



# 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English

## Curriculum Sample

Do you want your child to get good grades? Maybe move more quickly through a subject? Get accepted by a high-achieving magnet school? Become a valedictorian? Get a successful job earning an excellent wage?

**Our strong English curriculum can help your student reach his or her goals!**

Whatever your child's academic goals, A Grade Ahead's Enrichment at Home Program can help him or her achieve them!

In our monthly English enrichment program, your child will develop strong critical-thinking and analytical skills through challenging and motivational lessons and homework exercises.

We make it easy to implement at home! Here's how it works:

- 1. Learn a lesson:** New topics are introduced each week. *(Older students can teach themselves with our easy-to-understand lesson. Younger students may need to be assisted by a parent.)*
- 2. Complete 3 days of homework** including critical-thinking, comprehension, and vocabulary exercises. *(Select the time and place to complete the homework around your schedule.)*
- 3. Check your student's success** with the answers provided.
- 4. Enter scores in our Parent Portal** to follow your student's achievements.

### Want to see how A Grade Ahead works first-hand?

We have attached an entire lesson and one day's worth of homework for you to print out and try.



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# Lesson Booklet Sample

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English

Print it out and try it!



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**A. Vocabulary**


- 1. **belligerent** (adj.) of warlike character; aggressively hostile
- 2. **desolate** (adj.) barren or laid waste; lonely or uninhabited
- 3. **flagrant** (adj.) shockingly noticeable; notorious
- 4. **prohibit** (v.) (1) to formally forbid a person or group from doing something; (2) to make impossible or prevent
- 5. **thrive** (v.) to prosper or succeed; to grow or develop vigorously
- 6. **trifling** (adj.) of very little importance; of small value
- 7. **vestige** (n.) a mark, trace, or visible evidence of something that is no longer present or in existence

**Student Goals:**

- ✓ I will review informational writing and its purpose.
- ✓ I will understand the features that make informational writing successful.
- ✓ I will brainstorm for an informational topic I will eventually present.

**CHALLENGE! – College Preparatory Words**

 accost (v.)	aspersion (n.)	audacity (n.)
to approach and speak to someone, usually aggressively	false rumor, damaging report, slander	boldness or adventurousness; nerve



**Teaching Tip:** *The 8<sup>th</sup> grade English writing section will have many features of a writing workshop. Most students will have already been introduced to the types of writing covered in this section. As such, try to keep lessons short, and devote most of the class time to the collaborative aspects (i.e. “Peer Power,” “Teacher Time,” “Peer Proofs,” and “Powerful Presentations”) and completing Day 1 homework.*

**B. Writing**

In the first section of 8<sup>th</sup> grade English, we will cover several different types of writing. This month, we will explore informational writing. Over the next four weeks, you will do the following: (1) complete pre-writing activities, (2) write a rough draft, (3) edit your writing, and finally, (4) present a final copy of your informational writing piece.

**MONTH 1 WRITING ASSIGNMENT:** Your main project for this month will be completing one of the writing assignments below. You may choose the prompt that you like. Use this prompt to help you guide your brainstorming activity. You must select a prompt prior to completing Day 1 Homework.

- a. Your Future Career (Description Essay) – Think about a career you are interested in. Research this career and construct an informational essay that describes this job.
- b. Biographical Sketch (Chronological Essay) – Choose a person from history (or alive today!) that led an interesting life. Research him or her and write a biography, beginning with his or her early life.
- c. News Report (Cause and Effect Essay) – Pick a topic or event to write about. Research it and write as if you are delivering a news report on the causes and effects of your topic.

**Informational Writing**

Informational writing is a type of nonfiction writing that is based in conveying factual information. It is meant to increase the reader’s knowledge or understanding of a certain topic. It does not provide any opinion or argument. A good way to think of informational writing is to think of it as answering specific questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?




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Examples of informational texts are books, magazine articles, websites, booklets, academic essays, and other texts. They often have facts, quotes, and/or statistics to help explain the topic. One or many sources can be referenced in preparation for writing and used in a final work. Often, informational texts will look like research papers, with an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Some texts, like instruction sets or lists, may have different formatting.



*Note: If you quote or paraphrase a source, be sure to document it correctly according to the paper's style guide (MLA, APA, etc.) to avoid plagiarism.*

There are many different types of writing within this category, including (but not limited to) *definition, description, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, and sequence*. The type of informational writing heavily influences how the writing is organized. We will study some of these specific types of essays in the following weeks.

Type of Informational Writing	Purpose	Title Examples
Definition	Explains a specific term or concept	“What is friendship?” “The Meaning of...”
Description	Tells readers what something is or how something happened, provides details	“Animals of Africa” “The 2012 Olympic Games”
Cause and effect	Examines the reasons for and the outcomes of a certain situation	“The Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina”
Comparison and contrast	Analyzes the similarities and differences between two things	“The Difference Between Weather and Climate”
Sequence or Chronological	Describes a series of events or process in some order; often, shows events in the order they occurred	“How to Build a Desk” “Her Journey to Fame”



**Teaching Tip:** Many of the following topics are review for these students. Briefly review these concepts with students, but **quickly** move on to the Peer Power activity.

### Prewriting Activities

Prewriting activities are important to make sure that you have an interesting topic that will fit the prompt and provide enough material to write a whole paper.

#### Brainstorming

Brainstorming is the first part of the prewriting process. The process of brainstorming is to think of many possible ways to accomplish the goal of your writing. Two easy ways to brainstorm for informational texts are freewriting and the question method. Freewriting can be a list or a paragraph in which you simply write any thought that comes to you; these thoughts do not have to be complete sentences, nor use correct grammar.



**Example:** Prompt – Use freewriting to brainstorm for an informational piece involving a place you have visited.

I really like traveling so I've visited many places. America: NYC, North Carolina, San Diego, New Orleans. Europe: England, Scotland, France. Also India. History is really



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cool. My favorite place I've visited is London. I was interested in the Buckingham Palace and their guards. I can't remember when it was built or why the guards stand like they do.

The question method involves listing questions and writing all possible answers to each question. These questions should be inspired by the prompt. Answering the first question leads you to the second question, and so on, until you have the main topic and details you need for writing your piece.



**Example:** Prompt – Use the question method to brainstorm for an informational piece involving a place you have visited.

Where have I visited?

- The ocean, an amusement park, England, London, Mumbai

What interested me about these places?

- The native animals, the history, a specific museum exhibit

Note-taking

Once you have a topic, you can begin research and note-taking. Notes should be organized by source, with all citation information and (if applicable) page numbers.



**Example:** If you were researching the state of Oregon, your notes might look like this:

Lomax, E. L.. *Oregon, Washington and Alaska: Sights and Scenes for the Tourist*.  
Omaha, n.p., 1890.

page 1

- "Oregon" comes from the word for "wild thyme" in Spanish because there was a lot of thyme growing there when the Spanish came to the area.
- Astoria founded 1811
- Became a state on February 14, 1859

page 4

- Trade grew on the Columbia River



*Note: The source in the notes above are formatted as a correct MLA citation. It is recommended that you get in the habit of formatting your citations this way for easy use in your later works cited. Remember the framework given below for an MLA book citation and don't forget your hanging indent.*

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. City of Publication, Publisher, Publication Date.

Outlining

Outlines are used to organize research notes and create a structure for a paper. You can first organize your research by topic to see what ideas you have the most research on. From there, you can determine subtopics and supporting details and organize these into a paper outline. Remember, note outlines and paper outlines will look entirely different. Below, you can see what a note outline might look like.



**Example:** I. Nonfiction Writing

A. Informational Text

- i. Cause and effect
- ii. Sequence or chronological
- iii. Description
- iv. Definition
- v. Comparison and contrast

B. Nonfiction Narratives

C. Persuasive





**Peer Power!**

1. **Teachers:** Give students 2-3 minutes to do numbers 1-2, then divide students into pairs. Monitor pairs or groups to make sure they are completing the activity and staying on track. Students should finish Day 1 before the end of class.
2. **Students:** Follow the instructions to the right to complete the two brainstorming games. ALL work in your Day 1 homework must be done individually. An example of each brainstorming game is shown, played by Student 1 [S1] and Student 2 [S2] for a prompt. Use the lines provided to take any notes that you may find helpful while writing your essay. *[Note: The games are meant to help with thinking, but partners should not have the exact same topic.]*

**Teaching Tip:**  
Students at home may play with a parent or skip Peer Power.

**BEFORE YOU BEGIN: Complete numbers 1-2 in Day 1.**

*Concentration Game:* The goal is to stay focused and only answer with another possible topic.

**How to play:**

1. Without looking at your notes, say a possible topic of any prompt. Your partner must respond to you with another relevant topic of the same prompt.
2. The first person to answer in a non-statement, to pause for longer than 3 seconds, OR to move off-topic from the prompt loses.

EXAMPLE: Concentration Game

- S1:** Firefighter  
**S2:** Doctor  
**S1:** Chef  
**S2:** Meals

*\*S2 loses because he or she went off-topic.\**

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**PAUSE! Complete numbers 3-6 in your Day 1 homework.**

*Popcorn Questions:* Stay focused and ask your partner as many questions as you can about your prompt, without answering any of his or her questions.

**How to play:**

1. Ask your partner a question of the topics from the Concentration game.
2. When asked a question, you must only ask another question; do not answer the question.
3. The first person to answer in a non-question, to pause for longer than 5 seconds, OR to move off-topic from the prompt loses.

EXAMPLE: Popcorn Questions

- S1:** What do you like about that job?  
**S2:** How much money does that job make?  
**S1:** What do you want to be when you grow up?  
**S2:** A scientist.

*\*S2 loses because he or she answered in a non-question.\**

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**STOP! Quickly discuss potential topics with your partner, then finish Day 1 homework individually.**



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C. Grammar



**Teaching Tip:** Students should be graded on correct punctuation and grammar in all exercises. The following chart is provided to help parents and students grade their work. It is not intended to be taught in class.

Punctuation Guide for Parents and Students

Colons	
Lists	He travelled to three countries: Japan, Mexico, and Italy.
Business letters	Dear Sir or Madam:
Quotations: Formal and Long	To quote Sir Walter Raleigh: "Fortune is nothing but a power imaginary..."
	Benjamin Franklin had a great deal to say about pros and cons:  When confronted with two courses of action, I jot down on a piece of paper all the arguments in favor of each one-then on the opposite side, I write the arguments against each one.
Titles	<i>Washington: The Indispensable Man</i>
Joining Statements	I have two cousins: Chris and Johannah.
	He believes in helping others: He will give you a hand.
Semicolons	
List	William Jones, PhD; Selena Philips, DO; and Rachel Tripp, MD, wrote a book together.
Join Independent Clauses	Spring is finally here; the sun came out.
Commas	
Join Ind. Clauses with Conjunctions	He loved to read, yet he rarely reads at home.
Introductory Phrases and Clauses	Because I thought I had finished, I didn't check the back and missed 3 questions.
	For two days, no one spoke above a whisper.
Appositive Phrases	Stan walked to the house, a colonial mansion, and knocked on the door.
Participle Phrases	Begging for a ride to the party, Don went from friend to friend until he found one.
	Don went from friend to friend, begging for a ride to the party.
Series	He hit the ball, dropped the bat, and ran to first base.
Interjections	Oh, that looks pretty!
Coordinate Adjectives	That tall, distinguished, good-natured woman is my aunt. <i>(Use a comma if you can put "and" or "but" between the adjectives.)</i>
Quotations	My niece loves to say, "No."
	"I wish," said Luke, "that it would stop raining."
	"No!" said Tina. "You can't use my car, and that's final."
	"Why not?" Orville asked. "Birds can fly." <i>(The last 2 examples show when comma is not used within quotations.)</i>
Contrast	Some say the world will end in ice, not fire.
	The puppies were adorable, but very messy.
Typographical	We went to Versailles, Ohio, on our way West.
	He was born on June 15, 1959, in a wood hut.
	Bob Downey, MD, is giving a lecture at the university.
Long Numbers	5,456,783



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Quotation Marks	
Exact Words: dialogue or a quote	"What do you want?" asked Fred.
Titles: short story, article, essay, short poem, or a song.	"America the Beautiful" by Katherine Le Bates is a famous song, and "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost is a famous poem.
Slang	Sometimes kids these days say things are "chill" when what they really mean is calm or relaxing.
Jargon	Taylor totally "upstaged" Dave last night. ("upstaged" is theatre jargon for stealing attention onstage.)
Definition	The word "red" indicates a color between orange and purple on the spectrum.
Quotes inside Quotes	"I was talking to Bob, and he said, 'Don't buy the red one.'"
Apostrophes	
Possessive Nouns	John's car, children's toys, Chris' brother, friends' kids, Mark and Maya's mother
Omission	I can't find my keys anywhere. Go 'til you come to a door.



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**Week: 1 – Day 1**

**A. Writing**

Answers to 1-24 will vary based on the prompt and topic the student chose. The examples given below are representative of a student who chose prompt b, the “Biographical Sketch,” for his or her Month 1 paper.

1. b

Answers to 2 will vary. Language is expected to be casual and a bit chaotic as students try to brainstorm for a topic. An example is given.

2. I’m trying to think of who is someone very important and led an interesting life. I think it should be someone who I’ve heard of before. I really like space, so maybe an astronaut? But I also really enjoy reading and learning about people who wrote the books I like. I read this one weird story called “The Yellow Wallpaper” and I thought it was so good. I think the author had a pretty interesting life.

For numbers 3 and 6, students should list as many answers as they can, but can receive the point for having at least two answers written.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 3. exotic animals, authors, the revolutionary war                                  |   |
| 4. I want to be an author when I grow up, and I want to know what influenced them. |   |
| 5. What author can I research?   | 6. J.K. Rowling, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Mark Twain |
| 7. Charlotte Perkins Gilman  | 8. Hard childhood, then married and divorced          |
| 9. An influential social activist  | 10. C. P. Gilman wrote “The Yellow Wallpaper.”        |
| 11. She suffered from depression.  | 12. What was her early life like?                     |
| 13. What were her goals?   | 14. How did she treat her illness?                    |
| 15. Why did she write “The Yellow Wallpaper?”                                      |   |

Answers to 16-24 should use the information from 1-15. All main ideas (I, II, and III) and supporting details (a,b) should be completed. 3 of the 6 supporting details may be a question that needs answered. Each blank is worth one point each.

- 16-24. Life Background
- a. What was her early life like?
  - b. Married and divorced
- II. Health and life quality
- a. She suffered from depression.
  - b. How did she treat her illness?
- III. Literary works
- a. Why did she write “The Yellow Wallpaper?”
  - b. Social activism through written works (“The Yellow Wallpaper”)
- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 25. Y [fact]    | 21. N [opinion] |
| 27. N [opinion] | 23. Y [fact]    |
| 29. N [opinion] | 25. Y [fact]    |

**B. Vocabulary**

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. accosted     | 2. verb       |
| 3. thriving     | 4. adjective  |
| 5. audacious    | 6. adjective  |
| 7. aspersed     | 8. verb       |
| 9. desolate     | 10. adjective |
| 11. belligerent | 12. adjective |
| 13. vestige     | 14. noun      |
| 15. flagrant    | 16. adjective |
| 17. trifling    | 18. adjective |
| 19. prohibit    | 20. verb      |

Answers to 21-24 will vary. Students should have at least three sentences. Award one point for each vocabulary word used correctly for a total of 4 points. An example is given.

21-24. Penny is an audacious businesswoman who is thriving in her field. Her office is in a small, desolate corner, so she doesn’t talk to her coworkers much. This, and her busy schedule, removes any vestige of a social life.



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## Now, more than ever, kids need supplemental education!

A Grade Ahead's Enrichment at Home program makes it easy for you to help your students get caught up – and even stay ahead of – their peers. Our students are top performers at the heads of their classes who get into Ivy League schools and perform well on standardized tests. They reach their goals of becoming doctors, engineers, and other well-paid professionals.

### Why Enrichment at Home?

- 1. Our curriculum is outstanding**, with clear lessons and worksheets that are challenging and interesting. They are not boring and repetitive like some other programs.
- 2. Our parents love us**, with more than 90% referring us to their friends and families year after year. [See what real parents are saying in "Our Results"](#).
- 3. It's flexible.** You decide what curriculum your child needs and when to complete the lessons and worksheets.
- 4. It's cost-effective.** We provide everything you need to implement our enrichment program, starting at \$50 per month, with many discount options offered.

### Build Your Own Program

Whether your child is ahead of his or her peers or has some catching up to do, the Enrichment at Home program allows you to select the lessons your child will receive. By reviewing our [curriculum calendar](#), you can look at each month's topics and decide what is best for your child. Visit our [Math](#) or [English](#) web pages, and choose the grade you want to review. You will find the details on the right-hand side. When [registering](#), you can specify which month you want to receive. If your student is on pace with his or her peers, simply register, and we will send you the current month of curriculum. We can always make adjustments if the work is too hard or too easy.

*Our monthly curriculum is delivered to your home each month for \$50/month. Commit to six months and save \$50! To see other discounts, visit our [Pricing page](#).*



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