

# StrongMind 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	80.95%	80.95%	100.00%	100.00%
Grade 7	82.54%	82.54%	100.00%	100.00%
Grade 8	81.25%	81.25%	100.00%	100.00%

### Section 2. Texts

- The sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade materials include some high-quality texts across a variety of text types and genres as required by the TEKS.
- 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. However, the materials do not include a text complexity analysis or guidance document.

### 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 some opportunities for students to build their academic vocabulary across the course of the year.
- The materials do not 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 eighth-grade materials do not give the students opportunities specifically designed to write correspondence in a professional or friendly structure.
- The materials provide opportunities for students to apply composition convention skills in increasingly complex contexts throughout the year.

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

- The materials do not support students' listening and speaking about texts, and the sixth- and seventh-grade materials do not engage students in productive teamwork and student-led discussions in a variety of settings.
- The materials provide opportunities for students to engage in both short-term and sustained inquiry processes throughout the year.
- 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 do not offer differentiation supports for students who are performing below and above grade level.
- The materials provide some 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 do not include a TEKS for English Language Arts and Reading-aligned scope and sequence.
- The materials do not include annotations and support for engaging students in the materials or annotations and ancillary materials that provide support for student learning and assistance for teachers and administrators.

### Section 7. Additional Worksheets

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

# StrongMind 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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials include some high-quality texts for ELAR instruction and cover a limited range of student interests. Some materials include well-crafted text, representing the quality of content and language, and writing by experts in various disciplines; however other texts contain a similar language complexity and depth, and published-texts cycle through the school year. While the materials include some complex, traditional, and contemporary texts, no multicultural diverse text is included.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include classical authors, such as Jack London and Mark Twain, and well-known texts such as “The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave” and *Roughing It*. The materials include complex traditional texts, but many are excerpts from classical texts such as *Roughing It* by Mark Twain and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. Both authors are used throughout multiple units of study.

While the materials do include some contemporary texts such as “The Sound of Thunder” and “The Call of the Wild,” most are commissioned texts that are not published pieces representing high-quality works from experts in various fields or selections available from the public domain. Examples of commissioned texts include “The Fierce Flyer,” an informational text about bald eagles, and science news articles, “Could a Dragonfly’s Wings Be Alive – and Breathing?” and “Cool Jobs: New Tools to Solve Crimes.”

The materials include complex traditional texts, but many are excerpts from classic texts such as *Roughing It* by Mark Twain and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. Both authors cycle throughout multiple units of study. The texts also include a variety of short, more contemporary texts, but the selections do not include diverse texts, nor do they address various student interests. While many of the instructional skills increase in complexity throughout the year, many text selections do not.

In Unit 5, students read excerpts of well-known 20th-century American authors, including Jack London's "The Call of the Wild," Mark Twain's semi-autobiographical travel literature "Roughing

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

It" and "The Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury. Selections are well-known classics with high-level vocabulary and complex and varied sentence structures.

Unit 6 includes excerpts from highly acclaimed science fiction writers Stanislaw Lem and Ray Bradbury, *How the World Was Saved*, and *Fahrenheit 451*. Both contain complex themes, vocabulary, and well-developed characters. Students analyze an excerpt of *White Fang* by acclaimed American author Jack London and *Narrative of Frederick Douglass's Life, an American Slave*, an 1845 memoir and treatise on abolition written by the famous orator, a former slave.

Unit 10 students analyze the author's purpose and perspective of text after reading "My Fast-Food Meal" by Michael Pollan. Pollan writes about food and where it comes from, and his experiences at McDonald's. Students identify and analyze conflicting information and ideas after reading the informational text "Eating Healthy Foods During Short Lunch Periods Is Hard for Students" by Joanna Lin. Lin writes informational text from the experiences of an investigative reporter.

The selections in Unit 12 include various texts, many of high quality and focused on topics relevant to student interests, including celebrated 20th- and 21st-century American writer Ray Bradbury's short story "All Summer in a Day." Students read excerpts from "The Sniper" by Irish author Liam O'Flaherty, a short story written during the Irish Civil War and published during the war, and "Chew On This: Part 6" Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson. This contemporary nonfiction text tells the truth about how the fast-food industry has been feeding off children for generations.

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

### 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 and include print and graphic features of a variety of texts.

Examples of literary texts include but are not limited to:

from *Roughing It* by Mark Twain (novel)

from “The Call of the Wild” by Jack London (short story/adventure)

from *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (novel/science fiction)

from *White Fang - The Southland* by Jack London (novel/adventure)

“A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury (short story/science fiction)

“I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” by William Wordsworth (lyric poem)

“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes (poem)

“The Golden Apples: The Story of Atalanta and Hippomenes” retold by Mary Pope Osborne (myth)

“Journey” by Edna St. Vincent Millay (poem)

“In Just-” by E. E. Cummings (poem)

“The Glass Dog” by Frank Baum (short story/fairy tale)

“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson (short story/ horror)

“The Lady or the Tiger” by Frank Stockton (humor)

“Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. (short story/science fiction)

When Great Trees Fall by Maya Angelou (poem)

from *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen (novel/realistic fiction)

“The Sniper” by Liam O’Flaherty (short story/historical fiction)

Examples of informational texts include but are not limited to:

“What Was the Klondike Gold Rush” by the National Park Service (informational)

“Through the Rapids on the Way to the Klondike” by Jack London (nonfiction)

“Big Wolves and Ordinary Wolves: Wolf Weight Depends on When and What They Last Ate” by Tim Mowry (informational)

“Early School Starts Can Turn Teens into ‘Zombies’” by Stephen Ornes (argumentative)

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

“Feverish Climate Is Melting Glaciers, Study Confirms” by Thomas Sumner (informational)

“What Killed the Dinosaurs?” by Thomas Sumner (informational)

“Could a Dragonfly’s Wings Be Alive—and Breathing?” by Susan Milius (informational)

*Chew On This: Part 4* by Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson (argumentative)

“Remarks by the President on Comprehensive Immigration Reform” by President Barack Obama (speech)

“Address upon Signing Arizona Senate Bill 1070” by Jan Brewer (speech)

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

In Unit 2, the text “Untamed: The Wild Life of Jane Goodall” by Anita Silvey includes a digital card with an image of Jane Goodall and biographical information. The brochure “Staying Safe in Wolf Country” is a colorful text with headings, images, and graphics that support the reader's understanding of the content.

In Unit 3, students read “Big Wolves and Ordinary Wolves: Wolf Weight Depends on When and What They Last Ate” by Tim Mowry to practice summarizing. The text includes multiple images and captions to support the reader's understanding of the selection.

In Unit 7, “Early School Starts Can Turn Teens into 'Zombies'” by Stephen Ornes is used to analyze key details in a text. It includes multiple colored images, embedded quotes, and hyperlinked vocabulary. “Cool Jobs: New Tools to Solve Crimes” by Kathryn Hulick describes an unusual approach to learning about crime scenes and scientific evidence and includes images and animated texts to emphasize specific parts of the text.

In Unit 10, the informational texts include supporting images and graphics aligned to the selection's content. For example, “What Killed the Dinosaurs?” by Thomas Sumner includes both clipart and photographic images as well as animated quotes and captions. The article also contains footnotes and hyperlinked vocabulary to support students' understanding of the text.

Unit 11 includes Infographics such as “Which Country Reads the Most?” “Eating Foods Away from Home,” and “2013 Fast Foods Facts.” The infographics provide students with images to support and extend the reading topics.

# StrongMind 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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials include some texts to support students at an appropriate level of quantitative and qualitative complexity. However, a text-complexity analysis was not provided by the publisher.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 2, Lesson 7, “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson is included. The Lexile range for this selection is 810–1000. It is at the appropriate level for grade 8.

In Unit 3, an excerpt from “Golden Apples” by Mary Pope Osborne has a Lexile level of 1010–1200. This selection falls within the appropriate range for this grade level.

Unit 5 presents an excerpt from “A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury. This excerpt has a Lexile measure of 1012–1200 and falls within the appropriate level range.

Unit 7 includes an excerpt of *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. The text’s Lexile level is 890, which is lower than the eighth-grade level expectation.

Unit 10 has the text “Could a Dragonfly’s Wings Be Alive – and Breathing?” by Susan Milius with a Lexile level of 610L–800L and “Early School Starts Can Turn Teens into ‘Zombies’” by Stephen Ornes with a Lexile level of 1010L–1200L.

The text selections within the materials include public domain selections within appropriate Lexile measure. However, the usage, syntax, and context for cultural reference texts over 50 or 100 years old are typically more complex than contemporary texts. Other texts are commissioned pieces that do not have a qualified Lexile measure. The materials do not include components to identify points in the instruction that demonstrate qualitative complexity analyses. The publisher does not provide a rationale or suggestions for use.

# StrongMind 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 include questions and tasks that support students in analyzing and integrating knowledge, ideas, themes, and connections within and across texts. Some of the questions and tasks build conceptual knowledge, asking students to use previous learning to complete specific tasks. Many of the discussion board prompts allow students to have opportunities to make connections to personal experiences, other texts, and the world around them. Students also integrate multiple TEKS knowledge when using text evidence to identify and support big ideas, themes, and details.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 3, students recognize the theme and central idea of texts. After a lesson on theme, students read three poems and two myths and respond to the following questions: “As you read the following selections, try to determine the universal messages of each text. What is the story or poem generally about? What do its characters or speakers learn? What big lessons can readers learn?” Students then complete a quiz that provides five multiple-choice questions about the theme of various excerpts. “How does the speaker’s thoughtful attitude about his choice of path contribute to the poem’s message?” is an example of a question for “The Road Not Taken.”

In Unit 8, students focus on theme, central idea, and writing objective summaries. Students read the poems “O Captain! My Captain!” by Walt Whitman and “When Great Trees Fall” by Maya Angelou and an excerpt from *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen. After the lesson, students respond to a three-question multiple-choice quiz with the following questions: “One theme of “O Captain! My Captain!” is that sometimes, suffering and happiness go hand in hand. Which lines from the poem support this theme?; One central idea in *Hatchet* is that Brian has learned how to take care of himself and rely only on himself. Which supporting details best support this central idea? Select all that apply, and “What is a theme of the passage from *Hatchet*?” These questions require students to analyze the theme and details in a text.



# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

In Unit 11, students read an excerpt from the speech “Remarks by the President on Comprehensive Immigration Reform” by President Barack Obama. Later in the lesson, students are given two quotes from the excerpt and asked to respond in a short paragraph, explaining their interpretation of the quotation considering the questions: “What does this quotation mean to you?” and “Why do you think the author stated it?” Students are required to “use specific examples or textual evidence from research, the readings in this class, or your own experiences and knowledge.”

# StrongMind 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 make inferences, draw conclusions about the author's purpose and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. The materials also include opportunities for students to evaluate the stated or implied purposes of texts and analyze the author's choices and how they influence the text's meaning.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, the materials include a lesson on stated and implied meanings in texts. Students read "What Was the Klondike Gold Rush?" and "The Era of the Gold Rush," two informational articles published by the National Park Service. Students respond to the following questions: "What is an idea that can be inferred about the Yukon River based on the explicit descriptions found in this passage? Write your inferred idea in the space below." Questions and tasks prompt students to make inferences and evaluate the stated and implied meaning in texts.

In Unit 4, students engage in a lesson in point of view. Students learn about the different types of point of view, and after reading "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson, they respond to questions about the author's choice of point of view, such as: "Who seems to be telling the story? Does the story focus on the thoughts and actions of one particular character? and "Does the narrator seem to know the thoughts and feelings of everyone in the story?"

In Unit 7, the materials focus on analyzing the author's craft to present a literary text. Students read "How the World Was Saved" by Stanislaw Lem and an excerpt from *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. After reviewing the plot, dialogue, and characters, students respond to two practice

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

questions in a short answer format. The questions “How does the conversation in this passage affect the plot of the story?” and “This passage moves the plot of the story forward because it...” allows students to analyze the author's choices in developing the text.

In Unit 11, students listen to the podcast “Promposals: When Teens Compete for Most Extravagant Prom Invitations” by Natalie Bettendorf and an excerpt from the speech “Remarks by the President on Comprehensive Immigration Reform” by President Barack Obama to analyze the author's purpose. The materials include instruction on various mediums for text and audio characteristics and purposes. The following lessons focus on the author's purpose for using video, graphics and multimedia, and multiple mediums. Students then complete a quiz analyzing the author's choices by completing questions such as, “What is the purpose of the on-screen text in the video “2016 Was the Warmest Year on Record Part 2”? and “How well do the video images and the on-screen text work together to help the viewer understand the sources of temperature data?”

# StrongMind 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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials include opportunities for students to interact with and build key academic vocabulary by providing audio and in-context support. The materials do not contain scaffolds and support for educators to differentiate instruction for all learners. Also, materials do not contain a cohesive, yearlong plan for building academic vocabulary or applying words in appropriate contexts and across texts for all learners.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Each unit contains a lesson overview highlighting the terms covered and a specific vocabulary development lesson. Odd-numbered lessons include a quiz over the vocabulary words. Even-numbered lessons include an additional language development lesson focused on improving students' vocabulary knowledge. Students make flashcards or take notes for the given vocabulary. Students have access to the pronunciation of the vocabulary words using the audio feature. The lesson ends with multiple-choice questions as a check for understanding. However, the materials do not include a year-long plan demonstrating how the vocabulary builds throughout the year.

The materials provide opportunities for students to use audio support and practice the vocabulary words in context. The vocabulary and language skills lessons include the dictionary and translation options. However, each lesson has the same structure and no scaffolds or supports explicitly for teachers to differentiate the lessons based on learners' needs.

In Unit 1, the vocabulary words are *defiantly*, *gravely*, *lapse*, and *precisely*. Students have access to the definition, part of speech, etymology, images, and use in sentences. The word *definitely* is defined as an adverb meaning “in a bold and unafraid manner.” The etymology is “1583; French *défiant*, from Old French *defiant*, *defiant*, present participle of *defier*, *defier*, meaning “to defy,” + *-ly*.” A sample sentence accompanies the photograph of a child playing and making faces, “Billy defiantly refused to clean up the mess.” The next section of the unit provides a spelling lesson using basic spelling rules such as affixes, the silent-e, homonyms, and homophones.

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

In Unit 4, the words are *ascent*, *clamber*, *interval*, *lurk*, and *vapor*. As in every unit, students are provided with the definition, part of speech, etymology, and use in sentences. Students make flashcards or take notes for the vocabulary words provided. Students again have access to the pronunciation of the vocabulary words using the audio feature. The language skills lesson discusses subordinating conjunctions to create a variety of sentences.

In Unit 5, students study the words *conspicuously*, *gait*, *indifferent*, and *profoundly* before learning about Greek and Latin suffixes. Following the lesson, students are provided with a series of text messages to identify the suffixes -ment, -ance, -ion, and -ly. The language skills lesson includes details about how suffixes can be used as nouns, adjectives, verbs, or adverbs. The lesson ends with a quiz over Greek and Latin suffixes.

In Unit 11, students continue to review Greek and Latin roots, and then the materials include new vocabulary terms. Students study the words *comprehensive*, *extravagant*, *nostalgic*, and *quest*. The lesson concludes with a quiz in which students apply their understanding of the vocabulary terms. One example is “Read the sentence. After the accident at the factory, a comprehensive review of safety measures uncovered many problems. Which word means the opposite of *comprehensive* as it is used in this sentence?”

# StrongMind 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.

### Does Not Meet 0/1

The materials do not 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 not provided to foster independent reading. Materials do not provide a plan for students to self-select text and read independently for a sustained period of time and do not include planning and accountability for achieving independent reading goals.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials do not 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 is not provided to foster independent reading. In Unit 2, students analyze plot development when reading an excerpt of “The Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury. At the end of the lesson, the materials suggest, “As you read or hear any story, think about how the author builds the plot, from exposition to rising action to climax to falling action to resolution. What is the turning point of the story? How does dialogue provide background or other information that helps you understand what is taking place?” While the materials require students to read the selection provided and complete assigned tasks, procedures and protocols to foster independent reading are not included.

Materials do not provide a plan for students to self-select text and read independently for a sustained period of time and do not include planning and accountability for achieving independent reading goals. In Unit 3, students analyze the theme after reading the poems “O Captain! My Captain!” by Walt Whitman and “When Great Trees Fall” by Maya Angelou and an excerpt of *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen. The texts are read independently, but there is no plan for accountability, and the focus is applying the reading skill, not achieving independent reading goals.

# StrongMind 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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide support for students to develop writing skills across multiple text types throughout the course of the year. Students engage in writing tasks for a variety of purposes and audiences. Students have opportunities to write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Materials allow students to write informational texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. Materials allow students to write argumentative texts, including research support, to influence a specific audience's attitudes or actions on specific issues. Materials do not give the students opportunities specifically designed to write correspondence in a professional or friendly structure.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials do not include a defined task related to correspondence writing, but students respond to peers' discussion board posts. For example, in Unit 1, students compose an initial post introducing themselves to the class and getting to know each other. They compose a short paragraph about themselves, including some of their favorite things to do, details they would like to share about their life, one or two things that are unique about them, and any questions for your teacher. Students then read and respond to two peers, building on ideas, posing questions, or politely agreeing or disagreeing with respectful and open-minded comments. While students are engaged in written communication with peers, there is no guidance on composing correspondence appropriately.

In Unit 4, students analyze literary texts, including the difference between a narrative and a personal narrative. While reading "The Lottery," students analyze the point of view and plot elements before brainstorming for their narrative. After reading *The Call of the Wild* and analyzing the plot elements, students draft an outline of their narrative, applying their understanding of a literary text's structure. Then students compose a fictional narrative by

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

engaging in the writing process. The narrative must include plot elements, setting, character, point of view, dialogue, and pacing. The materials state the narrative should be based on imagined characters or events, not personal experience.

In Unit 5, students begin drafting a five-paragraph researched, informational essay describing their favorite fast food restaurant. The essay comprises a three-part series of lessons (introduction, body, and conclusion). Students must use MLA style to cite three to five sources correctly in the text and on a Works Cited page before submitting their final draft.

In Unit 8, the materials include lessons on an informational article's components and how to use research to support ideas appropriately. "Write a five-paragraph researched, informational essay describing your favorite fast-food restaurant." Students begin the writing process with a guided video lesson on choosing a topic, followed by support for determining the audience, purpose, and research questions. Tasks include: "Review the essay prompt and identify the task, purpose, and audience of your essay," and "Create an outline for your essay." The students complete drafts of their informational text in Unit 9.

In Unit 10, students write argumentative text to influence a specific audience's attitudes or actions on a particular issue. Students "Write a six-paragraph research-based argument essay in which you take a position on the impact of fast food on society. Write a clear, arguable claim, and provide three reasons that support the claim. Use evidence from different sources to support your claim and reasons that strongly and sufficiently address a counterclaim." In subsequent Unit 10 lessons, students focus on purpose and audience for their compositions through the following tasks: "Decide what you would like to know about the topic. Think about any questions or ideas that you or your audience might have," and "Examine your research questions ...Think about audience, purpose, focus, and scope." In Unit 11, students finish working on their prompts: "Prepare the final draft of your research-based argument essay to submit to your instructor...."



# StrongMind 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

The materials include written tasks that require students to respond using text evidence to support their ideas. Students demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge gained through analysis and synthesis of texts and justify their responses.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, students focus on explicit and implicit information while making inferences in text. After reading "What Was the Klondike Gold Rush?" and "The Era of the Gold Rush," students are asked, "What is an idea that can be inferred about the Yukon River based on the explicit descriptions found in this passage? Write your inferred idea in the space below." Later in the unit, students learn about staying safe online. The writing task is to list and explain three things students can start doing to keep safe online.

In Unit 2, students learn about characters and character archetypes. Students compose a response that tells about when they read a text containing a character archetype or were exposed to a real-life character archetype, including specific examples of textual evidence from research, the readings in this class, their own experiences, and knowledge. Another prompt is to choose one of the texts from the literary and informational selections within the unit. Students choose the selection they liked best, providing reasons why and offering evidence from the work to support their choice. Also, in Unit 2, after reading chapter 3 of Jack London's *Call of the Wild*, students respond to the prompt, "In the end, Buck's imagination is key to his winning the fight with Spitz. Using examples from the text, explain how Buck's imagination allows him to win the fight and become a lead dog."

In Unit 4, students state their opinion on whether they agree or disagree with a quote from "The Lottery." Tessie Hutchinson says things like: "You didn't give him time enough to take any paper he wanted. I saw you. It wasn't fair!" and "I think we ought to start over,"... "I tell you, it wasn't fair. You didn't give him enough time to choose. Everybody saw that." Students write a short paragraph stating their opinion and supporting it with researched facts or statistics, information from the readings in this class, and specific experiences or personal knowledge.

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

In Unit 8, students consider the speakers' perspective in "O'Captain! My Captain!" or "When Great Trees Fall" or Brian's main character from *Hatchet*. Students choose one speaker or character and write a short paragraph to explain that person's perspective by considering the struggles or desires and how the speaker or character saw the world. How does the speaker or character see themselves in connection to the world? Students use evidence from the texts, research, or personal experience to support their opinions. Also, in Unit 8, students use a discussion board activity to demonstrate what they have learned through reading and listening to texts. After reading "O Captain! My Captain!" by Walt Whitman and "When Great Trees Fall" by Maya Angelou. Students consider the following questions: "What are his or her struggles or desires? How does the speaker see the world around himself or herself? How does the speaker see himself or herself in relation to the world?"

In Unit 10, students demonstrate in writing what they have learned through reading text. The assignment states: "In this class, you have read about people we can admire. Choose one. In a short paragraph, explain why you believe this person is admirable." Students consider "what specific things this person has done" and "what kind of impact does this person still have on the world today." This writing task requires students to "use specific examples of textual evidence from research [or] the readings in this class.

In Unit 11, students study the components of an argumentative essay. After learning about hooks, claims, reasons, and counterclaims, students are provided with an introduction to an exemplar essay to identify a hook, the background, the claim, the reasons, and the thesis statement.

# StrongMind 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

Writing skills and knowledge of conventions are applied in somewhat increasing complexity over the course of the year, with opportunities for students to publish their writing. Materials allow students to engage in the writing process elements (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text, provide practice opportunities, and apply academic language conventions in writing. Students do not have opportunities to engage in speaking tasks using the conventions of academic language. Grammar, punctuation, and usage skills are taught in and out of context, and materials provide editing practice in students' writing as the year continues.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Throughout the materials, all writing lessons provide a series of steps, which allows students to focus on demonstrating proficiency in one portion of the task at a time. In Unit 4 and Unit 5, students analyze literary text and compose an imaginative narrative. After learning about the various literary techniques such as character development, point of view, and theme, students begin drafting their narrative employing those elements. One of the lessons in Unit 4 revisits characterization, addressed in Unit 2. Students revise for pacing, clarity in the delivery of the events, use of transitions. Students then edit for spelling, subject-verb agreement, sentence lengths and structures, the punctuation of dialogue, and transitions.

Throughout the materials, students engage in lessons learning about grammar, usage, and mechanics. The language skills portion of the lesson provides information about the focal grammar concept of the unit. In Unit 2, students learn how to use ellipses and dashes and complete a check to understand application questions. In Unit 3, when composing the narrative, students apply that information to their narratives to use pauses for effect. At the end of the unit, students edit their compositions for sentence variety, word choice, capitalization, and punctuation. In Unit 7, students learn about spelling rules, and in Unit 8, the materials introduce verbals. At the end of the unit, students edit their essays, applying their knowledge of sentence structure.

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

In each unit, students engage in writing tasks and respond to multiple discussion board posts applying their understanding of academic language conventions. In every discussion board task, the directions for engaging in the discussion board are for students to “Remember that this is an academic discussion board. Stay on topic and use correct spelling and grammar.” For example, in Unit 6, the word journal discussion board prompt requires students to analyze and apply their learning. Students respond to the prompt: “Let’s try to describe a big idea or event in one word. One prompt provided is, “In the Language Skill, you learned about verbals and their function. More specifically, you learned about three types of verbals: gerunds, participles, and infinitives. The topic for this Word Journal is gerunds. Choose one gerund (any verb that ends with -ing and functions as a noun) to describe something about you. Then explain your word choice.” This allows students to apply their understanding of verbals and compose a response with correct sentence structure and grammar.

Throughout Unit 10 and Unit 11, students compose a research-based argumentative essay about the impact of fast food on society. To support students in understanding the components of an argumentative essay, the materials include reading skills lessons focused on analyzing claims and arguments, the author’s purpose, and supporting evidence. The writing skills lessons brainstorming, building a claim, finding evidence, and outlining their information. Once students begin drafting the composition, the materials present the writing tasks in parts such as introduction, body, and conclusion to highlight the aspects of each part of the writing. After completing the essay draft, students revise their composition for a thesis statement, paragraphs and sentences, transitional words and phrases, and academic, formal style. In the editing phase, students focus on spelling, subject-verb agreement, sentence lengths and structures, and the use of transitions.

# StrongMind 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.

### Does Not Meets 0/4

Opportunities for listening to text are minimal, with no opportunities to speak about the texts included. Students have opportunities to engage in the discussion board feature throughout the materials, commenting on their peers' posts and asking clarifying questions, or extending the conversation. However, the materials do not include students' opportunities to engage in oral tasks, defending their claims with text evidence.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include an audio feature that allows students to listen to the texts; however, this is a general feature of the program, not specifically designed to address the texts being studied or as a means for students to demonstrate comprehension. The materials provide opportunities for students to engage in a discussion board throughout each lesson in the materials. They have the opportunity to share their opinions supported with text evidence and respond to peers; however, the materials do not include oral tasks for students to complete using text-supported claims.

In Unit 1, students read and listen to an audiovisual version of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, "Up-Hill" by Christina Rossetti, "Sonnet 8" by Henry Howard, and "Sonnet 130" by William Shakespeare. In the unit, students also read "The Brave William Tell" and listen to "The William Tell Overture" by Gioachino Rossini. However, the lesson focuses on analyzing mediums for texts, not demonstrating comprehension.

In Unit 10, students listen to "The Jabberwocky" by Robert Lewis Carroll, "I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud" by and "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe. The lesson explains that to identify sound-based devices, "it is helpful to read the poem aloud."

In Unit 2, students compose a "My Opinion" response to a discussion board prompt deciding if they agree or disagree with a statement from the previously read article, "Extreme Sports." Students are to state if they agree or disagree, supporting their opinion with researched facts or statistics, information from the readings in this class, or specific experiences or knowledge from the personal background. In the following lesson, students respond to a peer by agreeing,

# **StrongMind Grade 8**

## **English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary**

respectfully disagreeing, or asking questions about the response. While students defend their claims with text evidence, the response is submitted in written form, not oral discourse.

# StrongMind 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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials include activities for students to discuss ideas with their peers. Guidance and practice with grade-level protocols to express students' thinking are embedded in discussion board post assignments; however, the tasks are limited to the online discussion board, so students have no opportunities to actively engage by speaking and listening during discussions. The materials provide students with limited opportunities to give organized presentations or performances and speak clearly and concisely using language conventions. The materials include an oral presentation rubric to support teachers and students.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include guidance for students to post and respond to their peers' posts via the discussion board. In each lesson, students practice composing multiple posts and responding to peers. Each discussion board prompt provides specific directions for the initial response and commenting on their peers' posts.

In Unit 1, students introduce themselves to the class and get to know each other by writing a short paragraph about favorite things to do, details about their lives, and one or two unique things. Students are also encouraged to ask questions of the teacher. Later in the unit, students respond to their peers' posts. Students write responses that build on others' ideas, pose questions, or politely agree or disagree. Students are reminded to be respectful and open-minded and support their points. The materials encourage students to comment on posts from classmates they have something in common with, explain the connection, and provide details or examples of what you share. Students can also comment on posts that share exciting information, explaining why the particular details are of interest or asking their classmates questions about their post to start a conversation. Although guidance is provided for engaging in discussion with peers, the task is limited to an online discussion board, so students have no opportunities to actively engage by speaking and listening during discussions.

In Unit 2, students begin drafting functional skills writing assignments. The final product must be either a brochure or infographic. In Unit 3, students present their functional skills writing

# **StrongMind Grade 8**

## **English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary**

project. Guidance for the presentation includes “keep in mind the importance of eye contact, Volume, and pronunciation.” The options for submitting the presentation are to upload the recording of the oral presentation, a word-processing file containing the link to the presentation, or a word-processing file containing the answers to the Oral Presentation Questions that were presented to a friend or family member. The materials include an oral presentation rubric that evaluates the student’s preparation, presentation skills, and content.



# StrongMind 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 provide opportunities for students to engage in short-term research and inquiry projects throughout the year. Students find and analyze sources as well as synthesize the information. The materials address primary and secondary sources, including a practice activity for application. The research opportunities within the materials do not grow in complexity as the year progresses. The materials provide one opportunity for students to present their findings to peers with guidance on expectations and scoring.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 2, students begin learning general skills such as information sources, credible and accurate sources, paraphrasing information, and citing sources using MLA format to write a research paper. Students begin drafting functional skills writing assignments. At the end of Unit 2, students apply those skills to begin planning and organizing their ideas to create an infographic or brochure explaining one of the five digital literacy principles.

In Unit 3, students compose their functional skills project, including research, and present their information in an oral presentation. Guidance for the presentation includes “keep in mind the importance of eye contact, volume, and pronunciation.” The options for submitting the presentation are to upload a file containing a recording of the oral presentation, a word-processing file containing the link to the recording of your oral presentation, or a word-processing file containing the answers to the Oral Presentation Questions if it was presented to a friend or family member. The materials include an oral presentation rubric that evaluates the student’s preparation, presentation skills, and content.

In Unit 7, students begin an informational essay about their favorite fast-food restaurant. To provide support for effective research practices, the materials state, “a primary source offers firsthand information about something. This means that the information comes directly from that source. Primary sources include eyewitness accounts, professional studies, interviews, and historical documents.” The materials define a secondary source as one which “relays information from a primary source. Secondary sources are not the original sources for information. Instead, they usually comment on or offer their view of the primary source’s

# **StrongMind Grade 8**

## **English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary**

information. Secondary sources include newspaper or magazine articles, encyclopedias, and school textbooks.” This information provided helps students decide which evidence is best to include in their research paper. Students complete a task determining if the provided examples represent primary or secondary sources. Students present materials lessons on specific parts of the essay and compose an introduction, body paragraphs, and the conclusion before engaging in the revising and editing stages and submitting the final draft. There is no option for presentation in the materials.

# StrongMind 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 through questions and tasks that increase complexity throughout the year. Students build and apply knowledge and skills in reading and writing while using the discussion board as an opportunity to engage in academic discussion. Texts and tasks are coherently sequenced, requiring students to integrate ideas in individual texts and across multiple texts using evidence. Opportunities for increased independence are evident in the writing tasks, which include vocabulary, syntax, and fluency components.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, the materials include a lesson on stated and implied meanings in texts while making inferences and using text evidence. Students read “What Was the Klondike Gold Rush?” and “The Era of the Gold Rush,” two informational articles published by the National Park Service. Students respond to the following questions: “What is an idea that can be inferred about the Yukon River based on the explicit descriptions found in this passage? Write your inferred idea in the space below.” This allows students to make inferences and evaluate the stated and implied meaning in texts. The unit also includes a review of comprehension skills such as establishing a purpose for reading, asking questions, determining key ideas, and making connections. In the next lesson, students review response skills such as comparing sources, summarizing and paraphrasing, defending or challenging claims, and using text evidence. Students apply their understanding by reading an excerpt from “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson and determining the explicit and implicit meaning. At the end of the unit, students complete a discussion board post; prompts allow students to apply their understanding of inferences and evidence by telling about a time they could convince a friend or family member to do or to believe something by using strong evidence.

In Unit 5, students analyze figurative language and the impact of word choice. Students read Chapter 3 of “Roughing It” and Part 1 of “A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury, analyzing the

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

selections for irony, simile, and allusion. At the end of the lesson, students apply their understanding of an author's use of figurative language by responding to questions such as, "The author describes the dinosaur with a metaphor, 'the Tyrant Lizard.' Why is this description appropriate?" and "According to this passage, what does the phrase 'a touch of a hand' mean?" The following references students' understanding of "connotative and figurative language and author's style" from previous lessons "as guideposts to figure out authors' attitudes toward their subjects. As you examine an author's word choices, examine their connotations—their emotional and other associations—to help you identify tone." Students then respond to a reading skills quiz question about Chapter 3 of *Roughing It* by Mark Twain. "How does the description of the jackass rabbit's "most preposterous ears" impact the tone of the passage?" This allows students to use their knowledge of figurative language and the author's craft to determine a text's tone.

In Unit 7, the materials focus on analyzing the author's craft to present a literary text. Students read "How the World Was Saved" by Stanislaw Lem and an excerpt from *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. After reviewing the plot, dialogue, and characters, students respond to two practice questions in a short answer format. The questions "How does the conversation in this passage affect the plot of the story?" and "This passage moves the plot of the story forward because it . . ." allow students to analyze the author's choices in developing the text. In the next lesson, students read "Early School Starts Can Turn Teens into 'Zombies'" by Stephen Ornes and "Cool Jobs: New Tools to Solve Crimes" by Kathryn Hulick to determine the key ideas and events in informational texts and make connections between selections. The end of lesson checkpoint includes questions such as, "What inference can be made about the narrator from this passage?", "Which passages from 'Us and Them' most strongly support the idea that television affected the way people communicated with each other during the narrator's time growing up?" and "What is a key idea in "Feverish Climate Is Melting Glaciers, Study Confirms"? These questions allow students to demonstrate their understanding of making inferences, using evidence, and determining key ideas.

In Unit 10, students read *Chew On This: Part 4* by Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson to determine the author's argument and the supporting evidence. Students refer to previous lessons in the unit which addressed relevant and sufficient evidence. The materials include two practice questions based on the text "Remarks by the President on Comprehensive Immigration Reform" by Barack Obama for students to apply their understanding of the lesson. The questions are: "Which sentences in the first paragraph of the passage are most relevant to the claim? Write the two sentences in the space provided." and "Which sentence in the second paragraph of the passage insufficiently supports the claim? Write this sentence in the space provided." To respond appropriately, students must apply their knowledge of claims and supporting and relevant evidence. Students compose an argumentative research composition throughout this unit, taking a position on the impact of fast food on society. The essay must include a clear, arguable claim, supporting evidence from different sources, and a counterclaim

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

and refutation. This writing task allows students to apply their understanding from the analysis of reading argumentative texts.

In Unit 11, students read an excerpt from the speech “Remarks by the President on Comprehensive Immigration Reform” by President Barack Obama, focusing on the characteristics of audio and video mediums. Students consider the techniques and the author’s purpose for including them. The subsequent lesson consists of three infographics, which students analyze to determine how graphics and multimedia can be used to achieve specific purposes. Later in the lesson, students are given two quotes from the excerpt and asked to respond through the discussion board with a short paragraph explaining their interpretation of the quotation. Students are reminded to consider the questions: “What does this quotation mean to you?” and “Why do you think the author stated it?” Students are required to “use specific examples or textual evidence from research, the readings in this class, or your own experiences and knowledge.” Students begin drafting a research-based argumentative essay about the impact of fast food on society throughout this unit.

# StrongMind 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 the integration of literacy skills that spiral over the school year.

### Meets 4/4

The materials provide spiraling and scaffolded practice opportunities by supporting distributed practice over the course of the year. Most tasks require the integration of literacy skills that increase in independence.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The instructional materials include twelve units, each consisting of five lessons. Each of the first four lessons of each unit includes four paths: vocabulary and language, reading, writing, a checkpoint, and the last lesson of each unit includes a review and a unit exam. Each unit also includes a discussion board, where students communicate with peers. The sixth and twelfth units of the course are review units, which revisits the last five instruction units' skills. The instructional units' structure provides scaffolds for students to demonstrate proficiency in integrating literacy skills. For example, in reading, students begin the year reviewing reading comprehension and response skills. Students then apply their understanding of those skills as they read selections in subsequent lessons.

Students engage in analysis of texts throughout the materials, including multiple genres. Students have opportunities to apply their understanding of comprehension skills throughout the year. In Unit 1, students review reading comprehension skills such as asking questions while reading, making inferences, visualizing, synthesizing information, and monitoring comprehension. The materials include a graphic organizer to help students analyze texts in the materials and their independent reading. Students are encouraged to use the organizer throughout the year. Students apply their understanding of key ideas and details to compose an objective summary using the unit's discussion board. Students build on their knowledge of comprehension skills in the following units by analyzing literary texts' elements and structure. In Unit 4, students analyze literary texts, including narrative and poetry, focusing on the point of view, character, plot, setting, and theme development. Students draft a literary narrative throughout Units 4 and 5 employing the elements discussed in Unit 2.

In Unit 7, students continue analyzing informational texts' elements while drafting their research-based informational essay. In Unit 8, students analyze the art of persuasion by looking at texts and determining the author's claim, and evaluating reasoning and evidence. In Unit 9,

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

students begin to draft their argumentative essay building on the claim, evidence, and research support gathered in the previous unit.

All writing lessons provide a series of steps, which allows students to focus on demonstrating proficiency in one portion of the task at a time. In Unit 3, students take the information learned in Unit 1 about digital citizenship and composing informational texts to create a brochure about online safety practices. In Unit 4 and 5, students compose a narrative text using a sequence of tasks designed to scaffold their understanding of the process.

Throughout Units 10 and 11, students compose an argumentative essay. To support students in understanding the components of an argumentative essay, the materials include reading skills lessons focused on analyzing claims and arguments, the author's purpose, and supporting evidence. The writing skills lessons brainstorming, building a claim, finding evidence, and outlining their information. Once students begin drafting the composition, the materials present the writing tasks in parts such as introduction, body, and conclusion to highlight the aspects of each part of the writing.

# StrongMind 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.

### Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials do not include supports for students who demonstrate proficiency above grade level, such as planning and learning opportunities for students who demonstrate literacy skills above that expected at the grade level.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide opportunities for students to engage in workbook tasks, discussion boards, and lesson checkpoints for specific grade-level skills. However, The materials do not contain guidance for teachers to extend or differentiate learning opportunities for students who demonstrate literacy skills above grade level proficiency. Each unit consists of four lessons focused on specific grade-level language, reading, and writing skills. The fifth lesson in each unit contains an exam prep review, followed by a unit exam. All learners progress in the same sequence, with the same assignments, with no opportunity for extension or optional variation.

For example, In Unit 1, the materials begin with a video introduction which states that students will focus on vocabulary development using Greek and Latin roots and spelling correctly, determining the explicit and implicit meaning of texts, and digital citizenship skills such as communicating safely as well as finding accurate and reliable information on the Internet. The vocabulary lesson includes the words accumulate, array, cache, and expedite, followed by a lesson on Greek and Latin root words. The materials do not include additional words or tasks for students who are performing above grade level proficiency. Students then read two selections, “What was the Klondike Gold Rush?” and “the Era of the Gold Rush” by the National Park Service, to practice determining implicit and explicit meaning in texts and making inferences. No additional selections are provided to extend or differentiate for above-grade-level learners. The materials provide a digital citizenship lesson on being safe online, which leads to the writing lesson where students list and explain three practices that can help ensure safety while online. The materials do not suggest specific writing tasks designed to extend the learning to meet the needs of students performing above grade level proficiency.



# StrongMind 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.

### Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials do not contain guidance for teachers to extend or differentiate learning opportunities for students who demonstrate literacy skills below grade level proficiency.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide opportunities for students to engage in workbook tasks, discussion boards, and lesson checkpoints for specific grade-level skills. However, The materials do not contain guidance for teachers to extend or differentiate learning opportunities for students who demonstrate literacy skills below grade level proficiency. Each unit consists of four lessons focused on specific grade-level language, reading, and writing skills. The fifth lesson in each unit contains an exam prep review, followed by a unit exam. All learners progress in the same sequence, with the same assignments, with no opportunity for differentiation or optional variation.

For example, in Unit 4, the materials begin with an introduction, which states that students will revisit “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, focusing on viewpoints, practicing using reference materials like dictionaries, and starting writing a narrative. The vocabulary lesson includes the words contaminate, pacify, precede, and reluctantly followed by a lesson on Greek and Latin root words and reference materials. The materials do not include additional words or tasks for students who are performing below grade level proficiency. Students then read “The Lottery” in two sections to analyze the point of view. The materials do not include additional selections to differentiate for students performing below grade-level expectations. The materials provide a video about narratives, which leads to the writing lesson where students brainstorm and plan the elements of an original narrative to be composed in a subsequent lesson. The materials do not suggest specific writing scaffolds designed to meet the needs of students performing below grade level proficiency.

# StrongMind 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.

### Partially Meets 1/2

The materials provide some support for students to increase their English proficiency and development. The materials provide limited scaffolds, such as pictures to accompany some selections, footnotes, and an English dictionary. However, the materials do not include adapted text, native language support, cognates, summaries, realia, glossaries, bilingual dictionaries, and other modes of comprehensible input. The materials do not make strategic use of students' first language to linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic development in English. Vocabulary is developed in connected discourse through the discussion board feature.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Each unit consists of four lessons focused on specific language, reading, and writing skills. The unit begins outlining the unit's skills, followed by a series of alternating workbook lessons, a discussion board, and a checkpoint at the end of the task. Each unit's fifth lesson contains an exam prep review, followed by a unit exam. All lessons are provided for all students without specific linguistic accommodations for various English language proficiency levels. Each lesson in the unit includes vocabulary development lessons and reading and writing skill supports that focus on developing academic vocabulary. Students engage in written discussion with their peers using academic vocabulary by responding to each lesson's discussion board posts.

The materials include audio support for many selections, allowing students to listen to the English texts, but native language support, adapted texts, and summaries are not available. The materials include an embedded translation option for 17 languages, including Mandarin, Spanish, Italian, Finnish, German, Dutch, and Latvian. The embedded dictionary allows students to highlight and define words using an English dictionary, but a bilingual dictionary is not available.

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

In Unit 2, students read a portion of “A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury. The materials include a biography card with information about the author, embedded images throughout the text, and hyperlinked vocabulary for terms such as *momentary*, *penalty*, and *dictatorship*. However, the materials do not address English proficiency levels or suggest specific linguistic accommodations.

The materials include opportunities for students to engage in academic discourse with peers. In Unit 5, students complete a word journal where they choose a topic or big event to describe in one word, using specific details from the readings or their personal experiences to support their ideas. Later in the unit, students respond to peers’ postings by commenting on their ideas, agreeing, or disagreeing.

In Unit 10, the materials include a lesson on verb moods. Students have a definition of mood and an infographic (with words only, no images) that contains definitions and examples of the indicative, imperative, and subjunctive mood. There is a link to a text reader that will read the infographic to students in English, or students can highlight the text and translate it to one of the 17 languages provided. The materials also include a video and transcript discussing conditionals in the indicative and subjunctive moods. Native language support, cognates, and summaries are not provided as scaffolds to support students in developing proficiency with an advanced grammatical concept.

# StrongMind 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.

### Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials include assessments but do not include guidance for teachers and administrators to monitor progress or interpret and act on data yielded. The formative and summative assessments align with purpose and intended use but are not aligned to the TEKS. While the assessments align with the instructional content to assess student learning, the scoring information does not provide guidance for interpreting and responding to student performance.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Each unit includes four lessons with a lesson checkpoint and a unit exam. The lesson checkpoints include multiple-choice questions to assess students' understanding of vocabulary, language and usage, reading skills, and writing skills. For example, Unit 1, Lesson 4 includes questions about the vocabulary terms defiantly and precisely, analysis of text evidence to support a central idea, and inferences. The unit exam is similar in structure to the lesson checkpoints, but it covers the materials taught throughout the unit, not just a lesson. Units 6 and 12 contain a review and midterm and final exam. The midterm exam has a writing section and an objective portion. The midterm writing assessment is a 90-minute timed response where students will write a well-developed fictional narrative continuation for Ray Bradbury's short story "A Sound of Thunder." The end-of-course writing exam requires students to revise an argumentative paragraph by strengthening the claim and reasoning. The midterm exam consists of 50 questions, and the end-of-course exam contains 43 multiple-choice items; both assessments contain questions assessing students' mastery of vocabulary and analysis of the text.

The lesson checkpoints and unit assessments provide information about student accuracy on each question; however, there is no information about interpreting the results or responding to increased student mastery.

# **StrongMind Grade 8**

## **English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary**

The questions on the lesson checkpoints and assessments are aligned to the unit's instructional content; however, there is no information provided about how the questions specifically align with the TEKS.

# StrongMind Grade 8

## English Language Arts and Reading Program Summary

### Indicator 6.2

Materials include year-long plans and supports for teachers to identify the 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.

### Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials do not include support for teachers to identify or provide differentiated instruction to students to promote grade-level proficiency. The materials include only student-facing lessons and tasks. No support or guidance for teachers is included.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials do not include year-long plans for teachers to provide differentiated instruction to meet a range of learners' needs to ensure grade-level success. The materials do not provide guidance for teachers to engage students in multiple grouping (or other) structures. Teacher support is not included; reviewers found no evidence of differentiation to support students through multiple learning opportunities.

The materials are student-facing and do not include a teacher's edition or any annotations or support for engaging students in the materials or implementing ancillary and resource materials; reviewers found no student progress components.

The materials do not include annotations or ancillary materials as support for student learning or assistance for teachers.

# StrongMind 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.

### Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials are student-facing and appear to be an independent study format. They do not include implementation support for teachers or administrators. A TEKS-aligned scope and sequence is not provided, nor do the materials include additional supports to help administrators support teachers in implementing the materials. Materials appear to include a year of instruction, but there is no pacing document to explain how to implement the materials based on a 180- or 220-day schedule.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials do not include a TEKS-aligned scope and sequence to assist teachers or administrators in implementing the materials. While the materials are arranged in sequential order, there is no explanation or rationale to explain the instructional design.

No additional support to assist teachers in implementing the materials is provided.

No additional support to assist administrators in facilitating teacher implementation of the materials is provided.

The materials reviewed did not include a pacing guide to support instructional schedules.

# StrongMind 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 visual design of the student edition 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.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials are accessed through an online platform. The organization is very linear, with a sequential order to the presentation of the lessons. The materials contain a Dashboard that allows the user to access specific components of the platform. The Modules button gives students access to the lesson materials, quizzes, and assignments. The Syllabus button allows students to see all tasks required for completion of the course. Each module is organized by unit, and each task contains a hyperlink to allow students to access the content directly. The materials' actual layout includes a navigation bar across the left, allowing students to access the calendar, email, or help features easily. The content is centered on the page, and the right side of the screen includes appropriate whitespace to balance the content on the left.

All pictures and graphics are embedded within the lesson context and used as visual support to enhance students' understanding of the content. Each unit that includes vocabulary contains images for words that can be supported visually. For example, in Unit 1, students study the concept of a central idea. The materials include an embedded image of a graphic organizer that is a cluster map to determine a text's main idea. In Unit 4, when students read about claims and arguments about a topic on snacks at school, the materials include an image of students eating in a school setting. This allows students to build a context and make a connection with the materials. Examples similar to this are embedded throughout the materials.



# StrongMind 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

The technology components included are appropriate for grade level students and provide support for learning. The technology supports and enhances student learning as appropriate.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The digital materials support and enhance student learning. Students can access lessons, read assigned texts, complete exams, post responses within a discussion board, and type essays electronically. All components are clearly labeled within the structure of the module. The materials include hyperlinks to audio support in various languages as well as an embedded dictionary. The embedded audio and video clips are easy to access by simply pushing play. The navigation bar at the bottom of the screen allows students to toggle between tasks and quickly move between the assignments within a unit. The discussion board feature allows students to engage with peers in a virtual environment and even suggests using the “reply” feature to build on one another’s comments. The “Inbox” tab allows students to contact their teacher for support or assistance. No specific teacher guidance is provided to support teachers in utilizing the technology.