



Diocese of Joliet
Catholic Schools

Eighth Grade Curriculum Guide for Parents

Language Arts and Reading

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DIOCESE OF JOLIET CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

Academic excellence is a pillar of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Joliet. To assist schools in maintaining academic excellence, the Catholic Schools Office has developed curriculum guides for grades preschool through eight. The purpose of the curriculum guide is to identify what we want our students to know and be able to do at the end of each grade based on Catholic faith standards and content standards. With these guides as a template, each individual school develops a plan to clearly articulate what is taught, how it is taught, and how student achievement is assessed for each grade.



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CARDINAL NEWMAN STANDARDS

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Catholic Education released a [document](#) in 2014 to guide Catholic schools in their approach to educational standards. The Cardinal Newman Society responded to this call by creating the Cardinal Newman Catholic Curriculum Standards with support from more than eight Catholic universities and colleges.

This curriculum guide is aligned to those standards. The Cardinal Newman Catholic Standards for reading and language arts in this curriculum guide are:

Reading

- Analyze literature that reflects the transmission of a Catholic culture and worldview.
- Analyze works of fiction and non-fiction to uncover the authentic Truth.
- Share how literature can contribute to strengthening one's moral character.
- Explain from a Catholic perspective how literature addresses critical questions related to man, such as: How ought men live in community with each other? What are an individual's rights, duties, freedom, and restraints? What are society's? What is the relationship between man and God? Between man and the physical world? What is the nature of human dignity and the human spirit? What is love? What is the good life?
- Summarize how literature can reflect the historical and sociological cultures of the time period in which it was written to help us better understand ourselves and other cultures and times.
- Analyze an author's reasoning and discover the author's intent.
- Share how literature cultivates the aesthetic faculties within the human person.



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CARDINAL NEWMAN STANDARDS (CONTINUED)

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Language Arts

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- Explain from a Catholic perspective how literature addresses critical questions related to man, such as - How ought men live in community with each other? What are an individual's rights, duties, freedoms, and restraints? What are society's? What is the relationship between man and God? Between man and the physical world? What is the nature of human dignity and human spirit? What is love? What is the good life?
- Summarize how literature can reflect the historical and sociological culture of the time period in which it was written to help us better understand ourselves and other cultures and times.
- Analyze the author's reasoning and discover the author's intent.
- Explain how language can be used as a bridge for communion for the betterment of all involved.
- Write in various ways to naturally order thoughts to the truth with an accurate expression of intent, knowledge, and feelings.
- Use grammar as a means of signifying concepts and the relationship to reason.
- Develop empathy, care, and compassion for a character's crisis or choice in order to transcend oneself, build virtue, and better understand one's own disposition and humanity.
- Display the virtues and values evident within stories that invoice an ideal to take a stand for love, faith, courage, fidelity, truth, beauty, goodness, and all virtues.



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READING LITERATURE

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in reading literature by the end of Eighth Grade:

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine a moral theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot. Provide an objective summary of the text.
- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in literary and Biblical texts, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
- Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
- Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the moral/value choices made by the director or actors.
- Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.
- By the end of the year, read, comprehend, and defend grade-level texts through a Catholic lens for literature, including stories, dramas, and poems.



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READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in reading informational text by the end of Eighth Grade:

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient. Recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
- Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic including two Gospels and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
- By the end of the year, read, comprehend, and use grade-level informational text to respond appropriately through a Catholic lens to literary nonfiction and show an appreciation for informational text.



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WRITING

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in writing by the end of Eighth Grade:

- Write **arguments** to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence while maintaining Catholic values and identity.
 - Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
 - Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources (including but not limited to Catholic texts) and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
 - Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
 - Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- Write **informative/explanatory texts** to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - Develop the topic (including but not limited to a Catholic topic) with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
- Write **narratives** to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.



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WRITING (CONTINUED)

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in writing by the end of Eighth Grade:

- Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to develop experiences, events, and/or characters (character study may detail the implicit and/or explicit Catholic virtues and values).
- Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.
- Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. Examples may include prayers, Catholic moral teachings, and reflective essays.
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop, strengthen, and defend writing according to Catholic teaching as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well the purpose and audience have been addressed.
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing (including multi-media works reflecting a Catholic theme) and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
- Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources including an understanding and use of primary and secondary sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while exercising the virtue of honesty and following a standard format for citation of images, sources, and ideas thus eliminating plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.



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LANGUAGE

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in language arts by the end of Eighth Grade:

- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.
- Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.
- Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
- Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
- Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
- Spell correctly.
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on Eighth Grade reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.



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LANGUAGE (CONTINUED)

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in language arts by the end of Eighth Grade:

- Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
- Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.
- Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
- Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
- Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases (including faith literacy); gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.



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SPEAKING & LISTENING

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in speaking and listening by the end of Eighth Grade:

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led), building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study (including but not limited to Catholic texts and sources); explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
- Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, have the humility to qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
- Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats including but not limited to Catholic texts and sources (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
- Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
- Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
- Capitalize on opportunities to practice these skills within a liturgical context modeling Christ.