge of Language: By the end of grade 12, apply knowledge of language and command of vocabulary to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. G. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. H. Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. I. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
(VL) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Literal Meaning: By the end of grade 12, determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words using analysis of word parts (morphemes), word solving strategies, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.	L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. K. 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. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. M. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). N. Consult 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. O. 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).
(VI) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Interpretative Meaning: By the end of grade 12, interpret figurative and connotative word meanings, including shades of meaning based on word relationships and context.	L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. I. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. J. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. K. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. L. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Interdisciplinary Connections <u>2020 NJSL Social Studies</u>	

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

6.1 U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.	
Social and political systems have protected and denied human rights (to varying degrees) throughout time.	6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.b: Evaluate the impact of the institution of slavery on the political and economic expansion of the United States. Amistad
	6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.c: Construct an argument to explain how the expansion of slavery violated human rights and contradicted American ideals. Amistad
Fundamental rights are derived from the inherent worth of each individual and include civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights.	6.1.8.CivicsHR.4.a: Examine sources from a variety of perspectives to describe efforts to reform education, women's rights, slavery, and other issues during the Antebellum period. Amistad
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and statement)
Individuals can use their talents, resources, and abilities to give back.	9.1.8.CR.2: Compare various ways to give back through strengths, passions, goals, and other personal factors
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Computer Science and Design Thinking	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
The study of human-computer interaction can improve the design of devices and extend the abilities of humans.	8.1.8.CS.1: Recommend improvements to computing devices in order to improve the ways users interact with the devices.
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Climate Change Mandate	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
Gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.	9.4.8.CI.1: Assess data gathered on varying perspectives on causes of climate change (e.g., cross-cultural, gender-specific, generational), and determine how the data can best be used to design multiple potential solutions.
Multiple solutions often exist to solve a problem.	9.4.8.CT.1: Evaluate diverse solutions proposed by a variety of individuals, organizations, and/or agencies to a local or global problem, such as climate change and use critical thinking skills to predict which one(s) are

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	likely to be effective. 9.4.8.CT.2: Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option (e.g., MS-ETS1-4, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.1).
Digital technology and data can be leveraged by communities to address effects of climate change.	9.4.8.DC.8: Explain how communities use data and technology to develop measures to respond to effects of climate change (e.g., smart cities).
Sources of information are evaluated for accuracy and relevance when considering the use of information.	9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8). 9.4.8.IML.8: Apply deliberate and thoughtful search strategies to access high-quality information on climate change (e.g., 1.1.8.C1b).

Knowledge and Skills

Unit Learning Targets (Objectives):

Students will be able to...

Reading Skills:

- Respond to a question using a 140-character summary after exploring background information and research links.
- Identify and describe key features of memoirs, articles, speeches, biographies, and essays after studying the informational genre.
- Evaluate and determine the key ideas in a text by analyzing supporting details and participating in discussion.
- Identify and restate the main ideas and important details after reading a variety of informational texts.
- Analyze how an author connects individuals, events, and ideas through text structure and organization.
- Analyze how multiple organizational patterns within a single text contribute to the development of the central thesis.
- Determine how different text structures effectively convey information in nonfiction texts.
- Determine the meaning and usage of grade-level academic vocabulary, including words derived from Greek and Latin roots.
- Use context clues (definitions, comparisons, contrasts, and examples) to clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Identify and determine the meaning of technical vocabulary in informational texts.
- Synthesize information from multiple texts and media sources to form new insights and deepen comprehension.
- Identify and explain the purpose, strengths, and limitations of different types of media.
- Compare how information is presented in different formats, including written texts and video versions.
- Analyze the director's or actor's choices in a filmed production and evaluate how closely it stays true to the original text.
- Analyze how the author's word choice impacts meaning and tone in nonfiction and literary texts.
- Determine the meaning of figurative language and figures of speech in informational texts and poetry.
- Make inferences to analyze and understand central ideas, themes, or messages in poetry and prose.
- Create mental images to enhance reading comprehension and understanding of ideas.
- Participate in collaborative conversations about texts and write thoughtful reflections on discussion insights.
- Identify and articulate character traits, setting details, and central conflicts after reading and discussing a narrative excerpt.
- Analyze and evaluate how the author connects experiences and emotions across different informational texts.
- Determine the connotative and denotative meanings of words and phrases in context to understand deeper meaning in texts.

Writing Skills:

- Write a personal response or short constructed response that demonstrates understanding of informational or literary texts.
- Compose 140-character summaries in response to questions about researched topics.
- Analyze a student writing model to plan and organize an informative essay.
- Introduce a clear main idea or central concept about a topic in informative writing.
- Organize ideas, concepts, and information logically and effectively in informative drafts.
- Use relevant and specific supporting details to develop key ideas.
- Utilize appropriate transitions to create cohesion and show relationships between ideas.
- Incorporate domain-specific vocabulary to clearly explain or inform the reader about a topic.
- Maintain a consistent and formal writing style throughout an informative essay.
- Write effective introductions and conclusions that frame and reflect the main message of the essay.
- Draft a meaningful and well-organized informative essay in response to a prompt.
- Revise informative essays using a revision guide that focuses on clarity, organization, style, diction, and sentence effectiveness.
- Write short responses that analyze how authors' word choices shape tone, meaning, and alignment between text and media.

Language Skills:

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Recognize and use academic vocabulary words in a variety of written and spoken contexts.
- Identify and apply technical vocabulary accurately in subject-based writing.
- Practice using participles correctly in writing
- Use infinitives correctly in writing.
- Edit and polish the final draft of an informative essay, applying correct grammar, punctuation, and usage.
- Revise essays for sentence variety, word choice, and clarity after studying a sample student model.
- Use commas correctly after introductory words and transitions.

Unit Enduring Understandings:

Students will know...

- How to cite textual evidence
 - Argumentative elements
 - Prose-constructed response format
 - How to differentiate point of view
 - Conflicting viewpoints
 - Compare/contrast
 - Evaluate text
 - Genre-specific vocabulary (Academic and High Frequency)
 - How to support an argument
 - Steps of the writing process
 - Apply grammar conventions including functions of verbals, forms of verbs, verb active/passive voice and mood, punctuation (commas, ellipses and dash), and spelling
 - How to utilize technology and evaluate reliable sources
 - Effective speaking techniques
 - Adhere to MLA format when referencing Materials Select, discern appropriate resources for a given task
 - Create graphic organizers
 - Identify, define and explain the purpose of various literary devices used in reading selections

Unit Essential Questions:

- Why Do We Take Chances?

Instructional Plan

Suggested Activities	Resources/Texts
➤ Recognizing Genre: Informational ➤ Text, Academic Vocabulary, write: Analyzing Genre ➤ Independent reading assignment ➤ Evaluating Details, Greek and Latin Affixes and Roots, Media, Textual	StudySync Anchor Texts: The Vanishing Island A Night to Remember

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

➤ Evidence, Informative Writing ➤ Summarizing, informational Text Structure, Textual ➤ Evidence, Comparative Writing, Collaborative ➤ Conversations, ➤ Synthesizing, Media, Word Patterns and textual ➤ Evidence, Summarizing, Informative Writing ➤ Adjusting Fluency, Informational Text Elements, Figurative ➤ Language, Textual Evidence, Central or Main Idea, Author's Purpose and Point of View, ➤ Comparative Writing, Collaborative Conversations ➤ Context Clues, Technical Language, Write: Analyzing Genre, Textual Evidence, Argumentative Writing. ➤ Informative Writing. ➤ Language, Style, and Audience, Media, Textual Evidence, Theme, Literary Analysis Writing, ➤ Collaborative Conversations ➤ Connotation and Denotation, Textual Evidence, Literary Analysis Writing ➤ Self-selected Reading - Independent Reading, Personal Response Writing ➤ Review and Assessment ○ Extended Oral Project	Address to the Nation on the Explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger A Kenyan Teen's Discovery - There Be Lights to Save Lions Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave The Day I Saved a Life The Call of the Wild Cocoon Trade Books/Paired Reading for Book Clubs/Workshop Model : The Call of the Wild A Night to Remember Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass Additional Suggested Supplemental reading:
--	--

Evidence of Student Learning

Formative Assessments:

- Think Questions,
- Close read skills focus question,
- Collaborative conversation,
- Peer review,
- Short-response questions: Blasts,
- Digital reading comprehension questions,
- Test-talk/turn and talk,
- Writers' notebook
- Core ELAR: Comparative Reading and Writing lessons
- "Beyond the Book" activities: Writing prompts
- Academic Vocabulary in Context
- Beyond Text Talk: Facilitate own discussions
- Connect to Extended Writing Project- Activities & Skills practice
- StudySync TV
- Analyze for Enrichment

Summative Assessments

- End of Unit Assessment
- Oral Presentation

- Literary Analysis Task
- Research Simulation Task
- Explanatory/Informative Writing Task

Benchmark Assessments:

- Screening and Diagnostic
- StudySync Benchmarks are administered 3 times per year: fall, winter and spring
- Writing Benchmark 3 times per year
- Achieve 3000 Level Set Assessment (Basic Skills Only)
- DRA2 (Basic Skills Only)

Alternative Assessments

- CommonLit,
- Independent novel study
- Self-selected reading materials/vocabulary
- Stations and workshops
- Socratic Seminar
- Silent Seminar
- Discussion Board (Google Classroom)

Performance Tasks:

- Informative Writing
- Journal Writing - Honors English 8 Only

Suggested Options for Differentiation and Modifications

Special Education

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- Choral reading
- Chants, songs
- Preferential seating
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow all IEP modifications
- Scribe for students who can’t write
- Augmentative communication system

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Shorten/modify number and types of questions
- Scaffolds tab within each unit
- Leveled texts
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio highlight tool
- Audio speed
- Visually stimulating multimedia content
- Summaries
- Visual glossaries
- Words Banks
- Differentiated questions

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Involve families in student learning
- Respect cultural traditions
- Provided students with necessary academic resources and materials
- Allow for alternative assignments
- Provide visuals
- Assign peer tutor
- Collaborate with language professionals and ESL teachers
- Encourage parents to help children maintain their native language at home, while the school helps the child attain proficiency in English.
- Establish a positive connection with parent
- Utilize closed captioning when available
- Provide road maps or outlines for difficult concepts
- Provide sufficient wait time before calling on any student to help keep students who may need more time engaged
- Display a word wall with current academic vocabulary in each subject
- Speak clearly and slowly, avoid slang and idiomatic expressions
- Create a nurturing environment with structured routines

Students with a 504 Plan

- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow 504 plan
- Scribe for students who can't write
- Augmentative communication system

Students at Risk for Failure

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring

- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- choral reading
- chants, songs
- preferential seating

Gifted and Talented:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Encourage upper level intellectual behavior based on Bloom’s Taxonomy (analyzing, evaluating, creating)
- Do not always be explicit, allow for discovery
- Use centers and group students according to ability or interest
- Propose interest-based extension activities
- Use leveled texts and offer an advanced reader reading list
- Ask “why” and “what if” questions
- Use varied modes of pre-assessment and assessment
- Create an enhanced set of introductory activities (e.g. advance organizers, concept maps, concept puzzles)
- Provide options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum
- Organize and offer flexible small group learning activities
- Provide whole group enrichment explorations
- Teach cognitive and methodological skills
- Use center, stations, or contracts
- Organize integrated problem-solving simulations
- Debrief students
- Propose interest-based extension activities

Multilingual Learner

- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Pre Teach vocabulary
- Label items in classroom
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio speed
- Audio highlight
- Supplemental language
- Spanish cognates
- Visual glossaries
- Speaking frames
- Sentence frames

Supplemental Resources

Instructional Materials

- Blast: No Risk, No Reward
- Blast: Risky Business
- “Ronald Regan on the Challenger Disaster” (6th Grade Lexile Level): Blast: Now, That’s an Idea
- “**Mother to Son**” (7th Grade Lexile Level):
- “Learning to Read” (5th Grade Lexile Level):
- **Background Information on Fredrick Douglass:**
- Background Information on Jack London:
- *Call of the Wild* Lower Lexile and Differentiated and Modified activities:
- Self-Selected Blasts

Supplemental Materials

- Additional Blast:
 - The Elephants and the Bees- Richard Turere’s creative solution to save both livestock and lions in “A Kenyan Teen’s Discovery: Let There Be Lights to Save Lions” will connect students to this Blast, which asks, “How should we rethink conservation?”
 - Across the Universe- After reading President Reagan’s speech “Address to the Nation on the Explosion of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*,” students will have the context to discuss our continued exploration of space as they ask, “What makes a space mission successful?”
- Additional Grammar Lesson:
 - Participial Phrases
 - Gerund Phrases

Intervention Materials

- Bridges to Literature/Interactive Reader Selections as Applicable
- Scholastic/Scope Magazine as Applicable
- Studysync provides scaffolding and foreign languages to students in need

Teacher Notes

OCEAN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Unit 4 Overview

Content Area: English Language Arts

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

Unit Title: Hear Me Out

Duration: Days 30

Target Course/Grade Level: ELA 8

Introduction/Unit Focus:

This unit invites students to explore how language, carefully chosen and powerfully delivered, can inspire, persuade, and connect people across time. Through fiction, nonfiction, speeches, and contemporary texts, students will examine how word choice shapes meaning and impacts an audience. Iconic speeches by Abraham Lincoln and Sojourner Truth provide historical context for understanding how rhetoric can move nations and challenge injustice. Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* shows how everyday language, when used cleverly, can influence others. In *Across Five Aprils* by Irene Hunt, characters grapple with how to express their deeply personal and conflicting feelings during the American Civil War.

Modern texts bring these themes into the present. The graphic fantasy story “/Hug” explores the difficulty of delivering bad news through an unexpected, imaginative lens. A point/counterpoint article about gaming encourages students to reflect on how technology influences communication in today's world. In Tim Schager's humorous and creative “Cover Letter to Lucas Arts,” students see how word choice can highlight a writer's individuality, creativity, and intent.

Students will complete an independent reading assignment aligned with the themes and genres of the unit. At the conclusion of the unit, they will also complete an Extended Project that synthesizes their reading, analysis, and writing.

Reading Skills:

Throughout the unit, students will read and analyze speeches, essays, fiction, and graphic narratives to explore how authors use language to express ideas and influence audiences. They will study rhetorical strategies, tone, and diction, as well as how language choices shape theme and character development. Students will compare historical and contemporary texts to evaluate how effective communication adapts to context and audience. Close reading and discussion will help them trace arguments, identify bias or persuasion, and draw connections between the power of words in past and present contexts.

Writing Skills:

As they analyze how language impacts meaning, students will also learn to harness the power of words in their own writing. They will write an argumentative essay that demonstrates their ability to take a stance, support claims with logical reasoning and textual evidence, and craft language that is purposeful and persuasive. Students will develop strong thesis statements, structure their ideas effectively, and revise their drafts for clarity, tone, and style. By the end of the unit, they will demonstrate not only analytical insight but also their ability to communicate with precision, purpose, and voice through their Extended Project and argumentative writing.

Disciplinary Concepts for the Unit

Standard 9.1 Personal Financial Literacy

This standard outlines the important fiscal knowledge, habits, and skills that must be mastered in order for students to make informed decisions about personal finance. Financial literacy is an integral component of a student's college and career readiness, enabling students to achieve fulfilling, financially-secure, and successful careers.

Standard 9.2 Career Awareness, Exploration, Preparation and Training

This standard outlines the importance of being knowledgeable about one's interests and talents, and being well informed about postsecondary and career options, career planning, and career requirements.

Standard 9.4 Life Literacies and Key Skills

This standard outline key literacies and technical skills such as critical thinking, global and cultural awareness, and technology literacy* that are critical for students to develop to live and work in an interconnected global economy.

Standard 8.1 Computer Science

Computer Science outlines a comprehensive set of concepts and skills, such as data and analysis, algorithms and programming, and computing systems.

Standard 8.2 Design Thinking

Technology, outlines the technological design concepts and skills essential for technological and engineering literacy. The framework design includes Engineering Design, Ethics and Culture, and the Effects of Technology on the Natural world among the disciplinary concepts

Amistad Law: N.J.S.A. 18A 52:16A-88 Every board of education shall incorporate the information regarding the contributions of African-Americans to our country in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students.

Holocaust Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-28 Every board of education shall include instruction on the Holocaust and genocide in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary school pupils. The instruction shall further emphasize the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.

LGBT and Disabilities Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35 A board of education shall include instruction on the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, in an appropriate place in the curriculum of middle school and high school students as part of the district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (N.J.S.A.18A:35-4.36) A board of education shall have policies and procedures in place pertaining to the selection of instructional materials to implement the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35.

Diversity and Inclusion: C.18A:35-4.36a Curriculum to include instruction on diversity and inclusion.

The instruction shall:

- (1) highlight and promote diversity, including economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance;
- (2) examine the impact that unconscious bias and economic disparities have at both an individual level and on society as a whole; and
- (3) encourage safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students regardless of race or ethnicity, sexual and gender identities, mental and physical disabilities, and religious beliefs.
- (4) Investigate the roles and responsibilities of citizenship, including creating positive social change.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI)

Ensures that the contributions, history, and heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are included in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) for Social Studies in kindergarten through Grade 12 (P.L.2021, c.416).

21st Century Themes:

“Twenty-first century themes and skills” means themes such as global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy; learning and innovation skills, including creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration; information, media, and technology skills; and life and career skills, including flexibility. Career readiness, life literacies, and key skills education provides students with the necessary skills to make informed career and financial decisions, engage as responsible community members in a digital society, and to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities in an interconnected global economy.”

New Jersey Student Learning Standards-ELA

Focus Standards

Reading Literature

(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support

RL.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

conclusions drawn from the text.	
(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RL.CI.8.2. Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	RL.TS.8.4. Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	RL.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	RL.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums, including the representation/s or various perspectives of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or	RL.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.
Reading Informational Text	
(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RI.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or	RI.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	RI.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.
(AA) Analysis of an Argument: By the end of grade 12, evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning, the credibility and accuracy of each source as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	RI.AA.8.7. 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.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
Writing	
(AW) Argumentative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	W.AW.8.1. Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. P. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. Q. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	R. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. S. Establish and maintain a formal or academic style, approach, and form. T. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
(IW) Informative and Explanatory Writing: By the end of grade 12, write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. S. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension. T. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. U. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. V. Use precise language and domain/grade-level-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. W. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form. X. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.
(NW) Narrative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	W.NW.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. P. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	Q. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. R. 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. S. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. T. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
(WP) Writing Process: By the end of grade 12, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, and publishing.	W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
(WR) Writing Research: By the end of grade 12, conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	W.WR.8.5. 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.
(SE) Sources of Evidence: By the end of grade 12, gather relevant information and evidence from multiple sources to support analysis, reflection, and research, while assessing the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrating the information while avoiding plagiarism.	W.SE.8.6. 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.
(RW) Range of Writing: By the end of grade 12, write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time	W.RW.8.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Speaking and Listening	
(PE) Participate Effectively: By the end of grade 12, prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	SL.PE.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. M. 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. N. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. O. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. P. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
(II) Integrate Information: By the end of grade 12, integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	SL.II.8.2. 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.
(ES) Evaluate Speakers: By the end of grade 12, evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.	SL.ES.8.3. 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.
(PI) Present Information: By the end of grade 12, present information, findings, and	SL.PI.8.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
(UM) Use Media: By the end of grade 12, make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.	SL.UM.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
(AS) Adapt Speech: By the end of grade 12, adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
Language	
Conventions of Standard English	L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking. A. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. B. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. C. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. D. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood. E. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break. F. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission. G. Recognize spelling conventions.
(KL) Knowledge of Language: By the end of grade 12, apply knowledge of language and command of vocabulary to understand how language	L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	J. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. K. Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. L. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
(VL) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Literal Meaning: By the end of grade 12, determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words using analysis of word parts (morphemes), word solving strategies, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.	L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. P. 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. Q. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. R. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). S. Consult 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. T. 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).
(VI) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Interpretative Meaning: By the end of grade 12, interpret figurative and connotative word meanings, including shades of meaning based on word relationships and context.	L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. M. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. N. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. O. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	P. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Interdisciplinary Connections <u>2020 NJSL Social Studies</u>	
6.1 U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.	
Social and political systems have protected and denied human rights (to varying degrees) throughout time	6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.b: Evaluate the impact of the institution of slavery on the political and economic expansion of the United States.
	6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.c: Construct an argument to explain how the expansion of slavery violated human rights and contradicted American ideals
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills</u>	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and statement)
Individuals can use their talents, resources, and abilities to give back.	9.1.8.CR.2: Compare various ways to give back through strengths, passions, goals, and other personal factors
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Computer Science and Design Thinking</u>	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
The study of human-computer interaction can improve the design of devices and extend the abilities of humans.	8.1.8.CS.1: Recommend improvements to computing devices in order to improve the ways users interact with the devices.
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Climate Change Mandate</u>	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
Gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.	9.4.8.Cl.1: Assess data gathered on varying perspectives on causes of climate change (e.g., cross-cultural, gender-specific, generational), and determine how the data can best be used to design multiple potential solutions.
Multiple solutions often exist to solve a problem.	9.4.8.CT.1: Evaluate diverse solutions proposed by a variety of individuals, organizations, and/or agencies to

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	a local or global problem, such as climate change and use critical thinking skills to predict which one(s) are likely to be effective. 9.4.8.CT.2: Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option (e.g., MS-ETS1-4, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.1)
Digital technology and data can be leveraged by communities to address effects of climate change.	9.4.8.DC.8: Explain how communities use data and technology to develop measures to respond to effects of climate change (e.g., smart cities).
Sources of information are evaluated for accuracy and relevance when considering the use of information.	9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8). 9.4.8.IML.8: Apply deliberate and thoughtful search strategies to access high-quality information on climate change (e.g., 1.1.8.C1b).

Knowledge and Skills

Unit Learning Targets (Objectives): *Students will be able to...*

Reading Skills:

- Identify and describe characteristics of memoirs, articles, speeches, biographies, and essays within the informational text genre.
- Recognize and use ten academic vocabulary words across various contexts to deepen understanding.
- Make meaningful text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections to enhance reading comprehension.
- Identify and describe characters, setting details, and key events in graphic short stories and narrative texts.
- Analyze how dialogue and plot incidents reveal character traits, motivations, and development.
- Determine and analyze the theme and its development throughout a story.
- Identify key ideas and supporting details that convey the central message of a text.
- Delineate and evaluate arguments, claims, and counterclaims in point and counterpoint texts.
- Analyze how evidence supports reasoning in argumentative texts.

- Compare and contrast ideas, arguments, and claims across multiple texts and write short constructed responses.
- Analyze word choice, including analogies, allusions, and rhetorical devices, to understand author's purpose and tone.
Evaluate how various media versions of a story stay faithful or depart from the original text, including director or actor choices.
- Analyze point of view in fiction and how it relates to dramatic irony, figurative language, and allusions.
- Analyze figurative language, including verbal irony, to interpret deeper meanings.
- Use context clues and verify word meanings, including technical vocabulary and connotative/denotative meanings.
- Identify reasons for reading, set a purpose for reading, and use that purpose to guide focus and comprehension.
- Participate actively in collaborative conversations about texts, responding to comprehension questions and writing personal responses.

Writing Skills:

- Write clear, concise responses summarizing research findings or text analyses.
- Compose short written responses analyzing how rhetorical devices (e.g., rhetorical questions) impact audiences.
- Write personal reflections and responses that demonstrate understanding of texts and relate to personal experience.
- Plan and draft literary analyses using a clear thesis statement and organized arguments supported by evidence.
- Introduce claims clearly and distinguish them from opposing or alternate claims in argumentative writing.
- Use logical reasoning and credible evidence to support claims in literary analysis.
- Develop drafts by improving cohesion with words, phrases, and clauses that clarify relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal writing style appropriate for literary analysis and argumentative essays.
- Write conclusions that logically follow and reflect on the ideas and evidence presented.
- Analyze student writing models to plan meaningful literary or argumentative essays in response to prompts.
- Use revision guides to improve clarity, development, organization, style, diction, and sentence effectiveness in drafts.
- Edit and publish final drafts, applying correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling rules.

Language Skills:

- Recognize and accurately use ten academic vocabulary words in diverse contexts.
- Identify and understand technical vocabulary in texts and incorporate it effectively into writing.
- Analyze word patterns, connotations, and denotations to deepen vocabulary knowledge and enhance writing and discussions.
- Practice correct use of punctuation, including commas and ellipses for omission.

- Apply standard spelling rules accurately in writing.
- Edit and revise writing for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence variety to produce polished final drafts.

Unit Enduring Understandings:

Students will know...

- Participate successfully in cooperative learning groups such as literature circles
- Identify literary elements and provide examples from multiple works
- Sequence events in a short story, compare/contrast characters, themes and events in two short stories
- Identify and label the elements of plot in a short story
- Utilize graphic organizers effectively
- Apply vocabulary strategies such as semantic map to decode, understand word in context, and to increase advanced vocabulary usage
- To identify Latin/Greek prefixes and roots
- Read grade appropriate texts aloud and engage in sustained silent reading using various reading strategies and reflection
- Compare/contrast the elements of literature focusing on thematic connections
- Use the writing process to create first person and third person narratives and descriptive and speculative essays
- Utilize literary journals to analyze literature
- To write prose-constructed response responses to analyze literature
- Deliver and critique oral presentations based upon literary readings, inquiry and research, and analysis
- Analyze and evaluate electronic texts and other media forms using sound, listening, and viewing strategies
- Incorporate technology to enhance learning
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage, in addition to vocabulary and figurative language, when writing and speaking.
- Cite textual evidence to support an argument.
- Compare and contrast the structure of argumentative texts and analyze how they differ
- Determine the author's point of view and purpose of the text
- Analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums.
- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text.
- Analyze text which provides conflicting information on the same topic.
- Write arguments to support claims and develop a point of view using logical reasoning and relevant evidence.
- Employ the steps of the writing process to create effective writings.
- Conduct short research projects to support a point of view, develop or prove a thesis.
- Evaluate a speaker's argument as to soundness and relevance to the topic.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Engage in a range of collaborative discussions, such as literature circles, peer review, student/teacher conferences.
 - Acknowledge new information presented by others and justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
 - Integrate multimedia and visual displays to support point of view.
 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage, in addition to vocabulary and figurative language, when writing and speaking.
 - Identify how authors employ various poetic techniques
 - Identify various forms of poetry
 - Create original works of poetry based on traditional poetic paradigms
 - Evaluate poetry for various purposes
 - Compare and contrast various poetic forms and poems
 - Participate in collaborative groups and discussions
 - Effectively utilize technology
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage, in addition to vocabulary and figurative language, when writing and speaking
- Use the holistic scoring rubric to drive essay writing

Unit Essential Questions:

- How Do You Choose the Right Words?

Instructional Plan

Suggested Activities	Resources/Texts
➤ identify and describe details as well as articulate key ideas that are central to the text's message. ➤ make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections ➤ identify and describe characters and setting details as well as articulate events that are central to the story's plot ➤ analyze how dialogue and plot incidents reveal aspects of character. ➤ determine theme and analyze its development. ➤ analyze how the plot of the story is developed through the character's dialogue, actions, and motivations in a short, written response. ➤ delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in both the point and counterpoint texts. ➤ analyze how various types of evidence support reasoning in an argumentative text. ➤ compare and contrast ideas in two different texts.	StudySync Anchor Texts: HUG Denee Bendton: Broadway Princess Cover Letter to LucasArts Trade Books/ Paired Reading for Book Clubs/Workshop Model : Speech to the Ohio Women's Conference: Ain't I a Woman To America, Letters of a Civil War Nurse, The Gettysburg Address The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Chapter 2) Blind Additional Suggested Supplemental reading:

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

➤ analyze arguments and claims, as well as reasons and evidence, and compare and contrast in order to and write a short constructed response. ➤ write a short response that demonstrates their understanding of a key idea through a personal connection. ➤ analyze context clues and verify word meanings in resources. ➤ identify and understand technical language in a text ➤ analyze the word choices the author makes, including analogies and allusions. ➤ identify a reason for reading, and set a purpose for reading. ➤ describe characters and setting details as well as articulate events that are central to the story's plot. ➤ self-select a text, establish a purpose for reading, and read independently for a sustained period of time.	Across Five Aprils Little Women The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
---	---

Evidence of Student Learning

Formative Assessments:

- Think Questions,
- Close read skills focus question,
- Collaborative conversation,
- Peer review,
- Short-response questions: Blasts,
- Digital reading comprehension questions,
- Test-talk/turn and talk,
- Writers' notebook
- Core ELAR: Comparative Reading and Writing lessons
- "Beyond the Book" activities: Writing prompts
- Academic Vocabulary in Context
- Beyond Text Talk: Facilitate own discussions
- Connect to Extended Writing Project- Activities & Skills practice
- StudySync TV
- Analyze for Enrichment

Summative Assessments

- End of Unit Assessment
- Projects/Collaborative Assessments
- Literature Circles/Socratic Circles
- Literary Analysis Task
- Argumentative Writing Task

- Explanatory/Informative Writing Task

Benchmark Assessments:

- 3 Studysync Writing Benchmarks
- StudySync Benchmarks are administered 3 times per year: fall, winter and spring
- Achieve 3000 Level Set Assessment (Basic Skills Only)
- DRA2 (Basic Skills Only)

Alternative Assessments:

- CommonLit
- Independent novel study
- Teacher created assessments
- Self-selected reading materials/vocabulary
- Stations and workshops
- Socratic Seminar
- Silent Seminar
- Discussion Board (Google Classroom)
- Self Selected Blast and Written Response

Performance Tasks:

- Argumentative Writing

Suggested Options for Differentiation and Modifications

Special Education

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- Choral reading
- Chants, songs
- Preferential seating
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow all IEP modifications
- Scribe for students who can’t write
- Augmentative communication system
- Shorten/modify number and types of questions

- Scaffolds tab within each unit
- Leveled texts
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio highlight tool
- Audio speed
- Visually stimulating multimedia content
- Summaries
- Visual glossaries
- Words Banks
- Differentiated questions

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Involve families in student learning
- Respect cultural traditions
- Provided students with necessary academic resources and materials
- Allow for alternative assignments
- Provide visuals
- Assign peer tutor
- Collaborate with language professionals and ESL teachers
- Encourage parents to help children maintain their native language at home, while the school helps the child attain proficiency in English.
- Establish a positive connection with parent
- Utilize closed captioning when available
- Provide road maps or outlines for difficult concepts
- Provide sufficient wait time before calling on any student to help keep students who may need more time engaged
- Display a word wall with current academic vocabulary in each subject
- Speak clearly and slowly, avoid slang and idiomatic expressions
- Create a nurturing environment with structured routines

Students with a 504 Plan

- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow 504 plan
- Scribe for students who can't write
- Augmentative communication system

Students at Risk for Failure

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring

- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- choral reading
- chants, songs
- preferential seating

Gifted and Talented:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Encourage upper level intellectual behavior based on Bloom’s Taxonomy (analyzing, evaluating, creating)
- Do not always be explicit, allow for discovery
- Use centers and group students according to ability or interest
- Propose interest-based extension activities
- Use leveled texts and offer an advanced reader reading list
- Ask “why” and “what if” questions
- Use varied modes of pre-assessment and assessment
- Create an enhanced set of introductory activities (e.g. advance organizers, concept maps, concept puzzles)
- Provide options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum
- Organize and offer flexible small group learning activities
- Provide whole group enrichment explorations
- Teach cognitive and methodological skills
- Use center, stations, or contracts
- Organize integrated problem-solving simulations
- Debrief students
- Propose interest-based extension activities

Multilingual Learner

- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Pre Teach vocabulary
- Label items in classroom
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio speed
- Audio highlight
- Supplemental language
- Spanish cognates
- Visual glossaries
- Speaking frames
- Sentence frames

Supplemental Resources 4

Instructional Materials

- Skills/Standards Based Lessons as needed (Pacing Guide)
- Blast: Hear Me Out
- Blast: The World Beyond Warcraft
- EL Leveled Texts
- Self-Selected Blasts

Supplemental Materials

- Additional Blast:
 - We Can Do It- **Sojourner Truth's** "Speech to the Ohio Women's Conference: Ain't I a Woman?" gives students a historical context to investigate the question, "Why did it take so long for women to obtain the right to vote?"
 - Fight Like a Girl- After reading Cornelia Hancock's "Letters of a Civil War Nurse," students will have a natural jumping off point to ask, "How can women thrive in competitive environments?"
 - The Man from Illinois- President Lincoln's "**The Gettysburg Address**" remains one of the most powerful speeches ever given and provides students context to think about the question "What can today's political leaders learn from Abraham Lincoln?"
- Additional Grammar Lesson:
 - Ellipses for pauses or separation
 - Commas with Appositives and Appositive phrases
 - Commonly Misspelled words

Intervention Materials

- Bridges to Literature/Interactive Reader Selections as Applicable
- Scholastic/Scope Magazine as Applicable
- Studysync provides scaffolding and foreign languages as needed

OCEAN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Unit 5 Overview

Content Area: English Language Arts

Unit Title: Trying Times

Duration: 30 Days

Target Course/Grade Level: 8th Grade

Introduction/Unit Focus:

This unit centers on the theme of crisis-how individuals and societies respond to hardship, injustice, and global conflict. A key historical focus is World War II, explored through powerful texts such as *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*, which brings the personal impact of the Holocaust to life through drama. Students will further investigate the era through an excerpt from *Parallel Journeys*, iconic speeches by Winston Churchill and Elie Wiesel, and *Farewell to Manzanar*, which reveals the American experience of Japanese internment during the war.

The unit also expands beyond WWII to examine other forms of personal, political, and social crises. The drama *Teen Mogul* portrays a teenager navigating emotional and financial difficulties within her family. Claude McKay's poem "America" provides insight into the African-American experience, highlighting the tension between national pride and protest against systemic racism. Nelson Mandela's autobiography reflects on overcoming the crisis of apartheid in South Africa, while the novel *Refugee* by Alan Gratz offers a personal and moving look at the global refugee crisis, with a focus on the Syrian conflict.

Students will be expected to complete an independent reading assignment that complements the core texts, allowing them to explore crises from multiple perspectives. At the end of the unit, they will synthesize their learning through an Extended Project that reflects their understanding of the theme and the texts they've encountered.

Reading Skills:

Throughout the unit, students will develop their ability to analyze how authors portray crises and its impact on individuals, families, and nations. They will explore how various genres, including drama, autobiography, poetry, and historical fiction, use structure, tone, and point of view to communicate personal and political experiences. Students will examine authorial choices, such as diction and imagery, and how these elements deepen a reader's understanding of conflict and resilience. Critical reading strategies will be used to compare perspectives across time and cultures and to understand how different voices contribute to a more complex view of global events.

Writing Skills:

As they engage with these powerful texts, students will strengthen their own writing by responding thoughtfully to what they read. They will write analytical and reflective responses that cite textual evidence to support their ideas. The unit will culminate in an Extended Project that may involve research, narrative writing, or literary analysis-giving students the opportunity to apply their understanding of crisis through their own expression. Focus will be placed on planning, drafting, revising, and presenting writing that demonstrates clarity,

depth, and purpose. Through this process, students will learn how to communicate complex ideas with confidence and insight.

Disciplinary Concepts for the Unit

Standard 9.1 Personal Financial Literacy

This standard outlines the important fiscal knowledge, habits, and skills that must be mastered in order for students to make informed decisions about personal finance. Financial literacy is an integral component of a student's college and career readiness, enabling students to achieve fulfilling, financially-secure, and successful careers.

Standard 9.2 Career Awareness, Exploration, Preparation and Training

This standard outlines the importance of being knowledgeable about one's interests and talents, and being well informed about postsecondary and career options, career planning, and career requirements.

Standard 9.4 Life Literacies and Key Skills

This standard outline key literacies and technical skills such as critical thinking, global and cultural awareness, and technology literacy* that are critical for students to develop to live and work in an interconnected global economy.

Standard 8.1 Computer Science

Computer Science outlines a comprehensive set of concepts and skills, such as data and analysis, algorithms and programming, and computing systems.

Standard 8.2 Design Thinking

Technology, outlines the technological design concepts and skills essential for technological and engineering literacy. The framework design includes Engineering Design, Ethics and Culture, and the Effects of Technology on the Natural world among the disciplinary concepts

Amistad Law: N.J.S.A. 18A 52:16A-88 Every board of education shall incorporate the information regarding the contributions of African-Americans to our country in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students.

Holocaust Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-28 Every board of education shall include instruction on the Holocaust and genocide in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary school pupils. The instruction shall further emphasize the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.

LGBT and Disabilities Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35 A board of education shall include instruction on the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, in an appropriate place in the curriculum of middle

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

school and high school students as part of the district’s implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (N.J.S.A.18A:35-4.36) A board of education shall have policies and procedures in place pertaining to the selection of instructional materials to implement the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35.

Diversity and Inclusion: C.18A:35-4.36a Curriculum to include instruction on diversity and inclusion.

The instruction shall:

- (1) highlight and promote diversity, including economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance;
- (2) examine the impact that unconscious bias and economic disparities have at both an individual level and on society as a whole; and
- (3) encourage safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students regardless of race or ethnicity, sexual and gender identities, mental and physical disabilities, and religious beliefs.
- (4) Investigate the roles and responsibilities of citizenship, including creating positive social change.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI)

Ensures that the contributions, history, and heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are included in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs) for Social Studies in kindergarten through Grade 12 (P.L.2021, c.416).

21st Century Themes:

“Twenty-first century themes and skills” means themes such as global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy; learning and innovation skills, including creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration; information, media, and technology skills; and life and career skills, including flexibility. Career readiness, life literacies, and key skills education provides students with the necessary skills to make informed career and financial decisions, engage as responsible community members in a digital society, and to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities in an interconnected global economy.”

New Jersey Student Learning Standards-ELA

Focus Standards

Reading Literature

(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant

RL.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	
(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RL.CI.8.2. Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	RL.TS.8.4. Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	RL.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	RL.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums, including the representation/s or various perspectives of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	RL.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.
Reading Informational Text	
(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RI.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	RI.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	RI.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.
(AA) Analysis of an Argument: By the end of grade 12, evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning, the credibility and accuracy of each source as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	RI.AA.8.7. 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.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
Writing	
(AW) Argumentative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	W.AW.8.1. Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. U. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	V. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources. W. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. X. Establish and maintain a formal or academic style, approach, and form. Y. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
(IW) Informative and Explanatory Writing: By the end of grade 12, write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. Y. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension. Z. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. - AA. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. - BB. Use precise language and domain/grade-level-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. - CC. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form. - DD. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.
(NW) Narrative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using	W.NW.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	U. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. V. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. W. 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. X. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. Y. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
(WP) Writing Process: By the end of grade 12, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, and publishing.	W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
(WR) Writing Research: By the end of grade 12, conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	W.WR.8.5. 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.
(SE) Sources of Evidence: By the end of grade 12, gather relevant information and evidence from multiple sources to support analysis, reflection, and research, while assessing the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrating the information while avoiding plagiarism.	W.SE.8.6. 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.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

(RW) Range of Writing: By the end of grade 12, 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 tasks, purposes, and audiences.	W.RW.8.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Speaking and Listening	
(PE) Participate Effectively: By the end of grade 12, prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	SL.PE.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. Q. 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. R. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. S. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. T. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
(II) Integrate Information: By the end of grade 12, integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	SL.II.8.2. 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.
(ES) Evaluate Speakers: By the end of grade 12, evaluate a speaker's point of view,	SL.ES.8.3. 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.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.	
(PI) Present Information: By the end of grade 12, present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	SL.PI.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.
(UM) Use Media: By the end of grade 12, make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.	SL.UM.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
(AS) Adapt Speech: By the end of grade 12, adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
Language	
Conventions of Standard English	L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking. A. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. B. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. C. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. D. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood. E. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break. F. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	G. Recognize spelling conventions.
(KL) Knowledge of Language: By the end of grade 12, apply knowledge of language and command of vocabulary to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. M. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. N. Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. O. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
(VL) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Literal Meaning: By the end of grade 12, determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words using analysis of word parts (morphemes), word solving strategies, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.	L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. U. 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. V. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. W. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). X. Consult 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. Y. 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).
(VI) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Interpretative Meaning: By the end of grade 12, interpret figurative and connotative word meanings, including shades of	L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. Q. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

meaning based on word relationships and context.	R. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. S. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Interdisciplinary Connections <u>2020 NJSLS Social Studies</u>	
6.1 U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.	
A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights	6.1.12.A.11.e Assess the responses of the United States and other nations to the violation of human rights that occurred during the Holocaust and other genocides. Holocaust
D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.1.12.D.11.d Compare the varying perspectives of victims, survivors, bystanders, rescuers, and perpetrators during the Holocaust. Holocaust
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills</u>	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and statement)
Sources of information are evaluated for accuracy and relevance when considering the use of information.	9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, 2.1.8.CHSS/IV.8.AI.1, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8).
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Computer Science and Design Thinking</u>	
Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
Many factors influence the accuracy of inferences and predictions.	8.1.5.DA.5: Propose cause and effect relationships, predict outcomes, or communicate ideas using data.
New Jersey Student Learning Standards: <u>Climate Change Mandate</u>	

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
Gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.	9.4.8.CI.1: Assess data gathered on varying perspectives on causes of climate change (e.g., cross-cultural, gender-specific, generational), and determine how the data can best be used to design multiple potential solutions.
Multiple solutions often exist to solve a problem.	9.4.8.CT.1: Evaluate diverse solutions proposed by a variety of individuals, organizations, and/or agencies to a local or global problem, such as climate change and use critical thinking skills to predict which one(s) are likely to be effective. 9.4.8.CT.2: Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option (e.g., MS-ETS1-4, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.1)
Digital technology and data can be leveraged by communities to address effects of climate change.	9.4.8.DC.8: Explain how communities use data and technology to develop measures to respond to effects of climate change (e.g., smart cities).
Sources of information are evaluated for accuracy and relevance when considering the use of information.	9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8). 9.4.8.IML.8: Apply deliberate and thoughtful search strategies to access high-quality information on climate change (e.g., 1.1.8.C1b).

Knowledge and Skills
Unit Learning Targets (Objectives): <i>Students will be able to...</i> Reading Skills: ➤ Respond to questions with a short summary after researching background information on a topic. ➤ Identify and describe dialogue, stage directions, scenes, acts, plot, setting, and characterization in dramas. ➤ Recognize and describe characters and setting details, and explain events central to a drama's plot. ➤ Analyze how dialogue and incidents in drama propel action, reveal character traits, or provoke decisions.

- Compare and contrast the structure of two dramas and analyze how structure affects meaning and style.
- Use context clues and dictionary resources to infer and verify word meanings.
- Identify and restate key ideas and details from texts.
- Analyze the structure of speeches to understand how they develop key concepts.
- Cite textual evidence that supports explicit and inferred understanding of the text.
- Monitor comprehension and make connections to improve understanding.
- Analyze an author's style, including word choice and its impact on meaning and tone.
- Determine point of view, author's purpose, and develop written responses analyzing these elements.
- Participate in collaborative conversations, responding to prompts and reflecting on discussions.
- Use prereading supports (graphic organizers, illustrations, topic vocabulary) to understand new texts.
- Perform close readings using visual and contextual supports to deepen comprehension.
- Recognize and analyze expressions and figurative language in texts.
- Identify components of a soliloquy and brainstorm ideas using graphic organizers and vocabulary development.

Writing Skills:

- Write short responses demonstrating understanding of dialogue, dramatic action, and character development.
- Write personal connections after reading excerpts (e.g., from Anne Frank).
- Compose narrative responses analyzing drama elements like dialogue and incidents.
- Write short responses analyzing the author's style, word choice, and rhetorical devices.
- Plan, draft, and revise argumentative oral presentations considering audience and purpose.
- Utilize credible sources, avoid plagiarism, and follow citation standards in presentations and writing.
- Use a revision guide to improve clarity, organization, style, diction, and sentence effectiveness in writing.
- Draft and revise soliloquies, varying sentence types and applying peer feedback in writing and oral practice.
- Write reflections on collaborative discussions.
- Produce short written responses synthesizing analysis of informational and dramatic texts.

Language Skills:

- Recognize and use academic vocabulary words across varied contexts.
- Identify and understand technical language and sight vocabulary in reading and speaking.
- Apply spelling patterns and rules accurately when reading and writing.
- Correct use of sentence types to improve writing style and oral presentations.
- Use varied sentence structures in writing and oral presentations for effect.
- Edit written work for spelling, grammar, and punctuation accuracy.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Use context clues to infer meanings of unfamiliar words and verify with dictionaries.
- Practice writing with appropriate style and tone based on audience and purpose.

Unit Understandings:

Students will know...

- How to cite textual evidence
- Argumentative elements
- Prose-constructed response format
- How to differentiate point of view
- Conflicting viewpoints
- Compare/contrast
- Evaluate text
- Genre-specific vocabulary (Academic and High Frequency)
- How to support an argument
- Steps of the writing process
- Apply grammar conventions including functions of verbals, forms of verb active/passive voice and mood, punctuation (commas, ellipses and dash), and spelling
- How to utilize technology and evaluate reliable sources
- Effective speaking techniques
- Adhere to MLA format when referencing materials
- Select, discern appropriate resources for a given task
- Create graphic organizers
- Identify, define and explain the purpose of various literary devices used in reading selections

Unit Essential Questions:

- Who are you in a crisis?

Instructional Plan

Suggested Activities	Resources/Texts
➤ identify and describe characters and setting details as well as articulate events that are central to the drama's plot. ➤ analyze dialogue and incidents in a drama that propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. ➤ compare and contrast the structure of two dramas and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. ➤ analyze dialogue and incidents in a drama that propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision in a short, narrative response.	StudySync Anchor Texts: Teen Mogul Anne Frank - The Diary of Anne Frank Parallel Journeys Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat Farewell to Manzanar Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech Refugee America Gandhi the Man Long Walk to Freedom Trade Books/Paired Reading for Book Clubs/Workshop Model :

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

➤ write a short response that demonstrates their understanding of the author and her writing through a personal connection. ➤ use context clues to infer word meaning and then verify the inference with a dictionary ➤ analyze dramatic elements and structure in order to compare and contrast two texts in a short, written response. ➤ identify and restate the text’s key ideas and details. ➤ analyze how an author makes connections between individuals, events, and ideas through various informational text elements. ➤ analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. ➤ Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. ➤ Write a short response that demonstrates their understanding of positive outcomes as a result of the unconventional methods. ➤ self-select a text, establish a purpose for reading, and read independently for a sustained period of time.	The Diary of Anne Frank Refugee The Book Thief Additional Suggested Supplemental reading: We Might as well be Strangers by M.E. Kerr
Evidence of Student Learning	
Formative Assessments: ➤ Think Questions, ➤ Close read skills focus question, ➤ Collaborative conversation, ➤ Peer review, ➤ Short-response questions: Blasts, ➤ Digital reading comprehension questions, ➤ Test-talk/turn and talk, ➤ Writers’ notebook ➤ Core ELAR: Comparative Reading and Writing lessons ➤ “Beyond the Book” activities: Writing prompts ➤ Academic Vocabulary in Context ➤ Beyond Text Talk: Facilitate own discussions ➤ Connect to Extended Writing Project- Activities & Skills practice ➤ StudySync TV ➤ Analyze for Enrichment Summative Assessments ➤ End of Unit Assessment	

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Projects/Collaborative Assessments
- Literature Circles/Socratic Circles
- Oral Presentation
- Final exam
- Literary Analysis Task
- Research Simulation Task

Benchmark Assessments:

- 3 StudySync Writing Benchmarks
- StudySync Benchmarks are administered 3 times per year: fall, winter and spring
- Achieve 3000 Level Set Assessment (Basic Skills Only)
- DRA2 (Basic Skills Only)

Alternative Assessments:

- CommonLit,
- Independent novel study
- Teacher created assessments
- Self-selected reading materials/vocabulary
- Stations and workshops
- Socratic Seminar
- Silent Seminar
- Discussion Board (Google Classroom)
- Self Selected Blast and Written Response

Performance Task

- Research Paper - mandatory

Suggested Options for Differentiation and Modifications

Special Education

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- Choral reading
- Chants, songs
- Preferential seating
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow all IEP modifications
- Scribe for students who can't write
- Augmentative communication system
- Shorten/modify number and types of questions
- Scaffolds tab within each unit
- Leveled texts
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio highlight tool
- Audio speed
- Visually stimulating multimedia content
- Summaries
- Visual glossaries
- Words Banks
- Differentiated questions

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Involve families in student learning
- Respect cultural traditions
- Provide students with necessary academic resources and materials
- Allow for alternative assignments
- Provide visuals
- Assign peer tutor
- Collaborate with language professionals and ESL teachers
- Encourage parents to help children maintain their native language at home, while the school helps the child attain proficiency in English.
- Establish a positive connection with parent
- Utilize closed captioning when available
- Provide road maps or outlines for difficult concepts
- Provide sufficient wait time before calling on any student to help keep students who may need more time engaged
- Display a word wall with current academic vocabulary in each subject
- Speak clearly and slowly, avoid slang and idiomatic expressions
- Create a nurturing environment with structured routines

Students with 504 Plan

- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow 504 plan
- Scribe for students who can't write
- Augmentative communication system

Students at Risk for Failure

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase

- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- choral reading
- chants, songs
- preferential seating

Gifted and Talented:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Encourage upper level intellectual behavior based on Bloom’s Taxonomy (analyzing, evaluating, creating)
- Do not always be explicit, allow for discovery
- Use centers and group students according to ability or interest
- Propose interest-based extension activities
- Use leveled texts and offer an advanced reader reading list
- Ask “why” and “what if” questions
- Use varied modes of pre-assessment and assessment
- Create an enhanced set of introductory activities (e.g. advance organizers, concept maps, concept puzzles)
- Provide options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum
- Organize and offer flexible small group learning activities
- Provide whole group enrichment explorations
- Teach cognitive and methodological skills
- Use center, stations, or contracts
- Organize integrated problem-solving simulations
- Debrief students
- Propose interest-based extension activities

Multilingual Learner

- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Pre Teach vocabulary
- Label items in classroom
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio speed
- Audio highlight
- Supplemental language
- Spanish cognates
- Visual glossaries

- Speaking frames
- Sentence frames

Supplemental Resources 5

Instructional Materials

- Skills/Standards Based Lessons as needed (Pacing Guide)
- Blast: Trying Times
- Anne Frank Background:
- Holocaust Background:
- Holocaust Background:
- Paired Text- "Who Was Anne Frank"
- Paired Text- "Seven Decades On, Anne Frank's Word Still Comfort"
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- "The Girl Who Lived Forever"- (Teacher Trial or account needed)
- *Anne Frank* (5th Grade Level)-
- Farewell to Manzanar

Supplemental Materials

- Gandhi Background Knowledge: Can be paired with "Gandhi the Man"
- Self-Selected Blast
- Additional Blasts:
 - **The Struggle of the Rohingya**- After reading about Anne Frank, Alfons Heck, and Helen Waterford, students will have historical context to reflect on the question, "How can we better understand the challenges refugees face?"
 - **All's Fair in War**- Winston Churchill's speech "Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat" called for "victory at all costs" and connects students to the question, "When is it appropriate to use military force?"
 - **Wiesel's Words**- Elie Wiesel's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech is a natural jumping off point to ask, "How can reading and writing help us cope with tragedy?"
- Additional Grammar Lessons:
 - Active and Passive Voice
 - Consistent Verb Voice and Mood
 - Participles
 - Gerunds

Intervention Materials

- Bridges to Literature/Interactive Reader Selections as Applicable
- Scholastic/Scope Magazine as Applicable
- Studysync provides scaffolding and foreign language as needed

Teacher Notes

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

--

OCEAN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Unit 6 Overview

Content Area: English Language Arts

Unit Title: Beyond Reality

Duration: 30 Days

Target Course/Grade Level: 8th Grade ELA

Introduction/Unit Focus:

This unit invites students to dive into the realms of fantasy and science fiction, genres where the impossible becomes possible and imagination reigns. From aliens and ghosts to vampires and wizards, the texts in this unit transport readers to other worlds while challenging them to reflect on their own. Whether the protagonists are navigating unknown dimensions or extraterrestrial beings are seeking connection and belonging, students will examine how these fantastical elements mirror real-world struggles, hopes, and questions.

Through this exploration, students will consider key questions: What can imagined worlds teach us about the real one? Why are fantasy and science fiction so compelling? And how can stepping into an alternate reality deepen our understanding of society and ourselves?

Authors featured in this unit include science fiction pioneers like H.G. Wells and Ray Bradbury, as well as contemporary fantasy writers Susan Cooper and Tomi Adeyemi. Students will also encounter innovative storytelling from Ekaterina Sedia and Raouf Mama, who draw on traditional folklore to craft their visions of alternate worlds. Poems by Sara Teasdale and Derrick Harriell add lyrical perspectives on war and memory, while nonfiction selections from Randall Munroe and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights prompt students to reflect on the consequences of human choices, both imagined and real.

Throughout the unit, students will complete an independent reading assignment connected to the themes explored in both the fiction and nonfiction texts. To culminate their learning, students will undertake an Extended Project that allows for deeper investigation and creative expression.

Reading Skills:

In this unit, students will develop their analytical reading skills by exploring how authors use fantastical elements to comment on human nature, ethics, social justice, and the future. They will identify central themes and track their development across different genres and mediums. Students will analyze how setting, character development, and conflict function in fantasy and science fiction narratives, and how those elements reflect real-world issues. Close reading strategies will be emphasized as students draw inferences, examine authorial choices, and synthesize ideas from poetry, fiction, and nonfiction.

Writing Skills:

As they engage with these rich and imaginative texts, students will also strengthen their ability to write with purpose and precision. The unit culminates in a research paper, where students will select a topic inspired by the texts and themes explored in class. They will learn to develop strong research questions, evaluate the credibility of sources, and organize their ideas into a clear and informative essay. Instruction will also emphasize effective paraphrasing, citation, and revision. Through this process, students will shift from readers to researchers, applying what they've learned in both creative and academic ways.

Disciplinary Concepts for the Unit

Standard 9.1 Personal Financial Literacy

This standard outlines the important fiscal knowledge, habits, and skills that must be mastered in order for students to make informed decisions about personal finance. Financial literacy is an integral component of a student's college and career readiness, enabling students to achieve fulfilling, financially-secure, and successful careers.

Standard 9.2 Career Awareness, Exploration, Preparation and Training

This standard outlines the importance of being knowledgeable about one's interests and talents, and being well informed about postsecondary and career options, career planning, and career requirements.

Standard 9.4 Life Literacies and Key Skills

This standard outline key literacies and technical skills such as critical thinking, global and cultural awareness, and technology literacy* that are critical for students to develop to live and work in an interconnected global economy.

Standard 8.1 Computer Science

Computer Science outlines a comprehensive set of concepts and skills, such as data and analysis, algorithms and programming, and computing systems.

Standard 8.2 Design Thinking

Technology, outlines the technological design concepts and skills essential for technological and engineering literacy. The framework design includes Engineering Design, Ethics and Culture, and the Effects of Technology on the Natural world among the disciplinary concepts

Amistad Law: N.J.S.A. 18A 52:16A-88 Every board of education shall incorporate the information regarding the contributions of African-Americans to our country in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students.

Holocaust Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-28 Every board of education shall include instruction on the Holocaust and genocide in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary school pupils. The instruction shall further emphasize the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.

LGBT and Disabilities Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35 A board of education shall include instruction on the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, in an appropriate place in the curriculum of middle school and high school students as part of the district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (N.J.S.A.18A:35-4.36) A board of education shall have policies and procedures in place pertaining to the selection of instructional materials to implement the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35.

Diversity and Inclusion: C.18A:35-4.36a Curriculum to include instruction on diversity and inclusion.

The instruction shall:

- (1) highlight and promote diversity, including economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance;
- (2) examine the impact that unconscious bias and economic disparities have at both an individual level and on society as a whole; and
- (3) encourage safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students regardless of race or ethnicity, sexual and gender identities, mental and physical disabilities, and religious beliefs.
- (4) Investigate the roles and responsibilities of citizenship, including creating positive social change.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI)

Ensures that the contributions, history, and heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are included in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs) for Social Studies in kindergarten through Grade 12 (P.L.2021, c.416).

21st Century Themes:

"Twenty-first century themes and skills" means themes such as global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy; learning and innovation skills, including creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration; information, media, and technology skills; and life and career skills, including flexibility. Career readiness, life literacies, and key skills education provides students with the necessary skills to make informed career and financial decisions, engage as responsible community members in a digital society, and to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities in an interconnected global economy."

[New Jersey Student Learning Standards-ELA](#)

Focus Standards

Reading Literature

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	RL.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RL.CI.8.2. Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	RL.TS.8.4. Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	RL.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text through the use of different perspectives of the characters and that of the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony).
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and	RL.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums, including the representation/s or various perspectives of a subject or a key scene in two

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	different artistic mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	RL.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on how the author's idea in fiction and literary nonfiction texts (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) is shaped by the author's emphasis on different evidence, advancing different interpretations of facts, or fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.
Reading Informational Text	
(CR) Close Reading of Text: By the end of grade 12, read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
(CI) Central Ideas and Themes of Texts: By the end of grade 12, determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
(IT) Interactions Among Text Elements: By the end of grade 12, analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	RI.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.
(TS) Text Structure: By the end of grade 12, analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section,	RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	
(PP) Perspective and Purpose in Texts: By the end of grade 12, assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	RI.PP.8.5. Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
(MF) Diverse Media and Formats: By the end of grade 12, synthesize content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	RI.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.
(AA) Analysis of an Argument: By the end of grade 12, evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning, the credibility and accuracy of each source as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	RI.AA.8.7. 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.
(CT) Comparison of Texts: By the end of grade 12, analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
Writing	
(AW) Argumentative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning	W.AW.8.1. Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

and relevant and sufficient evidence.	Z. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. AA. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources. BB. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. CC. Establish and maintain a formal or academic style, approach, and form. DD. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
(IW) Informative and Explanatory Writing: By the end of grade 12, write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. EE. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension. FF. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. GG. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. HH. Use precise language and domain/grade-level-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. II. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form. JJ. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.
(NW) Narrative Writing: By the end of grade 12, write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	W.NW.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. Z. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. AA. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. BB. 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. CC. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. DD. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
(WP) Writing Process: By the end of grade 12, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, and publishing.	W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
(WR) Writing Research: By the end of grade 12, conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	W.WR.8.5. 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.
(SE) Sources of Evidence: By the end of grade 12, gather relevant information and evidence from multiple sources to support analysis, reflection, and research, while assessing the credibility and accuracy of	W.SE.8.6. 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.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

each source, and integrating the information while avoiding plagiarism.	
(RW) Range of Writing: By the end of grade 12, 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 tasks, purposes, and audiences.	W.RW.8.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Speaking and Listening	
(PE) Participate Effectively: By the end of grade 12, prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	SL.PE.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. U. 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. V. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. W. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. X. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
(II) Integrate Information: By the end of grade 12, integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	SL.II.8.2. 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.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

(ES) Evaluate Speakers: By the end of grade 12, evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.	SL.ES.8.3. 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.
(PI) Present Information: By the end of grade 12, present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	SL.PI.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.
(UM) Use Media: By the end of grade 12, make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.	SL.UM.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
(AS) Adapt Speech: By the end of grade 12, adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
Language	
Conventions of Standard English	L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking. A. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. B. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. C. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. D. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

	E. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break. F. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission. G. Recognize spelling conventions.
(KL) Knowledge of Language: By the end of grade 12, apply knowledge of language and command of vocabulary to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	L.KL.8.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. P. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. Q. Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. R. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
(VL) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Literal Meaning: By the end of grade 12, determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words using analysis of word parts (morphemes), word solving strategies, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.	L.VL.8.3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. Z. 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. AA. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. BB. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). CC. Consult 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. DD. 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).
(VI) Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Interpretative Meaning: By the end of grade 12, interpret figurative and connotative word	L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

meanings, including shades of meaning based on word relationships and context.	T. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. U. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. V. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. W. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
--	---

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Interdisciplinary Connections
2020 NJSLS Social Studies

6.1 U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.

History, Culture, and Perspectives	Compare and contrast the voluntary and involuntary migratory experiences of different groups of people, and explain why their experiences differed.
---	---

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and statement)
An essential aspect of problem solving is being able to self-reflect on why possible solutions for solving problems were or were not successful.	9.4.8.CT.3: Compare past problem-solving solutions to local, national, or global issues and analyze the factors that led to a positive or negative outcome.
Sources of information are evaluated for accuracy and relevance when considering the use of information.	9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, 2.1.8.CHSS/IV.8.AI.1, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8).

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Computer Science and Design Thinking

Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
Economic, political, social and cultural aspects of society drive development of new technological products, processes, and systems.	8.2.8.ITH.1: Explain how the development and use of technology influences economic, political, social, and cultural issues.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Climate Change Mandate

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

Core Ideas	Performance Expectations (Identified with Standard Number and Statement)
Gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.	9.4.8.CI.1: Assess data gathered on varying perspectives on causes of climate change (e.g., cross-cultural, gender-specific, generational), and determine how the data can best be used to design multiple potential solutions.
Multiple solutions often exist to solve a problem.	9.4.8.CT.1: Evaluate diverse solutions proposed by a variety of individuals, organizations, and/or agencies to a local or global problem, such as climate change and use critical thinking skills to predict which one(s) are likely to be effective. 9.4.8.CT.2: Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option (e.g., MS-ETS1-4, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.1).
Digital technology and data can be leveraged by communities to address effects of climate change.	9.4.8.DC.8: Explain how communities use data and technology to develop measures to respond to effects of climate change (e.g., smart cities).
Sources of information are evaluated for accuracy and relevance when considering the use of information.	9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8). 9.4.8.IML.8: Apply deliberate and thoughtful search strategies to access high-quality information on climate change (e.g., 1.1.8.C1b).

Knowledge and Skills
Unit Learning Targets (Objectives): <i>Students will be able to...</i> Reading Skills: ➤ Respond to questions after exploring background information and research. ➤ Identify and describe literary elements in science fiction and nonfiction texts. ➤ Recognize and use academic vocabulary across various contexts. ➤ Make inferences to improve reading comprehension. ➤ Identify character and setting details and articulate events central to the plot. ➤ Determine and analyze the theme of a text, including its relationship to characters and plot development. ➤ Analyze how a story's theme is developed through character interactions.

- Demonstrate understanding of characterization through narrative techniques.
- Analyze story elements and compare how the structure of a short story and a poem contribute to meaning and style.
- Analyze the author's style, including word choice, and its impact on meaning and tone.
- Identify the central or main idea to participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
- Analyze differences in point of view between characters and the audience or reader.

Writing Skills:

- Analyze a sample student model and plan a meaningful research paper.
- Plan research by generating and refining questions for a short project.
- Assess the reliability, credibility, and accuracy of research resources.
- Take notes on relevant information from multiple sources and generate focused questions for exploration.
- Draft a research paper in response to a prompt.
- Evaluate and modify research plans as needed during the drafting process.
- Develop drafts by paraphrasing and crediting sources appropriately.
- Cite all sources accurately in a Works Cited list.
- Incorporate graphics and multimedia to enhance comprehension and add information.
- Revise drafts for clarity, development, organization, style, diction, and sentence effectiveness.
- Edit and publish the final draft of the research paper.

Language Skills:

- Practice using infinitive clauses correctly.
- Practice spelling commonly misspelled words.
- Use ellipses correctly to indicate pauses or separation.
- Correct sentence fragments to improve sentence completeness.

Unit Enduring Understandings:

Students will know...

- Strategies to use for close reading
- Differences between genres such as science fiction and fantasy
- Compare and contrast methods
- Close reading strategies
- Identification of words based on context
- Point of view
- Theme comparison
- Identifying evidence
- Significance of figurative language usage
- Literary Analysis strategies
- The steps of the writing process
- Interactions between plot elements
- Identification of unknown words or phrases

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

➤ How to collaborate effectively ➤ Teacher expectations and assessment tools ➤ Academic and high-frequency vocabulary ➤ Interpret and analyze text ➤ Purpose of technology in real-world situations	
Unit Essential Questions: ➤ What do other worlds teach us about our own?	
Instructional Plan	
Suggested Activities	Resources/Texts
➤ make inferences in order to improve reading comprehension. ➤ identify and describe characters and setting details as well as articulate events that are central to the story's plot. ➤ determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters and plot. ➤ analyze how the theme of the story is developed through a character's interactions. ➤ write a short scene that demonstrates their understanding of characterization through narrative techniques. ➤ write a short response that demonstrates their understanding of theme through a personal connection. ➤ identify and describe characters and setting details as well as articulate events that are central to the story's plot. ➤ determine theme in a text, especially as it relates to setting ➤ analyze story elements and compare and contrast how the structure of a short story and a poem contribute to the meaning and style of each. ➤ write a short response analyzing how the story's structure and the structures of two other texts compare and contrast, and how structure relates to the meaning and style of each text. ➤ respond to a question with a 140-character response. ➤ analyze the author's style, including word choice, and its impact on meaning and tone.	StudySync Anchor Texts: Manuel and the Magic Fox Paired Readings- "The Dark is Rising, "There Will Come Soft Rains" The War of the Worlds Everybody Out Spaceships Universal Declaration of Human Right How Hare Drank Boiling Water and Married the Beautiful Princess and Children of Blood and Bone Trade Books/Paired Reading For Book Clubs: The Dark is Rising The War of the Worlds Over Sea, Under Stone (in conjunction with The Dark is Rising) Additional Suggested Supplemental Reading:

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- determine the meaning and usage of grade-level academic English words derived from Greek and Latin roots.
- write an objective summary of a text.
- participate in a collaborative conversation in response to a prompt and write a reflection on participation in the discussion.
- self-select a text, establish a purpose for reading, and read independently for a sustained period of time.

Evidence of Student Learning

Formative Assessments:

- Think Questions,
- Close read skills focus question,
- Collaborative conversation,
- Peer review,
- Short-response questions: Blasts,
- Digital reading comprehension questions,
- Test-talk/turn and talk,
- Writers' notebook
- Core ELAR: Comparative Reading and Writing lessons
- "Beyond the Book" activities: Writing prompts
- Academic Vocabulary in Context
- Beyond Text Talk: Facilitate own discussions
- Connect to Extended Writing Project- Activities & Skills practice
- StudySync TV
- Analyze for Enrichment

Summative Assessments

- End of Unit Assessment
- Projects/Collaborative Assessments
- Literature Circles/Socratic Circles
- Oral Presentation
- Final exam
- Literary Analysis Task
- Research Simulation Task

Benchmark Assessments:

- StudySync Benchmarks are administered 3 times per year: fall, winter and spring
- Writing Benchmark
- Achieve 3000 Level Set Assessment (Basic Skills Only)
- DRA2 (Basic Skills Only)

Alternative Assessments:

- CommonLit,

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Independent novel study
- Teacher created assessments
- Self-selected reading materials/vocabulary
- Stations and workshops
- Socratic Seminar
- Silent Seminar
- Discussion Board (Google Classroom)
- Self Selected Blast and Written Response

Performance Task

- Research Paper - Mandatory

Suggested Options for Differentiation and Modifications

Special Education

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- Choral reading
- Chants, songs
- Preferential seating
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow all IEP modifications
- Scribe for students who can’t write
- Augmentative communication system
- Shorten/modify number and types of questions
- Scaffolds tab within each unit
- Leveled texts
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio highlight tool
- Audio speed
- Visually stimulating multimedia content
- Summaries
- Visual glossaries
- Words Banks

- Differentiated questions

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Involve families in student learning
- Respect cultural traditions
- Provided students with necessary academic resources and materials
- Allow for alternative assignments
- Provide visuals
- Assign peer tutor
- Collaborate with language professionals and ESL teachers
- Encourage parents to help children maintain their native language at home, while the school helps the child attain proficiency in English.
- Establish a positive connection with parent
- Utilize closed captioning when available
- Provide road maps or outlines for difficult concepts
- Provide sufficient wait time before calling on any student to help keep students who may need more time engaged
- Display a word wall with current academic vocabulary in each subject
- Speak clearly and slowly, avoid slang and idiomatic expressions
- Create a nurturing environment with structured routines

Students with 504 Plan

- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Follow 504 plan
- Scribe for students who can't write
- Augmentative communication system

Students at Risk for Failure

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher reads aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Use a strong student as a “buddy” (does not necessarily have to speak the primary language)
- choral reading
- chants, songs
- preferential seating

Gifted and Talented:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Encourage upper level intellectual behavior based on Bloom's Taxonomy (analyzing, evaluating, creating)
- Do not always be explicit, allow for discovery

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

- Use centers and group students according to ability or interest
- Propose interest-based extension activities
- Use leveled texts and offer an advanced reader reading list
- Ask “why” and “what if” questions
- Use varied modes of pre-assessment and assessment
- Create an enhanced set of introductory activities (e.g. advance organizers, concept maps, concept puzzles)
- Provide options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum
- Organize and offer flexible small group learning activities
- Provide whole group enrichment explorations
- Teach cognitive and methodological skills
- Use center, stations, or contracts
- Organize integrated problem-solving simulations
- Debrief students
- Propose interest-based extension activities

Multilingual Learners

- Small group instruction-guided reading and guided writing
- Use books on tape
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Work in a small group
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Assign a picture or movement to vocabulary words
- Pre Teach vocabulary
- Label items in classroom
- Screen reader
- Audio
- Audio speed
- Audio highlight
- Supplemental language
- Spanish cognates
- Visual glossaries
- Speaking frames
- Sentence frames

Supplemental Resources 6

Instructional Materials

- The Big Blast: Beyond Reality
- Blast: From Fiction to Future (“There Will Come Soft Rains”)
- Blast: The Heroes We Deserve (“Everybody Out”)
- The Dark is Rising
- Skills/Standards Based Lessons (Pacing Guides)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Supplemental Materials

- Supplemental Materials I Need a Hero - *H. G. Wells’ The War of the Worlds* reveals what many think our future society will or should look like. Reading it

Ocean Academy Charter School
Curriculum Guide
Grade 8 - ELA

prepares students to analyze our present world in this Blast by asking “To what extent does pop culture influence our society?”

- Seeking Asylum - The “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” gives context necessary for students to consider the question “How has the entire world been affected by the Syrian refugee crisis?”
- Stand Up - Malala Yousafzai became an internationally known activist at the young age of 11, for speaking out against the Taliban in Pakistan. In 2014, Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi, an Indian human rights activist, were both awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Both activists’ stories inspire students to consider: “What are some ways we can defend our human rights and the rights of others?”

➤ Additional Grammar Lessons:

- [Spelling Rules I](#)
- [Spelling Rules II](#)
- [Homophones](#)

Intervention Materials

- Bridges to Literature/Interactive Reader Selections as Applicable
- Scholastic/Scope Magazine as Applicable
- Scaffolding and text in other languages provided by StudySync

Teacher Notes