

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8 English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Section 1. English Language Arts and Reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) Alignment

Grade	TEKS Student %	TEKS Teacher %	ELPS Student %	ELPS Teacher %
Grade 6	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Grade 7	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Grade 8	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Section 2. Texts

- The sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade materials include high-quality texts across a variety of text types and genres as required by the TEKS.
- The materials describe their approach to text complexity as a blend of quantitative and qualitative analyses resulting in a grade-band categorization of texts. The sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade materials include a variety of text types and genres across content as required by the TEKS. Texts are appropriately challenging and are at an appropriate level of complexity to support students at their grade level.

Section 3. Literacy Practices and Text Interactions

- The materials provide students the opportunity to analyze and integrate knowledge, ideas, themes, and connections within and across texts using clear and concise information and well-defended text-supported claims through coherently sequenced questions and activities.
- The materials provide students the opportunity to analyze the language, key ideas, details, craft, and structure of individual texts.
- The materials provide opportunities for students to build their academic vocabulary across the course of the year.
- The materials include a plan to support and hold students accountable in independent reading.
- The materials provide students the opportunity to develop composition skills across multiple text types for varied purposes and audiences.
- The materials provide opportunities for students to apply composition convention skills in increasingly complex contexts throughout the year.
- The materials support students' listening and speaking about texts and engage students in productive teamwork and student-led discussions in a variety of settings.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

- The materials provide opportunities for students to engage in both short-term and sustained inquiry processes throughout the year.
- The materials contain interconnected tasks that build student knowledge and provide opportunities for increased independence. These tasks are supported by spiraling and scaffolded practice.

Section 4. Developing and Sustaining Foundational Literacy Skills

- N/A for ELAR 6-8

Section 5. Supports for All Learners

- The materials offer differentiation supports for students who are performing below and above grade level.
- The materials provide support and scaffolding strategies for English Learners (EL) that are commensurate with the various levels of English language proficiency as defined by the ELPS.

Section 6. Implementation

- The materials include a TEKS for English Language Arts and Reading-aligned scope and sequence.
- The materials include annotations and support for engaging students in the materials as well as annotations and ancillary materials that provide support for student learning and assistance for teachers and administrators.

Section 7. Additional Information

- The publisher submitted the technology, cost, professional learning, and additional language supports worksheets.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 2.1

Materials include high-quality texts for ELAR instruction and cover a range of student interests.

- The texts are well-crafted, representing the quality of content, language, and writing that is produced by experts in various disciplines.
- Materials include increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse texts.

Meets 4/4

The materials include high-quality texts for ELAR instruction and cover a range of student interests. The materials include well-crafted texts representing the quality of content, language, and writing produced by experts in various disciplines. The materials include increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and culturally diverse texts.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The publisher’s selection of high-quality texts for eighth-grade ELAR instruction reflects a rich and diverse group of texts from multiple genres, author’s backgrounds, and accessibility for students, including works by multiple award-winning and recognizable authors. The materials contain a variety of high-quality, engaging, and relatable texts from various experts and acclaimed authors from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds, exposing students to the various genres and kinds of writing offered in well-arranged thematic units. Each unit’s preface material includes helpful information about the Lexile level of texts, publication dates, and potentially challenging elements. Unit 1 ranges in Lexile levels between 940 and 1170. Most texts in this unit are between 940L and 1010L, an accessible starting point for eighth-graders. For unit 6, the Lexile range is 810 and 1380, with most texts falling between 1070L and 1170L. This academic progression demonstrates increasingly complex, traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse texts throughout the year.

Unit 1 includes excerpts representing the quality of content, language, and writing produced by experts in various disciplines. For example, a 1948 nonfiction essay, “Let ‘Em Play God” by award-winning film director Alfred Hitchcock explains that the secret recipe to success is “letting the audience play God” by revealing integral parts of the plot while the characters are kept in the dark. Unit 1 includes an excerpt that increasingly unfolds the complex contemporary and diverse texts. The 1932 novel, *The Conjure Man Dies* by African-American author and leader of the Harlem Renaissance, Rudolph Fisher, crafts the plot development to center around a Harlem doctor who is summoned to examine the mysterious death of a local fortune-teller or conjure man.

Unit 2 includes literature pieces representing the quality of content, language, and writing produced by experts in various disciplines. For example, “Slam, Dunk, & Hook,” a poem by

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa. The poem describes an African-American youth playing basketball during times of racial tension in the Deep South. Unit 2 also includes increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse texts. The study of *The Outsiders* by SE Hinton contains rich characterization and appeals to students at this grade level. This novel study is paired with other comparative texts, including the “Inaugural Address of Lyndon Baines Johnson,” excerpts from William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, and “Chekhov’s Letter to His Brother Nikolai,” a letter written by famous Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, encouraging his brother to grow up and become a “man of culture.” The novel unit also includes excerpts from the acclaimed autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* published in 1845, which depicts Douglass’ journey from slavery to freedom.

Unit 3 includes the poem “The Road Not Taken” by American poet Robert Frost, who executes and extends metaphor and assonance. The theme centers on the idea that the most difficult decisions are often the right decisions; this resonates with middle-school students navigating through a transitional age. Unit 3 includes a contemporary speech and eulogy by former President Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Nation on the Explosion of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*.” Following the shock of the *Challenger* explosion in 1986, Reagan consoles a grieving nation, reminding them the risks are great and that “discovery is undertaken by the brave, not the faint-hearted.”

Unit 4 taps into students' interests in gaming with the graphic short story “/HUG” written by author Ehud Lavski and artist Yael Nathan of EL Comics. The graphic story depicts a world consisting of non-playable characters and humans operated by avatars; one human is faced with a dilemma and dwindling time in the video game world. Unit 4 contains a thematic set of texts that include increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse texts to introduce students to the debatable topics surrounding and causes of the Civil War. The texts include an excerpt from *Across Five Aprils* written by popular, young-adult author Irene Hunt and “Letters of a Civil War Nurse,” a primary source document written by Cornelia Hancock to her mother. The text set concludes with Abraham Lincoln’s “The Gettysburg Address,” one of the most famous American history speeches.

Unit 5 includes the iconic 1940 speech “Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat” by British Prime Minister and Nobel Prize winner Winston Churchill as well as Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston’s autobiography, *Farewell to Manzanar*, discussing how Japanese Americans living in California were impacted by the events of Pearl Harbor, a time in American history not discussed in textbooks.

Unit 6 includes a variety of text types representing diverse authors and topics, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; “Manuel and the Magic Fox” by Ekaterina Sedia; Jack London’s *Call of the Wild*; Ray Bradbury’s science fiction short story “There Will Come Soft

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Rains”; and Sarah Teasdale’s poem of the same name, on which Bradbury’s story is based; and “Everybody Out” by Randall Munroe, who was a roboticist at NASA.

Indicator 2.2

Materials include a variety of text types and genres across content that meet the requirements of the TEKS for each grade level.

- Text types must include those outlined for specific grades by the TEKS:
 - Literary texts must include those outlined for specific grades.
 - Informational texts include texts of information, exposition, argument, procedures, and documents as outlined in the TEKS.
- Materials include print and graphic features of a variety of texts.

Meets 4/4

The materials include a variety of text types and genres across content that meet the requirements of the TEKS for each grade level. Literary texts and informational texts include those outlined in grade 8 TEKS. The materials include print and graphic features of a variety of texts.

Examples of literary texts include but are not limited to:

“The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allen Poe (fiction)

“The Monkey’s Paw” by W. W. Jacobs (short story)

“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson (short story)

“I’m Nobody! Who are you?” by Emily Dickinson (poem)

“My Mother Pieced Quilts” by Teresa Paloma Acosta (poem)

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton (Fiction)

“The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost (poem)

“Learning to Read” by Frances Ellen Watkins (poem)

An excerpt from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (fiction)

An excerpt from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain (fiction)

/Hug by Ehud Lavski & Yael Nathan (fiction)

Monster by Walter Dean Myers (fiction)

The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett (drama)

Twelve Angry Men by Reginald Rose (drama)

An excerpt from *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London (fiction)

“Manuel and the Magic Fox” by Ekaterina Sedia (fantasy)

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

An excerpt from *The Dark is Rising* by Susan Cooper (fantasy)

Examples of informational texts include but are not limited to:

“Let ‘Em Play God” by Alfred Hitchcock (exposition)

“Ten Days in a Mad-House” by Nellie Bly (informational: newspaper article)

So where are you from? by Naomi Sepiso (informational)

Curtain Call by Swin Cash (informational)

“Commencement Address to the Santa Fe Indian School” by Michelle Obama (informational)

An excerpt from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* by Frederick Douglass (memoir)

An excerpt from *A Night to Remember* by Walter Lord (nonfiction)

Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science by John Fleischman (informational)

“My Very Dear Wife” by Sullivan Ballou (Informational: letter)

“Gaming Communities” by Joshua Vink and Caroline Rodgers (argumentative)

Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston (informational)

“Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat” by Winston Churchill (argumentative)

Diary excerpts from *Anne Frank: The Diary Of A Young Girl* by Anne Frank (informational)

“Everybody Out” (from “What If?”) by Randall Munroe (informational)

Examples of print and graphic features include but are not limited to:

The instructional materials contain a variety of graphic features. Each lesson has a related image on the title page. Many lessons begin with an introductory video. Vocabulary activities include interactive charts. Materials include color-coded highlighted sections of text with embedded explanatory note boxes, bolded subheadings, text bullets, and embedded graphic organizers.

In Unit 1, the materials provide various graphic features to assist students in comparing and contrasting Emily Dickinson’s poem “I Never Heard the Word Escape” to the informational piece “Ten Days in a Mad-House” by Nellie Bly. The graphic features include multi-level bullets, bold headings, color-coded text highlights, compare-and-contrast charts, interactive, drag, and drop vocabulary charts.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

In Unit 2, “Theories of Time and Space” includes several print features on the read section, such as underlined vocabulary words with a hyperlink. When students click on the hyperlink, a pop-out display shows the definition of the vocabulary word. The vocabulary words (conclusion, terrain, tome) are bolded on the text. Unit 4 includes illustrations in the graphic story */Hug* by Ehud Lavski & Yael Nathan. For “Tim Schafer’s Cover Letter to LucasArts” by Tim Schafer, a cover letter document appeals to readers. This creative and unique cover letter includes graphics to demonstrate organizational structure in literature. Unit 6 includes the science fiction short story “There Will Come Soft Rains” by Ray Bradbury, with a futuristic color living room photo.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 2.3

Texts are appropriately challenging and are at an appropriate level of complexity to support students at their grade level.

- Texts are accompanied by a text-complexity analysis provided by the publisher.
- Texts are at the appropriate quantitative levels and qualitative features for the grade level.

Meets 4/4

The materials include appropriately challenging texts and are at an appropriate level of complexity to support students at grade level 8. Texts are accompanied by a text complexity analysis, provided by the publisher, at the beginning of each text. The analysis clearly explains the text's grade-level appropriateness and includes both a quantitative measure and many qualitative descriptors.

Evidence Includes but is not limited to:

The Lexile levels of texts range from 730L to 1270L. The majority of the texts fall within the 970L–1120L range, ideal for eighth grade. The texts' qualitative features reflect the skills and concepts required for eighth-grade students. The units tend to build toward more complex texts requiring inferential thinking and background knowledge essential for understanding and may contain more archaic, unfamiliar, or allusive language. The three components defining text complexity are the quantitative elements such as Lexile, length, and publication of the text. The qualitative elements are the structural, linguistic, and contextual qualities that determine easier or difficult readability and the reader and task expectations, such as how the reader interacts with the text.

The first text in Unit 1 illustrates that text complexity is a combination of factors, as Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" is not particularly high on the Lexile scale (950). However, his short stories are known for their complex sentences and vocabulary, and this particular story's unique and intense first-person narration both engages and challenges students. The materials point out that "students will most likely be challenged by the specialized vocabulary and required prior knowledge for many of these texts and could benefit from detailed discussions about these things throughout the unit." Also, the materials suggest that "sentence structures, text features, content and relationships among ideas make these selections accessible to eighth-graders, encouraging them to dig deeper as readers by engaging with texts of varying difficulty."

Unit 2 includes practice in text analysis and recognizing genre characteristics, with a genre focus on poetry and a speech, a persuasive personal essay, and several fiction selections. A Lexile range of 660–1280 is included in this unit, with most texts in this 740L to 850 Lexile range; this

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

range makes for an appropriate beginning for eighth-graders to advance their ability to analyze text and recognize genre characteristics. Michelle Obama’s “Commencement Address to the Santa Fe Indian School,” with a Lexile level of 1280 and a 2,826-word count, introduces students to argumentative skills through a rhetorical speech format. These readings are designed to “prepare students for the analytical and close reading skills they will need in future units throughout the year.” Several texts in Unit 2 are poetry or verse-form fiction, so Lexile levels are not listed. However, the poetry selections are engaging and challenging for eighth-graders, including several contemporary poems, as well as Emily Dickinson’s “I’m Nobody! Who are you?”

Unit 3 includes narrative texts and informational pieces of literature with a Lexile range of 950L–1010L, slightly higher than those of the previous unit. “Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science” by Thomas Ponce (2004) is also a modern article with a 970 Lexile and a word count of 1,396. The organization pattern of the text may be challenging for students. The events do not follow a chronological structure or use the past tense. In Unit 3, *Narrative of Frederick Douglass’s Life, An American Slave* by Frederick Douglass has a Lexile of 1010. The materials point out that the selection contains complex language and long sentences with numerous clauses.

Unit 4 provides practice in analyzing various argumentative and informational texts, with a range of 780–1250, and the majority of the texts fall in the 910–1120 range. Its challenging primary documents (e.g., “The Gettysburg Address,” Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a Woman,” and historical letters) are balanced with a group of texts on gaming (e.g., a graphic short story and a point-counterpoint pair of argument essays at 1120L, “Gaming Communities” by Joshua Vink and Caroline Rodgers). Unit 4 also emphasizes nonfiction, although materials do include fiction selections as well. The publisher states that many of the texts in Unit 4 “will introduce students to new writing modes, particularly the various ways authors construct arguments. The featured sentence structures, text features, content, and relationships among ideas make these selections accessible to eighth-graders, encouraging them to think more broadly as learners by engaging with texts of varying difficulty.” For example, “My Very Dear Wife” by Sullivan Ballou (1861) reviews the causes and outcomes of the Civil War and provides students with opportunities to practice sentence structure. Other skills in this selection spiral on Focus questions such as audience, purpose, arguments, claims, and rhetorical devices.

Unit 6 features texts from iconic authors H.G. Wells, Ray Bradbury, and Jack London. An excerpt from H.G. Wells’ “War of the Worlds” poses challenges to students due to its complex writing style, reflective of the period. The classic short also contains several British spellings, such as “realising” and “forthwith.” “There Will Come Soft Rains,” a short story by Ray Bradbury, requires students to piece together the chronological events which unfold in brief descriptions of the day. An excerpt from Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild* (1160L) may present prior-knowledge challenges to students unfamiliar with the characteristics of snowy climates and

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8 English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

challenging syntax and narrative perspective shifts. Another technically simpler but lengthier piece, “Manuel and the Magic Fox” by Ekaterina Sedia, has a Lexile level of 810 but is over 3,500 words. However, it requires some significant historical and cultural background knowledge.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.A.1

Materials contain questions and tasks that support students in analyzing and integrating knowledge, ideas, themes, and connections within and across texts.

- Most questions and tasks build conceptual knowledge, are text specific/dependent, target complex elements of the texts, and integrate multiple TEKS.
- Questions and tasks require students to
 - make connections to personal experiences, other texts, and the world around them and
 - identify and discuss important big ideas, themes, and details.

Meets 4/4

The materials contain questions and tasks that support students in analyzing and integrating knowledge, ideas, topics, themes, and connections within and across texts. Most questions and tasks build conceptual knowledge, are text-specific/dependent, target complex elements of the texts, and integrate multiple TEKS. Questions and tasks require students to connect to personal experiences, other texts, and the world around them and identify and discuss important big ideas, themes, and details.

Evidence Includes but is not limited to:

Unit 1 includes an excerpt from Alfred Hitchcock’s essay, “Let ‘Em Play God.” Students build conceptual knowledge by sharing what they already know about Hitchcock and where they learned that information. Students predict vocabulary meaning by predicting words in bold they will read in the text. For example, “In paragraph 1, focus on the sentences that use or connect to the word ingredient.” Students practice the reading comprehension strategy of generating questions for the first six paragraphs of text. Students answer text-specific questions such as “What leads to suspense in Rope?” and “Why doesn’t Hitchcock make whodunits or puzzlers?” Students build on content knowledge and engage in Text Talk using text-specific questions like, “What does it mean to let the audience ‘play God’?” And more complex text-specific questions like, “What does Hitchcock mean by ‘whodunit’?”

Unit 2 focuses on the big idea of identity and community. The texts center around the theme that “experiences from our past shape who we are in the present.” The materials provide activities to support identifying the controlling idea and supporting evidence. The teacher asks guiding questions to support students’ analysis of the controlling idea, such as, “Does the writer directly state the controlling idea in the introduction? If not, what larger idea do the details relate to and have in common? What supporting evidence does the writer provide? How does the supporting evidence help to further explain the controlling idea? How does the supporting evidence help me to understand the topic better?” The materials model the process of analyzing the controlling idea with an excerpt from “So Where are you from?” by Natalie

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Serpico. The “Your Turn” portion of the activity provides an excerpt from the same text, and students answer multiple-choice questions about the controlling idea and supporting evidence.

In Unit 3, the opening “Blast” lesson focuses on the essential question, “Why do we take chances?” To introduce the lesson, the teacher asks students to discuss the last time they took a chance and “what was risky about the action” with a partner. In the first reading of the unit, students read Robert Frost’s “The Road not Taken,” followed by an excerpt from Rachel DeWoskin’s novel *Blind*, and another excerpt from the nonfiction work “Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science,” by John Fleischman. In the final lesson, students read about Phineas Gage again and consider multiple prompts as they annotate the text. One prompt asks them to make connections across texts and to their own lives: “Choosing to move forward with your life after a serious injury can feel risky. In *Blind*, Emma takes a chance when she decides to take steps toward recovery. Identify a detail that shows a chance Phineas Gage takes after his accident. Explain whether or not you think Emma’s and Gage’s chances are worth taking.”

In Unit 5, students read excerpts from *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, making connections to personal experiences, other texts, and the world around them. Students begin by reflecting on the importance of making connections and helping readers better understand and enjoy the text. The materials model the process of making connections and provide a list of guiding questions to help students make connections, such as, “What do I think of and feel about these characters (or people)? Do these characters (or people) remind me of anyone I know? What do I think of and feel about these events? Do these events remind me of any of my personal experiences? How is this text similar to other texts I have read? How is this text different from other texts I have read? How does this text relate to what I know about similar texts, history, current events, or the real world? How does this text relate to the world around me?” The “Your Turn” activity provides students with a list of statements about various texts, and the students drag-and-drop them into a chart according to the type of text connection. Later in Unit 5, after reading “Parallel Journeys” by Eleanor Ayer, students develop identification of the theme as they answer Literature Prompt 1, “What do you think is the central idea of the text?” Students’ responses build on content knowledge as they provide textual evidence identified in the selection to support their claim.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.A.2

Materials contain questions and tasks that require students to analyze the language, key ideas, details, craft, and structure of individual texts.

- Questions and tasks support students' analysis of the literary/textual elements of texts by asking students to
 - analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the author's purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding;
 - compare and contrast the stated or implied purposes of different authors' writing on the same topic;
 - analyze the author's choices and how they influence and communicate meaning (in single and across a variety of texts); and
 - ask students to study the language within texts to support their understanding.

Meets 4/4

The materials contain questions and tasks that require students to analyze the language, key ideas, details, craft, and structure of individual texts. The questions and tasks support students' analysis of the literary and textual elements of texts. Students analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the author's purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. They compare and contrast the stated or implied purposes of different authors' writing on the same topic and analyze the author's choices and how they influence and communicate meaning (in single and across a variety of texts). Students also study the language within texts to support their understanding.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, students read "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe and analyze how the author's word choice, tone, and speech patterns reveal the narrator's personality. The "Model" section provides several guiding questions to help students analyze how the author's use of language contributes to voice, such as, "Does this author, narrator, or character speak distinctively? What words or phrases does the author, narrator, or character use that express his or her personality? Does the way this author, narrator, or character uses language give me a sense of his or her age and personality? How might the meaning of the text change if the author, narrator, or character's voice was less distinct?" In Unit 1, students watch a concept definition video to learn about the author's purpose and a message from Nellie Bly's "Ten Days in a MadHouse." After the video, they participate in a turn-and-talk activity with their peers to reflect on a text they previously read that was entertaining and informative. Students share evidence that proves the author has achieved both purposes.

In Unit 2, the close reading, analysis, and reflection of the unit texts focus on the Big Idea,

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

“What makes us who we are?” These activities culminate in an argumentative essay that explores how authors express their ideas about identity and belonging through their characters and speakers. Students self-select three texts from the unit, focusing on the authors’ use of figurative language to communicate ideas. The students analyze a sample essay that explores the same Big Idea. Also found in this unit are opportunities for students to study the language within texts to support their understanding. For example, “My Mother Pieced Quilts” by Teresa Palomo Acosta and “Curtain Call” by Swin Cash involve students actively participating in a collaborative discussion. They re-read the texts to find words that both authors use to transform common activities like basketball and quilting into something more personal. Students cite textual evidence to support their understanding in the collaborative discussions.

In Unit 5, students analyze the author's choices and how they influence and communicate meaning (in single and across various texts). This unit offers a series of lessons focused on emotional responses to circumstances. While students make personal connections to the texts, they also analyze how different authors use different genre elements and rhetorical strategies to illustrate those emotional responses. The materials first offer independent reading lessons for William Blake’s poem “A Poison Tree” and an excerpt from Walter Dean Myers’s novel *Monster*, followed by a lesson in which students investigate Myers’s life and its connections to his work. Finally, the materials offer first-read, skill (author’s purpose and message), and close-read lessons focused on Nelson Mandela’s memoir *Long Walk to Freedom*. In the final lesson of this series, students read the memoir excerpt closely, reflecting on prompts that ask them to identify details in Mandela’s work that “[e]xplain the connection between” Mandela’s “purpose and message,” show his purpose, and “support his claim ‘with freedom comes responsibility.’” Students explain “why this idea applies not only to South Africans.” Students also consider their reading in light of the other two texts, finding examples in each of how “[a]nger and fear can affect how a person acts in a time of crisis” and then explaining “the similarities and differences in the fear and anger shown in the three selections.”

Unit 6 includes the document “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” by The United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Students read text and review lessons on the author's purpose and message in a nonfiction text. The teacher reminds students to notice the details suggesting why the author wrote a certain piece, the universal idea, and details reflected throughout the text. The teacher asks why the author wrote what he or she wrote, how the student knows, and what takeaway the author wishes to leave the reader. The teacher revisits the United Nations document and models how to highlight information, explaining “the purpose and message by identifying details” in the document. Students answer questions such as, “Based on Article 18 in paragraph 26, the reader can conclude that the authors believe?” “In Article 21 in paragraph 29, the authors’ message is?”

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.A.3

Materials include a cohesive, year-long plan for students to interact with and build key academic vocabulary in and across texts.

- Materials include a year-long plan for building academic vocabulary, including ways to apply words in appropriate contexts.
- Materials include scaffolds and supports for teachers to differentiate vocabulary development for all learners.

Meets 4/4

The materials include a cohesive, year-long plan for students to interact with and build key academic vocabulary in and across texts. Materials include a year-long plan for building academic vocabulary, including ways to apply words in appropriate contexts, and include scaffolds and supports for teachers to differentiate vocabulary development for all learners.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Students “encounter new vocabulary in each reading selection found in the Core ELAR Program and the StudySync Library.” Each selection in the core program includes vocabulary instruction and student practice, with the “aim of building vocabulary knowledge and improving students’ ability to access complex texts.” Each unit contains a Novel Study section that provides reading guides to several novels that connect to the unit’s theme and an introductory lesson that explicitly presents academic vocabulary. The Novel Units provide Reading Guides that preview key vocabulary, providing definitions. Students gain vocabulary knowledge during the First Read lessons, albeit in a limited context. The pre-selected, presumably unfamiliar selected words are highlighted in bold, but they are not defined. Practice questions in the “Think” section for each First Read “help students strengthen their vocabulary through various strategies—including using context clues, identifying Greek and Latin roots and affixes, and using print and digital resources—to determine the possible meanings of two of the selected vocabulary words.” The materials include additional support, specifically for English Learners and students whose skills are “approaching” grade level. Students also have access to a visual glossary, which adds a photo or illustration to each word and its definition.

In Unit 1, the materials include a year-long plan for building academic vocabulary, including ways to apply words in appropriate contexts. For example, in Unit 1, the First Read lesson for “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson contains several boldfaced words: *lottery*, *paraphernalia*, and *tradition*. The instructional guide provides steps to model using context clues to make predictions about word meaning. The guide provides a targeted passage and scripted think-aloud to model the process of predicting word meaning.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

In Unit 2, the materials include scaffolds and supports for teachers to differentiate vocabulary development for all learners. For example, all students practice using vocabulary by dividing into pairs or small groups. Each group receives a word from a vocabulary word list, and they act out a short scene that demonstrates the meaning of their word. The groups take turns performing their scene for the class. Beginner and Intermediate English Learners (ELs) speak and use vocabulary in context to build their academic language proficiency. The teacher uses scripted questions provided in the materials. In Unit 2, as they read “Ten Days in a Madhouse” by Nellie Bly, the students collaborate and discuss the vocabulary words and make predictions about the meaning of each of the bolded words in the text. Beginning and Intermediate ELs receive differentiation by using the Spanish definitions, non-Spanish speakers can look for the meaning in their language using the visual glossary, and advanced and advanced high ELs use the vocabulary guide.

In Unit 3, the materials include a year-long plan for building academic vocabulary, including ways to apply words in appropriate contexts and scaffolds and supports for teachers to differentiate vocabulary development for all learners. For example, in this particular unit, the Skill lesson for “Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science” by John Fleischman, the skills video introduces the terms *controlling idea*, *thesis*, and *supporting evidence*. The Vocabulary section provides a drop-and-drag activity requiring students to match the targeted terms with the correct definition. The Model portion of the lesson allows students to interact with a model of applying the targeted vocabulary to a text excerpt. The instructional materials also provide scaffolds for ELs and approaching learners’ various proficiency levels. For example, in Unit 3, during the First Read of “Gaming Communities” by StudySync, the scaffolds include a vocabulary guide that targets words that may be challenging to these students. The guide provides reflective questions to help students determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, such as, “Is the word a noun, a verb, an adjective, or an adverb? What is Berni Good talking about in the quotation that includes ‘environment’? What adjective in this sentence helps describe ‘environments’?”

In Unit 5, the materials include a year-long plan for building academic vocabulary, including ways to apply words in appropriate contexts. For example, during the first-read lesson of an excerpt from *Parallel Journeys*, by Eleanor Ayer, one of the “Think” questions after reading asks students to read a dictionary entry for the word *accommodate* and then select the definition which “most closely matches” its meaning in the text. Students write the correct definition and then explain their process for choosing the correct definition. The lesson plans also recommend having students whose skills are above grade level conduct a “word study” on one or two words of their choice and make a Frayer model that the class can use as a resource.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.A.4

Materials include a clearly defined plan to support and hold students accountable as they engage in independent reading.

- Procedures and/or protocols, along with adequate support for teachers, are provided to foster independent reading.
- Materials provide a plan for students to self-select texts and read independently for a sustained period of time, including planning and accountability for achieving independent reading goals.

Meets 1/1

The materials include a clearly defined plan to support and hold students accountable as they engage in independent reading. Procedures and protocols, along with adequate support for teachers, are provided to foster independent reading. The materials provide a plan for students to self-select texts and read independently for a sustained period of time, including planning and accountability for achieving independent reading goals.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Every teacher has access to StudySync’s Library of texts with “hundreds of short stories, poems, excerpts of novels and dramas, essays, speeches, and primary source documents, including a wide selection of full-length novels and dramas, as well as an array of Spanish language texts.” New texts added monthly support teachers with ongoing resources; also, students can access the complete library from any device, at any time, so assigning independent reading practice is doable. A “Self-Selected Blast” is provided to the students at the end of each unit. Students answer a unique driving question and learn a strategy they can use when they self-select a text. The materials provide online resources of various texts in the StudySync library for their self-selected reading with information about the theme and Lexile range for that particular unit; this range ensures the students’ text options are appropriate. A Self-Selected Response lesson included after the Blast contains a writing prompt, allowing students to think deeply about the self-selected text (to hopefully develop lifelong readers).

The materials offer multiple opportunities for structured and supported independent reading in every unit. Independent reading lessons are linked with related readings that follow the first-read, skill lesson(s), and close-read sequence and provide opportunities for comparing and contrasting, making connections across texts, and examining how different authors and text structures approach similar topics or themes. All units include at least three independent reading lessons. While students read and annotate the text selection independently, the lesson includes multiple opportunities for engagement about the reading with others, including teacher-led portions. Independent reading lessons begin in the same way as first-read lessons: with an initial introduction video and discussion, vocabulary preview activities, and

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

opportunities to apply related comprehension skills. Students read and annotate the text independently in the digital platform and then discuss the reading with the teacher and other students in a section of the lesson plan called “Text Talk.”

In Unit 1, in the Self-Selected Reading Blast, all students establish a purpose for reading a self-selected text. Students “look at the covers of books...and the unique artwork [to learn] about its genre and tone.” Students use research links to explore each text’s poster and video preview. The teacher mimics the experience of being at the movies by turning off the lights, showing each text’s poster and video preview, and prompting students to turn and talk, using questioning strategies. Using “The Cremation of Sam McGee” by Robert W. Service, the teacher models how to establish a purpose for reading a self-selected text.

In Unit 2, students read an excerpt from *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai. After reading, they discuss their initial vocabulary predictions with a partner. Then, the class regroups to check for comprehension and connection with questions like “In the section Outside, what is happening with the family?” and “What images does the narrator use to describe her teacher and classmates?” The class views a video of students discussing the text and reflecting on their responses in the video. Finally, students complete a multiple-choice quiz to check for individual understanding and a short personal response in the style of the passage they have read. This unit also includes materials that provide a plan for students to self-select texts and read independently for a sustained period of time, including planning and accountability for achieving independent reading goals. For example, students read the poem “My Mother Pieced Quilts” by Teresa Palomo Acosta in whole class with teacher support and the short personal essay “Curtain Call” by Swin Cash independently. The materials support student accountability for achieving independent reading goals by completing a comparative writing response that connects the ideas within the core and independent reading assignments.

Unit 4 includes a PDF document for *The Outsiders*, by S.E. Hinton, in which students have to re-read the listed paragraphs independently to answer comprehension questions from the Close Read such as, “What change takes place during Miss Xinh’s Friday class? Why does this happen, and what is the result?” Questions such as these allow students to reflect as they read independently by gathering factual details from the text.

In Unit 6, while reading *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* by Douglass, students independently read two poems, “Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes and “Learning to Read” by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. The materials provide a comparative writing assignment that requires the students to make connections between the three texts: “The speakers of the poems ‘Mother to Son’ and ‘Learning to Read,’ and Frederick Douglass, in his autobiography, describe the risks involved to make successes of their lives. Students think about the structures of the texts and the use of language, descriptions, and events.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.B.1

Materials provide support for students to develop composition skills across multiple text types for a variety of purposes and audiences.

- Materials provide students opportunities to write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas.
- Materials provide students opportunities to write informational texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes.
- Materials provide students opportunities to write argumentative texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues.
- Materials provide students opportunities to write correspondence in a professional or friendly structure.

Meets 4/4

The materials provide support for students to develop composition skills across multiple text types for a variety of purposes and audiences; opportunities to write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas; opportunities to write informational texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes; opportunities to write argumentative texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues; opportunities to write correspondence in a professional or friendly structure.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Unit 1 provides students opportunities to write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. For example, after reading “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe, students compose a literary analysis analyzing the narrator’s trust. Students also consider the narrator’s voice and description of events as they conclude the narrator’s state of mind. The literary analysis includes textual evidence to support students’ ideas. In Unit 1, students also write informational texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. In a few lessons, students practice writing narrative texts with an informational purpose, such as a prompt synthesizing readings from a lesson in which students read “Ten Days in a Mad-House” by Nellie Bly and “I never hear the word ‘Escape’” by Emily Dickinson. In this task, students imagine the speaker of “I never hear the word ‘Escape’” is an inmate wrongly held there, and Bly interviews her. Students write a brief account as Bly might for her newspaper. Students show the contrasts between the two situations, relying on both texts’ evidence.

Unit 2 provides students opportunities to write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. For example, after reading the realistic fiction short story “Abuela Invents the Zero” by Judith Ortiz Cofer, students write a narrative letter

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

that continues the story in which Constancia apologizes to Abuela and resolves the conflict between them. Students explain what Constancia has learned and how she has changed in their narrative. Students incorporate flashbacks to show the circumstances of the character's conflict and what lessons Constancia learns. In Unit 2, students also write informational texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. For example, after reading the "Commencement Address to the Santa Fe Indian School" by Michelle Obama, students compose an informational analysis. Students analyze Obama's closing remarks of her speech, "I hope that you will always remember your story and that you will carry your story with you as proudly as I carry mine." Students use rhetorical devices to relate to Obama's audience and communicate her message to graduates of the Santa Fe Indian School to "carry your story with you." The informational analysis includes textual evidence to support the students' understanding of ideas.

In Unit 3, students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. After reading Robert Frost's "The Road not Taken" and reviewing both figurative language and theme in skill lessons, students compose an original poem to respond to the lesson. Students write a poem using an extended metaphor to show the journey of a particular choice and to describe the risk involved in their decision. Students' poems may use regular rhyme and meter or be in free verse and may be humorous or serious. The final line in the poem states the poem's theme as it relates to the speaker and the events.

Unit 4 provides students opportunities to write correspondence in a professional or friendly structure. In one lesson, students read a pair of point/counterpoint texts by Joshua Vink and Caroline Rodgers with a central theme of gaming. After reading the texts, students write a letter to a publisher responding with their opinion on both pieces. They use evidence from both texts to demonstrate their "command of the information," the "reasons" for their opinions, and a "recommendation." Students may also offer their recommendation by writing no more than three paragraphs and limiting their letter to 200 words. The students' letter adheres to formal writing expectations since it is written to a professional publisher.

Unit 5 includes opportunities to write informational texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. This unit includes an excerpt from the informational text, *Parallel Journeys* by Eleanor Ayer. After reading, students write an "imagined newspaper or TV news account of the events" discussed in the text. Students mimic a reporter by identifying people, places, and details without altering events. In Unit 5, the materials also provide students opportunities to write argumentative texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues. For example, in Unit 5, students analyze Winston Churchill's persuasive techniques in "Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat" and Elie Wiesel's techniques in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech. In these lessons, students consider both the structure and informational evidence that Churchill employs and Wiesel's personal and emotional appeals. In the writing project extension, students use Wiesel's speech as a

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

model to write and perform their persuasive oral presentations. Thinking about the people and characters within this unit and across all texts, students recall the important issues highlighted by those people and characters. Taking inspiration from one of those individuals, students prepare and deliver a speech in which they advocate a position on a topic they care about while including anecdotes and illustrations to support their position.

In Unit 6, the materials provide students opportunities to write correspondence in a professional or friendly structure. This unit includes the cover letter document, “Tim Schafer’s Cover Letter to LucasArts,” by Tim Schafer. After reading, students design a cover letter in the hopes of getting hired as an employee or intern, using the document as a model. Students “describe the graphics [they] would include,” writing in a way to garner the employer’s attention and guarantee employment.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.B.2

Most written tasks require students to use clear and concise information and well-defended text-supported claims to demonstrate the knowledge gained through analysis and synthesis of texts.

- Materials provide opportunities for students to use evidence from texts to support their opinions and claims.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to demonstrate in writing what they have learned through reading and listening to texts.

Meets 4/4

Most written tasks within the materials require students to use clear and concise information and well-defended text-supported claims to demonstrate the knowledge gained through analysis and text synthesis. The materials provide opportunities for students to use evidence from texts to support their opinions and claims and to demonstrate in writing what they have learned through reading and listening to texts.

Evidence Includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, students read an excerpt from the graphic novel *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman and P. Craig Russell. After the Independent Read, students ponder the title and excerpt and provide a written response to the following questions: “What kind of story did you expect to read based on the title? Why? Did your expectations change after you read the excerpt?” Students use quotations and descriptions from the excerpt to explain whether their predictions were accurate after analyzing the book title.

In Unit 2, students use evidence from texts to support their opinions and claims. For example, in “Abuela Invents the Zero” by Judith Ortiz Cofer, the students use text evidence to support their answer to: “Explain how Connie considers herself to be before Abuela comes to visit, and how this opinion changes by the end of the story.” Students cite text evidence to support their response while identifying irony within the text. The materials also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate in writing what they have learned through reading and listening to texts in this unit. Unit 2 includes an excerpt from S.E. Hinton’s novel, *The Outsiders*. In a Close Read activity, students use text evidence to develop a written response explaining three inferences about how interacting with Cherry has changed Ponyboy’s point of view about the Greasers and the Socs. Students consider which pieces of text evidence helped them make the inferences and how their background knowledge supports those inferences.

In Unit 3, students demonstrate in writing what they have learned through reading and listening to texts. For example, after reading “Vanishing Island” by Anya Groner, students explain, “what makes people care so deeply about this ‘vanishing island’ that nothing can

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

induce them to leave? Why do people continue to inhabit it and work so hard for its cultural survival?” Students use evidence from the text, including print and graphic features, to support their understanding. Unit 3 also provides students opportunities to use evidence from texts to support their opinions and claims. For example, after reading the poem “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost, students answer the following questions in written format: “What evidence in the text of the poem shows you that the speaker is uncertain about which road to choose? What do lines 16–20 tell you about how the speaker imagines his future? How does the speaker feel about the road he didn’t take?” Students cite evidence from the text to support their answers.

In Unit 4, students demonstrate in writing what they have learned through reading and listening to texts. For example, students read “The Gettysburg Address” by Abraham Lincoln, an excerpt from *Across Five Aprils* by Irene Hunt, and *Letters from a Civil War Nurse* by Cornelia Hancock. Students write an essay explaining how the novel, the letter, and the speech enhance their understanding of the Civil War. Students incorporate text evidence to support their response and “paraphrase the texts in ways that maintain the intended meaning and follow a logical order.”

In Unit 5, students use evidence from texts to support their opinions and claims. Students read Eli Wiesel’s “Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech” and explain how Wiesel connects his personal story to the occasion of this speech. Students express their opinion about whether this connection effectively uses text evidence to support their claim. In Unit 5, students read *Twelve Angry Men* by Reginald Rose and write an essay explaining how “making the characters into numbers rather than names affect the drama” and “how students retain the differences among the characters and their points of view.”

In Unit 6, students demonstrate in writing what they have learned through reading and listening to texts. For example, following a lesson on figurative language, students apply their understanding of figurative language when responding to the poem “Spaceships” by Derrick Harriell. They consider how “the use of figurative language heighten[s] or add[s] humor to the everyday experience the speaker of the poem describes; Why might a poet follow such a scheme?” Students cite examples of figurative language in their responses. The materials in this unit also provide opportunities for students to use evidence from texts to support their opinions and claims. For example, in Unit 6, students analyze the details included by the narrator of HG Wells’s *The War of the Worlds*, making conclusions about the “tone . . . the details create” and explaining why they think “each part of the war with the Martians is given such careful detail?” The prompt concludes with the reminder to “use evidence from the text” for support.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.B.3

Over the course of the year, composition convention skills are applied in increasingly complex contexts, with opportunities for students to publish their writing.

- Materials facilitate students' coherent use of the elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.
- Materials provide opportunities for practice and application of the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing, including punctuation and grammar.
- Grammar, punctuation, and usage are taught systematically, both in and out of context, and materials provide editing practice in students' own writing as the year continues.

Meets 4/4

Over the year, composition convention skills are applied in increasingly complex contexts, with opportunities for students to publish their writing. The materials facilitate students' coherent use of the writing process elements (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose multiple texts. The materials also provide opportunities for practice and application of academic language conventions when speaking and writing, including punctuation and grammar. Grammar, punctuation, and usage are taught systematically, both in and out of context, and materials provide editing practice in students' own writing as the year continues.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials facilitate students' coherent use of the writing process elements (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. For example, each unit contains an Extended Writing or Oral Project that draws on the texts studied during the unit and facilitates students through the writing process elements (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) compose text. The lesson begins with planning activities that review the targeted genre's characteristics, examine the writing prompt, and provide an opportunity for students to summarize their writing plans. The lesson's draft portion focuses on developing ideas and organizational skills as the students compose their rough draft. The materials provide specific skill lessons on style, format, and elaboration in the project's revision portion. The edit and publish phase of the project contains skill lessons on targeted grammar skills that the writer can apply before publishing. Each of the extended writing projects follows the same format. The skill lessons vary based on the genre characteristics and targeted grammar instruction. Also, grammar, punctuation, and usage are taught systematically, both in and out of context, and materials provide editing practice in students' own writing as the year continues. For example, each grade 8 unit includes an Additional Grammar Lessons Section within the Unit Overview, organized by the following: Define—the term is defined and discussed; Vocabulary—vocabulary is learned through drag and drop activity; Model—grammar Rules explained in and out of context; Your Turn—students practice with drag and drop activity.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

The following is a sampling of eighth-grade TEKS-aligned grammar lessons:

Unit 1—Basic Spelling Rules II

Unit 2—Commas with Compound Sentences

Unit 3—Consistent Pronoun Use

Unit 4—Commas with Appositives and Appositive Phrases

Unit 5—Hyphens

Unit 6—Quotation Marks and Italics

Grammar, punctuation, and grammar are also taught out of context using the “Grammar, Language, and Composition Guide,” an extensive guide that includes a Grammar and Language Workbook and a Grammar and Composition Handbook. As the grade level increases, the length, complexity, and amount of descriptive phrases and clauses within sentences increases. For example, in the seventh-grade Grammar and Language Workbook, students are asked to identify the subject and predicate in the following sentence: Wilde is the author of “A Woman of No Importance” and “The Importance of Being Earnest,” as well as the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In the eighth-grade workbook, the same exercise asks students to identify the subject and predicate in the following sentence: “Aqueducts and tunnels channel water from the Snowy Mountains for irrigation and hydroelectric power southeast.”

In Unit 1, the materials facilitate students’ coherent use of the writing process elements (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Extended writing projects in each unit include specific lessons for each element. For example, in Unit 1, the Extended Writing Project and Grammar provides lessons in each stage of the writing process to support students as they “write a suspenseful narrative, creating suspense from an unlikely source, such as a familiar place or everyday situation.” Lessons include a planning lesson, which reviews the elements of fiction they have studied throughout the unit’s reading lessons, and drafting lessons focused on developing ideas, organizing the narrative, and using models and collaboration to draft their narratives. In the next set of writing lessons, teachers target exposition, details, and dialogue to help students revise their narratives. Finally, students edit and publish in the final lesson of the sequence. In general, publishing appears to be submitting the final copy of the composition for evaluation to the teacher through the online platform.

In Unit 3, the StudySync Platform includes the Informational Writing Process. Under the Revision tab, the teacher has lesson plans that focus on having the students revise their essays for run-on sentences and pronoun-antecedent agreements. There are lesson plans for teachers to address sentence fragments and consistent verb tenses under the editing and publishing tab.

In Unit 5, the extended writing project includes an editing section in which students apply the grammar lessons from the unit to edit their own work. For example, in this unit, students edit their extended projects, which are also presented orally; the materials offer a set of lessons on commonly confused words, parentheses and brackets, and commas. Then, in the editing

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

section, students edit their work in response to their peers' feedback and an editing checklist that applies the grammar concepts they have studied during the project. For example, "Have I used the correct forms of commonly confused words? Have I followed the rules for using parentheses and brackets? Have I used commas correctly? Do I have any sentence fragments or run-on sentences? Have I spelled everything correctly?"

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.C.1

Materials support students' listening and speaking about texts.

- Speaking and listening opportunities are focused on the text(s) being studied in class, allowing students to demonstrate comprehension.
- Most oral tasks require students to use clear and concise information and well-defended text-supported claims to demonstrate the knowledge gained through analysis and synthesis of texts.

Meets 4/4

The materials support students' listening and speaking about texts. The speaking and listening opportunities are focused on the texts being studied in class, allowing students to demonstrate comprehension; most oral tasks require students to use clear and concise information and well-defended text-supported claims to demonstrate the knowledge gained through analysis and synthesis of texts.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, during a close read lesson on W. W. Jacobs's "The Monkey's Paw," students have multiple opportunities to discuss the text. First, they discuss the Skills Focus prompts in small groups, beginning with "Identify evidence of Herbert's behavior in the story and explain how it influences events." Then, they view a video of a group of students discussing the text. The class analyzes the group's interactions, considering how members of the group address the prompt, build on each other's ideas, and make determinations and conclusions about the text. Finally, students break into small groups again to participate in a "Collaborative Conversation" to unpack the analytical writing prompt.

In Unit 2, the poem "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" by Emily Dickinson focuses on having students create mental images as a way to improve their reading comprehension. Students begin with a listening activity in which they watch and listen to a Concept Definition video, then Turn and Talk with a partner to discuss, "What does it mean to visualize? How does visualizing help you as a reader?" Speaking practice comes from talking to a peer and applying knowledge from the video to answer comprehension questions by learning from each other. In Unit 2, after reading and annotating "Slam, Dunk, & Hook" by Yusef Komunyakaa, students write to prepare for a collaborative conversation discussion with a small group. The prompt asks students first to consider what the game of basketball means to the players in the poem and then to "identify the poet's use of metaphors and allusions and explain how they help to communicate the game's importance to individual players and the team as a whole." Students share their analyses during their small group discussions and provide feedback both individually and as a group.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

In Unit 3, in the poem “Learning to Read” by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, students review the discussion prompt: “It’s often said that ‘knowledge is power.’ The speaker of the poem explains why enslaved people were not allowed to learn to read: ‘Knowledge didn’t agree with slavery—/’Twould make us all too wise.’ Discuss these ideas and your response to the poem.” Students prepare discussion plans using personal responses and text evidence to support their ideas. After discussion plans are complete, students discuss the prompt in groups, including the ideas and responses to the poem.

In Unit 5, students read the StudySync fiction text “Monster.” As students read, they “annotate by asking questions, tracking the development of characters, plot events, and theme(s), and responding with connections and inferences.” Then, students watch and listen to a StudySyncTV video modeling several students discussing the text. The materials provide discussion questions to promote understanding of the collaborative discussion process. The teacher pauses the video at specific times to discuss the following questions about the students’ discussion: “Dakota thinks that Steve is not guilty of murder. What example does she cite to support her belief? How does Colin explain Steve’s reasons for writing the screenplay? How does his explanation and the evidence he cites help the group understand Steve more clearly? How does the group characterize Steve? Do you agree? What evidence supports their characterization?” Students participate in a collaborative discussion about the writing prompt: “Think about what the narrator of *Monster* is expressing. Why do you think he does this in the form of a screenplay? Is the use of dramatic elements effective? Use examples from the text to explain your response. Finally, what would a screenplay of your life look like? Write the title and opening moment.”

In Unit 6, for the poem “Spaceships” by Derrick Harriell, students engage in collaborative conversation before writing. Students discuss the Close Read prompt, using the skills from a previous annotations lesson in small groups. “How does the use of figurative language heighten or add humor to the everyday experience the speaker of the poem describes? Why might a poet follow such a scheme? Cite examples of figurative language in your response.” This unit also includes several science fiction selections about futuristic societies that are void of human existence, and students “research how technology, robotics, and artificial intelligence are impacting a specific sector, like education, cars, film industry.” Students work in small groups to conduct research, design a multimedia presentation to present their research to the class, and rehearse the presentation, ensuring that each group member is prepared to present.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.C.2

Materials engage students in productive teamwork and in student-led discussions, in both formal and informal settings.

- Materials provide guidance and practice with grade-level protocols for discussion to express their own thinking.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to give organized presentations/performances and speak in a clear and concise manner using the conventions of language.

Meets 4/4

The materials engage students in productive teamwork and student-led discussions in both formal and informal settings. The materials provide guidance and practice with grade-level protocols for discussion to express their thinking and provide opportunities for students to give organized presentations/performances and speak clearly and concisely using the conventions of language.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Unit 1 includes an introductory lesson that defines collaborative conversation and collaboration and provides a video of students modeling the discussion process. Students watch a SyncSkills Video of two students discussing the appropriate protocol of collaborative discussions: listening carefully, responding thoughtfully, using respectful language, encouraging participation, and being careful not to shut down ideas. The materials provide specific strategies to guide students in participating in grade-level discussions to express their thinking (e.g., asking questions or making comments to elicit discussion from the group; building on others' ideas; responding to others with relevant evidence, ideas, and observations; identifying points of agreement or disagreement; refocusing the discussion if necessary; and taking notes while others are speaking). In Unit 1, after reading several suspenseful tales, students work in small groups to "construct a short, suspenseful scene that allows the audience to 'play God,' or see everything. Students must collaboratively create the scenario and decide how they will tell the audience the secrets of the scene while keeping characters in the dark." After each performance, students engage in a class conversation about, "What secrets were clear to the audience but not the characters? How did you feel as you watched? What could the group have done to make the scene even more suspenseful?"

In Unit 2, the materials offer optional opportunities for other performances in the "Beyond the Book" sections of each lesson. For example, after reading Swin Cash's "Curtain Call," students create a 60-second elevator speech that clearly and concisely articulates their purpose in life and describes the legacy they want to leave behind. This activity precedes a mock trial activity connected to Edgar Allen Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart" in Unit 1.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

In Unit 3, the materials present a standard process for discussion; in First Read lessons, “students have the opportunity to practice oral reading fluency with a partner, as well as to talk about the video preview and to participate in Text Talk after the initial reading. In skill lessons, Turn and Talk and Discuss the Model activities allow students to share ideas and review the lessons. In the Close Read, students engage in a Collaborative Conversation to discuss the text in preparation for addressing a writing prompt.” In this unit, the materials allow students to express their thinking by allowing them to make predictions about vocabulary words. In the First Read Lesson Plan of “Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes, students preview the text and make predictions about vocabulary using context clues. Then they work with a partner on a Pair Share task to learn from each other as the teacher monitors the class providing scaffolding guidance to those who lack proficiency in the standardized skills. Also, Unit 3 includes a research project in which students collaborate in a small group to construct a multimedia presentation about a “community impacted by rising sea levels,” similar to the one they read about in “Vanishing Island” by Anya Groner.

Unit 5 includes the play *Twelve Angry Men* by Reginald Rose. In small groups and before they begin their writing assignment, students discuss the following: “From both the stage directions and the dialogue in *Twelve Angry Men*, what do you know about the case and the 3rd, 7th, and 8th Jurors? How do you know it? Finally, how does making the characters into numbers rather than names affect the drama? How do you retain the differences among the characters and their points of view?” If students struggle with beginning their conversation, the teacher provides a scaffold question, such as, “Why do you think the author chose to use numbers instead of names for the jurors?”

In Unit 6, students plan, write, and present researched informational presentations in small groups, drawing from the prompt: “Science fiction and fantasy stories feel the most realistic when authors use inspiration from their own lives. Many authors include details from the world around them in their imaginary or futuristic stories. What inspires authors of fantasy and science fiction? How do authors mix real life with their imagination? Work with a group to conduct and present a researched informational presentation. Be sure to include background information on a specific story or author in your presentation.”

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.D.1

Materials engage students in both short-term and sustained recursive inquiry processes to confront and analyze various aspects of a topic using relevant sources.

- Materials support identification and summary of high-quality primary and secondary sources.
- Materials support student practice in organizing and presenting their ideas and information in accordance with the purpose of the research and the appropriate grade level audience.

Meets 4/4

The materials engage students in both short-term and sustained recursive inquiry processes to confront and analyze various aspects of a topic using relevant sources. Materials support the identification and summary of high-quality primary and secondary sources and support student practice in organizing and presenting their ideas and information in accordance with the purpose of the research and the appropriate grade-level audience.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials support the identification and summary of high-quality primary and secondary sources. For example, the materials contain an Eighth Grade Grammar Language and Composition Guide in PDF form through the StudySync online platform. The Grammar Language and Composition Guide contain a Table of Contents, which lists Chapter 19 Research Report and the Inquiry process and Gathering Sources and Primary sources.

In Unit 2, the materials support student practice in organizing and presenting their ideas and information in accordance with the purpose of the research and the appropriate grade-level audience. For example, students research the lives of a specific group of refugees to write a fictional series of first-person journal entries after reading “Inside Out and Back Again” by Thanhà Lai. Throughout the program, students engage in informal collaborative research and present their findings through various optional “Beyond the Book” activities; these are embedded within each unit and connected to the ideas and themes presented in the readings. The activities require students to work in small groups to conduct informal research on a topic and present their findings to the class. For example, in Unit 2, students select a specific refugee group and “Research news articles, podcasts, and/or interviews to learn about their refugee experience.” Students select a refugee with an interesting story and research this person and his or her experiences. Students use this information to write a series of first-person journal entries in the refugee’s voice.

In Unit 3, students engage in informal collaborative research and present their findings throughout the program through various optional Beyond the Book activities embedded within

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

each unit and connected to the ideas and themes presented in the readings. The lessons provide a basic overview of the activity and do not include explicit instructions for the teacher or student. The activities require students to work in small groups to conduct informal research on a topic and present their findings to the class. In Unit 3, students research a conflict between human beings and animals, creating a “dynamic infographic designed to raise awareness about this man vs. nature conflict.” The materials provide a specific list of tasks and questions to guide students through the research process, including: “Clearly identify the conflict between humans and animals they want to research. Research this conflict to find out more about it. Where is this conflict taking place? What is causing the conflict? In what way are humans and/or animals threatened? What damage has already been done? What are possible solutions to this conflict?” Students prepare an infographic that identifies the conflict and location, provides visual data to show the conflict’s impact, and communicates a clear call to action. Infographics can be completed on paper or online. Students conduct a gallery walk to see what their peers have created.

In Unit 5, the materials include lesson plans allowing students to learn to organize and present their ideas according to the research paper’s purpose by teaching them to do these activities using relevant information from reliable sources and using note cards to annotate and organize. For example, in Unit 5 lesson plan Research and Note-Taking, the student begin to find, gather and synthesize information from various sources by engaging in a group discussion using specific guiding questions.

In Unit 6, the materials support the identification and summary of high-quality primary and secondary sources. This unit includes a Primary and Secondary Sources Skills Lesson. Students “will prepare to write a research paper by differentiating between primary and secondary sources.” Students watch a Concept Definition video and read the definition for Primary and Secondary Sources. Students explain with a partner through a Turn and Talk activity and “discuss the last primary and secondary sources [they have]read,” and explain “how each text presents information.” Students review the vocabulary words *primary source* and *secondary source* through a drag-and-drop activity. The teacher projects a model text, and students read and annotate to highlight key points and ask questions. Students answer questions to differentiate between primary and secondary sources. To close the lesson, students complete a Writer’s Notebook activity to recall a time they attended a school dance or sports game. Students write a one-paragraph, firsthand account of the event as it would appear in a diary or personal letter; they also write a one-paragraph, secondhand account of the same event as it would appear in the school newspaper. In Unit 6, the materials also support student practice in organizing and presenting their ideas and information in accordance with the purpose of the research and the appropriate grade-level audience. For example, students research a dangerous threat to the human population after reading Robert Frost’s “Fire and Ice.” They then participate in a debate about human extinction or research how technology, robotics, and artificial intelligence are impacting a specific sector, like education, cars, or the film industry.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8 English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

They prepare a presentation to the class in connection to the reading “There Will Come Soft Rains” by Ray Bradbury.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.E.1

Materials contain interconnected tasks that build student knowledge and provide opportunities for increased independence.

- Questions and tasks are designed to help students build and apply knowledge and skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, and language.
- Materials contain a coherently sequenced set of high-quality, text-dependent questions and tasks that require students to analyze the integration of knowledge and ideas within individual texts as well as across multiple texts.
- Tasks integrate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking; include components of vocabulary, syntax, and fluency, as needed; and provide opportunities for increased independence.

Meets 4/4

The materials contain interconnected tasks that build student knowledge and provide opportunities for increased independence. Questions and tasks are designed to help students build and apply knowledge and skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, and language. The materials contain a coherently sequenced set of high-quality, text-dependent questions and tasks that require students to analyze the integration of knowledge and ideas within individual texts as well as across multiple texts. Tasks integrate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking; include components of vocabulary, syntax, and fluency, as needed; and provide opportunities for increased independence.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 2, students read an excerpt from *House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, then complete a skills lesson on figurative language and comparing and contrasting. In a final lesson in the series, students review figurative language as they annotate the text during close reading. The materials provide prompts to guide students in their close reading and annotations, such as “Identify the figurative language in paragraph 9 of the excerpt from *The House on Mango Street*. Explain what ideas Esperanza is expressing with this figurative language” and “Identify the figurative language in paragraph 13 of the excerpt from *The House on Mango Street*. Explain how the figurative comparison helps the reader understand how Esperanza feels.” Finally, students write a response in which they apply their learning about figurative language to their reading of multiple texts: “*Inside Out and Back Again*, ‘Theories of Time and Space,’ and *The House on Mango Street* each feature an individual grappling with the concept of home. How does each text use figurative language to convey the overall challenges of leaving one’s home? Be sure to support your ideas with evidence from all three texts.”

Unit 3 includes the poem “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost. Students complete a “First Read” by “using the reading comprehension strategy of making inferences, us[ing] context clues

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

to define new vocabulary, and demonstrat[ing] comprehension by responding to questions using text evidence.” Students complete a quiz, answering high-quality, text-dependent questions including but not limited to: “Which of the following inferences about the speaker is best supported by the first stanza? Why most likely does the speaker choose the path that is grassy and wanted wear? Which of these inferences about the speaker is best supported by stanzas 3 and 4?”

In Unit 4, students prepare for a similar discussion, this time discussing a poem whose language and the subject are less familiar to them. In Unit 4, the materials prompt students to “discuss” an extended metaphor as well as the concept of a requiem and consider how the poem “connects to other selections from the unit.” The poem and the discussion task in Unit 4 are more challenging to students than the similar reading and discussion in the previous unit. This unit also contains a coherently sequenced set of high-quality, text-dependent questions and tasks that require students to analyze the integration of knowledge and ideas within individual texts as well as across multiple texts. The materials provide text-dependent questions and tasks to facilitate students’ understanding and analysis of each text. For example, while reading *Across Five Aprils*, students watch an introductory video; participate in a whole-class discussion, sharing their prior knowledge about the Civil War; and participate in a “Collaborative Discussion,” using text evidence to discuss an excerpt from a previous unit that features an argument between several characters. Using relevant ideas and text evidence, students “Think about the argument the characters are having. Are they basing their arguments on logic, fear, beliefs, or something else? Which character’s style is most similar to yours? When you argue, on what do you base your arguments?” Students discuss the pros and cons of each approach.

Unit 5 includes an excerpt from the autobiography *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston. Students gain practice through a First Read of the text, “using the reading comprehension strategy of visualizing, use context clues to define new vocabulary, and demonstrate comprehension by responding to questions using text evidence.” In a Close Read of the text, they “creat[e] an illustration that clarifies a key moment in the text and discuss [their] work with a small group.” Materials provide directions for discussion: “Choose one moment in this excerpt from *Farewell to Manzanar* where you think an illustration would help or improve a reader's experience of the text. First, illustrate the moment, being careful not to impose anything unintended by the author. Then, write a caption from the text under the illustration. Finally, share and discuss your illustration with a small group.”

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 3.E.2

Materials provide spiraling and scaffolded practice.

- Materials support distributed practice over the course of the year.
- Design includes scaffolds for students to demonstrate integration of literacy skills that spiral over the school year.

Meets 4/4

The materials provide spiraling and scaffolded practice and support distributed practice over the year. The materials' design includes scaffolds for students to demonstrate the integration of literacy skills that spiral over the school year.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, the materials support distributed practice over the year. For example, the materials provide a Skill lesson on mood. Students watch a StudySync Skills video explaining mood; review guiding questions to help identify mood; read and discuss an annotated model text that applies the questions; and read an excerpt from *The Conjure-Man Dies: A Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem* by Rudolph Fisher, answering multiple-choice questions about mood. After reading another excerpt of the same text, students plan for a text-based discussion about mood by preparing a written response to the following prompt: "What makes *The Conjure-Man Dies* so mysterious? Write a plan for your discussion. As you prepare, be sure to identify several examples of the author's language contributing to the story's mood. Additionally, include any lingering questions you have regarding characters and events."

In Unit 5, students transform an entry from Anne Frank's diary into a scene using detailed stage directions and dialogue. Students work collaboratively to "write stage directions that describe the stage, characters, and mood." Unit 1 also includes scaffolds for students to demonstrate the integration of literacy skills that spiral over the school year. For example, this unit includes the poem "I Never Hear the word 'Escape'" by Emily Dickenson. During the Skills activity on the personal response, students "analyze how characters' motivations and behaviors influence events in a work of fiction." They make predictions about vocabulary with teacher support. For students unable to make predictions, the teacher directs them to revisit the Identification and Application section of the Grade 8 Context Clues lesson. Students practice a Text Talk with speaking frames and paragraph guides. Scaffolds prepare students to complete the following written response: "What do you think the speaker of the poem means by the idea of 'escape'? Think about situations or times when you wanted to 'escape.' How did your feelings compare to the speaker's? Include details from the poem and your own experiences in your response."

In Unit 2, the materials support distributed practice over the course of the year. For example, students apply the skills lesson to their reading of Yusef Komunyakaa's poem "Slam, Dunk, &

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Hook” by discussing “the poet’s use of metaphors and allusions.” It is a key concept in the analytical and response prompts throughout the unit, culminating in an extended writing project in which students “select three powerful metaphors that deepen our understanding of identity and belonging” and write an analytical essay examining those metaphors in their reading.

In Unit 3, the materials support distributed practice over the course of the year. For example, after another skills lesson on figurative language, students read “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost and apply their understanding of extended metaphor by writing a poem that includes one. Later in the unit, after reading Langston Hughes’s poem “Mother to Son,” they consider how they might use a metaphor to “share...advice with a friend.” In Unit 4, students discuss the effect of extended metaphor in Walt Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!” after another skills lesson on figurative language. For example, students revisit the concept again during a skills lesson connected to the poem “Spaceships” by Derrick Harriell and respond to a writing prompt that asks them to consider how figurative language “heighten[s] or add[s] humor to the everyday experience the speaker of the poem describes,” citing “examples of figurative language” in their responses. Students first encounter argumentation in Unit 1, when they read Alfred Hitchcock’s essay “Let ‘em Play God” and attempt to capture the essay’s thesis by discussing and writing about the essay’s “central message” after a skills-focused lesson on the author’s purpose and message. Though the materials do not yet use the term “argument,” students consider Hitchcock’s central claim and evidence as they read and annotate the text, using prompts such as “Identify evidence that reveals Hitchcock’s central message about creating suspense.” They also write a response: “What does Hitchcock mean when he says, ‘you have suspense when you let the audience play God’? How does this message emerge throughout his essay?” Unit 4 also includes scaffolds for students to demonstrate the integration of literacy skills that spiral over the school year. For example, “My Very Dear Wife” by Sullivan Ballou has interconnected activities. Students read another text and find similarities that it shares with the Ballou text. “Read Shakespeare’s Sonnet 73. Do you believe the texts explore the same themes or ideas? Write an essay of at least 300 words explaining why or why not. Be sure to use specific evidence from both texts to support your response.”

In Unit 6, the materials support distributed practice over the year. This unit includes the short story “There Will Come Soft Rains” by Ray Bradbury. Students engage in the initial reading of text through a First Read activity, “using the reading comprehension strategy of visualizing, us[ing] context clues to define new vocabulary, and demonstrat[ing] comprehension by responding to questions using text evidence.” Students engage in a Skills lesson to “explain how the setting influences characters’ values and beliefs.” Students develop a short constructed response and “compare and contrast the short story with two poems in order to better understand how the setting, values, and message in each text relate to each other.” A Blast activity ends this lesson with students, “explor[ing] background information and research links to answer the driving question: How can science fiction predict the future?”

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 5.1

Materials include supports for students who demonstrate proficiency above grade-level.

- Materials provide planning and learning opportunities (including extensions and differentiation) for students who demonstrate literacy skills above that expected at the grade level.

Meets 2/2

Materials provide planning and learning opportunities (including extensions and differentiation) for students who demonstrate literacy skills above that expected at the grade level. The materials provide mostly for whole-class instructional engagement with opportunities for above-grade-level students to craft activities that reflect above-grade-level literacy skills expected at the grade level.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Every reading selection is accompanied by a minimum of one planning and learning opportunity for students who demonstrate proficiency above grade level. The textbook uses the term “Beyond” to indicate differentiated or extension materials for students performing above grade level. These extensions appear in the lesson plan’s optional section. The extension activities focus on all aspects of literacy (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

In a dedicated writing lesson focused on drafting a narrative in Unit 1, students performing above level analyze a “sentence or passage from one of the mentor texts in the unit that they find particularly effective” and explain in a group why that sentence or passage was effective, considering structure, style, or other factors. Unit 1 also contains opportunities for above-grade-level students to extend learning by actively participating in an inquiry and research task. Students craft the meaning of the term *tell-tale* before reading “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allen Poe. The teacher encourages students to identify other stories that align with the term *tell-tale* and audibly share their findings with the class. Another extension provides an opportunity for above-level students to analyze a quote related to the suspense. Students interpret a quote by Mary McCarthy: “The suspense of a novel is not only in the reader but in the novelist, who is intensely curious about what will happen to the hero.” Students synthesize the meaning of the quote and explain whether they agree with its message with a logical expression. Unit 1 also presents an opportunity for above-level learners, located in the teacher’s lesson plan’s optional section. *Sorry, Wrong Number* by Lucille Fletcher contains an above-grade-level activity in which students lead the discussion related to the theme and details from the selection. This task for above-level students allows them to make connections from the text to the world, self, and other pieces of literature.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Unit 2, the instructional materials extend learning for above-grade-level students by conducting independent research related to a piece of text read in class. After reading “Commencement Address to the Santa Fe Indian School,” by First Lady Michelle Obama, students conduct informal research and inquire about the Santa Fe Indian School, comparing new learning with their prior knowledge of Native Americans. Students synthesize the information and audibly share their new knowledge with the rest of the class in a logical manner to summarize information in a meaningful format. Also, in Unit 2, the instructional materials include a Beyond extension for students who demonstrate literacy skills above grade level. The teacher introduces Emily Dickenson’s poem “I’m Nobody! Who Are You” to on-level learners with a preview video and brief text introduction. The Beyond extension suggests that the above-grade-level learners lead a whole class brainstorming activity, creating a list of frogs and bogs’ knowledge.

Unit 4 recommends differentiated analysis prompts for above-level learners, including asking students to analyze a quotation in light of their reading. For example, as part of the teacher’s lesson introduction, beyond-level students interact with the quote: “The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him,” by G.K. Chesterton, while on-level students focus on reading a letter home from a Civil War soldier.

In Unit 6, the materials provide an extension activity for above-grade-level learners. After reading *War of the Worlds*, students engage in a “Text Talk” discussion of the story. Beyond-grade-level students write one additional discussion question and lead a small group collaborative discussion using their self-generated questions to guide the conversation.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 5.2

Materials include supports for students who perform below grade-level to ensure they are meeting the grade level literacy standards.

- Materials provide planning and learning opportunities (including extensions and differentiation) for students who demonstrate literacy skills below that expected at the grade level.

Meets 2/2

The materials include supports for grade 8 students who perform below grade-level to ensure they meet the grade-level literacy standards. Planning and learning opportunities, including extensions and differentiation, are evident for students who demonstrate literacy skills below that expected at the grade 8 level.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials provide scaffolds such as visual glossaries, question and annotation guides, and writing supports to address the needs of approaching-grade-level learners who demonstrate literacy skills below that expected at grade level. The materials provide a proficiency tab for each activity. The teacher selects approaching to reveal the sidebar pop-up that provides scaffolds and differentiation for many activities. These scaffolds help approaching-grade-level learners access complex texts, increase comprehension, and streamline written language production.

In Unit 1, all students read the informational essay “Let ‘Em Play God” by Alfred Hitchcock and answer reading comprehension questions. In a built-in, titled strategy for approaching grade level students, students discuss the questions in a small group before submitting their responses with a text-dependent question guide as a scaffold. Unit 1 materials also include supports while reading “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson. The materials suggest grouping approaching-level students with on-grade-level peers for additional support as they read and generate questions. Scaffolds such as speaking frames to assist approaching-level students are evident as students discuss the text. The speaking frames provide sentence stems for specified paragraphs. For example, after reading paragraphs 43–63, students complete the following sentence frame: “The Hutchinson household has to...because...” The materials provide differentiation for approaching-level learners with an Annotation Guide that highlights specific details and commentary in the text and provides guiding questions to help them interpret the information.

In Unit 3, a reading lesson focuses on an excerpt from Walter Lord’s *A Night to Remember*. Students discuss their reading in groups, practicing synthesizing information across paragraphs. The lesson plan’s differentiation column recommends grouping students whose skills are

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

approaching grade level with on-grade-level peers for additional support during the synthesis practice.

Unit 5 provides additional support for approaching-level learners to analyze the oral presentation prompt. The core lesson provides an overview of the prompt, “How do you advocate a position?” and includes a list of effective communication skills. The Approaching scaffolds focus less on communication skills such as eye contact or speaking rate and more on exploring the “what” and “how” of the assignment prompt. The materials suggest that students consider the following questions: “What does advocate mean? What is an issue or topic you care about? What are some examples of why it matters to you?”

In Unit 6, for Ray Bradbury’s “There Will Come Soft Rains,” the independent read core activities involve understanding poetry by responding to comprehension questions, participating in collaborative conversations, and writing responses. There are peer review sentence frames for approaching-level students: “You could answer the prompt more completely by ____.” The scaffolds have one-word blanks to allow students to complete the sentence using one word of their choice in a simplified way.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 5.3

Materials include supports for English Learners (EL) to meet grade-level learning expectations.

- Materials must include accommodations for linguistics (communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded) commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency as defined by the ELPs.
- Materials provide scaffolds such as adapted text, translations, native language support, cognates, summaries, pictures, realia, glossaries, bilingual dictionaries, thesauri, and other modes of comprehensible input.
- Materials encourage strategic use of students' first language as a means to linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic development in English (e.g., to enhance vocabulary development).
- Vocabulary is developed in the context of connected discourse.

Meets 2/2

The materials include supports for English Learners (ELs) to meet grade-level learning expectations. Materials include accommodations for linguistics commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency as defined by the ELPS. Materials provide various scaffolds, such as Spanish translations of each unit's essential components and cognates for unit vocabulary. Students are encouraged to use their first language as a means to linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic development in English. Materials develop vocabulary in the context of connected discourse.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide a grades 6–12 “Newcomer EL Support Guide” to help students build their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. The “Start Smart” introduction focuses on developing students' knowledge of the alphabet and phonics, basic greetings, geometric shapes, and numbers. Also included in the support guide are songs/chants and other progress monitoring tools, and newcomer cards provided for extra visual support. Every text selection offers a summary, and students can select from languages diverse as Cantonese and Haitian Creole for a translation and audio reading of the summary. 25–30 texts for grades 6–8 are available in Spanish in the library.

Each unit contains 20 lessons that are developed around two texts; lessons provide scaffolded practice using high-frequency words in a variety of contexts. Beginning ELs complete the “Your Turn #1” activity, matching “structural and thematic models of authentic texts.” These are written at four levels of proficiency: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Advanced High. EL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the “Integrated Reading and Writing” section by pairing EL students with on-grade-level peers, giving students the option to annotate in their native language and share their responses with a partner before participating in the group

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

discussion. All StudySync lesson plans contain a section that lists the TEKS and ELPS per activity under Standards Instruction/Application.

In Unit 1, all students read the short story “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson. Proficiency-leveled summaries, summaries in multiple languages, and audio and audio text highlighting are available digitally. Beginning and intermediate ELs make predictions about vocabulary by scanning the text to highlight vocabulary words. The teacher calls attention to Spanish-speaking students’ Spanish definitions and allows non-Spanish-speaking students to look up word meanings in their native language; a visual glossary serves as a comprehensible input scaffold. Later in Unit 1, after reading “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe, students respond to the following prompt: “Can the narrator of ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’ be trusted? Consider the narrator’s voice and description of events as you conclude the narrator’s state of mind.” The instructional materials provide a variety of accommodations for ELs of various levels of English proficiency. Beginning and intermediate ELs draw their reflections or write them in their native language. During collaborative conversations over the text, the teacher works directly with beginning and intermediate ELs, using the discussion prompts and speaking frames to facilitate the discussion. Advanced and advanced high ELs work in mixed-level groups of three or four students, using the discussion guide and speaking frames as needed.

In Unit 2, students use annotation tools provided in the materials while reading Emily Dickinson’s poem “I’m Nobody! Who are you?” The scaffolding tab includes a word bank for beginning and intermediate ELs, which offers a short definition and picture of each bolded word in the text. Additionally, these two levels have access to a synopsis of the poem in which specific words are bolded and explained. For example, the synopsis includes the sentence “The speaker says that being Somebody is depressing.” The accompanying glossary for the synopsis includes Spanish equivalents for each bolded word and its definition and picture.

In Unit 4, the “Extended Writing Project” provides ELPS-aligned scaffolds for EL students with various English language proficiency levels. For example, during the Extended Writing Project’s planning phase, scaffolds address the needs of all levels of ELs by providing a glossary of key terms with the definition and image of vocabulary related to the assignment: recipient, date, body paragraph, address, and complimentary close. Later in Unit 4, while reading Robert Frost’s poem “Fire and Ice,” beginning and intermediate ELs have access to simple definitions and illustrations connected to bolded words from the text and the text’s synopsis. Keywords from the synopsis are bolded and defined; these words and their definitions are also available in Spanish translation.

In Unit 6, students engage in conversational discourse using sight vocabulary and high-frequency words. The “Extended Oral Project” in each unit also provides an opportunity for students to engage in connected discourse. For example, in this unit specifically, EL students “plan, draft, practice and deliver an oral presentation that ties into the theme of the unit and spans informative, argumentative and narrative genres.” The materials provide a model of

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8 English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

acquiring new vocabulary: concept mapping, compare/contrast, and drawing/memorizing/reviewing.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 6.1

Materials include assessment and guidance for teachers and administrators to monitor progress including how to interpret and act on data yielded.

- Formative and summative assessments are aligned in purpose, intended use, and TEKS emphasis.
- Assessments and scoring information provide sufficient guidance for interpreting and responding to student performance.
- Assessments are connected to the regular content to support student learning.

Meets 2/2

Materials include assessment and guidance for teachers and administrators to monitor progress to interpret and act on data yielded. Formative and summative assessments are aligned in purpose, intended use, and TEKS emphasis. Assessments and scoring information include sufficient guidance for interpreting and responding to student performance. Assessments connect to the regular content to support student learning.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Assessments and scoring information provide sufficient guidance for interpreting and responding to student performance. The program overview states that the materials provide “mastery tracking and reteaching tools to help teachers guide every student toward achievement.” The program overview states that “progress monitoring charts” detail which standards are covered in each instructional sequence, identify standards tested on state assessments, and guide teachers toward resources for reteaching and remediation.

Formative and summative assessments are aligned in purpose, intended use, and TEKS emphasis. Skills lessons embedded in each lesson “conclude with short, auto-graded assessments that use the same format and question stems as Texas state assessments and provide teachers immediate feedback about student progress toward TEKS mastery.”

In Unit 1, formative and summative assessments are aligned in purpose, intended use, and TEKS emphasis. The materials introduce Plot, TEKS 8.7(C) (analyze non-linear plot development such as flashbacks, foreshadowing, subplots, and parallel plot structures and compare it to linear plot development) in an independent reading lesson of an excerpt from Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book*. There is a comprehension quiz and a question that asks students to order events. In a later lesson in the series, students read WW Jacobs’s “The Monkey’s Paw” and respond to a Think question that defines foreshadowing and asks students to identify an example from the text. In the skills lesson, which focuses on plot, students apply the concept to answer multiple questions about plot elements, including foreshadowing, tension, and rising action. Then, in the close read lesson, students annotate the text by the following prompts that

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

ask them to apply their knowledge of the plot, each tied to TEKS.8.7(C). Summative tests include assessing comprehension skills/vocabulary standards taught throughout each unit of instruction and stimulus texts that reflect the rigor and text complexity required by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The summative Unit 1 End-of-Unit Assessment “uses grade-level-appropriate passages and writing prompts to assess student performance against the key reading, writing, and language standards covered in the unit.” There are six selections of various genres included in the summative assessment that measures reading comprehension, revising/editing, and written response—this format mimics the TEKS-aligned STAAR/EOC (except for the drag-and-drop and short answer response questions).

In Unit 5, assessments are connected to the regular content to support student learning. For example, students read two plays and analyze how playwrights develop dramatic action through acts and scenes. The End-of-Unit Assessment includes a play and questions about how playwrights develop dramatic action through acts and scenes. For example: “The playwright most likely limits the play’s action to one scene in order to...? What action occurs during the break between scenes 1 and 2? The playwright likely divides the action into two scenes in order to...?”

In Unit 5, each lesson set includes multiple-choice comprehension and skill assessments and ends with student writing; these provide assessment data on the skills and concepts from those lessons. Each unit ends with a standardized assessment aligned to the TEKS addressed in that unit. For example, in Unit 5, students read the speech "Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat" by Winston Churchill. In the lesson connected to this reading, students review the concept of Author’s Purpose and Text Structure, TEKS 8.9(B) in a focused skills lesson.

In Unit 6, assessments are connected to the regular content to support student learning. The materials contain assessments that are connected to the regular content at the end of each unit. Under the Unit Overview of the StudySync platform, the materials include an end-of-unit assessment that uses grade-level-appropriate passages and writing prompts to assess student performance against the key reading, writing, and language standards covered in the unit. The Unit assessment includes the following writing prompt “Write a research report using the four fiction selections within the unit. In their report, students discuss the conclusion they reach about the role of technology in society.” The assessment includes a total of 40 multiple-choice questions that are TEKS-aligned to ELAR content from the unit’s standards. Also included in Unit 6 are formative and summative assessments aligned in purpose, intended use, and TEKS emphasis. For example, in this unit, students conduct a First Read of the story “Manuel and the Magic Fox” by Ekaterina Sedia. In a Text Talk activity, students engage in a TEKS-aligned, formative assessment task by discussing the following questions in a teacher-led format: “Why didn’t Manuel want to leave the Navajo reservation? Who does Manuel meet in the desert? What does Manuel learn when he arrives home?” The summative Unit 6 End-of-Unit

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Assessments use grade-level-appropriate passages and writing prompts to assess student performance against the key reading, writing, and language standards covered in the unit.

The materials provide sufficient guidance for interpreting and responding to student performance in various ways. The materials provide mastery tracking and reteaching tools to help teachers guide every student toward achievement. Teachers are provided with progress monitoring charts that detail which standards are covered in each instructional sequence, identify standards tested on state assessments, and guide teachers toward resources for reteaching and remediation. Additionally, assessments can be used to inform subsequent instruction, aid in making leveling and grouping decisions, and point toward areas in need of reteaching or remediation. Assessments are provided with instructions that guide teachers on how to administer and score the various assessment components, use student assessment data in designation and grouping decisions as well as determining which assessments to use, and review the assessment with students to have them self-correct incorrect responses. The teacher uses the results to determine reteaching or enrichment opportunities based on the needs of the students. Finally, administrators are provided with the Administrator Assessment Database with exclusive access to passages and questions to create three additional tests that mirror Texas state assessments.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 6.2

Materials include year-long plans and supports for teachers to identify needs of students and provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of a range of learners to ensure grade-level success.

- Materials provide an overarching year-long plan for teachers to engage students in multiple grouping (and other) structures. Plans are comprehensive and attend to differentiation to support students via many learning opportunities.
- Teacher edition materials include annotations and support for engaging students in the materials, as well as support for implementing ancillary and resource materials and student progress components.
- Annotations and ancillary materials provide support for student learning and assistance for teachers.

Meets 2/2

The materials include year-long plans and supports for teachers to identify students' needs and provide differentiated instruction to meet a range of learners' needs to ensure grade-level success. Materials include support for teachers to address the needs of approaching- and beyond-level learners. Materials provide an overarching year-long plan for teachers to engage students in multiple grouping structures. Plans provide differentiation to support all levels of students via many learning opportunities. Teacher edition materials include annotations and support for engaging students in the materials. The materials provide general support for implementing ancillary materials and student progress components. Lesson plans for the core instructional materials contain comprehensive annotations to support student learning and assistance for teachers.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Teacher edition materials include annotations and support for engaging students in the materials. These is also support for implementing ancillary and resource materials and student progress components. The materials provide minimal guidance to support teachers in implementing the ancillary resources. The units' lesson plans do not address when and how the teacher should embed the ancillary resources into the daily lessons to support student progress.

Annotations and ancillary materials provide support for student learning and assistance for teachers. The program overview document has additional resources in the library through its search functions. Teachers can access it on the page labeled "Additional Resources." The library of additional readings and a limited number of "spotlight" skill lessons is available and searchable by skill, standard, and concept. Other ancillary materials, including workbooks and additional practice materials for vocabulary, grammar, spelling, foundational skills, and test

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

preparation, are available in the materials' additional resources section. However, the relationship between these two different sets of "Additional Resources" is unclear. The pacing guide for each unit also contains a column called "Additional Program Lessons for Reteaching," which includes both connected lessons in other units as well as additional skills lessons called "Spotlight Skill Lessons," which the materials note teachers can use to review any skills or concepts with which students may be struggling. The vocabulary and spelling workbook includes a Student Progress Chart to track students' scores on the 30+ worksheets, unit review, and unit test. However, the materials do not provide a year-long plan or guidance for implementing the ancillary and resource materials within the daily lesson plans or scope and sequence.

Additionally, the Strategies Glossary, located in the additional resources section of each grade level, is a tool for educators that includes thoroughly detailed, research-based strategies. The Strategies Glossary is divided into five sections, each focused on a different domain or type: Vocabulary, Speaking and Listening, Reading, Writing, and Formative Assessment. The strategies in this document can be used for a variety of lessons and learners within the classroom. They are flexible, adaptable, and allow educators to differentiate lessons seamlessly.

In Unit 1, annotations and ancillary materials provide support for student learning and assistance for teachers. In the First Read of "Sorry Wrong Number" by Lucille Fletcher, the lesson plan includes a Read section where the teachers have instructions to help students be successful. The materials suggest that if students are unable to make predictions, teachers can revisit the Identification and Application section of the Grade 8 Context Clues lesson with the class. After revisiting, teachers guide students to make predictions about the next bold word in the text in the paragraph. Another example of teacher supports in the lesson includes, "If students struggle to generate meaningful questions, show and discuss examples using the model provided."

In Unit 3, the teacher edition materials include annotations and support for engaging students in the materials as well as support for implementing ancillary and resource materials and student progress components. For example, in the First Read lesson for "The Road not Taken" by Robert Frost, the teacher edition and lesson plan prompt teachers to "Check for Success" during a partner activity in which students preview key vocabulary. Materials note that if students are unable to make predictions about word meaning, teachers revisit the Identification and Application section of the Grade 8 Context Clues lesson with the class. After revisiting, the teacher guides students to make predictions about the next bold word in the text. Later in the lesson, as students begin reading the text in small groups, practicing the skill of making inferences, the materials prompt teachers to circulate to listen for sample inferences. The Check for Success prompt for teachers in this section of the lesson plan directs teachers to ask small groups to provide examples of inferences they have made and why they have made them. The teacher projects exemplar inferences as an instructional model for students as they

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

continue reading. If students struggle to make logical inferences, they can show and discuss examples using the instructional model.

In Unit 6, the materials provide an overarching year-long plan for teachers to engage students in multiple grouping (and other) structures. Plans are comprehensive and attend to differentiation to support students via many learning opportunities. In the Skills lesson for Academic Vocabulary, the teacher reads a list of academic vocabulary and definitions, pairs students, and assigns each pair a word from the list. In an Independent Read Turn and Talk activity of the excerpt from the novel *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, students discuss original vocabulary predictions with a neighbor. During a collaborative conversation activity with the same excerpt, the teacher posts a writing prompt to discuss small groups. However, there is no overarching year-long plan for these grouping opportunities.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 6.3

Materials include implementation support for teachers and administrators.

- Materials are accompanied by a TEKS-aligned scope and sequence outlining the essential knowledge and skills that are taught in the program, the order in which they are presented, and how knowledge and skills build and connect across grade levels.
- Materials include additional supports to help teachers implement the materials as intended.
- Materials include additional supports to help administrators support teachers in implementing the materials as intended.
- Materials include a school years' worth of literacy instruction, including realistic pacing guidance and routines and support for both 180-day and 220- day schedules.

Meets 2/2

The materials are accompanied by a TEKS-aligned scope and sequence outlining the essential knowledge and skills taught in the program, the order in which they are presented, and how knowledge and skills build and connect across grade levels. The materials include supports to help administrators support teachers in implementing the materials as intended. Materials include a school year's worth of literacy instruction, including realistic pacing guidance, routines, and support for a 180-day schedule, but there is no pacing option for a 220-day schedule.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide a TEKS-aligned scope and sequence outlining the essential knowledge and skills taught in the program broken down by unit. The Scope and Sequence includes the TEKS alignment for all the elements covered in each unit, including Academic Vocabulary, Genre, Text Selections, Blasts, Extended Writing Project, and Novel Studies. The Scope and Sequence specifies if the activities are "Practice/Application Only" or "Instruction and Practice/Application." The program guide's appendix includes scope and sequence documents for all grade levels in the grade band, arranged with each TEKS student expectation listed across the top by letter and number. Each expectation addressed in a given lesson is marked as either Practice/Application Only or Instruction And Practice/Application. Charts provide pacing suggestions, along with guidance on opportunities for practice and reteaching to standards mastery. However, the materials do not provide a Scope and Sequence that demonstrates how the TEKS connect across grade levels.

The materials provide explicit guidance with both digital and print supports to ensure teacher success. The resources help teachers provide instruction that builds both the essential student skills and knowledge, as listed in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and English Language Proficiency Standards. This guide outlines every aspect of the curriculum and product support

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

afforded teachers, including working collaboratively with other content-area teachers to develop student literacy. Each unit includes a pacing guide which “outlines the scope and sequence of texts and skills” included and addressed in the unit. The pacing guide includes columns indicating “Days for suggested pacing,” titles and grouping of readings, the targeted skills lessons paired with each text or group of texts, “Spotlight Skill” lessons, and texts in future units. Teachers can use this to review any skills or concepts with which students may be struggling. There is also a list of lessons that review material previously taught in other units. The pacing guide also previews both the extended writing project and end-of-unit assessment, breaking down the assessment by reading passage title, genre, Lexile level, length, and the corresponding TEKS and skills addressed in the assessment’s questions.

The Core Program Guide states that the “Administrator Assessment Database provides administrators exclusive access to passages and questions to create three additional tests that mirror Texas state assessments.” Also, the guide states that “Regularly scheduled public webinars are offered for teachers and administrators. These webinars are an ideal environment for asking questions, connecting with other users, and discussing best practices.” If teachers or administrators need “immediate assistance,” the materials recommend contacting Customer Support, who will provide quick solutions for a successful implementation. The overview document mentions a responsive team of curriculum experts who will work with teachers to offer advice on learning, implementing, and customizing the curriculum.

Materials include a school years’ worth of literacy instruction, including realistic pacing guidance and routines and support for a 180-day schedule. The materials provide a thematic Unit Pacing Guide that outlines the scope and sequence of texts and skills taught in the units based on a 180-day schedule. The program overview document states the materials meet the “challenges of the latest Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for English Language Arts and Reading as well as the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) with 180 days of instruction broken into six Core ELAR units at each grade.” The guide includes suggested pacing, along with guidance on opportunities for practice and reteaching to standards mastery. The guide provides additional program lessons for reteaching as well as identifying spiraling skills. A 220-day schedule including realistic pacing guidance and routines and support is not evident within the materials.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 6.4

The visual design of the student edition (whether in print or digital) is neither distracting nor chaotic.

- Materials include appropriate use of white space and design that supports and does not distract from student learning.
- Pictures and graphics are supportive of student learning and engagement without being visually distracting.

Meets 2/2

The student edition's visual design (whether in print or digital) is neither distracting nor chaotic. The materials include appropriate white space and design that supports and does not distract from student learning. Simultaneously, pictures and graphics are supportive of student learning and engagement without being visually distracting.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The overall visual design is clean and easily navigated, with an appropriate amount of white space on all borders to focus readers on each screen center. The student pages' design for each lesson makes the content easy to read. The page format, margins, and empty spaces are consistent throughout the lessons. The lesson pages make good use of white space, bold-faced font, bullets, and line spacing to create a clean design that is easy to navigate and free from distractions. Fonts and graphics are simple and accessible, drawing the eye to the text, reading, or concepts students focus on each screen. The materials use a standard font, using boldface and darkened text boxes with white lettering to draw attention to the lesson's subtitles and sections. The navigation path is user-friendly and straightforward, easily identifiable, and visually appealing through the student preview of each lesson. Every unit receives ample space and has a predictable structure: Unit Overview, Integrated Reading and Writing, Extended Writing Project and Grammar, ELL Resources, Novel Study, and End-of-Unit Assessment.

Images within the student lesson pages support student learning by directing attention towards important information, clarifying content, and breaking up text into digestible chunks. The images are crisp, using contrast and faded images to highlight text within the image. The images are appropriate and relatable for the intended audience's age, grade, and experience level. The images effectively highlight and connect to the content. Images are clean, crisp, and free of clutter. Text is of appropriate size and clear font. However, it is unclear if the web-based graphics with text are legible when scaled down for viewing on a mobile device. Images are balanced, representing a wide range of people, locations, topics, and cultures.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

The pictures and graphics provided in the materials support student learning and are not visually distracting, such as video introductions, drag-and-drop charts, and student library novel titles. The color, narration, and pace of each text introduction video often mirror the text’s content. For example, the video introducing the concept of the plot begins with a student telling another student a story. They stop and tap the screen, which fades them into the background and brings the word “plot” to the forefront in large print, followed by the word’s definition. Then, they take turns explaining and defining elements of the plot, pausing briefly to point to their print versions on the screen. Video images fade into the background long enough for students to read the text but briefly enough to be engaging.

McGraw Hill Texas StudySync Grade 8

English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

Indicator 6.5

If present, technology components included are appropriate for grade level students and provide support for learning.

- Technology, if present, supports and enhances student learning as appropriate, as opposed to distracting from it, and includes appropriate teacher guidance.

Not Scored

Technology components included in the materials are appropriate for grade-level students and provide support for learning. The technology supports and enhances student learning as appropriate, as opposed to distracting from it, and includes appropriate teacher guidance.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials reviewed are an online platform, so technology is the primary support and publication mechanism for the materials, though PDF printing is an option. For example, teachers and students can print the hard copies by selecting the Actions tab. The materials are user-friendly and support navigation in multiple areas through searching and clicking on relevant tabs and links. The digital materials support and enhance student learning with an organized, visually appealing, and easy to navigate design. The students have a top of the webpage per selection of four buttons; the first one controls the Audio with options to highlight the text as it is being read or slow the speech. The digital materials provide clear tabs to support ease of navigation through the materials. The materials also offer multiple redundant lists and outlines for ease of navigation. Teachers and students access readings, activities, and assessments through the online platform, which provides opportunities for annotation, differentiation, and peer review. Program features are designed to mimic the style of communication on social media, encouraging student engagement. There are various online student learning opportunities, including Blasts, where students complete an online QuikPoll and online Drag-and-Drop activities in the Your Turn section. The videos embedded in each lesson are relevant to the materials, good quality, and clearly labeled. The interactive writing tools are simple to use with clear instructions and action tabs. The editable charts, annotation boxes, and drag-and-drop interactive features are easy to navigate and free from distracting extraneous information. Additionally, the materials provide educators' professional development through videos, relevant articles, and other aids to meet the classrooms' changing needs.