

Language Arts 8 / Grade 8 Curriculum
Course Anthology: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Grade 8 *Collections*

Unit 1: The Thrill of Horror

Essential Question: Why is horror both terrifying and fascinating?

Enduring Understandings: • Horror can be both terrifying and fascinating, yet it provides a way for individuals to develop coping skills through imagination. • The relationship between the creator of horror and the reader/viewer helps create suspense, tension, and fear.

Maryland College and Career Ready Frameworks, Grades 6-8

- [Reading Literature Framework](#)
- [Reading Informational Texts Framework](#)
- [Writing Framework](#)
- [Speaking and Listening Framework](#)
- [Language Framework](#)

Text Title and Author	Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for English Grades 6-8
Unit Introduction and Opener: Why is horror both terrifying and fascinating?	RI.8.2, RI.8.6
Anchor: “The Tell-Tale Heart” (CL) (short story) by Edgar Allan Poe	RL.8.4, RL.8.6, L.8.2a
“The Monkey’s Paw” (CL) (short story) by W. W. Jacobs / <i>The Monkey’s Paw</i> (film clip) by Ricky Lewis Jr.	RL.8.2, RL.8.4, RL.8.7, L.8.4a
“The Outsider” (short story) by H. P. Lovecraft	RI.8.2, RI.8.4, RI.8.6
“Scary Tales” (essay) by Jackie Torrence	RI.8.2, RI.8.4, RI.8.6
Short, focused research: Research an author and how that author builds suspense.	SL.8.5, W.8.2b, W.8.7, W.8.8
Novel study: Novels for consideration are listed below. Teachers may select a novel for class study or create book clubs of selected texts.	Teachers will determine the focus standard(s) for instruction.

Unit 2: Society, Culture, and Belonging

Essential Question: How does one’s society and culture shape a sense of belonging?

Enduring Understandings: • Family is often a bridge between society, culture, and developing a sense of belonging. • Individual perceptions of society, culture, and a sense of belonging often lead to misunderstanding. • Society, culture, and a sense of belonging all play different and varying roles and are valued differently at times.

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Unit Introduction and Opener: How does one’s society and culture shape a sense of belonging?	RI.8.2, RI.8.4
“There but for the Grace” (poem) by Wisława Szymborska	RL.8.2, RL.8.4
<i>New Immigrants Share Their Stories</i> (documentary) by Lisa Gossels	RI.8.2, RI.8.3, RI.8.6, RI.8.7
Anchor: “My Favorite Chaperone” (short story) by Jean Davies Okimoto or excerpt from <i>The Latehomecomer</i> (memoir) by Kao Kalia Yang	RL.8.3, RL.8.4
“What to Bring” (essay) by Naisha Jackson	RI.8.3, RI.8.5
“After Auschwitz” (speech) by Elie Wiesel	RI.8.2, RI.8.4, RI.8.5, RI.8.6, RI.8.7, RI.8.8
from <i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i> (CL) (diary) by Anne Frank	RI.8.2, RI.8.3, RI.8.4, RI.8.5, RI.8.6
“A Place to Call Home” (research study) by Scott Bittle and Jonathan Rochkind	RI.8.3, RI.8.4, RI.8.6
Short, focused research: Research a U.S. immigrant’s experience.	SL.8.5, W.8.2b, W.8.2f, W.8.7, W.8.8
Anchor: <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> (drama) by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett	RL.8.2, RL.8.3, RL.8.6

Unit 3: The Move Toward Freedom

Essential Question: How do an individual’s convictions shape a movement?

Enduring Understanding: • Movements have been shaped by individuals throughout history. • Individuals with the same convictions create movements for social justice still today. • Freedom is a subjective concept that can look differently to different individuals. • The fight for freedom continues throughout our society and the world.

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Unit Introduction and Opener: How do an individual’s convictions shape a movement?	RI.8.2, W.8.9b
Anchor: “The Drummer Boy of Shiloh” (historical fiction) by Ray Bradbury	SL.8.5, W.8.2b, W.8.2f, W.8.7, W.8.8
from <i>Bloody Times: The Funeral of Abraham Lincoln and the Manhunt for Jefferson Davis</i> (history writing) by James L. Swanson	RI.8.1, RI.8.3, RI.8.4, RI.8.5
“O Captain! My Captain!” (CL) (poem) by Walt Whitman	RL.8.4, RL.8.5
Anchor: from <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave</i> (CL) (autobiography) by Frederick Douglass	RI.8.4, RI.8.5, RI.8.6, W.8.2a, W.8.2b
“Letter to Harriet Tubman” (CL) (letter) by Frederick Douglass / from <i>Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad</i> (biography) by Ann Petry / “My Friend Douglass” (historical writing) by Russell Freedman	RI.8.2, RI.8.3, RI.8.4, RI.8.5, RI.8.6, W.8.2b, W.8.2d, SL.8.4, SL.8.6
Short, focused research: Research what it means to be free (politically, personally, geographically).	SL.8.5, W.8.2b, W.8.2f, W.8.7, W.8.8
Novel study: Novels for consideration are listed below. Teachers may select a novel for class study or create book clubs of selected texts.	Teachers will determine the focus standard(s) for instruction.
<p>Unit 4: Approaching Adulthood Essential Question: What experiences influence the passage into adulthood? Enduring Understandings: • The passage into adulthood is a process often marked by specific life events and rites of passage. • As an individual transitions to adulthood, s/he takes on new roles and responsibilities.</p>	
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Unit Introduction and Opener: What experiences influence the passage into adulthood?	SL.8.1, SL.8.2, L.8.4

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Anchor: “Marigolds” (CL) (short story) by Eugenia Collier	RL.8.2, RL.8.3, RL.8.4, L.8.5, SL.8.1
“The Whistle” (short story) by Anne Estevis	RL.8.2, RL.8.3
“Hanging Fire” (CL) (poem) by Audre Lorde / “Teenagers” (poem) by Pat Mora	RL.8.2, RL.8.5
Anchor: “When Do Kids Become Adults?” (argument) by Laurence Steinberg, Jenny Diamond Cheng, Jamie Lincoln Kitman, Barbara Hofer, and Michael Thompson	RI.8.2, RI.8.6, RI.8.8
“Is 16 Too Young to Drive a Car?” (article) by Robert Davis / “Fatal Car Crashes Drop for 16-Year-Olds, Rise for Older Teens” (article) by Allison Aubrey	RI.8.2, RI.8.9, W.8.1a, W.8.1b
“Your Phone Can Wait” (public service announcement film) by Stephanie Ramirez / “Driving Distracted” (public service announcement poster)	RI.8.7, RI.8.9, SL.8.5, W.8.7
“Teens Needs Jobs, Not Just Cash” (argument) by Anne Michaud / “Teens at Work” (editorial) form <i>The Record-Journal</i>	RI.8.4, RI.8.6, RI.8.8, SL.8.5, W.8.7
“Identity” (CL) (poem) by Julio Noboa Polanco / “Hard on the Gas” (poem) by Janet S. Wong	RL.8.2, RL.8.5
Short, focused research: Research the cultural, societal, or legal aspects of adulthood.	RI.8.2, RI.8.3, RI.8.7, RI.8.8, SL.8.5, W.8.1, W.8.5, W.8.7, W.8.8
Novel study: Novels for consideration are listed below. Teachers may select a novel for class study or create book clubs of selected texts.	Teachers will determine the focus standard(s) for instruction.

Novels for consideration: *The Night Gardener*, *What You Hide**, *Refugee*, *Anne Frank* (drama), *Harriet Tubman*, *The Giver* (CL), *The Outsiders* (CL), *The Steep and Thorny Way** (approved for use in book clubs), *Chasing Lincoln’s Killer*, *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom*, *Red, White, and Whole**, *White Bird*

* Indicates novel that requires parent letter to be sent home prior to instruction.

CL indicates that the text is available in [CommonLit](#).

For more information regarding the Language Arts 8 course content, curriculum, and pacing, please contact Kristine Scarry, Supervisor of Reading, English, Language Arts (Kristine.scarry@hcps.org) or Annmarie Steltzer, Assistant Supervisor of Reading, English, Language Arts (Annmarie.steltzer@hcps.org).