English 8
Reading Review Notes
for
Parents & Students
2016-2017
English 8
Reading Content Review Notes
2017-2018

This resource is intended to be a guide for parents and students to improve content knowledge and understanding. The information provided is based on the Standards of Learning taught during the school year and comes from the English 8 Standards of Learning curriculum framework issued by the Virginia Department of Education. The curriculum framework in its entirety can be found at the following website:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/index.shtml

In addition to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) English curriculum frameworks and released tests, information from various websites is included. Websites are listed with the information as it appears in the document.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
How many questions are on the Grade 8 Reading VA SOL Test?

There are 55 multiple choice questions on the Grade 8 Reading VA SOL Test.

How much time is my child given to complete the test?

The Grade 8 Reading VA SOL Test is untimed.

What is considered a passing score on the Grade 8 Reading VA SOL Test?

Proficient: 400-499
Advanced Proficient: 500-600
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Which Grade 8 Reading Standards of Learning will be tested?

- The Grade 8 Reading Blueprint Summary Table is listed below. This blueprint is a snapshot of SOLs, corresponding reporting categories, and the number of questions per reporting category that will be on the Virginia Grade 8 Reading SOL Test.

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<th>Reporting Category</th>
<th>Grade 8 Reading Standards of Learning</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
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<td>Use word analysis strategies and word reference materials</td>
<td>8.4 a-d</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts</td>
<td>8.5 a-k</td>
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<td>Demonstrate comprehension of nonfiction texts</td>
<td>8.6 b-k</td>
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<td>8.4 e-f 8.5 l-m 8.6 a.1</td>
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| Number of Operational Items | 45  |
| Number of Field Test Items* | 10  |
| Total Number of Items on Test | 55  |

*Field test items are being tried out with students for potential use on subsequent tests and will not be used to compute students’ scores on the test.

Source: Virginia Department of Education
Use Word Analysis Strategies and Word Reference Materials

8.4 The student should be able to:

- identify various types of figurative language such as similes, metaphors, personification, onomatopoeia, and hyperboles
- identify the connotation (emotional association) and the denotation (dictionary meaning) of words in sentences to help determine meaning and differentiate among words with multiple meanings and phrases
- use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words in a passage
- use roots, affixes, cognates, synonyms, and antonyms to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words in a passage
- use dictionaries, thesauruses, and glossaries to determine and locate the definition, pronunciation, etymology, spelling, and word usage of particular words in a passage

You do not need to read a passage to answer the following questions. Read and answer the questions.

Read this sentence and dictionary entry.

Vangie won the journalism award for her profile of Senator Miles, which she wrote for the school newspaper.


1. Which definition entry best fits the word profile as it is used in this sentence?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
   d. 4
2. Read this sentence.

The Amazon River snakes 4,000 miles through South America.

The word “snakes” is used to show that the Amazon River—

a. has potential to cause harm  
b. makes very little sound  
c. flows at a very rapid pace  
d. curves in its direction

Directions: Read the story and answer the questions that follow.

The Wall

1 “Remember,” said the art teacher, Mr. Ramirez, “our class has volunteered to paint a mural for the school beautification project. We’re looking for a few good ideas, and then we’ll vote on the best one. Any suggestions?”

2 I thought about the sketchbook in my backpack. When Mr. Ramirez announced the mural project last week, I drew my idea. Every time I went to submit it, though, my stomach tied up in knots. So each day I slipped out of class with everyone else, my sketchbook tucked away in my backpack.

3 Mr. Ramirez stood by the blackboard with a piece of chalk in his hand, waiting. The class looked around uneasily. Josh, the boy who sat across the table from me, spoke up first. “That’s easy, Mr. R. You should paint me.”

4 A few of Josh’s friends on the opposite side of the room snickered. Others in the class rolled their eyes.

5 “Seriously,” Josh said. “I’m good-looking. I’m a model student. I’m well-loved by all the girls. I’m a regular icon of everything this school represents.”

6 “You are a regular icon of modesty, Josh,” said the teacher.

7 Alana Jackson raised her hand. “Mr. Ramirez,” she said, “I have an idea that I think would represent more than just one person.” She glared at Josh, then turned away. “Let’s make a rainbow. The colors could represent the diversity of our school.”

8 As Mr. Ramirez wrote “rainbow” on the blackboard, Josh called out, “Way to go, rainbow girl. Did you think of that all by yourself?”
I pulled my sketchbook from my bag. The class was silent. This was my chance to speak up—but I didn’t say anything. I couldn’t. Instead, I buried my head in my arms.

“Don’t be upset,” Josh said to me, “pretty soon we’ll have a lovely rainbow mural in the courtyard to cheer everyone up.”

A few people had other ideas, but none reflected the whole school. The bell rang, and as everyone filed out of the room, Mr. Ramirez called out for us to keep thinking and bring more suggestions tomorrow.

That night at home, I opened my sketchbook and looked at my idea for the mural. I had stayed after school one day to brainstorm mural ideas that would reflect the life of our school. At first everything had seemed quiet, but then I came across some boys playing basketball behind the gym. I sketched the outline of one of the boys leaping into the air for a slam dunk. The girl’s softball team was practicing out in the field, so I drew the outline of my friend Maggie at bat. In the art hall, I found a girl working on a painting. I sketched another silhouette of her with canvas and brush. I also found a boy in the library with a pile of books, a few students working on a science lab, and the drama club rehearsing lines. Silhouettes of all these people wound up in my mural sketch. I thought I was finished, but as I waited for my mom in the parking lot, I saw a few boys practicing skateboard tricks across the parking lot. One of them was Josh. I added one last outline to my drawing.

I sat on my bed looking at the sketch. Who was I kidding? No matter how pleased I was with my idea at home, no matter how resolved I felt to share it, I always chickened out when surrounded by blackboards and classmates. How was tomorrow going to be any different? I was tired of being a spineless jellyfish, though. I packed my sketchbook in my bag and placed the bag by the door.

The next day, the class added a few new ideas to the list, but no one was excited by any of them. I held my sketchbook on my lap, like a soldier ready for battle. Now was the time, this was the day... but nothing happened. My hand didn’t go up in the air. My voice didn’t speak up. I just sat there.

After a few minutes, Mr. Ramirez looked over at me. “Marianna, do you have an idea to share?”

“Me?” I said. Everyone was looking. The walls were laughing at me. “No, not me. Sorry.”

I melted. It was over. For good. As Mr. Ramirez reviewed our list of ideas, I opened my sketchbook to the mural silhouettes. It didn’t matter now, did it? I took a deep breath and prepared to tear the page out.
18 "Hey, that’s not too bad," someone said behind me. It was Josh.

19 I slammed the sketchbook shut. I had thought he was asleep.

20 "Come on," he said, "let me see it again."

21 I don’t know why, but I handed the sketchbook to him. The next thing I knew, he winked at me and flew to the front of the room.

22 "Mr. R!" he announced. "We have a winner! I have our mural right here!"

23 I turned redder than any can of red paint. Oh, to be some kind of burrowing creature that could dig a hole and hide in the sand!

24 When Mr. Ramirez asked if this was my idea for the mural, I felt my thoughts were peeled away by my classmates’ stares. I sat up straight. “Yes, it is,” I said.

25 The class voted, and my idea was chosen for the mural. Afterward, Josh patted my shoulder. “I can’t believe you were going to let us get stuck with the rainbow," he said.

26 I smiled.

27 "No need to thank me," he said. “It’s just another day’s work for the best-looking guy on campus!”

Source: Virginia Department of Education

3. In paragraph 5, the word icon means—

a. religious image  
   b. loyal friend  
   c. talented comedian  
   d. recognizable figure

4. Which phrase from paragraph 12 helps the reader understand the meaning of silhouette?

a. “I had stayed after school one day.”
   b. “I drew the outline for my friend.”
   c. “I found a girl working on a painting.”
   d. “I waited for my mom in the parking lot.”
5. Complete the following analogy.

   Mural is to painting as ______

   a. color is to rainbow
   b. drawing is to sketch
   c. project is to idea
   d. book is to library

6. Which of these is an example of personification?

   a. “Others in the class rolled their eyes.”
   b. “This was my change to speak up—“
   c. “The walls were laughing at me.”
   d. “… I felt my thoughts were peeled away…”

7. Which phrase is an example of a metaphor?

   a. “I slipped out of class with everyone else”
   b. “I opened my sketchbook”
   c. “I also found a boy in the library.”
   d. “I was tired of being a spineless jellyfish”

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**Demonstrate Comprehension of Fictional Texts**

8.5 The student should be able to read and interpret a variety of fictional text, to include being able to:

- explain the use of symbols and figurative language
- make inferences and draw conclusions based on explicit and implied information using evidence from the text as support.
- explain how authors use characters, conflict, point of view, voice, and tone to create meaning
- identify a variety of plot elements and characteristics of different types of literary genres such as short story, novels, poems, folk tales, fables, etc.
- compare and contrast how an author uses word choice, dialogue, form, rhyme, rhythm, and voice in a variety of text
- identify author’s viewpoint and purpose for writing the text
- identify the main idea and supporting details of a text
- identify how the author organizes the text and the different patterns authors use
- identify cause and effect relationships within a passage
We stood in the street looking down at the tree. The rain was falling. Then he announced, “O.K., we gonna push ‘im up!” “What are you talking about, Poppa? The roots are out of the ground!” “Shut up, we gonna push ‘im up, he’s gonna grow again.” We didn’t know what to say to him. You couldn’t say no to him. So we followed him into the house and we got what rope there was and we tied the rope around the tip of the tree that lay in the asphalt, and he stood up by the house, with me pulling on the rope and Frankie in the street in the rain, helping to push up the great blue spruce. In no time at all, we had it standing up straight again!

With the rain still falling, Poppa dug away at the place where the roots were, making a muddy hole wider and wider as the tree sank lower and lower toward security. Then we shoveled mud over the roots and moved boulders to the base to keep the tree in place. Poppa drove stakes in the ground, tied rope from the trunk to the stakes, and maybe two hours later looked at the spruce, the crippled spruce made straight by ropes, and said, “Don’t worry, he’s gonna grow again . . . .”

I looked at the card and wanted to cry. If you were to drive past that house today, you would see the great, straight blue spruce, maybe 65 feet tall, pointing straight up to the heavens, pretending it never had its nose in the asphalt.

I put Poppa’s card back in the drawer, closed it with a vengeance. I couldn’t wait to get back into the campaign.

"Poppa and the Spruce Tree." From DIARIES OF MARIO M. CUOMO by Mario M. Cuomo, copyright © 1984 by Mario M. Cuomo. Used by permission of Random House, Inc.

8. Read this sentence from the essay.

A thousand pictures flashed through my mind, but one scene came sharply into view.

The words *came sharply into view* are closest in meaning to the words--

a. appeared like a movie  
   b. appeared as a bright light  
   c. prompted more memories  
   d. stood out clearer than others

9. Read these sentence from the essay.

I put Poppa’s card back in the drawer, closed it with vengeance. I couldn’t wait to get back into the campaign.

The author uses the phrase *with vengeance* to show that he is

a. feeling sadness because he misses his father  
   b. displaying anger at being behind in the campaign  
   c. showing great determination after making a decision  
   d. using unexpected force while thinking of something else

10. According to the essay, how does Poppa teach his children about being successful?

a. He serves as an example.  
   b. He guides them with love.  
   c. He shares stories about his life.  
   d. He gives them business advice.

11. Mario Cuomo’s adult attitude toward his father is

a. appreciative  
   b. critical  
   c. obedient  
   d. resentful

12. Mario Cuomo is most like his father when he

a. wins the race for governor in his home state  
   b. records the story of the spruce tree in his journal  
   c. overcomes his discouragement with his campaign  
   d. reads the business card he made for the family business
13. Which sentence gives the best description of how Mario Cuomo and his father deal with difficult situations?

a. Both are easily distracted.
b. Each relies on the other for help.
c. Each questions his own decisions
d. Both are determined to overcome challenges.

14. Which sentence best summarizes what happens in “Poppa and the Spruce Tree”?

a. The author is discouraged because he is losing a political campaign.
b. The author helps his father work through what could have been a crisis.
c. The author returns to his old house and sees a large spruce tree still growing.
d. The author continues his campaign when he remembers a lesson his father taught him.

Demonstrate Comprehension of Nonfiction Texts

8.6 The student should be able to read and interpret a variety of nonfiction text, to include being able to:

- make inferences and draw conclusions based on explicit and implied information using evidence from the text as support
- analyze the author’s qualifications, viewpoint, and impact
- analyze the author’s use of text structure and word choice
- analyze details for relevance and accuracy
- differentiate between fact and opinion
- identify the main idea
- summarize and critique text
- identify an author’s organizational pattern using textual clues, such as transitional words and phrases
- identify cause and effect relationships
Directions: Read the flier and answer the questions that follow.

Celebrate Virginia History
at Thornton Middle School’s
History Fair Competition

Old Days, Better Ways:
Technology Builds on the Past

Saturday, March 24

Why Participate?
Understanding history is vital to understanding ourselves as a people and as a nation. History is much more than the study of dusty relics and events long past. It is an essential part of who we are today and who we will become. History shows us our progression from the past to the present and helps us build a better future. The History Fair Competition makes understanding history exciting, engaging, and fun!

All students who enter the Thornton competition have a chance to compete in the Virginia History Day District 8 Competition, Virginia History Day State Competition, and the National History Day Competition at the University of Maryland.

As further inducement, all entrants in the Thornton History Fair Competition have a chance to win a $50, $75, or $100 U.S. Savings Bond.

This Year’s Topic
All entries must address how agriculture, communication, or transportation technology has improved the quality of life for Americans. To many people, technology means computers, hand-held devices, or vehicles that travel to distant planets. However, technology is the application of scientific knowledge to solve a problem, so technology touches lives in countless ways. Individual middle school teachers will preview student topic proposals. Projects should focus on technology that may have become less commonly employed or even obsolete in its original form but has evolved into something that is still meaningful today.

Individual students or groups may enter one of the following categories:

- Exhibit
- Performance
- Documentary
- Essay

Source: Virginia Department of Education
Category Requirements

Exhibit: A traditional three-panel board presentation. Size is limited to 72” tall, 40” wide, and 30” deep. The exhibit should be freestanding. The student must be present during judging to answer questions.

Performance: A dramatic portrayal of the topic no more than 10 minutes long. If costumes are used, they should be authentic representations of the period portrayed.

Documentary: A visual presentation (such as a video, slide show, or computer project) no more than 10 minutes long. A desktop computer, screen, projector, and speakers will be available. Students must provide their presentations on CDs before Friday, March 23. Students needing other equipment should contact the Multimedia Resource Center by Monday, March 19.

Essay: An academic paper of no fewer than 2,000 and no more than 2,500 words. No illustrations are allowed. Use standard font and margins. Please do not include covers. A list of references must be included.

Important Dates

January 5    Submit a preliminary topic proposal to your history teacher. The teacher may require a second proposal if the preliminary proposal is off-topic or needs elaboration.

February 5   Submit a first draft of essay, exhibit materials, performance script, or documentary storyboard.

February 19  A committee of Thornton teachers will critique materials and provide feedback. Students then have an opportunity to revise and improve their final products.

March 9      Submit a final draft of essay.

March 15     Exhibit, performance, and documentary committee preview

March 24     Thornton Middle School History Fair

  • 7:00 A.M. – 9:00 A.M. Participants set up in gym
  • 10:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M. Fair opening and judges’ review
  • 7:00 P.M. Awards ceremony and picnic

April 7: Virginia History Day District 8 Competition
April 28: Virginia History Day State Competition
June 10–14: National History Day Competition

Source: Virginia Department of Education
15. The reader may best conclude that one important goal of the History Fair Competition is for students to—

   a. perform in front of an audience
   b. participate in a national competition
   c. learn to follow detailed instructions
   d. realize the importance of technology

16. Under the heading “Category Requirements,” which organizational pattern is used to present information?

   a. concept/definition
   b. order of importance
   c. compare and contrast
   d. cause and effect

17. Based on the “Important Dates” section, the reader may best infer that contestants are encouraged to —

   a. research historical eras to ensure that people are portrayed accurately
   b. begin work early and produce several drafts of their work
   c. ask a history teacher to supply an interesting topic
   d. improvise a performance for a committee preview

18. The flier encourages students to participate in the History Fair Competition because it provides an opportunity to —

   a. experiment with new technologies
   b. work closely with teachers
   c. enjoy a fun learning experience
   d. discover facts about the community

19. Before submitting an entry, a student who made a 15-minute documentary would have to —

   a. add computer graphics that explain the topic
   b. decide which information can be removed
   c. revise the opening to include a title
   d. dramatize scenes with dialogue

20. Which of these best describes the role that the committee of Thornton teachers plays in the competition?

   a. set up multimedia equipment in the gym
   b. award cash prizes at the final picnic
   c. provide comments as projects develop
   d. teach history lessons about technology
21. Which of these topics would qualify for the History Fair Competition?

a. How Pioneers Settled the American West  
b. The Impact of Riverboats on American Trade  
c. The Effect of Climate Change on American Life  
d. How Teachers Shaped American Education

Source: Virginia Department of Education
The multiple choice questions on the Grade 8 Reading VA SOL Test fall into several categories. The categories listed below are the most common. Follow these tips when answering these types of questions.

1. MAIN IDEA
   ✓ After reading a passage, locate and underline the main idea.
   ✓ Remember that the main idea is the most important point expressed in the entire passage.

2. SIGNIFICANT DETAILS:
   ✓ Find out what details to look for by reading the questions before re-reading the passage.
   ✓ Underline these details as you read.
   ✓ Remember that correct answers do not always use the exact words that appear in the passage.

3. VOCABULARY:
   ✓ Often asks you to define a word within the context of the passage.
   ✓ Sometimes the word in question may have several different meanings. Therefore, answer choices may include meanings of the word that do not fit the context in which the word appears.
   ✓ Read the answer choices and then plug them into the sentence to determine which answer fits the context of the passage.

4. CONCLUSION AND INFEERENCE:
   ✓ A conclusion or inference is often some idea within a passage that the author is hinting at but does not state directly.
   ✓ Consider various parts of the passage together to determine what the author is implying.

5. READ ALL ANSWER CHOICES:
   ✓ Read all answer choices **BEFORE** choosing one.
   ✓ Read each question and the answer choices carefully. Do not rush through the questions and make the mistake of marking the first answer choice that seems correct.
   ✓ Watch out for “distracters.” Distracters are answer choices that are true, but are not relevant to the question that is being asked.

Source: Rockingham County Public Schools (Virginia)
http://www.rockingham.k12.va.us/English/shared/TIPS%20FOR%20STUDENTS.pdf
STAR (Students Teaching Activities Resources)

Suffolk Public Schools STAR resource webpage contains resources that assist students in enhancing their comprehension of the Virginia Standards of Learning. Resources include but are not limited to activities, games, power points, web quests, and websites that address Standards of Learning objectives in each content area in grades K-12.

http://www.spsk12.net/departments/STAR/
1. D
2. D
3. D
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. D
8. D
9. C
10. A
11. A
12. C
13. D
14. D
15. D
16. A
17. B
18. C
19. B
20. C
21. B