



***Department of Teaching & Learning***  
***Parent/Student Course Information***

***Core English Grade 8***

***(LA1123)***

*Counselors are available to assist parents and students with course selections and career planning. Parents may arrange to meet with the counselor by calling the school's guidance department.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Core English 8 provides a variety of opportunities in reading and writing through students' examination of various genres, authors, characters, people, and themselves. This course is organized around the overarching theme of Challenges and reflects a variety of encounters with literature: non-fiction, short stories, novels and excerpts, historical fiction, narrative non-fiction, and media. Major goals of the eighth-grade program include: strengthening writing and organization with an emphasis on expository and persuasion, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and research skills along with developing effective communication through group discussions and oral presentations. The students will use the writing process to develop expository, narrative, reflective, and persuasive writing. Through writing instruction, students learn to analyze their own writing, and set goals to improve their composing and expression, and grammar, usage, and mechanics. The students continuously revise and edit their work as they build their writing. Additionally, they begin to read and write critically in response literature.

Writing, reading, discussion, performance based assessments, and classroom presentations require that the students move beyond literal recall of facts to an interpretation of literature with cooperative written response. Students are provided opportunities to examine various purposes for writing and to consider how writers make choices based on audience, purpose, and format. Throughout the year, the students continuously revise and edit their work as they build their body of writing.

At this grade level, students take the two Standards of Learning (SOL) tests for grade eight: English: Reading and English: Writing. Specific dates for the SOL tests will be announced by the school.

**PREREQUISITE**

English 7

**OPTIONS FOR NEXT COURSE**

Enrollment for the next English course should be based on student performance, teacher recommendation, and parent input. The courses available are Core English, Grade 9 and Advanced English, Grade 9.

**REQUIRED STUDENT TEXTBOOK**

Hardbound and Online Access for *Holt McDougal Literature, 8*  
Online Access for *Write Source Recharged*

## 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Visit the Virginia Department of Education website to access the English 8 Standards of Learning

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards\\_docs/english/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/index.shtml)

### SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The teacher may choose supplementary materials to extend and enrich the students' knowledge of course standards. These materials may be drawn from: supplementary novels, visual media, primary source documents, simulations, computer programs and other online educational resources.

### READING SELECTIONS

In addition to poetry, short stories, dramas, and nonfiction texts, the following is a list of works commonly studied at this level. The literature selections are provided by the school, and the individual teachers select the most appropriate titles for the students.

*The Acorn People*, Ron Jones  
*Across Five Aprils*, Irene Hunt  
*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain  
*And One For All*, Theresa Nelson  
*April Morning*, Howard Fast  
*Code Talker*, Joseph Bruchac  
*Crispin*, Avi  
*The Contender*, Robert Lipsyte  
*The Daybreakers*, Louis L'Amour  
*Deathwatch*, Robb White  
*The Diary of Anne Frank*, Anne Frank  
*A Family Apart*, Joan Nixon  
*Farewell to Manzanar*, Jeanne W. and James D. Houston  
*The First Woman Doctor*, Rachel Baker  
*Freak the Mighty*, Rodman Philbrick  
*The Giver*, Lois Lowry  
*Good Night Mr. Tom*, Michelle Magorian  
*Home Before Dark*, Sue Ellen Bridgers  
*The House of Dies Drear*, Virginia Hamilton

*Last Shot*, John Feinstein  
*A Light in the Forest*, Conrad Richter  
*A Long Way from Chicago*, Richard Peck  
*No Promises in the Wind*, Irene Hunt  
*Nothing But The Truth*, Avi  
*The Outsiders*, S.E. Hinton  
*The Pearl*, John Steinbeck  
*The Pigman/The Pigman's Legacy*, Paul Zindel  
*The Sea of Trolls*, Nancy Farmer  
*Shane*, Jack Schaefer  
*Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World*, Jennifer Armstrong  
*The Skin I'm In*, Sharon Flake  
*Waiting for the Rain*, Sheila Gordon  
*Walkabout*, James Vance Marshall  
*When a Hero Dies*, Anne Schraff  
*Won't Know Till I Get There*, Walter Dean Myers  
*The Year Without Michael*, Michael Pfeffer  
*Z for Zachariah*, Robert C. O'Brien

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For further information, please call (757) 263-1070.

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Alternative formats of this publication which may include taped, Braille, or large print materials are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Call or write The Department of Teaching and Learning, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038. Telephone 263-1070 (voice); fax 263-1424; 263-1240 (TDD) or email her at [Cameron.Vadersen@vbschools.com](mailto:Cameron.Vadersen@vbschools.com).

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