



Essential ELA Skills for the Scholar

Entering Eighth Grade

Below is a list of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills that are most essential for scholars to have fully mastered before starting ELA 8. Please practice these skills with your scholar from now and throughout the summer to ensure he's ready to rock 8th grade ELA!

Most Important Skill – You can read for **45 minutes straight** with almost no breaks.

Skill #1 – You automatically use **pre-reading strategies** when you first look at a text:

- You determine the genre of the text.
- You make predictions about what may happen in the text or what you'll learn.
- You develop initial questions about the topic, plot, or character.

Skill #2 – As you read, you can easily determine the **GIST** (ASK: Who did what and why?)

G= The gist is GENERAL; There's no need for details yet.

I = The gist gives a central IDEA; Stick to the main idea for now.

S = You gist is a SUMMARY; Sum it up in one or two sentences.

T = The gist is only based on what's in the TEXT; Look at the title and the first sentence or paragraph for the initial gist.

Skill #3 – You can **Close Read and Annotate**.

38 THE EVOLUTION OF USEFUL THINGS

things that wouldn't work as a springboard to new approaches." He was quite explicit about the way an idea progressed from terrible-looking things to bottles displayed proudly in supermarkets: "If I hadn't used those mistakes as stepping stones, I would never have invented anything." Whatever one may think of the plastic bottle, the thing does fulfill the objective of replacing glass bottles. That Wyeth's achievement now presents environmental problems for other inventors to solve should come as no surprise in an imperfect world of imperfect things.

Regardless of their background and motivation, all inventors appear to share the quality of being driven by the real or perceived failure of existing things or processes to work as well as they might. Fault-finding with the made world around them and disappointment with the inefficiency with which things are done appear to be common traits among inventors and engineers generally. They revel in problems—those they themselves identify in the everyday things they use, or those they work on for corporations, clients, and friends. Inventors are not satisfied with things as they are; inventors are constantly dreaming of how things might be better.

This is not to say that inventors are pessimists. On the contrary, they are supreme optimists, for they pursue innovation with the belief that they can improve the world, or at least the things of the world. Inventors do not believe in leaving well enough alone, for well enough is not good enough for them. But, also being supreme pragmatists, they realize that they must recognize limits to improvement and the trade-offs that must accompany it. Credible inventors know the limitations of the world too, including its thermodynamic laws of conservation of energy and growth of entropy. They do not seek perpetual-motion machines or fountains of youth but, rather, strive to do the best with what they have and for the best they know they can have, and they always recognize that they can never have everything.

Marvin Camras, a native Chicagoan who was educated at the Illinois Institute of Technology and spent most of his career at its affiliated research institute, holds over five hundred patents for devices in electrical communications. When once asked if he noticed whether inventors had any common traits, he responded:

They tend to be dissatisfied with what they see around them. Maybe they're dissatisfied with something they're actually

Handwritten notes:

- interesting personality type of an inventor is to never be happy with the world as it is and the things in it.
- obsessed with perfection never happy with reality. Don't like sentence.
- true what is the point of this?
- Pragmatists - person who is oriented towards the success or failure of a particular line of action.
- important in order for inventors to do their job and succeed they fail many times before as well.
- discover these things through work and life.
- believe that anything can be fixed or improved if they try.
- supreme pragmatists realize that nothing is absolutely perfect.
- they realize that they have to be realistic about their goals and know that they can never have everything perfect.
- Thermodynamic - using or producing heat.

THE POWER OF Annotating

Annotating is when readers make notes and flag or highlight important details while they are reading.

- Focus on what they are reading.
- Understand the details of a text.
- Keep track of thoughts and feelings.
- Keep track of important details.
- Prepare for discussion.
- Prepare to write about a text.

What Is CLOSE READING?

Close reading is a thoughtful analysis and reading of a text to develop a deep understanding of the author's message, craft, or style.

Why Do Readers Close Read?

- To gain a deep understanding of the topic
- To fully understand the author's message
- To focus on patterns and details in the text
- To think critically about a text
- To grow as writers

Why Annotate?

- To understand the details of a text
- To keep track of thoughts, feelings, and important details
- To prepare for discussion
- To prepare to write about a text

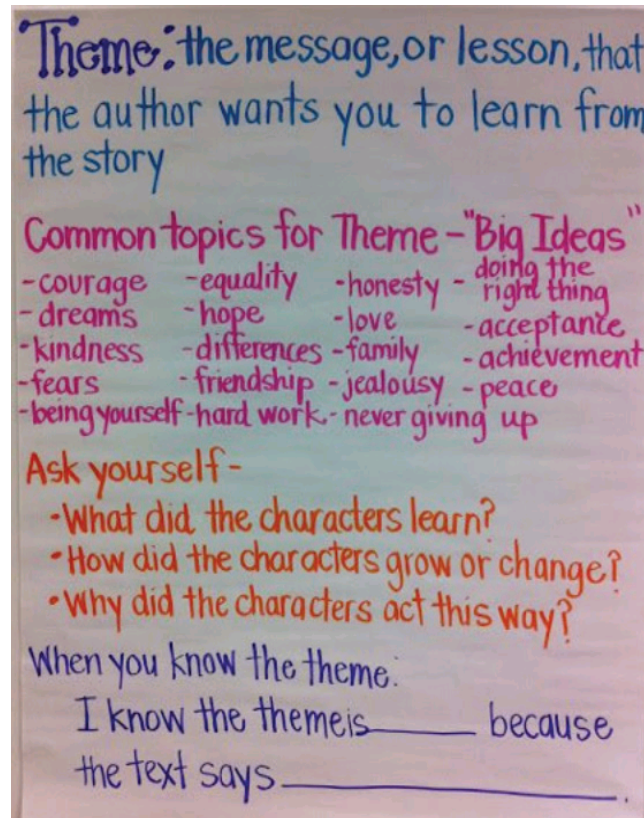
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Skill #4 –You can combine information you already know and evidence from a piece of reading to **make inferences** or explain what you think might happen next.

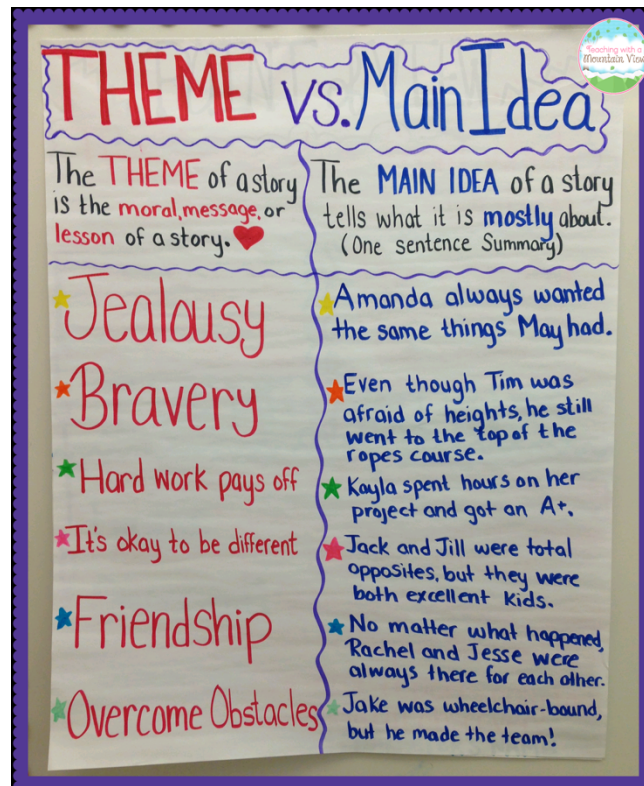
Examples of inferences:

- I can tell that Harry Potter is stubborn because...
- If you read between the lines, it's clear that the author thinks President Trump's decisions are hurting the environment because...
-

Skill #5 – You can identify the theme of the story or poem.



Skill #6: You can identify the **central idea** of a text.



Skill #7 – You can use information from a text to **explain your answer** or support your opinion.

Examples:

- *I think that Harry Potter is wrong about Snape because in Chapter 9....*
- *I know that scientists around the world are working on climate research because in the article, it mentions...*

Skill #8 – You can determine the **point of view** of a text and compare the effect of different points of view in different texts.

Point of View

1 st Person	2 nd Person	3 rd Person
The story is told by one of the characters.	The story is told by a narrator talking to the reader.	The story is told by a narrator.
Key Words: I Me We	Key Words: You Your	Key Words: He She They

Third Person	
Third Person Limited	Third Person Omniscient
The narrator knows the thoughts of <u>one</u> character.	The narrator knows the thoughts of <u>every</u> character.

Skill #9 – You can **analyze characters** in texts.

Characterization:

- The way a character is portrayed/described by the author
- How the author reveals the personality and ***motives*** of the character

2 Types

- **Direct Characterization** → the author **tells** you → author makes direct statements about the character
- **Indirect Characterization** → the author **shows** you → author **reveals** who the character is → the **reader has to infer** (draw conclusions about the character)
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For identifying ***indirect characterization*** use ***STEAL***



Skill #10 – You can use the surrounding sentences to help figure out what an **unfamiliar word** means.

Skill #11 – You can find **strong, relevant evidence** from texts to prove you point in writing or speech. This includes:

- *Citing the evidence (saying where exactly the evidence came from)*
- *Either quoting it directly or paraphrasing it*
- *Explaining the meaning of the evidence and how it proves their point*

Example: In “Still I Rise,” you can tell the narrator is self-confident because she says in stanza 5: “I laugh like I’ve got gold mines / Diggin’ in my own backyard.” Her laugh signals that she knows she has a strong and rich spirit, and she doesn’t need to worry about what others think.

Skill #12 – You can write a **professional e-mail**, including:

- A short subject to capture the main point of your email
- A professional greeting, such as:
 - *Dear Mr. Morgan,*
 - *Good Morning Ms. Jones,*
- An opening greeting sentence, such as:
 - *I hope you are doing well.*
 - *I hope you’re having a good day.*
 - *I hope you and your family are safe during this time.*
 - *Happy Monday!*
- Complete sentences clearly and politely explaining their point, question, etc.
- A closing sentence thanking the person for their time or help, such as:
 - *Thank you for reading my email.*
 - *I appreciate any help you can offer.*
 - *Thank you so much for considering my request.*
 - *Thank you for your time.*
- A professional closing, such as:
 - *Sincerely,*
Jordan Pierre
 - *Be Well,*
Neo Fleurimond
 - *With Gratitude,*
Tarif Rose






Skill #13 – You can use Accountable Talk Stems to have **at least a 15-minute** discussion about a topic or text.

Accountable Talk Sentence Stems

AGREE	DISAGREE/CHALLENGE
★ I agree with _____ because... ★ I want to add to/build upon what _____ said... ★ I’m glad you said that because I also think... ★ I think _____ brings up a great point because...	→ I want to respectfully disagree with _____ because... → I heard you say _____, but I actually think... → I have a different opinion... → What evidence do you have to support that? → Have you considered that maybe... → I disagree with that use of evidence because...

CLARIFY/ELABORATE	PRESENTING EVIDENCE/MAKING CONNECTIONS
➤ I still have questions about... ➤ Can you elaborate on that idea? ➤ I’m not sure what you mean... ➤ Could you tell me more about...? ➤ I am confused about...	♦ What you said reminds me of... ♦ I predict that... ♦ One example of that is... ♦ Based on the evidence, I think... ♦ My evidence is... ♦ In the text, it says... ♦ I notice that...

Skill #14 – You can determine the **author's purpose** for writing a certain text.

Get PIE'D in Author's Purpose!		
 P ersuade	the author tries to <u>convince</u> the reader of something	article about how to help save an endangered animal
 I nform	the author gives <u>information</u> about a topic	nonfiction book with animal facts
 E xplain	the author writes the <u>steps</u> the reader will follow	directions on how to build a birdhouse
 E ntertain	the author writes something the reader will <u>enjoy</u>	fiction book with characters, plot, etc.
 D escribe	the author uses some of the <u>senses</u> to <u>tell about</u> a topic	essay about the sights, sounds, & smells of a favorite place

Link to Anchor Charts: <https://www.madison-schools.com/cms/lib9/MS01001041/Centricity/Domain/3351/ReadingStrategiesMiniAnchorCharts-2.pdf>