



English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 8 (ELAR) 8A Syllabus

Course Name

ELAR 8A

English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 8 – Semester A

Course Information

ELAR 8A is the first semester of this two-semester course.

The main themes of ELAR 8A are heroes and societies and how these are represented in many types of writing. Reading gives you a chance to think about why people behave the way they do, why societies have certain rules, and reflect on what could be different in the world.

ELAR 8A uses journaling activities to help you improve your reading skills so you can get more out of your encounters with various texts. These activities also prepare you for bigger assignments where you turn in a chart, an essay plan, or a complete essay.

There are four main writing assignments with two in each unit. You'll work on these major assignments a little bit at a time while you look at helpful examples of this type of writing in the textbook.

Good luck on your journey through ELAR 8A!

Course Delivery Method

Online

Contacting Your Instructor

You may contact your instructor through the Blackboard messaging system. Technical support is available 24/7 at [TTU K-12](#).

Course Objectives

After completing this course, you should be able to:

1. select texts of interest to reflect and synthesize informally through discussion and writing;
2. ask questions, make predictions, observe genre characteristics and text structures;
3. use textual evidence, use new vocabulary words, reflect on the ideas of others, and make connections among texts, ideas, and experiences;
4. analyze author's craft through a variety of genres and mimic features and styles in their own formal and informal writing;
5. answer text-dependent questions at varying levels; and
6. demonstrate writing skills and grammar knowledge through a creative writing, writing that defines, informational writing, and argumentative writing.

ELAR 8 addresses the required Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). These can be found at the [Texas Education Agency](https://www.tea.texas.gov/essential-knowledge-and-skills) website.

Textbook and Materials

Textbook(s)

The required **digital** textbook for this course is:

- *SpringBoard English Language Arts and Language Workshop, Grade 8.* (2021). The College Board. ISBN 9781457311796

Be sure you have access to the Language Workshop as well as the regular textbook.

These digital textbooks can only be purchased through the TTU K-12 partner bookstore, MBS (see the [TTU K-12 website](#) for a link to MBS). Once you make your purchase, you will receive your credentials to the online textbooks and resources via email, and it may take 1-2 business days.

The following required book may be in any format:

- *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (any edition)

Materials

No additional materials are required.

Technical Requirements

- Internet access – preferably high speed (for accessing Blackboard)
- Email

- Word processing software such as Microsoft Word
- Adobe Reader (download from Adobe.com)
- Audio and video capabilities (for watching/listening to course content)
- PDF app (free options available)

Technical Skill Requirements

Be comfortable with the following:

- using a word processor
- Internet search engines and browsers
- creating PDFs (see **Requirements for Creating PDFs** on the course Syllabus page)

Course Organization

This course is organized into seven lessons and a final examination. Each lesson contains the following:

- Introduction with Objectives
- A Getting Started folder with graded activities
- Lesson folders with journaling activities and other graded assignments
- Mid-Unit Check folders
(These appear after you complete certain assignments in the first half of the unit.)
- End-of-Unit Check folders
(These appear after you complete certain assignments in the second half of the unit.)

Each lesson includes several activities that present content knowledge. Each lesson also includes multiple graded assignments to ensure that you learn the content that has been presented in the activities. Some of the assignments are automatically-graded quizzes, and some are written assignments or activities that your instructor will grade. Be sure you read all instructions carefully and ask your instructor for help if something is not clear.

Course Outline

Please note that some assignments will be hidden from you when you start the course. As you move through the lessons and complete assignments, more will unlock for you.

Lesson	Topic	Approximate Time for Completion
Lesson 1.0	Getting Started with Unit 1	5 days
Lesson 1.1	<i>Big Hero 6</i>	2 days

Lesson	Topic	Approximate Time for Completion
Lesson 1.2	"Ithaka"	3 days
Lesson 1.3	"The Drummer Boy of Shiloh"	3 days
Lesson 1.4	<i>Odyssey</i>	2 days
Lesson 1.5	<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i> (excerpt and graphic novel version)	5 days
Lesson 1.6	"Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat" (speech)	2 days
Mid-Unit Check	Turn in your Final Hero's Story, Mid-Unit journal, Mid-Unit discussion. <i>(Note that you won't see this folder until you've completed the preparatory story assignments.)</i>	3 days
Lesson 1.7	"A Man" and "Soldier home after losing his leg in Afghanistan"	5 days
Lesson 1.8	"Where I Find My Heroes"	5 days
Lesson 1.9	Historical Heroes	4 days
Lesson 1.10	"A Definition of a Gentleman" and Definition Essay progress	4 days
End-of-Unit Check	Turn in your Final Definition Essay; Unit Reflection discussion. <i>(Note that you won't see this folder until you've completed the preparatory essay assignments.)</i>	2 days
	*Midterm Exam	
Lesson 2.0	Getting Started with Unit 2	1 day
Lesson 2.1	Informational Writing	2 days
Lesson 2.2	Introduction to Dystopian Fiction	2 days
Lesson 2.3	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i> (start reading)	5 days
Lesson 2.4	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i> (continued)	5 days
Lesson 2.5	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i> (wrap up)	5 days
Mid-Unit Check	Turn in your Final Informational Essay. <i>(Note that you won't see this folder until you've completed the preparatory essay assignments.)</i>	2 days
Lesson 2.6	"Private Eyes" – Argument, Part 1	3 days
Lesson 2.7	News Article – Argument, Part 2	3 days
Lesson 2.8	Debatable Claims – Argument, Part 3	2 days

Lesson	Topic	Approximate Time for Completion
Lesson 2.9	Conducting Effective Research – Argument, Part 4	3 days
End-of-Unit Check	Turn in your Final Argumentative Essay. <i>(Note that you won't see this folder until you've completed the preparatory essay assignments.)</i>	2 days
	*Final Exam	

Assignment Schedule

Each of the following must be completed to complete the course. Items with an asterisk (*) indicate that these are summative assessments for the course.

Lesson	Weeks	Assignments
Getting Started with Unit 1	1	Checkpoint 1 – Introduce Yourself (Non-graded) Unit 1 Reader/Writer Journal: Your "Getting Started" Entry (Unit 1, Part 1) 1.0 Upload: Warm Up Creative Writing Activity Reading Club: Independent Reading List
Lessons 1.1, 1.2	2	1.1 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 1) 1.1 Writer's Craft Self-Check 1.2 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 1) 1.2 "Ithaka" Self-Check 1.2 Reading Club – Reading Aloud
Lessons 1.3, 1.4	3	1.3 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 1) 1.3 "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh" Self-Check 1.3 Upload: Graphic Organizer 1.3 Upload: Turn in a Story Plan 1.4 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 2) 1.4 <i>Odyssey</i> Self-Check
Lesson 1.5	4	1.5 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 2) 1.5 <i>A Wrinkle in Time</i> Self-Check 1.5 Writer's Craft Self-Check 1.5 Upload: Turn in Your First Draft Unit 1 Reading Discussion – Favorite Text
Lesson 1.6, Mid-Unit Check	5	1.6 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 2) 1.6 Churchill Speech Self-Check *Mid-Unit Upload: Turn in your Final Hero's Story

Lesson	Weeks	Assignments
		Mid-Unit Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 2) Mid-Unit Reading Club – List Update Checkpoint 2 (Non-graded)
Lesson 1.7	6	1.7 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 3) 1.7 “A Man” and Article Self-Check 1.7 Upload: Hero Chart Unit 1 Reading Discussion – Poem Response
Lesson 1.8	7	1.8 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 3) 1.8 Upload: Brainstorming for Definition Essay 1.8 “Where I Find My Heroes” Self-Check 1.8 Writer’s Craft Self-Check 1.8 Reading Club – Share about Heroes
Lessons 1.9, 1.10, End-of-Unit Check	8-9	1.9 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 3) 1.9 Historical Heroes Self-Check 1.9 Writer’s Craft Self-Check 1.10 Writer’s Craft Self-Check 1.10 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 1, Part 3) *End-of-Unit Check: Turn in Your Final Definition Essay Unit 1 Reading Discussion – Unit Reflection
Midterm	9	*Midterm Exam
Getting Started with Unit 2, Lessons 2.1, 2.2	10	Unit 2 Reader/Writer Journal: Your “Getting Started” Entry (Unit 2, Part 1) 2.1 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 2, Part 1) 2.1 “Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts” Self-Check 2.1 Upload: Informational Writing Warm-Up 2.2 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 2, Part 1) 2.2 “Harrison Bergeron” and “Mixed Up World” Self-Check 2.2 Upload: Conflict in “Harrison Bergeron” 2.2 Writer’s Craft Self-Check
Lesson 2.3	11	2.3 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 2, Part 1) 2.3 Upload: Character Perspectives in <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> 2.3 Reading Club – Societal Topic 2.3 Upload: Informational Essay Plan 2.3 Writer’s Craft Self-Check
Lesson 2.4	12	2.4 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 2, Part 2) 2.4 <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> and Banned Books Day Self-Check Unit 2 Reading Discussion – Banned Books

Lesson	Weeks	Assignments
Lesson 2.5	13	2.5 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 2, Part 2) 2.5: <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> Self-Check continued 2.5 Upload: Protagonist and Setting Chart (You'll work on this throughout Lessons 2.3-2.5.) 2.5: <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> Wrap Up Unit 2 Reading Discussion – Book Talk
Mid-Unit Check, Lesson 2.6	14	Mid-Unit Reading Club – What I've Learned *Mid-Unit Upload: Turn in your Final Informational Essay 2.6 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 2, Part 3) 2.6 "Private Eyes" Self-Check Unit 2 Reading Discussion – "Private Eyes" 2.6 Upload: Planning an Argumentative Essay
Lessons 2.7, 2.8	15	2.7 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 2, Part 3) 2.7 Media Argument Self-Check 2.7 Upload: The Research Planning Process 2.7 Reading Club – Argumentative Texts 2.8 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 2, Part 3) 2.8 Self-Driving Cars Articles – Self Check 2.8 Upload: Thinking About Audience
Lesson 2.9, End-of- Unit Check	16	2.9 Reader/Writer Journal (Unit 2, Part 3) 2.9 Elements of Good Research and Evidence – Self-Check 2.9 Upload: Organize and Outline *End-of-Unit Upload: Turn in Your Final Argumentative Essay
Final	16	*Final Exam

Course Credit

The course grade will be calculated as follows:

- 50% coursework average;
- 50% summative assessment average, including the final exam;
- A passing course grade is 70 or higher.

Students must attempt all assignments in the course. The final exam will not be available until all assignments have been accepted and graded by the teacher.

Students who score below 70% on the final exam will be eligible for one re-exam opportunity.

Coursework

The graded assignments within each lesson are formative in nature. This means that they are designed to assist you in applying and demonstrating the lesson concepts, as well as identifying areas in which you need additional review. You may use all the lesson's learning activities to assist you as you complete the graded assignments.

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments are those that allow you to demonstrate mastery of the course objectives. For summative assessments, you will NOT be allowed to use the learning materials. These are opportunities for you to show what you have learned by that point in the course.

Summative assessments may be proctored using the online proctoring system Proctorio. Information about Proctorio is provided in **Remote Proctoring** in the Syllabus section of your course. The summative assessments for this course are as follows:

- **Summative Assessments (20% of Course Grade)**
 - Unit 1, Embedded Assessment 1: Mid-Unit Upload: Hero's Story (100 points)
 - Unit 1, Embedded Assessment 2: End-of-Unit Upload: Definition Essay (100 points)
 - Midterm Exam (90 points)
 - Unit 2, Embedded Assessment 1: Mid-Unit Upload: Informational Essay (100 points)
 - Unit 2, Embedded Assessment 2: End-of-Unit Upload: Argumentative Essay (100 points)
- **Summative Final Exam (30% of Course Grade)**

Course Completion

- Students may not complete the course in less than 30 days.
- All courses expire six months after the enrollment date.

Academic Integrity

It is the aim of the faculty of Texas Tech University to foster a spirit of complete honesty and high standard of integrity. The attempt of students to present as their own any work not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offenders liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

“Scholastic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor) or the attempt to commit such an act.

Student Expectations

You will be expected to log into the Blackboard course regularly to be aware of possible announcements/reminders and to pace your progress in the course.

Students are expected to maintain an online environment conducive to learning, which includes “netiquette” (Internet etiquette). Please review the basic rules for [Online Discussion Netiquette](#). Ensure that your email messages, discussion board postings, and other electronic communications are thoughtful and respectful. Diverse opinions are welcome in this course, and you are expected to demonstrate an open mind and courtesy when responding to the thoughts and ideas of others.

The following are prohibited:

- making offensive remarks in email or the discussion board;
- using inappropriate language or discussing inappropriate topics online;
- spamming;
- hacking;
- using TTU or Blackboard email or discussion boards for commercial purposes;
- using all caps (considered shouting in online communications); and
- cyber-bullying or online harassment of any type.

Inappropriate behavior shall result in consequences ranging from a request to correct the problem, to removal from the course or even the university, depending on the severity of the behavior. Disciplinary actions will be taken according to the TTU K-12 Student Handbook.

Communication

- You can expect a reply from your instructor within 2 business days.
- Use the Blackboard Course Messages tool for sending messages to your instructor.

Submitting Assignments

You will submit all assignments through the Blackboard Assignment Tool, rather than by mail or email.

Technical Difficulties

Getting Help

For student assistance with Blackboard, visit [TTU K-12 Support](#).

Computer Problems

A working computer is necessary for online coursework. Computer problems will not be accepted as a valid reason for failure to complete course activities within the allotted

time frame. Identify a second computer, before the course begins, that you can use if you experience computer problems.

Server Problems

When the Blackboard server needs to be taken down for maintenance, the Blackboard administrator will post an announcement in your course informing you of the time and date. If the server experiences unforeseen problems, your course instructor will notify you.

Lost or Corrupted Files

You must keep/save a copy of every project/assignment on an external disk or personal computer. In the event of any kind of technology failure (e.g., Blackboard server crash or virus infection, students' own computer problems, loss of files in cyberspace, etc.) or any disputes, the instructor may request or require you to resubmit the files. In some instances, the instructor may need to open another attempt within Blackboard, so communication with your instructor is critical in these circumstances.