



You and Your Eighth Grade Child

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

Introduction

By the time your child reaches eighth grade, he or she will be engaged in a great variety of physical and mental changes. Young teens vary dramatically and they worry about being or looking different than their peers. The hormonal and physical demands of puberty will bring changes to their complexions, their eating habits, their emotional stability, and physical coordination. You will need to be supportive and understanding, and provide frequent reassurance and encouragement.

In Eighth Grade, students apply skills they learned in earlier grades to make sense of longer, more complex books and articles. Students will expand their vocabularies and will continue to compose essays, stories, and research papers using a variety of writing styles. To meet these literacy goals, students must devote significant attention to precise details in their reading and when writing.

Students of this age are also generally energetic, thoughtful, and idealistic. They have a deep sense of what's fair and right. Keep an open line of communication with your child and take time every day to engage in conversations about his/her day, friends, and schoolwork.

Literature: Students will interpret, analyze, and evaluate narratives, poetry, and drama artistically and ethically by making connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, personal events, and situations.

Informational Text: Students will delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient.

Speaking and Listening: Students will engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Word Study: Students will recognize and understand the multiple levels of meaning of figurative language in text, be able to predict and verify the meaning of Greek and Latin roots, and use strategies to determine the meaning of unknown words within a piece of text.

Argumentative, Narrative, and Informational Writing: Students will produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. They will draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research and apply grade 8 reading standards to literary nonfiction.

At Home:

- Be aware that your child's interests will widen and that s/he may face increased distractions from doing schoolwork. You will need to help your child manage his/her time and activities. Creating a family calendar in a central location of your home is one way to post and remember important school-related events such as parent meetings, due dates for projects, and test schedules.
- The Rush-Henrietta School District offers a valuable resource called Parent Connect. This free online tool is available to all parents of students in grades 6-12. Parent Connect provides students and parents with more timely access to assignments, grades, and attendance reports.
- Read more at: [Guide to Middle School](#)



At Home:

Reading and discussing informational text (newspaper and magazine articles—print or digital) at home with your child are good practice for reinforcing the skills s/he will need to be successful in school.

Mathematics (for more on math, go to: [*The Math Director's Page*](#))

As they progress into more difficult mathematics it is important for students to understand that all new learning is based on what they already know. All of the skills they have been taught since kindergarten will be connected to what they are learning next.

Digits is the primary resource used in the classroom and can also be accessed from home. While it is an online program, print materials are readily available to students.

The units of study for eighth grade math and what students will learn in each unit are:

- **The Number System (8.NS):** Know that there are numbers that are not rational and approximate them by rational numbers.
- **Expressions & Equations Part I (8.EE):** Work with radicals and integer exponents.
- **Expressions & Equations Part II (8.EE):** Understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations. Analyze and solve linear equations and pairs of simultaneous linear equations.
- **Functions (8.F):** Define, evaluate, and compare functions. Use functions to model relationships between quantities.
- **Geometry (8.G):** Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software. Understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem. Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres.
- **Statistics & Probability (8.SP)** Investigate patterns of association in bivariate data.

In addition to gaining mathematical understanding, students need to perform calculations and solve problems quickly and accurately. This is called fluency. In eighth grade, students will become fluent with solving simple 2×2 systems by inspection.

Students enrolled in Integrated Algebra I in eighth grade will take the NYS Integrated Algebra I Regents examination.

At Home:

- When working with your child on his/her homework, reading the problem aloud together can be more effective than reading it silently. Once your child has read the problem, ask him/her some questions, for example:
 - ◇ What do you know right now, just from reading the problem?
 - ◇ What will you need to know to solve the problem?
 - ◇ What have you been practicing in class that might help you with this problem?
 - ◇ What will an answer to the question look like? Will it be a number? Does it require you to write an explanation? Do you have to estimate? Do you have to round off?

Social Studies

In eighth grade, the social studies curriculum continues the study of U.S. History from the end of the Civil War .

The skills of historical analysis include the ability to: explain the significance of historical evidence; weigh the importance, reliability, and validity of evidence; understand the concept of multiple causation; understand the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical developments.

The units studied in eighth grade are:

- **Unit 1:** Reconstruction - Regional tensions following the Civil War complicated efforts to heal the nation.
- **Unit 2:** A Changing Society - Industrialization and immigration contributed to the urbanization of America.
- **Unit 3:** Expansion and Imperialism - Economic, political, and cultural factors contributed to a push for westward expansion and an aggressive foreign policy.
- **Unit 4:** World War I and the Roaring 20s - Involvement in the war significantly altered the lives of Americans.
- **Unit 5:** The Great Depression - Economic and environmental disasters in the 1930s created hardships for many Americans.
- **Unit 6:** World War II - The nature and consequences of warfare during WWII transformed the United States and the global community.

- **Unit 7:** Foreign Policy after WWII - Increased economic interdependence and competition, as well as environmental concerns, are challenges faced by the United States.
- **Unit 8:** Demographic Changes after WWII - Population movements have resulted in changes to the American landscape and shifting political power.
- **Unit 9:** Domestic Politics and Reform - The civil rights movement and the Great Society were attempts by people and the government to address major social, legal, economic, and environmental problems.

Throughout their units of study in eighth grade, students will need to:

- Consider the sources of historic documents, narratives, or artifacts and evaluate their reliability.
- Understand how different experiences, beliefs, values, traditions, and motives cause individuals and groups to interpret historic events and issues from different perspectives.
- Describe historic events through the eyes and experiences of those who were there.

A big event for eighth graders is the annual Washington D.C. trip in the spring. This excursion is optional, and students will have ample opportunity to raise funds to help pay their travel expenses. Special related activities are planned for those students who choose not to go to Washington D. C.

Science

In eighth grade, students will take their first science Regents course. Earth Science involves the study of the many aspects of the Earth including the origin, composition, and physical features. Students will use maps and reference tables along with hands-on examinations of rocks, minerals, soil, and water to gain an understanding of the Earth's history and the ever changing nature of our planet.

The units of study in Earth Science are:

- Earth Dimensions
- Minerals & Rocks
- Weathering, Water, Soil
- Erosion, Deposition, & Landscapes
- Plate Tectonics
- Earth's History
- Meteorology
- Climate, Seasons, and Insolation
- Astronomy

Laboratory work is fundamental to science education, and is embedded throughout the course. To enhance their studies of Earth Science, students will participate in two field trips during the school year. One will be to Mendon Ponds Park and one will be to Letchworth State Park.

Music and Art

New options for eighth grade students this year are the Applied Technology courses.



Applied Music Technology: Students will learn to listen for and create contrast in music. Students will answer questions such as, “What makes a ‘good’ melody?” and “How do chord progressions support melody?” and then use that knowledge to create a harmonically supported melody. Students will discover the role that technology increasingly plays in the production and distribution of music. They will learn to manipulate sound, including using loops, tracks, and live recordings.

Applied Arts Technology is the study of technology in the production of art. Students will plan and produce artwork in 2D, 3D, and media arts through the use of Creative Suite, the industry standard in art technology.

Physical Education

During Middle School, the physical education curriculum is designed to offer students positive experiences through participation in a variety of activities. Good sportsmanship is a priority in all activities. Students will be expected to:

- Demonstrate competency in a variety of physical activities that provide conditioning for each fitness area.
- Understand the relationship between physical activity and the prevention of illness, disease, and premature death.
- Develop and implement a personal fitness plan based on self-assessment and goal setting, understand physiological changes that result from training, and understand the health benefits of regular participation in activity.
- Understand the physical and environmental dangers associated with particular activities and demonstrate proper procedures for safe participation in games, sports, and recreational pursuits.

At the end of the school year (June), students will take the NYS Earth Science Regents Examination. Students must complete a minimum of 1200 minutes of laboratory work in order to take the Regents exam.

At Home:

Here are three tips to help your child prepare to take the Earth Science NYS Regents Exam:

1. Make sure your child is doing the required schoolwork and completing all homework assignments.
2. Visit this Website for some great review and practice: <http://regentsprep.org/Regents/earthsci/earthsci.cfm>
3. Practice the test format. NYS posts all previous Regents exams and answer keys on its Website. Earth Science exams can be found here: <http://www.nysedregents.org/EarthScience/>. Provide a quiet place for your child to complete an exam. Make sure you keep time.

Applied Science Technologies This is a 20 week hands-on course that exposes students to the latest design and modeling equipment used today. With a focus on engineering practices, students will make connections between science, technology, and the real world. Innovative 3D design soft ware, along with various tools, building systems, and precision machining equipment, will be used to solve problems.

Student work will culminate in the creation of a ‘virtual art gallery.’ This course builds on a student’s previous knowledge and acquired skills in seventh grade art.



In addition, when their schedules allow, students wishing more opportunities in music may participate in Chorus, and/or Band or Orchestra and those wishing more opportunities in art may consider enrolling in Studio in Art.

Studio in Art is an advanced art course that is ideal for students who have a strong creative talent and who may be considering a possible career in the field of art. This course provides students with a firm foundation in the art elements, principals, and processes. Upon successful completion of this course, students will have earned 1.0 credit in the arts.

Encore Classes

- **Language Other Than English (LOTE 8):** Students will continue to study the language they chose following sixth grade. At the end of eighth, students will take a proficiency exam in their foreign language. Passing this exam is required for high school graduation.
- **Health 8:** Students will conduct a personal health inventory and learn how to improve and monitor their health habits. Students will study basic first aid and safety and discuss the dangers of unhealthy behaviors.
- **Family & Consumer Science 8 (FCS):** Career Development, Financial Management, and Nutrition and Wellness comprise the units of study.
- **Naviance Family Connection:** Students will continue to use NAVIANCE with the assistance of school counselors for career development and college planning. In eighth grade, students will be introduced to the Career Key to start mapping out a four-year college/career plan. This web-based program also will be available to parents and students on their personal home computers. Parents will be mailed a registration code in September.
- **Technology 8:** The technology curriculum will continue to focus on engineering design and robotics.



Steam Electives (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math)

Eighth grade students will have the opportunity to choose between Applied Art and Music Technologies or Applied Science Technologies as elective offerings. These 20-week courses have been developed to prepare students with more advanced and related skills within the areas of science, technology, engineering, math, and the arts. The underlying themes of the applied technology courses include: problem based learning, real life scenarios, time management, group dynamics, and college and career readiness. The cross-curricular connections will allow students to explore possible career paths based on individual preferences, skills, and capabilities.

Standards Based Assessing, Grading and Reporting

Why has NYS adopted the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)?

Standards provide a clear roadmap for learning for teachers, parents, and students. By having clearly defined goals families and teachers can work together to ensure that students succeed. Standards help parents and teachers know when students need extra assistance or when they need to be challenged even more. Standards also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.

What's a Rubric?

A rubric is a scoring tool that teachers use when assessing student's work. A teacher creates a rubric by listing the elements that s/he expects to see in a piece of work and defining how the quality of the work will be assessed. An effective rubric helps teachers and students get a clear picture of the value of the work.

What is a Performance Standard?

A performance standard is a description of what students should know or be able to do at a certain grade level. Standards help teachers and parents understand what teachers target in instruction, and what students will be working towards. All states in the U.S. have standards that describe the framework for the curriculum.

The Rush-Henrietta Office of Instruction

Dina M. Wilson, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

For further information about your child's learning, please talk with your child's teacher, school principal, or contact one of the Program Directors.

English Language Arts: Jeanette Cannioto (jcannioto@rhnet.org, 585-359-5052)

Mathematics: Jody Hoch (jhoch@rhnet.org, 585-359-5050)

Social Studies: Mark MacMillan (mmacmillan@rhnet.org, 585-359-5056)

Science & Health: Donna Horn (dmhorn@rhnet.org, 585-359-5054)

Physical Education: Tom Stewart (tstewart@rhnet.org, 585-359-7809)

Music & Visual Art: Donna Watts (dwatts@rhnet.org, 585-359-5058)



**Guiding Student Success
One Student at a Time**

RUSH-HENRIETTA Central School District

2034 Lehigh Station Road
Henrietta, New York 14467

Phone: (585) 359-5000

Fax: (585) 359-5045

www.rhnet.org

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