

## Sample Year Plan with Questions for Grade 8 English Language Arts

Unit (and Unit Type)	Context	Unit Overview and Questions for Deeper Understanding
<p><b>Adventure and Adventurers</b></p> <p>(multi-genre thematic)</p> <p>[Model Unit]</p>	<p>Social, Cultural, and Historical</p>	<p>Life offers us opportunities for adventure and suspense. We can climb mountains, sail around the world, or journey to faraway places. We can become explorers and adventurers. We can enjoy the challenge and overcome our fears and, with determination, try something new. Sometimes we succeed. Other times, we may fail but learn an unexpected lesson. The lessons remind us that all of life's adventures must be kept in perspective.</p> <p><b>Possible Questions for Deeper Understanding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you an adventurer? In what ways?</li> <li>• What makes an adventure? What are the defining moments in an adventure?</li> <li>• What are the qualities of real-life adventurers?</li> <li>• What can we learn from our successes and our failures?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Timeless Narratives of the First Nations and Greek Peoples</b></p> <p>(author/genre study)</p> <p>[Model Unit]</p>	<p>Imaginative and Literary</p>	<p>Long before people invented writing, they were reciting poetry, telling stories, and singing songs about their beliefs, dreams, and experiences. Some of the traditional poems, stories, and songs explained events in the natural world and involved the actions of supernatural forces such as gods. Others were stories based on individuals who actually lived and whose feats, foibles, and follies became legends.</p> <p><b>Possible Questions for Deeper Understanding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes a “great” story?</li> <li>• How can stories from other places and times teach us about ourselves? Our environment?</li> <li>• What lessons can we learn about ourselves and others through these stories?</li> <li>• What lessons can we learn about human nature?</li> <li>• What lessons can we learn about the meaning of life?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Becoming Myself</b></p> <p>(multi-genre thematic)</p>	<p>Personal and Philosophical</p>	<p>Becoming an adolescent gives you the opportunity to look at yourself and others and to consider who you are and who you want to be. Some of you are private people who need time alone. Others are outgoing and love to socialize. You all have strengths, abilities, and talents. Some of you might have physical skills and talents to communicate through activities such as dance, sports, and charades. Some of you might have social abilities and talents to co-operate, negotiate, empathize, or interact effectively with others. Still others of you might have logical abilities, musical abilities, verbal abilities, or visual abilities.</p> <p><b>Possible Questions for Deeper Understanding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can we celebrate about ourselves?</li> <li>• How can we discover our unique qualities and talents?</li> <li>• How can we use and share our unique qualities and talents?</li> <li>• How did we get to be who we are?</li> </ul>

Unit (and Unit Type)	Context	Unit Overview and Questions for Deeper Understanding
<p><b>An Eye on Our Natural and Technological Environment</b></p> <p>(multi-genre thematic)</p>	<p>Environmental and Technological</p>	<p>We live in a complex world that requires us to live and work with nature, animals, other human beings, and technology in a respectful way. Wherever we live, we use natural and synthetic resources. Sometimes we take all of these for granted. Whether it is a simple technology such as a pen or a complex technology such as the Internet, it has an impact on our lives, environment, and society. Considering the role of technology in our past, present, and, especially, our future is important.</p> <p><b>Possible Questions for Deeper Understanding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What technology do we take for granted?</li> <li>• What are some of the most recent developments in technology? What are some unintended consequences of these developments?</li> <li>• What are some of the significant technical inventions of the past?</li> <li>• What do you anticipate will be the important technological developments in your lifetime?</li> <li>• What are some potential benefits and risks related to these developments?</li> <li>• How can technology be used for good and for bad?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Burning Questions</b></p> <p>(multi-genre inquiry)</p>	<p>Communicative</p>	<p>Have you ever been curious about how things work? Have you ever been curious about other people's lives? Have you ever wondered what questions other people asked? Throughout life, we wonder and we often have "burning questions" to which we would like an answer. Asking questions that we wonder about and setting out to find the answers for ourselves is an important part of learning and growing. Often searching for answers not only affects us, but also the lives of many other people, and may even change the way people see the world.</p> <p><b>Possible Questions for Deeper Understanding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do people ask questions? Why do you ask questions?</li> <li>• What is a good question?</li> <li>• What is the best question you have ever asked?</li> <li>• What is the hardest question you have ever tried to answer?</li> <li>• What are some purposes of questions?</li> <li>• What are some "burning questions" that inventors and discoverers have followed?</li> <li>• To what "burning question" do you want to find the answer? How will you do it?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Is It Fair? – In Search of Justice</b></p> <p>(multi-genre thematic)</p> <p>[Optional Unit]</p>	<p>Social, Cultural, and Historical</p>	<p>Throughout life, we are haunted and challenged by the issue of fairness. Many people have struggled to address the injustices of our world. Do you believe that all people should have the right to be treated well and to have the same chances in life? Do you believe that life should be fair? What are some of the injustices of the past? Of the present? How can an individual, group, or community address the injustices of our world?</p> <p><b>Possible Questions for Deeper Understanding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have people been discriminated against because of their colour, gender, religion, or race?</li> <li>• How fair is it that some people receive less pay than others for equal work or do not share in the wealth of the world?</li> <li>• How have innocent people suffered so others can gain?</li> <li>• What injustices would you like addressed in your society? How could changes best be made?</li> <li>• What are our responsibilities to others in supporting justice?</li> </ul>
---	---	---

*Good language and literacy skills lay the foundation for social, academic, economic, personal, and national success.*

(Jamieson & Tremblay, 2005, p.1)

## Focuses on Language

Language and language study are at the centre of the Middle Level English language arts program. The study of the English language arts (listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing) and of the elements and conventions associated with each language cueing system (i.e., pragmatic, textual, syntactical, semantic/lexical/morphological, graphophonic, and other) enables students to understand and appreciate language and to use it in a variety of situations for communication, for learning, and for personal satisfaction.

An effective English language arts program that develops students' facility with language provides students with opportunities to:

- **learn to use language** in a variety of meaningful ways, considering and determining their audience, purpose, and situation
- **learn about language** as a necessary tool for thinking and communicating effectively, considering the resources and conventions of language
- **learn through language** by applying their knowledge of language in their listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing experiences.

**Language study** is an integral part of an English language arts program. Students in each grade are expected to understand the concepts related to the language cues and conventions. As students listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent, they are expected to apply the concepts as they construct and communicate meaning in their English language arts program and in their daily communication.