

The California Content Standards for Grade Eight Pacific Grove Unified School District



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Well-communicated standards provide you with the information you need to have a better understanding of what your child is to learn in a specific grade level and in a specific subject. Your knowledge of the standards will help you frame your questions for parent-teacher conferences and counselor conferences; select reading and writing materials for the home; and shape your visits to public libraries and other places of interest.

GRADE EIGHT

English–Language Arts

READING

Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

- Students use their knowledge of word origins and word relationships, as well as historical and literary context clues, to determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and to understand the precise meaning of grade level-appropriate words.

Reading Comprehension

- Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They describe and connect the essential ideas, arguments, and perspectives of the text by using their knowledge of text structure, organization, and purpose. The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition, students read one million words annually on their own, including a good representation of narrative and expository text (e.g., classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, online information).

Literary Response and Analysis

- ◆ Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They clarify the ideas and connect them to other literary works.

WRITING

Writing Strategies

◆ Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

◆ Students write narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive essays of at least 500 to 700 words in each genre. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies.

WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Listening and Speaking Strategies

Students deliver focused, coherent presentations that convey ideas clearly and relate to the background and interests of the audience. They evaluate the content of oral communication.

Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students deliver well-organized formal presentations employing traditional rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, exposition, persuasion, description). Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organizational and delivery strategies.

History–Social Science

The intellectual skills noted below are to be learned through, and applied to, content standards for grades six through eight. They are to be assessed *only in conjunction with* the content standards in grades six through eight.

In addition to the standards for grades six through eight, students demonstrate the following intellectual reasoning, reflection, and research skills:

CHRONOLOGICAL AND SPATIAL THINKING

Students:

- ◆ Explain how major events are related to one another in time.
- ◆ Construct various time lines of key events, people, and periods of the historical era they are studying.
- ◆ Use a variety of maps and documents to identify physical and cultural features of neighborhoods, cities, states, and countries and to explain the historical migration of people, expansion and disintegration of empires, and the growth of economic systems.

RESEARCH, EVIDENCE, AND POINT OF VIEW

Students:

- Frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research. Distinguish fact from opinion in historical narratives and stories.
- Distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, essential from incidental information, and verifiable from unverifiable information in historical narratives and stories.
- Assess the credibility of primary and secondary sources and draw sound conclusions from them.
- Detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made (the questions asked, sources used, author's perspectives).

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

Students:

- Explain the central issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.
- Understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including the long- and short-term causal relations.
- Explain the sources of historical continuity and how the combination of ideas and events explains the emergence of new patterns.
- Recognize the role of chance, oversight, and error in history.
- Recognize that interpretations of history are subject to change as new information is uncovered.
- Interpret basic indicators of economic performance and conduct cost-benefit analyses of economic and political issues.

United States History and Geography: Growth and Conflict

• Students in grade eight study the ideas, issues, and events from the framing of the Constitution up to World War I, with an emphasis on America's role in the war. After reviewing the development of America's democratic institutions founded on the Judeo-Christian heritage and English parliamentary traditions, particularly the shaping of the Constitution, students trace the development of American politics, society, culture, and economy and relate them to the emergence of major regional differences. They learn about the challenges facing the new nation, with an emphasis on the causes, course, and consequences of the Civil War. They make connections between the rise of industrialization and contemporary social and economic conditions.

• Students:

- Understand the major events preceding the founding of the nation and relate their significance to the development of American constitutional democracy.
- Analyze the political principles underlying the U.S. Constitution and compare the enumerated and implied powers of the federal government.
- Understand the foundation of the American political system and the ways in which citizens participate in it.
- Analyze the aspirations and ideals of the people of the new nation.
- Analyze U.S. foreign policy in the early Republic.
- Analyze the divergent paths of the American people from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced, with emphasis on the Northeast, South, and West.
- Analyze the early and steady attempts to abolish slavery and realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.

- Analyze the multiple causes, key events, and complex consequences of the Civil War.
- Analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction.
- Analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution.

Science

- **FOCUS ON PHYSICAL SCIENCE**

- *Motion*

- The velocity of an object is the rate of change of its position.

- **Forces**

- Unbalanced forces cause changes in velocity.

- *Structure of Matter*

- Elements have distinct properties and atomic structure. All matter is composed of one or more of the elements in the periodic table.

- **Earth in the Solar System (Earth Science)**

- The structure and composition of the universe can be learned from the study of stars and galaxies and their evolution.

- *Reactions*

- Chemical reactions are processes in which atoms are rearranged into different combinations of molecules.

- **Chemistry of Living Systems (Life Science)**

- Principles of chemistry underlie the functioning of biological systems.

- **Periodic Table**

- The organization of the periodic table is based on the properties of the elements and reflects the structure of atoms.

- *Density and Buoyancy*

- All objects experience a buoyant force when immersed in a fluid.

- *Investigation and Experimentation*

- Scientific progress is made by asking meaningful questions and conducting careful investigations. To understand this concept and to address the content in the other three strands, students should develop their own questions and perform investigations.