

**New Paltz Central School District  
English Language Arts  
8th Grade**

TIME	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS/CONTENT	STANDARDS/SKILLS	ASSESSMENTS
<p><b>September – October</b></p>	<p><b><u>UNIT 1: The Outsiders</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is an outsider?</li> <li>• How does literature provoke thought about social issues?</li> <li>• How do you determine the main idea in a piece of fiction?</li> <li>• How do different genres address the theme of being an outsider?</li> <li>• How do you compare two different works of literature dealing with the same theme?</li> <li>• How do you use writing to persuade or convince?</li> <li>• What are effective questions?</li> <li>• What is the structure of an essay?</li> <li>• What are effective proofreading strategies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> <li>• Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</li> <li>• Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke decision.</li> <li>• Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</li> <li>• Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).</li> <li>• Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills checks - vocabulary and chapter checks using Senteo</li> <li>• Writing activities - quote analysis, poetry analysis and synthesis</li> <li>• Class discussion/debate (S.O.S - The Whole Mess is Cherry's Fault)</li> <li>• Quizzes</li> <li>• GRASPS - website book review and teen gang article</li> <li>• Unit assessment</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.</li> <li>○ Use words, phrases and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.</li> <li>○ Establish and maintain a formal style.</li> <li>○ Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.</li> <li>● Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; including formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</li> <li>○ Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</li> <li>○ Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</li> <li>○ Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</li> <li>○ Establish and maintain a formal style.</li> <li>○ Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Produce text (print and nonprint) that explores a variety of cultures and perspectives.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.</li> <li>• Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</li> <li>• Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.</li> <li>• Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 8 topics, texts, and issues</i>, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.</li> </ul>	

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<b>November - January</b>	<p><b><u>Unit 2: Literature Circles</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the elements of a meaningful literary discussion?</li> <li>• How does literature provoke thought about social issues?</li> <li>• How do different novels address similar themes?</li> <li>• How do you analyze literature?</li> <li>• How do you prove understanding and knowledge of text?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpret and analyze information from fiction</li> <li>• Identify significant literary elements (including metaphor, symbolism, foreshadowing, dialect, rhyme, meter, irony, climax) and use those elements to interpret the work</li> <li>• Identify author’s purpose and explain how the theme is conveyed</li> <li>• Understand that within any group there are many different points of view depending on the particular interests and values of the individual, and recognize those differences in perspective in texts and presentations</li> <li>• Evaluate their own and others’ work based on a variety of criteria (e.g., logic, clarity, comprehensiveness, conciseness, originality, conventionality) and recognize the varying effectiveness of different approaches</li> <li>• Present (in essays, position papers, and debates) clear analyses of issues, ideas, texts, and experiences, supporting their positions with well-developed arguments</li> <li>• Express ideas and concerns clearly and respectfully in conversations and group discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic essay</li> <li>• Book review</li> <li>• Creative writing in response to novel</li> <li>• Group presentation</li> <li>• Nonfiction research and presentation related to novel</li> </ul>

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<p><b>January - March</b></p>	<p><b><u>UNIT 3: Short Fiction and Short Nonfiction</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the essential components of a short story?</li> <li>• How do authors use the genre to tell a story?</li> <li>• How do authors use literary devices to portray theme in short stories?</li> <li>• What individual components make each story successful and give it literary merit?</li> <li>• What role does the short story play in society?</li> <li>• What is Gothic literature and what devices contribute to a Gothic element?</li> <li>• How can simple sentences be made more complex and engaging/more creative?</li> <li>• What is the difference between writing an opinion and writing a persuasion?</li> <li>• What are effective note-taking methods while listening?</li> </ul> <p>-----</p> <p>Short Stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Eleven”</li> <li>• “The Dinner Party”</li> <li>• “Raymond’s Run”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> <li>• Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</li> <li>• Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provide a decision.</li> <li>• Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.</li> <li>• Analyze how differences, in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.</li> <li>• Read and comprehend literature and literary nonfiction independently and proficiently.</li> <li>• Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills checks (vocabulary and Senteo reading checks)</li> <li>• Writing activities (poetry analysis and synthesis, personal response and connection, opinion and persuasive responses, writing in response to listening/note taking)</li> <li>• Class discussion/debate (S.O.S - Uncle Basil is greedy)</li> <li>• Quizzes</li> <li>• Major writing assignments (Gothic Lit Story, article about caring for someone with a disability, essay)</li> <li>• Final assessment (persuasive writing, noting and emulating author’s craft/style, character development, and parts of plot)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You Can’t Take it With You”</li> <li>• “Path Through the Cemetery”</li> <li>• “Mother in Mannville”</li> </ul> Poems/Songs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Empire of Dreams”</li> <li>• “I Put a Spell on You”</li> </ul> Articles/Memoirs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Whispers from the Grave”</li> <li>• “Not Your Typical Prom Night”</li> <li>• “Learn or Burn”</li> <li>• “Is it okay to Lie?”</li> </ul> Literary terms Vocabulary Writing prompts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).</li> <li>• Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.</li> <li>• Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.</li> <li>○ Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</li> <li>○ Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</li> <li>○ Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</li> <li>● Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>○ Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</li> <li>• With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</li> <li>• Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.</li> <li>• Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 8 topics, texts, and issues</i>, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on <i>grade 8 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use content (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.</li> <li>○ Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.</li> <li>○ 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).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.</li> </ul>	

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<b>March - April</b>	<p><b><u>UNIT 4: ELA Review: Test Taking as a Genre</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do students need to know to achieve mastery on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA assessment?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen for key ideas and record notes</li> <li>• Listen to collect and interpret data, facts, and ideas</li> <li>• Listen to comprehend, interpret, and respond to imaginative texts</li> <li>• Listen to analyze and evaluate information, ideas, opinions, issues, themes, and experience</li> <li>• Take notes to record and organize relevant data, facts, and ideas</li> <li>• Accurately determine scores on sample exemplar papers</li> <li>• Synthesize across texts</li> <li>• Draw conclusions and make inferences based on explicit and implied information with supporting evidence</li> <li>• Complete graphic organizers</li> <li>• Analyze rubrics</li> <li>• Grade and analyze sample essays</li> <li>• Recognize proper grammar and spelling</li> <li>• Edit selected drafts to improve language mechanics</li> <li>• Revised selected drafts to improve content and language</li> <li>• Write on demand (timed tests)</li> <li>• Recognize common theme between two pieces of writing</li> <li>• Self-assess writing</li> <li>• Write in a timed environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphic organizers</li> <li>• Short responses</li> <li>• Extended responses (essays)</li> <li>• Peer review</li> <li>• Multiple choice (reading comprehension quizzes)</li> <li>• Self-assessment</li> </ul>

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<b>April - May</b>	<p><b><u>UNIT 5: Twelve Angry Men</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general, how does our criminal justice system work?</li> <li>• What makes a play different from other types of literature?</li> <li>• What is “reasonable doubt”?</li> <li>• How do stage directors help performers?</li> <li>• What are the elements of a drama?</li> <li>• How does one construct a business letter?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify literary elements of different genres:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Elements of plot</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identify the ways in which characters change and develop throughout a story</li> <li>• Infer character traits</li> <li>• Identify missing information and irrelevant information</li> <li>• Read in the following genre: drama, short fiction</li> <li>• Understand importance of time in setting</li> <li>• Understand importance of place in setting</li> <li>• Write the following to analyze and evaluate ideas, information, themes, and experiences: persuasive texts</li> <li>• Revise and edit to maintain formal tone, organization of ideas, and proper format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of famous quotes and application to the text</li> <li>• Discussions/discussion questions</li> <li>• Compare/contrast text to movie</li> <li>• Reenactment of play</li> <li>• Tests/quizzes</li> </ul>
<b>May - June</b>	<p><b><u>UNIT 6: Shakespeare</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who was William Shakespeare and why should we read his works today?</li> <li>• What was life like in Shakespeare’s time?</li> <li>• What makes the Globe Theatre unique?</li> <li>• How can we decode Shakespeare’s language?</li> <li>• What literary techniques did Shakespeare use and why?</li> <li>• What characterization techniques did Shakespeare use in <i>Taming of the Shrew</i>?</li> <li>• How did <i>Taming of the Shrew</i> reflect the roles of men and women of the time?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the elements of a Shakespearean sonnet.</li> <li>• Identify the symbolism of the Globe Theatre.</li> <li>• Recognize Shakespeare’s tone through plot and character.</li> <li>• Understand Shakespearean language.</li> <li>• Connect Shakespearean themes to modern life.</li> <li>• Analyze quotes/distinguish insightful quotes.</li> <li>• Identify literary elements of different genres: drama, poetry.</li> <li>• Determine how the use and meaning of literary devices such as symbolism, metaphor and simile, alliteration, personification, flashback, and foreshadowing convey the author’s message or intent.</li> <li>• Listen to comprehend, interpret, and respond to imaginative texts.</li> <li>• Read and interpret sonnets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write an original sonnet.</li> <li>• Tests and quizzes.</li> <li>• Discussions.</li> </ul>