

New York State Assessment English Language Arts Lessons and Activities

Grade 8

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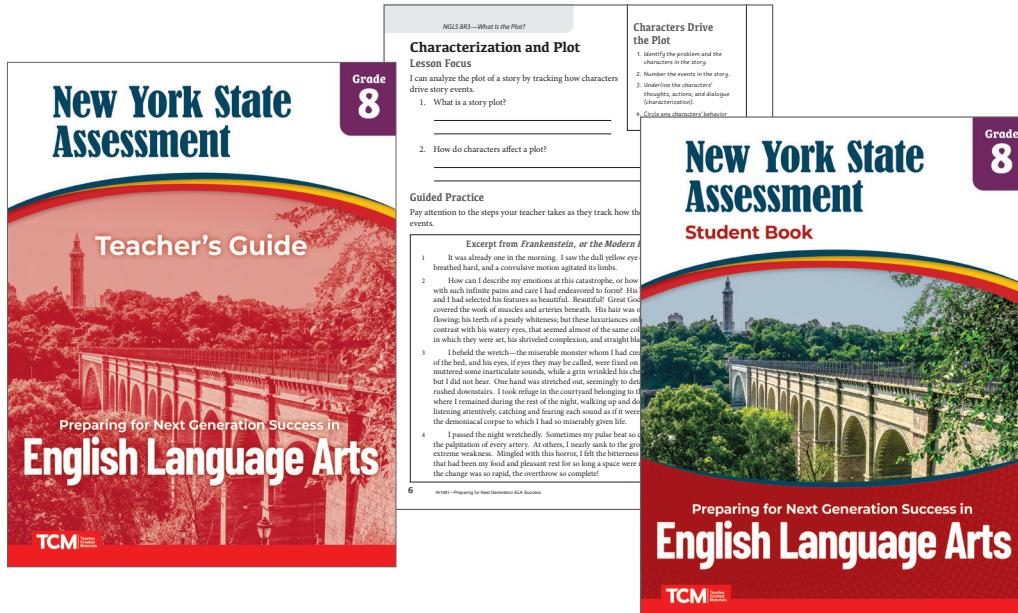
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New York State Assessment

Teacher's Guide

Preparing for Next Generation Success in

English Language Arts

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Pacing Plan

The following eight-week pacing plan is designed to provide students with a variety of strategies for analyzing literature and informational texts. Lessons in the student book appear in this order. You should customize this pacing plan according to students' needs. Each lesson requires 30–45 minutes and spans five instructional days.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Analyzing Literature Through Characters in a Story	8R3 (RL) Guided Practice	8R3 (RL) Partner Practice	8R2 (RL) Guided Practice	8R2 (RL) Partner Practice	8R3 (RL) 8R2 (RL) Independent Practice
Making Connections in Nonfiction Texts	8R2 (RI) Guided Practice	8R2 (RI) Partner Practice	8R9 (RI) Guided Practice	8R9 (RI) Partner Practice	8R2 (RI) 8R9 (RI) Independent Practice
Evaluating Authors' Strengths in Literature	8R9 (RL) Guided Practice	8R9 (RL) Partner Practice	8R8 (RL) Guided Practice	8R8 (RL) Partner Practice	8R9 (RL) 8R8 (RL) Independent Practice
The Development of Ideas and Viewpoints in Nonfiction	8R3 (RI) Guided Practice	8R3 (RI) Partner Practice	8R6 (RI) Guided Practice	8R6 (RI) Partner Practice	8R3 (RI) 8R6 (RI) Independent Practice
Unpacking the Mood and Tone of Text with Word Choice	8R4 (RL) Guided Practice	8R4 (RL) Partner Practice	8R6 (RL) Guided Practice	8R6 (RL) Partner Practice	8R4 (RL) 8R6 (RL) Independent Practice
Analyzing and Assessing Meaning and Evidence	8R4 (RI) Guided Practice	8R4 (RI) Partner Practice	8R8 (RI) Guided Practice	8R8 (RI) Partner Practice	8R4 (RI) 8R8 (RI) Independent Practice
Decoding Word Meaning Through Context and Affixes	8L4 (RL) Guided Practice	8L4 (RL) Guided Practice	8L4 (RI) Guided Practice	8L4 (RI) Partner Practice	8L4 (RL) 8L4 (RI) Independent Practice
Practice Tests	Test 1	Test 1 Review	Test 2	Test 2 Review	Celebration

Characterization and Plot

This lesson guides students as they work on pages 6–7.



Teacher Tip

Provide a plot diagram or a sequence of events chart to support your visual learners.

Lesson Focus

Reading Standard 8R3—In literary texts, analyze how particular lines of dialogue or events propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Guided Practice

1. Tell students that authors often use their characters to drive, or move, the plot of a story forward. A character's actions, dialogue, and thoughts can show and/or explain the direction of the plot.
2. Have students pay attention to the steps you take as you model how to identify the events in the plot and the characters' behaviors that drive the events.

After you finish reading paragraph 1, model step 1 of “Characters Drive the Plot” by identifying the two characters: the narrator and his creation, the creature. Ask, what situation is the narrator in?

Excerpt from *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*

1 It was already one in the morning. I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open. It breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

2 How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavored to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath. His hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same color as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion, and straight black lips.

3 I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed, and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear. One hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

4 I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery. At others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment. Dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me, and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!



Answers for page 7—1. B; 2. C; 3. D; 4. A

After reading paragraphs 1 and 2, model step 2 of “Characters Drive the Plot” by numbering the events: first, the creature awakens; second, the narrator sees his creation did not turn out as he had hoped.

After reading paragraphs 3 and 4, model step 3 of “Characters Drive the Plot” by underlining the narrator’s thoughts about the creature and circling the creature’s actions.

Putting It All Together

After you read the final paragraph, ask students which character behaviors drove the plot forward.

Partner Practice

This lesson guides students as they work on pages 8–9.

1. Remind students to use the steps from “Characters Drive the Plot” on page 8.
2. Use this time to collect data as you listen to student conversations to prepare for 1:1 or small-group instruction during Independent Practice.

Remind students to identify the characters and their situation first.

Make sure students identify and number the events in the story.

Excerpt from *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*

1 I went over to the captain. “An unusual assortment of devilish,” I companionably informed him, as carefree as a collector in front of an aquarium.

2 “Correct, Mr. Naturalist,” he answered me seriously, “and we’re going to fight them at close quarters. We shall rise to the surface and slaughter the vermin.”

3 “That will be a difficult undertaking.”

4 “Correct. Our electric bullets are ineffective against such soft flesh, where they don’t meet enough resistance to go off; however, we’ll attack the beasts with axes.”

5 “We’ll go with you,” I said decisively. And we followed Captain Nemo, heading to the central companionway.

6 There, some ten men were standing by for the assault, armed with boarding axes. Conseil and I picked up two more axes while Ned Land seized a harpoon. Stationed on the top steps, one of the seamen undid the bolts of the hatch, but he had scarcely unscrewed the nuts, when the hatch flew up with tremendous violence, obviously pulled open by the suckers on a devilfish’s arm.

7 Instantly, one of those long arms glided like a snake into the opening, and twenty others were quivering above. With a sweep of the ax, Captain Nemo chopped off this fearsome tentacle, which slid writhing down the steps. Just as we were crowding each other to reach the platform, two more arms lashed the air, swooping on the seamen who stood in front of Captain Nemo, and carried the fellow away with irresistible violence. Captain Nemo gave a shout and leaped outside, and we all rushed after him.

8 “What! Seized by the tentacle and glued to its suckers, the unfortunate man was swinging in the air at the mercy of this enormous appendage. He gasped, he choked, he yelled: “Help! Help!” These words, pronounced in French, left me deeply stunned! So, I had a fellow countryman on board, perhaps several! I’ll hear his harrowing plea the rest of my life!

9 The poor fellow was really done for. Who could tear him from such a powerful grip? Even Captain Nemo, armed with his harpoon and with his two axes, needed more of its arms while his chief officer struggled furiously with other monsters crawling up the Nautilus’s sides. The crew battled with flailing axes, and the Canadian, Conseil, and I sank our weapons into these fleshly masses. An intense, musky odor filled the air. It was horrible.

10 What rage then drove us against these monsters! We lost all self-control.

What situation are the characters facing?

How is Captain Nemo behaving?

Whose actions move the story forward?

As you circulate, listen to student conversations about the plot. Notice which students can analyze how a character’s actions lead to the next event in the story. Gather students for a quick small-group discussion on how to identify characterization that drives the plot.



Answers for page 9—

1. A; 2. C; 3. B; 4. B

Putting It All Together

Remind students that characters’ actions, thoughts, and dialogue impact the development of the plot.

Independent Practice

This lesson guides students as they work on pages 14–15.

1. Remind students to use the steps from “Characters Drive the Plot” on page 14.
2. Use this time to support students in 1:1 or small-group instruction.

As you circulate, notice which students identify the events in the story. Use this time to support students in one-to-one small-group instruction.

A Real Cliffhanger

1 The day of my 14th birthday, I was named the youngest summer intern ever hired at *Photography World* magazine. Fifteen-year-old Brandt snagged the other intern spot.

2 On our first day, Mrs. Donegan, the no-nonsense editor in chief, presented us with a challenge: “Snap a gripping, unforgettable photograph in the next two weeks,” she instructed. “I’ll select a photo to feature in the magazine, where photography enthusiasts all around the country can admire it.”

3 While Brandt and I both smiled and wished each other luck, I could tell by the glint in his eyes that he wanted to win as much as I did. For my first photo, I captured a close-up of deer-covered leaves glittering in the morning sun, and Brandt snapped a shot of his dog, Riley, shaking his whole body after a bath. Streams of water flew off Riley’s wet fur in bright streaks of light.

4 Unimpressed by both entries, Mrs. Donegan yawned and said, “Show me action-packed.”

5 The next day, I returned with two new photos. Mine focused on a mallard taking flight, and Brandt’s showed a soccer player’s foot connecting with the ball. “Better, especially this one,” Mrs. Donegan said, tapping Brandt’s photo, “but I still don’t feel like it.”

6 My instincts were telling me that Brandt was pulling ahead in the competition, and I knew I needed to up my skills if I wanted to win. Walking through the forest, I spotted Brandt’s bike parked near the path that led up our town’s highest hill. Spring is not usually my thing, but I was dying to see what sort of photos Brandt was taking. I found him at the top of the cliff, his face a mask of deep concentration as he leaned over the edge trying to take a photo straight down.

7 “Brandt, that’s super dangerous,” I said in a near-whisper, worried that I would startle him—which I did. The sound of my voice yanked him out of his daze, and he lost his balance. With his arms pinwheeling as he teetered over the edge, he let go of his camera and it fell far below.

8 Brandt tumbled too—but backward. He landed on his backside with his legs sticking out over the cliff and shouted, “Alice, help me!”

9 “Don’t move!” I cried, rushing to pull him back from the edge and up to his feet.

10 “Whoa, thanks,” Brandt gasped. “Obviously, I’m taking the competition way too seriously! But it doesn’t matter anymore—with my camera smashed, you’ll be the winner.”

11 I shook my head. “We’re making each other better photographers, and I want to stick with it. You can use my camera, but just make sure your next photos aren’t quite so . . .”

12 “Action-packed!” Brandt asked, and we both laughed.

Remind students that the character’s dialogue, actions, and thoughts drive the plot.



Answers for page 15—

1. C; 2. C; 3. D; 4. B;
5. Answers should include the expectations of Mrs. Donegan.

New York State Assessment

Student Book



Preparing for Next Generation Success in

English Language Arts

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Characterization and Plot

Lesson Focus

I can analyze the plot of a story by tracking how characters drive story events.

1. What is a story plot?

2. How do characters affect a plot?

Characters Drive the Plot

1. Identify the problem and the characters in the story.
2. Number the events in the story.
3. Underline the characters' thoughts, actions, and dialogue (characterization).
4. Circle any characters' behavior that drives the plot forward.

Guided Practice

Pay attention to the steps your teacher takes as they track how the characters drive the story events.

Excerpt from *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*

- 1 It was already one in the morning. I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open. It breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.
- 2 How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavored to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath. His hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same color as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion, and straight black lips.
- 3 I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed, and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear. One hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.
- 4 I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery. At others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment. Dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me, and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Characterization and Plot (cont.)

Directions: Use the text on page 6 to answer the questions.

1 What do the details in paragraph 3 reveal about the creature?

- A** It has been taught to communicate.
- B** It wants to connect to its creator.
- C** It is able to see the world clearly.
- D** It wishes to arrest the narrator.

2 How do the actions of the creature in paragraph 3 affect the plot?

- A** They make the narrator determined to destroy his masterpiece.
- B** They make the narrator feel excited to meet and tell the world about his great work.
- C** They cause the narrator to believe that his creation wants to cause him harm.
- D** They cause the narrator to feel melancholy with his creation's appearance.

3 In paragraph 4, why does the narrator say, “Dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me”?

- A** The narrator regrets leaving without speaking to the creature.
- B** The narrator wishes he had designed the creature to be more beautiful.
- C** The narrator is questioning his ability to create life.
- D** The narrator realizes his creation is more frightening than fulfilling.

4 How does the event in paragraph 4 relate to the details in paragraph 2?

- A** It suggests that the narrator's dream of creating a perfect man turned into a nightmare.
- B** It shows how miserable the narrator is, abandoning his creation to make someone new.
- C** It explains how the narrator is building the courage to confront the creature he created.
- D** It demonstrates the narrator's willingness to apologize for his mistakes.

Characterization and Plot

Partner Practice

Directions: Read the excerpt from *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne with a partner. As you read together, practice the steps modeled by your teacher during the Guided Practice.

Excerpt from *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*

- 1 I went over to the captain. “An unusual assortment of devilfish,” I companionably informed him, as carefree as a collector in front of an aquarium.
- 2 “Correct, Mr. Naturalist,” he answered me seriously, “and we’re going to fight them at close quarters. We shall rise to the surface and slaughter the vermin.”
- 3 “That will be a difficult undertaking.”
- 4 “Correct. Our electric bullets are ineffective against such soft flesh, where they don’t meet enough resistance to go off; however, we’ll attack the beasts with axes.”
- 5 “We’ll go with you,” I said decisively. And we followed Captain Nemo, heading to the central companionway.
- 6 There, some ten men were standing by for the assault, armed with boarding axes. Conseil and I picked up two more axes while Ned Land seized a harpoon. Stationed on the top steps, one of the seamen undid the bolts of the hatch, but he had scarcely unscrewed the nuts, when the hatch flew up with tremendous violence, obviously pulled open by the suckers on a devilfish’s arm.
- 7 Instantly, one of those long arms glided like a snake into the opening, and twenty others were quivering above. With a sweep of the ax, Captain Nemo chopped off this fearsome tentacle, which slid writhing down the steps. Just as we were crowding each other to reach the platform, two more arms lashed the air, swooped on the seaman stationed in front of Captain Nemo, and carried the fellow away with irresistible violence. Captain Nemo gave a shout and leaped outside, and we all rushed after him.
- 8 What a scene! Seized by the tentacle and glued to its suckers, the unfortunate man was swinging in the air at the mercy of this enormous appendage. He gasped, he choked, he yelled: “Help! Help!” These words, pronounced in French, left me deeply stunned! So, I had a fellow countryman on board, perhaps several! I’ll hear his harrowing plea the rest of my life!
- 9 The poor fellow was certainly done for. Who could tear him from such a powerful grip? Even so, Captain Nemo rushed at the devilfish, and with a sweep of the ax, hewed one more of its arms while his chief officer struggled furiously with other monsters crawling up the Nautilus’s sides. The crew battled with flailing axes, and the Canadian, Conseil, and I sank our weapons into these fleshy masses. An intense, musky odor filled the air. It was horrible.
- 10 What rage then drove us against these monsters! We lost all self-control.

What situation are the characters facing?

How is Captain Nemo behaving?

Whose actions move the story forward?

Characterization and Plot (cont.)

Directions: Use the text on page 8 to answer the questions.

1 How does the dialogue in paragraphs 1–5 drive events in the story?

- A** It reveals Captain Nemo's plan for freeing the ship from the giant squid.
- B** It shows the narrator is a more experienced seaman than Captain Nemo.
- C** It suggests Captain Nemo has had experience with the giant squid before.
- D** It indicates the narrator may not help protect the ship from the giant squid.

2 Which event in the story **most** affects the narrator's emotional state?

- A** He witnesses Captain Nemo chopping the squids' giant tentacles.
- B** He flies to the floor by the force of the squids' strength.
- C** He witnesses a French seaman carried away by a tentacle.
- D** He fights alongside his fellow seamen and the captain.

3 What do the details in paragraphs 7 and 9 reveal about Captain Nemo?

- A** He enjoys putting his crew in danger for his own entertainment.
- B** He believes the captain of a ship should protect his crew.
- C** He wants to impress his crew by collecting the most tentacles.
- D** He wishes to save the French seaman from an untimely death.

4 Read these sentences from paragraph 9: “What rage then drove us against these monsters! We lost all self-control.” What do these sentences reveal about the crew?

- A** They have been taught that a crew must fight to save their captain.
- B** They are overwhelmed by the scene before them and must act.
- C** They plan to abandon their ship to escape the threat before them.
- D** They are now able to accept their shipmates' fate.

Characterization and Plot

Independent Practice

Directions: Read the story “A Real Cliffhanger” independently. As you read, practice the steps from “Characters Drive the Plot” on page 6.

A Real Cliffhanger

- 1 The day of my 14th birthday, I was named the youngest summer intern ever hired at *Photography World* magazine. Fifteen-year-old Brandt snagged the other intern spot.
- 2 On our first day, Mrs. Donegan, the no-nonsense editor in chief, presented us with a challenge: “Snap a gripping, unforgettable photograph in the next two weeks,” she instructed. “I’ll select a photo to feature in the magazine, where photography enthusiasts all around the country can admire it.”
- 3 While Brandt and I both smiled and wished each other luck, I could tell by the glint in his eyes that he wanted to win as much as I did. For my first photo, I captured a close-up of dew-covered leaves glittering in the morning sun, and Brandt snapped a shot of his dog, Riley, shaking her whole body after a bath. Streams of water flew off Riley’s wet fur in bright streaks of light.
- 4 Unimpressed by both entries, Mrs. Donegan yawned and said, “Show me action-packed.”
- 5 The next day, we returned with two new photos. Mine focused on a mallard taking flight, and Brandt’s showed a soccer player’s foot connecting with the ball. “Better, especially this one,” Mrs. Donegan said, tapping Brandt’s photo, “but I still don’t feel the action.”
- 6 My instincts warned me that Brandt was pulling ahead in the competition, and I knew I needed to sharpen my skills if victory was to be mine. Walking home that afternoon, I spotted Brandt’s bike parked near the path that led up our town’s highest hill. Spying is not usually my thing, but I was dying to see what sort of photos Brandt was taking. I found him at the top of the cliff, his face a mask of deep concentration as he leaned over the edge trying to take a photo straight down.
- 7 “Brandt, that’s super dangerous,” I said in a near-whisper, worried that I would startle him—which I did. The sound of my voice yanked him out of his daze, and he lost his balance. With his arms pinwheeling as he teetered over the edge, he let go of his camera and it fell far below.
- 8 Brandt tumbled too—but backward. He landed on his backside with his legs sticking out over the cliff and shouted, “Alice, help me!”
- 9 “Don’t move!” I cried, rushing to pull him back from the edge and up to his feet.
- 10 “Whoa, thanks,” Brandt gasped. “Obviously, I’m taking the competition way too seriously! But it doesn’t matter anymore—with my camera smashed, you’ll be the winner.”
- 11 I shook my head. “We’re making each other better photographers, and I want to stick with it. You can use my camera, but just make sure your next photos aren’t quite so . . .”
- 12 “Action-packed?” Brandt asked, and we both laughed.

Characterization and Plot (cont.)

Directions: Use the text on page 14 to answer the questions.

- 1** How does the dialogue in paragraph 5 propel events in the story?
A It suggests that Mrs. Donegan will not be a fair judge.
B It reveals that Mrs. Donegan prefers Brandt's photographs.
C It shows that Mrs. Donegan expects more creativity from the interns.
D It indicates that Mrs. Donegan is hesitant to work with teenagers.

- 2** What do the details in paragraph 6 reveal about the narrator?
A She is eager to learn from Mrs. Donegan.
B She believes Brandt will want to work as partners.
C She is dedicated to winning the photography competition.
D She plans to ruin Brandt's opportunity to get a great photograph.

- 3** Which event in the story **most** affects the narrator's feelings about the competition?
A She is hired as an intern at *Photography World* magazine.
B Mrs. Donegan prefers Brandt's photographs over hers.
C She is invited to help Brandt take photographs of a cliff.
D Brandt's attempt at a risky photography shot goes wrong.

- 4** How does the event in paragraph 12 relate to the details in paragraph 7?
A It shows that the narrator continues to hold a grudge against Brandt.
B It suggests that the narrator spies on Brandt because she admires him.
C It provides support for the idea that great photography is action-packed.
D It presents evidence that Brandt is confident he will win the competition.

- 5** What do paragraphs 3–6 reveal about photography competitions? Use two details from the story to support your response.
