



VALWOOD

GO BEYOND

Eighth Grade Composition Curriculum

8th Grade Composition

Course Description	Topics at a Glance
<p>The Seventh grade composition program is based upon grammar, vocabulary, and composition. It is designed to build those skills needed for advanced writing and vocabulary needed in upper level college preparatory classes. Sentence structure and the use of sentence variation in compositions will be stressed. Various types of paragraphs (and essays) will be required: narrative, descriptive, compare-contrast, cause and effect, persuasion, and exposition. Students will use the writing process to prepare these compositions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writer’s Notebook • Drafting with own and peer’s writing (revision and editing skills) • Development and presentation of a writer’s portfolio, • Types of Essays include narrative, descriptive, compare-contrast, cause and effect, persuasion, and exposition.
Assessments	Effective Components of Composition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher created assessments • Writing pieces • Journal Entries • Standardized Test 	<p>Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and high expectation for all students • Instruction driven by standards/curriculum, not materials or a published program • Frequent, timely, meaningful feedback of student accomplishment • Instruction supports equity with multiple opportunities to learn through grouping, scaffolding, differentiation, and extension • Teachers use multiple forms of representation are used (e.g., pictures, words, symbols, diagrams, tables, graphs, word walls, and movement) <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in classroom talk (listening, elaborating, clarifying, expanding) • Applying rigorous, strategic thinking (application, explanation, perspective-taking, interpretation, perspective, empathy, self-knowledge) <p>Teachers prepare for instruction by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Data Driven Balanced Literacy Instructional Approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reading & writing demonstrations ◆ Shared and guided reading & writing ◆ Independent reading & writing • Balancing whole group, small group, and individual instruction • Using collaborative learning groups • Planning opportunities to read and write multiple genres • Providing opportunities for students to authentically respond to and judge what they read
Grade Level Expectations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence • Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. • Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences 	

Writing & Composition

The Standards acknowledge the fact that whereas some writing skills, such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing, other skills are more properly defined in terms of specific writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. These standards stress the importance of the writing-reading connection by requiring students to draw upon and write about evidence from literary and informational texts. Because of the centrality of writing to most forms of inquiry, research standards are prominently included in this strand, though skills important to research are infused throughout the document.

WRITING & COMPOSITION

Text Types and Purposes (*These broad types of writing include many subgenres.)

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

10. 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 tasks, purposes, and audiences.

LANGUAGE Anchor Standards Connected to Writing & Composition

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Valwood Graduate Competencies

The Valwood graduate competencies are the preschool through twelfth-grade concepts and skills that all graduates will be able to demonstrate.

Valwood Graduate Competencies in the Writing and Composition standard:

- Write with a clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail
- Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone, and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes
- Apply standard English conventions to effectively communicate with written language
- Implement the writing process successfully to plan, revise, and edit written work
- Master the techniques of effective informational, literary, and persuasive writing

Content Area: Composition - 8th Grade	
Standard: 1. Writing and Composition	
Valwood Graduates:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Write with a clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail. 	
GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATION	
Concepts and skills students master:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With awareness of audience and purpose, compose narrative writing. 	
Evidence Outcomes	21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies
<p>Students can:</p> <p>Text Types and Purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. ii. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. iii. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. iv. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events. 	<p>Inquiry Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What helps a reader visualize the character, setting, and plot in a composition? 2. How does a writer’s knowledge of their audience and purpose contribute to their writing? 3. How do graphic organizers or planning guides support the writer? 4. How can the use of correct vocabulary, grammar, usage, and mechanics add clarity to writing? 5. How is revising a piece of writing as essential as the initial effort? 6. How can desktop and online resources be used to edit and critique a work in progress? <p>Relevance and Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When working on an important project at work people can use a variety of online resources to expand their ideas. 2. Pieces of electronic information can be stored for later use, application, and research.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events. b. Use a range of poetic techniques (alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme scheme); figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification); and graphic elements (capital letters, line length, word position) to express personal or narrative voice in texts. c. Use a range of planning strategies to organize ideas, and generate descriptive and sensory details (outline, web, free write, graphic organizers, list, etc.). d. Use word choice, sentence structure, and sentence length to create voice and tone in writing. e. Revise and edit writing to strengthen clarity, fluency, ideas, and vividness of voice, tone, organization, and convention. f. Using specific criteria engage in self-evaluation and peer review to explain strengths and weaknesses of one's own writing and the writing of others. g. As writers, use mentor texts and authors to help craft appropriate technique. 	<p>Nature of Discipline:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writers use the writing process, with a variety of media and technology tools to publish compositions. 2. Writers use descriptive language to create mental pictures for the reader. 3. Skilled writers apply their knowledge when writing in Science, Technical Subjects, and History/Social Studies
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Content Area: Composition - 8th Grade		
Standard: 1. Writing and Composition		
Valwood Graduates:		
➤ Write with a clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.		
GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATION		
Concepts and skills students master:		
2. With awareness of audience and purpose, compose persuasive and informational writing.		
Evidence Outcomes	21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies	
<p>Students can:</p> <p>Text Types and Purposes:</p> <p>a. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly. ii. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. iii. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons. iv. Establish and maintain a formal style. v. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented. vi. Identify and use several effective arguments in a piece of writing intended to persuade an audience. vii. Demonstrate awareness of audience expectations possible bias when writing informational or persuasive text. viii. Demonstrate awareness of <i>own</i> possible bias when writing informational or persuasive text. ix. Revise ideas and structure to improve depth of argument/information and logic of organization; identify persuasive elements in a peer's writing and critique the effectiveness. x. Explain and imitate effective persuasive writing used by writers who are trying to persuade an audience. <p>b. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.</p>	<p>Inquiry Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is word selection important to a piece of writing? 2. How do writers organize their thinking to include the audience they are addressing? How do writers convey precise messages to audiences? 3. How does a writer gather information to create informative/explanatory pieces of writing? 4. How do writers monitor their work to include information that is relevant to the topic? 5. Why must opinion pieces include the writer's point of view and logically ordered reasons supported by facts and details? 6. How can various tools help a writer revise and edit written work? 	
		<p>Relevance and Application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before a project is turned in to a supervisor, people work with a co-worker to edit and revise their work. 2. Successful revision includes rereading, reflecting, rethinking, and rewriting. 3. Choosing the right words to communicate thoughts helps deliver a clear message. 4. Working together, a written piece can reflect valued points of view and motivate others.
		<p>Nature of Discipline:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writers understand that compositions may be used to convey ideas, evoke emotion, persuade, or entertain. 2. Creative and colorful writing persuades and influences events. 3. Skilled writers apply their knowledge when writing in Science, Technical Subjects, and History/Social Studies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.ii. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.iii. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.iv. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.v. Establish and maintain a formal style.vi. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.c. Write multi-paragraph compositions that have clear topic development, logical organization, effective use of detail, and variety in sentence structure.d. Organize information into a coherent essay or report with a thesis statement in the introduction and transition sentences to link paragraphs.e. Write to analyze and explain procedures, processes, and informational texts (e.g. steps in a scientific investigation, how a bill becomes a law). | |
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Content Area: Composition - 8th Grade		
Standard: 1. Writing and Composition		
Valwood Graduates:		
➤ Apply standard English conventions to effectively communicate with written language.		
GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATION		
Concepts and skills students master:		
2. Use the recursive process of writing, including revising and editing for clarity and grammar and conventions use, to produce well-written documents for specific purposes and audiences.		
Evidence Outcomes	21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies	
<p>Students can:</p> <p>Production and Distribution of Writing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. b. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. c. Employ a range of planning strategies to generate descriptive and sensory details and informational organization (webbing, free writing, and graphic organizers). d. Analyze writing to improve clarity of paragraphs, transitions, vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea. e. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting. <p>Conventions of Standard English:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> f. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, and possessive). ii. Use intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves). iii. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person. iv. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents). 	<p>Inquiry Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If piece of writing has many errors or is difficult to read, what are readers' thoughts about that piece? 2. How do writers prepare their writing for different audiences? 3. How can the use of correct vocabulary, grammar, usage, and mechanics add clarity to writing? 4. How can writers create strong sentence fluency in their work? 5. What is the purpose of applying appropriate conventions of standard English? 6. How can use of spelling rules and patterns improve written communication? 	
		<p>Relevance and Application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Written language differs from spoken language in terms of vocabulary, structure, and context. 2. Learning to edit writing is important because it demonstrates the work to others who may be reading it (Locate examples of public places where there is poor grammar or poor spelling. Write a letter to a local business asking for support for a class project. Use electronic resources to edit and revise your project.)
		<p>Nature of Discipline:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writers pay attention to the way sentences start, which creates more sentence fluency in their writing.

- v. Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.
- vi. Identify fragments and run-ons and revise sentences to eliminate them
- vii. Use coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences
- viii. Maintain consistent verb tense within paragraph.
- ix. Choose adverbs to describe verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.
- g. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
 - i. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.
 - ii. Spell correctly.

Knowledge of Language:

- h. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
 - i. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
 - ii. Maintain consistency in style and tone.

Range of Writing:

- i. 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.

2. Research and Reasoning

Research and Reasoning skills are pertinent for success in postsecondary and workforce settings. Students need to acquire these skills throughout their schooling. This means students need to be able to distinguish their own ideas from information created or discovered by others, understand the importance of creating authentic works, and correctly cite sources to give credit to the author of the original work.

WRITING & COMPOSITION

Text Types and Purposes*

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

10. 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 tasks, purposes, and audiences.

LANGUAGE Anchor Standards Connected to Research and Reasoning

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Valwood Graduate Competencies

The Valwood graduate competencies are the preschool through twelfth-grade concepts and skills that all graduates will be able to demonstrate.

Valwood Graduate Competencies in the Research and Reasoning standard:

- Discriminate and justify a position using traditional lines of rhetorical argument and reasoning
- Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic
- Gather information from a variety of sources; analyze and evaluate the quality and relevance of the source; and use it to answer complex questions
- Use primary, secondary, and tertiary written sources to generate and answer research questions
- Evaluate explicit and implicit viewpoints, values, attitudes, and assumptions concealed in speech, writing, and illustration
- Demonstrate the use of a range of strategies, research techniques, and persistence when engaging with difficult texts or examining complex problems or issues
- Exercise ethical conduct when writing, researching, and documenting sources

Content Area: Composition - 8th Grade	
Standard: 2. Research and Reasoning	
Valwood Graduates:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gather information from a variety of sources; analyze and evaluate the quality and relevance of the source; and use it to answer complex questions. 	
GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATION	
Concepts and skills students master:	
1. Conducts and shares research by synthesizing information from multiple sources.	
Evidence Outcomes	21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies
<p>Students can:</p> <p>Research to Build and Present Knowledge:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate. b. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources. c. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres [e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories] in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics"). ii. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not"). d. Prepare presentation of research findings (written, oral, or a visual product) for clarity of content and effect, and grammatically correct use of language, spelling, and mechanics. e. Identify a topic for research, develop the central idea or focus and potential research question(s), and locate appropriate resources. f. Locate specific information within resources using indexes, tables of contents, electronic search features, key words, etc. 	<p>Inquiry Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do writers summarize and synthesize information to reflect their ideas on a subject? 2. How do writers organize information so they can reflect on the data gathered? 3. How do people decide on and use credible, relevant, appropriate, accurate, and valid information? 4. How do writers determine what they want the audience to know? 5. How can writers ensure they gather valid information for research? 6. Group Research: How will you plan to divide/organize the tasks between your group members or for yourself in order to meet the deadline(s)? How will you hold yourself and others accountable for sharing the work load of group/team projects? <p>Relevance and Application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using organizational strategies allows researchers to conduct quality research. 2. Completing a research project in a group enables multiple perspectives. 3. Being able to compromise and negotiate are important life skills. 4. Selecting the best methods for research will save time and help students become more proficient in writing and presentations. <p>Nature of Discipline:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Researchers make sure research projects are organized in a cohesive manner.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">g. Use a range of print and non-print sources (atlases, data bases, reference materials, online and electronic resources, interviews, and direct observation) to locate information to answer research questions.h. Follow established criteria for evaluating accuracy, validity, and usefulness of information.i. Select and organize information, evidence, details, or quotations that support the central idea or focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2. Working as an individual, small group or large group requires intellectual autonomy, intellectual integrity, intellectual humility, and so forth.3. Researchers must choose the right kind of question at issue or a purpose worth researching to conduct quality work.4. Skilled writers apply their knowledge when writing in Science, Technical Subjects, and History/Social Studies
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Content Area: Composition - 8th Grade	
Standard: 2. Research and Reasoning	
Valwood Graduates:	
➤ Evaluate explicit and implicit viewpoints, values, attitudes, and assumptions concealed in speech, writing, and illustration.	
GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATION	
Concepts and skills students master:	
2. Recognize the implications of bias and assumptions in research.	
Evidence Outcomes	21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies
Students can: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Determine strengths and weaknesses of own and others' thinking by using criteria including relevance, clarity, accuracy, fairness, significance, depth, breadth, and logic. b. Identify the natural tendency in humans to use stereotypes, prejudices, biases, and distortions. c. Identify and articulate own assumptions and assumptions of others that underlie inferences being made and assess those assumptions for justifiability. 	Inquiry Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do assumptions shape people's thinking? 2. How do biases interfere with critical thinking? 3. When is an assumption helpful/hurtful? 4. How do people explain the implications and concepts used by themselves and others, including authors? 5. Did the author consider various points of view open-mindedly? 6. How do people monitor their thinking for clarity and careful reasoning?
	Relevance and Application: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When reading, personal assumptions affect how a reader understands and interprets the text. 2. Helping ourselves be aware of biases will assist us in becoming productive, open-minded citizens. 3. Historians shift their perspectives (different from their own) to analyze a situation. 4. Good architects question their own thinking or actions to avoid making unsupported inferences or conclusions about the properties of new building materials.
	Nature of Discipline: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Researchers know the quality of thinking impacts their lives and the lives of others. 2. Researchers know that assessing their assumptions is important as they make daily decisions. 3. All reasoning is based on assumptions. 4. For thinking to improve, it is necessary to ask critical questions. 5. Assessing their assumptions is important as people make daily decisions.