

A quick guide for observing classroom content and practice

Working with appropriate complex texts, students should:

Read About It

- Stories
- Drama
- Poetry
- Nonfiction

Think About It

- Research
- Analysis
- Reflection

Talk About It

- Presentation
- Collaboration

Write About It

- Arguments
- Explanations
- Narratives

In a **grade 8 ELA class**, you should observe the teacher integrating the grade level ELA standards and students engaging in a variety of the following standards and practices:

Students engage independently with grade-level literary and informational texts, focusing on:

- Key ideas and details:** objective summary, development of theme or main idea, pivotal lines or events, strong textual evidence for claims about explicit and implicit meanings
- Craft and structure:** impact of different text and paragraph structures, effect of differences in point of view (e.g., dramatic irony, conflicting evidence), impact of specific word choices, rhetorical techniques, including allusion, analogy, irony, and parody
- Integration of knowledge and ideas:** faithfulness of film or live production to text, benefits and drawbacks of various media for presenting specific information, relationship of new texts to old (e.g., how modern texts re-imagine folk tales), disagreement between texts on same topic

Students engage in higher-order reasoning, both orally and in writing, especially by:

- Synthesizing:** drawing on multiple sources of information in multiple formats to answer a self-generated research question and to generate focused questions for further research
- Analyzing:** understanding the purpose and motives (e.g., political, commercial) behind an author’s or speaker’s presentation of information, assessing credibility of sources
- Evaluating:** assessing arguments with attention to soundness of reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of evidence, recognizing irrelevant information

Students attend closely to language use in their own work and others’, focusing on:

- Meanings:** strategies (e.g., consulting resources, analyzing roots) for understanding words and phrases in context—including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings
- Conventions:** punctuation to indicate pauses or breaks (e.g., ellipsis, em dash), verb voice (active, passive) and mood (indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, subjunctive), verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives)

Students interact frequently, purposefully, and effectively with diverse others, engaging in:

- Discussion:** being prepared, following rules, defining individual roles, monitoring progress toward goals, connecting others’ ideas, asking and answering questions, acknowledging other viewpoints and defending or adjusting own stance in response
- Presentation:** coherent claims or findings, emphasis on salient points, eye contact, volume, pronunciation, integration of multimedia elements, consideration of specific audience
- Collaboration:** revising and editing work with help from peers and adults, using Internet and other technology to publish and exchange ideas and information, paraphrasing without plagiarizing and providing citations in standard format

Students engage in writing within a range of time frames for a variety of audiences, producing:

- Arguments:** claims distinguished from counterclaims, logical reasoning, relevant evidence, accurate and credible sources, formal style
- Explanations:** well-chosen details and quotations, domain-specific vocabulary, useful formatting and multimedia elements, formal style
- Narratives, scripts, and poems:** clear point of view, sensory details, narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing), irony and parody
- All writing:** clear and appropriate beginning and end, logical and cohesive structure, varied and effective transitions, precise language, suitability to audience and task



ELA What to Look For Guide

The practices below, which fall under Standards I and II of the MA Model Teacher Rubric, should be evident in planning and instruction. Any particular lesson will demonstrate some of the practices, not all. For each lesson, artifacts or observables might include: lesson plan, tasks and assessments, teacher instruction, student discussion and behavior, or student work.

Student Practices

Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment

- Appear consistently engaged and motivated to learn.
- Participate in constructive conversations with teacher about how to improve their performance.

Teaching All Students

- Challenge themselves, take academic risks, and ask for support when appropriate.
- Demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.

Teacher Practices

Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment

- Engages students in tasks that relate to grade-level standards for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and/or language.
- Communicates objectives clearly and provides timely, descriptive feedback to students on their progress and performance.
- Communicates and supports language objectives for English language learners in a clear, explicit way.
- Requires that students use higher-order thinking skills in interactions with text, teacher, and one another.
- Structures lesson well, effectively managing pacing, sequence, activities, materials, resources, technologies, and grouping.

Teaching All Students

- Effectively models ways in which students can access challenging texts through the use of specific strategies.
- Communicates clear, consistent, and high expectations for student work, using rubrics, exemplar texts, and guided practice as appropriate.
- Provides scaffolding and accommodations (graphic organizers, pre-taught vocabulary, reading partners, etc.) for English learners, students with disabilities, and other students who need help accessing the curriculum.
- Provides opportunities for students to read, write, speak, and listen in diverse groups.

NOTES