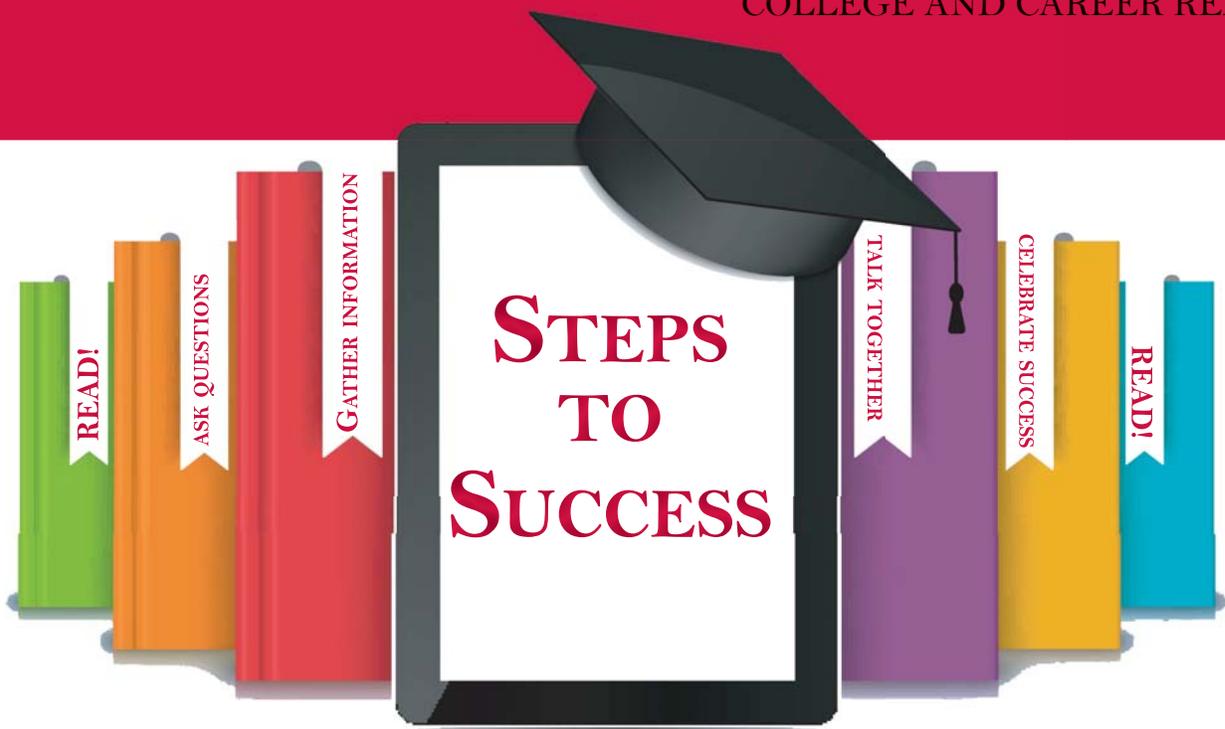


SOUTH CAROLINA STANDARDS

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY



Family-Friendly Guide for Middle School English Language Arts

Middle school is a time of intense mental, physical, and emotional development. For parents, it can resemble a dizzying roller coaster ride. Middle-school students need to see relevance to their lives in academics and enjoy using their skills to solve real-life problems. To keep them involved, the *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards* stress analyzing and solving real-world problems that are relevant to the students. At this age, students read and examine major works of fiction and non-fiction. They hone their ability to evaluate and assess the credibility and accuracy of information.



STEPS TO SUCCESS

This document is designed to:

- Provide examples of the standards, skills, and knowledge your child will learn in English language arts and should be able to do upon exiting middle school
- Suggest activities on how you can help your child at home
- Offer additional resources for information and help

Log on to the SC Department of Education website, <http://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/>, for the complete standards.

LEARN ABOUT THE STANDARDS

The *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts* (ELA):

- Outline the knowledge and skills students must master so that, as high-school graduates, they have the expertise needed to be successful in college or careers.
- Provide a set of grade-level standards, “stair steps,” based on the previous grade’s standards which serve as the foundation for the next grade.
- Ensure that no matter where a student lives in South Carolina, the expectations for learning are the same.

Human knowledge now doubles about every three years. Therefore, revision of South Carolina’s standards occurs periodically to respond to this growth of knowledge and increase of needed skills so our students will be ready for college or jobs. The *Col-*

lege- and Career-Ready Standards prepare students for dealing with the growing mass of information by not only emphasizing content knowledge but by also stressing the skills of reasoning, analyzing data, and applying information to examine and solve situations.

South Carolinians developed these academic standards for South Carolina’s children. The ELA standards are aligned with the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*, which summarizes the knowledge, skills, and habits employers expect (See http://sccompetes.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Profile-of-the-South-Carolina-Graduate_Updated.pdf.) Developed by business leaders, the *Profile* is approved by the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce and is endorsed by the Superintendents’ Roundtable, as well as South Carolina’s colleges and universities. The *Profile* demands world-class knowledge and skills, emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving, communication, and interpersonal skills.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

INQUIRY AND INVESTIGATION

Middle-school students must analyze and evaluate what they learn, read and investigate. Students determine the reliability of sources and bias of writers. They conduct extensive research projects outside of class. These **Steps to Success** include:

Fifth Grade	Middle School	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop questions that narrow a topic and help direct further study • Conduct research to develop questions, build knowledge; and, generate possible explanations, while considering other views or possible results • Combine information from several print and digital sources to answer questions and solve problems • Analyze the reliability of information presented in different print and digital sources • Draw conclusions from relationships and patterns found during research • Develop a plan to communicate findings and/or conduct further research • Analyze the learning process and think of how to apply new ways of learning to future study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop questions to broaden thinking about an idea and direct additional study • Demonstrate that patterns of evidence lead to certain conclusions. Critically review them and acknowledging other views. • Develop questions based on evidence, give explanations, propose conclusions, but consider other viewpoints • Gather information from many sources and evaluate each for perspective, validity, and bias • Assess the process of investigation and anticipate and overcome obstacles. Reflect on the comprehensiveness of the inquiry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and refine questions. Revisit and refine questions again, as research moves along on an idea, to direct inquiry for learning, and for deeper understanding. • Analyze ideas and information from many sources. Develop questions, propose interpretations, and consider alternative views and perspectives. • Gather information from many sources and evaluate each for perspective, validity, and bias • Organize and synthesize relevant ideas to deepen understanding, communicate learning, and identify implications for further study • Analyze the investigation process to evaluate and revise the research plan and strategies. Address misconceptions and apply learning to future inquiries.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

WRITING

Middle-school students spend a great deal of time interpreting and reporting on research of fictional and non-fictional text. They are expected to produce coherent essays that are error-free and feature varied sentence structure. Students use citations competently and follow research report formats in their written reports. These **Steps to Success** include:

Fifth Grade	Middle School	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write legibly • Write stories and research papers using arguments that are well organized and supported by relevant facts • Use information from various credible sources. Provide a general observation and focus. • Use a style and tone appropriate to the writing purpose • Plan, revise, and edit to better focus on a topic and to improve writings. Build on the ideas of others to strengthen writing. • Write frequently on both fiction and non-fiction topics with deepening understanding • Write and research at length using the compute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write arguments that introduce opposing claims and provide evidence and data for each from multiple reliable sources • Develop the topic with well-chosen facts, details, and quotations. Follow a standard format for citation of sources. • Further develop a style and tone appropriate to the writing purpose • Plan, revise, and edit to improve writing • Write frequently and at length on both fiction and non-fiction topics • Write and research at length using the computer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write arguments that introduce a clear and well-informed claim. Establish the significance of the claim and outline the counterclaims. • Develop the topic with relevant, credible sources for the claim and counter claims. Outline the strengths and weaknesses of the claims. • Maintain a formal style and objective tone. Follow a standard format for citation of sources. • Plan, revise, and edit through numerous drafts to improve writing • Write frequently, routinely, and at length on both fiction and non-fiction topics • Write and research at length using the computer



COMMUNICATION

Middle-school students more closely examine the accuracy and viewpoints of communications and those communicating. They scrutinize a presenter’s arguments and determine whether the information is sufficient and reliable. These **Steps to Success** include:



Fifth Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop ideas to contribute to a discussion, providing accurate and related information • Report on a topic or give an opinion with facts and descriptive details. Use a logical order of ideas. • Participate in focused conversations. Build on the ideas of others. Pose questions, respond to clarify thinking, and express new thoughts. Identify how and why the speaker chooses particular words and phrases or stresses certain words. Consider whether sufficient facts are included and how they are presented.

Middle School	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect the ideas of several speakers and provide ideas, evidence, and observations in a discussion • Consider new ideas and different opinions in developing views. Justify view based on the evidence given. • Analyze and evaluate the credibility and accuracy of information and findings • Determine the effectiveness of a speaker’s argument. Evaluate the reasoning on the sufficiency of the evidence and whether irrelevant evidence was used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the development of related themes across a variety of texts. Cite evidence to support the analysis and provide an objective summary. • Analyze how literary texts and media indirectly refer to themes and models from historical and cultural traditions • Evaluate several texts to develop a theory regarding the authors’ use of structure, plot, and manipulation of time. Cite support from the texts. • Analyze how an author’s choices of structure, order of events, and manipulation of time create different effects • Read often and at length to improve vocabulary. Learn about style and enjoy the stories

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

READING FOR ENJOYMENT AND ENRICHMENT

Middle-school students see more nuances, complexities, and perspectives in their analyses of characters and plots. They must analyze how the author put the story together in order to examine how the order influences meaning. These **Steps to Success** include:

Fifth Grade	Middle School	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarize the key details of a story or the main concepts in the text• Analyze how the author uses words and phrases to impact the reader's point of view• Compare the way topics, ideas, concepts, and events are shown in first person, second person, and third person accounts/sources• Quote accurately to study the meaning beyond the text to support conclusions• Analyze two or more characters, events, or settings and explain how they influence the plot or action• Read often and at length to improve vocabulary, learn about style, and enjoy the stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare a portrayal of a place or character to an historical account to understand how authors use or alter history for effect• Determine the theme(s) and analyze the development. Provide a summary.• Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes or character types from myths or traditional stories. Describe how the material is presented in a new way. Analyze the author's choice of structures (parts of the story and how the reader encounters them) and draw conclusions about how they influence meaning.• Read often and at length to improve vocabulary. Learn about style and enjoy the stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze the development of related themes across a variety of texts. Cite evidence to support the analysis and provide an objective summary.• Analyze how literary texts and media indirectly refer to themes and models from historical and cultural traditions• Evaluate several texts to develop a theory regarding the authors' use of structure, plot, and manipulation of time. Cite support from the texts.• Analyze how an author's choices of structure, order of events, and manipulation of time create different effects• Read often and at length to improve vocabulary. Learn about style and enjoy the stories.





READING FOR INFORMATION

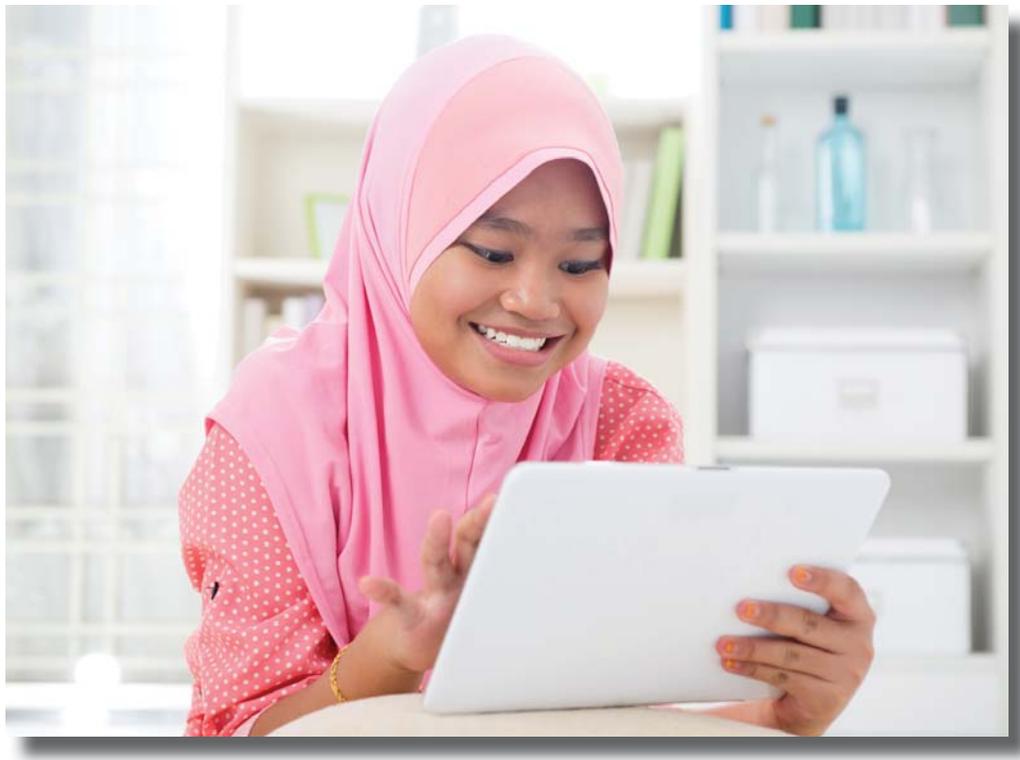
Middle-school students are better prepared to examine more closely the quality and reliability of the information provided in a text. They will judge the reasoning and the evidence provided, supporting their own decisions with facts. These **Steps to Success** include:

Fifth Grade	Middle School	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quote from the text to analyze meaning given and implied in the text • Summarize a text with two or more central ideas, supporting with key details • Make conclusions or predictions from the reading, supporting ideas with details • Read texts that are more complex. Respond according to the purpose of the task and whether it is to explain, inform, or convince. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cite the evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says, both stated clearly and hinted at • Determine an author’s perspective or purpose. Analyze how the author acknowledges or responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. • Analyze and evaluate the claims made in a text. Assess whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is sufficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate different supported interpretations in areas where the text leaves the meaning uncertain. Cite textual evidence to support synthesis of interpretations. • Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is effective. Analyze how the style and content contribute to the persuasiveness or beauty of the text. • Analyze and critique the reasoning in historical, scientific, technical, cultural, and influential argument writing

LEARNING AT HOME

Your child may be more independent at this age, but your support and help are needed still to succeed in middle school. Work with your teen at home. Be informed about assignments and timelines and if help is needed with specific skills. Here are some suggestions for things to do at home to help your teen learn:

- Read, read, read, whatever - comic books, magazines, graphic novels, or a mystery series. If your teen is a reluctant reader, make an extra effort to find articles and magazines about a hobby or interest.
- Continue to show your own interest in reading. Students this age still take cues from adults, even though they would never admit it.
- Check out two copies of the same book with your teen. Set aside a time for reading and discussing the book. Discuss what you have been reading as you go about the day's activities.
- Make sure your teen gets enough sleep. Homework and extra activities can interfere with the time your teen goes to bed. Teenagers need more than the usual seven to eight hours of rest. Lack of sleep impacts academic success, attitude, and health.
- Turn off the video games, TV, smart phone, and radio during homework time. Teens don't need the distractions while studying. Try to give your teen a quiet spot to work.
- Have your teen keep an agenda or homework journal. Go over it together to make sure all of the assignments are done.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- For suggestions of sixth and seventh grade spelling words and spelling activities to work on at home, see <http://www.spelling-words-well.com/7th-grade-spelling.html>.
- This site helps with vocabulary and grammar and donates rice through the *World Hunger Programme* for every right answer: <http://freerice.com>. Start at the lowest level of difficulty and let your teen work his way up.
- *Scholastic* provides “parent refreshers” of the skills your child is expected to learn in each grade in school: <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/collection/subject-refreshers/parent-primers>.
- A good reference site for the writing process, mechanics, grammar, and punctuation (also a useful review for parents): <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/>. This is a site for college students, but middle school students and parents can benefit from its clear explanations.
- Challenging vocabulary games can be found at <http://www.vocabulary.co.il/>.
- Games, activities, and puzzles are available at <http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/grade/7-8/>.
- Help for parents and teens on middle school academics and social changes: <http://www.schoolfamily.com/middle-school>.
- Many local libraries have sections dedicated to teen books - books targeted at middle school reading level and interests. Alternatively, ask your local librarians for suggestions.



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