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# COMMON CORE

grade

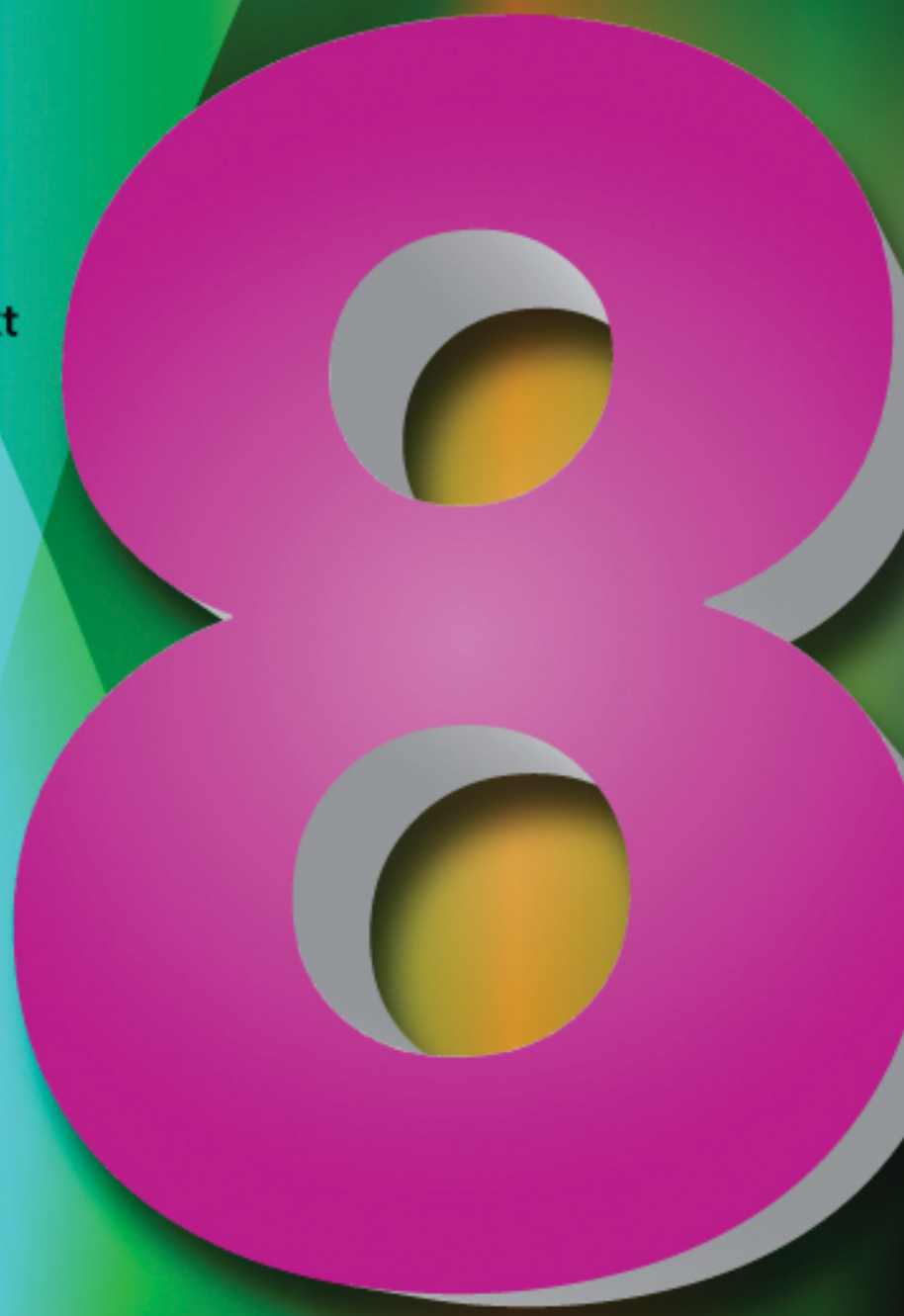
# 8

# LANGUAGE ARTS WORKOUTS

Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language Skills Practice



- Reading Literature
- Reading Informational Text
- Writing Opinion Pieces
- Writing Informative and Explanatory Texts
- Writing Narratives
- Drawing Evidence From Texts
- Discussions
- Standard English Grammar and Usage
- Using Language
- Figurative Language



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## Introduction to the Teacher

The time has come to make our children’s reading, writing, and speaking education more rigorous. The Common Core State Standards were developed for this purpose. They guide educators and parents by outlining the skills students are expected to master at each grade level. The bar has been set high, but with a little help, students can meet the challenge.

*Common Core Language Arts Workouts, Grade 8* is designed to assist teachers and parents who are implementing the new requirements. It is filled with skills practice pages, critical-thinking tasks, and creative exercises that correspond to each standard for language arts.

Each day, students will work with a different grade-level-specific language arts skill. The brief exercises will challenge them to read, think, and speak with improved facility.

Every page contains at least one “workout.” The workouts vary according to the standard covered. Some are simple practice exercises. Others pose creative or analytical challenges. Certain pages invite further exploration. Suggested student projects include reports, speeches, discussions, and multimedia presentations.

The workout pages make great warm-up or assessment exercises. They can set the stage and teach the content covered by the standards. They can also be used to assess what students have learned after the content has been taught.

We hope that the ideas and exercises in this book will help you work more effectively with the Common Core State Standards. The series also includes books for Grade 6 and Grade 7. With your help, we are confident that students will develop increased language arts power and become more effective communicators!



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## READING LITERATURE: KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS— Understanding the Text

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1:** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**Directions:** Read the selection and then answer the questions.

### Bad Day on Route 22

A disheveled man slightly north of 40 stumbled into the roadside café. It was a little past noon and all the stools at the counter were occupied by truckers and loggers. They were concentrating on their sandwiches and coffee so they didn't notice when the newcomer collapsed into the too-soft red cushions of a corner booth, grimacing slightly.

Eileen noticed though, it was her job to monitor everyone and everything that came through that door, especially after the call she had just received from Pete, the head ranger out at the national park. This character matched his description perfectly.

Eileen glanced back at the man before slipping through the swinging doors into the kitchen. The plates on her tray jiggled.

Jake stopped flipping a pancake and studied her curiously. "Shaky this morning, eh?"

Eileen shook her head, set the tray down, and then headed for the phone on the wall by the sink.

1. Does this story take place in the desert, the mountains, or the city? Which details in the selection let you know?

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2. How does Eileen feel about the disheveled man who has just entered the café? Which details in the selection let you know?

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3. Who is Jake? Which details in the selection let you know?

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4. What was Eileen planning to do?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# READING LITERATURE: KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS— Fiction Analysis Record Sheet

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2:** Determine a 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.

**Directions:** Read a short story or novel. Fill in the information below.

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Theme** (coming-of-age, man against nature, greed, love, friendship, perseverance, patience, individuality, courage, gratitude, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

**Viewpoint character or characters** (narrator): \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Point of View** (first-, second-, or third-person?): \_\_\_\_\_

**Main character** (protagonist): \_\_\_\_\_

**Main character’s problem** (What does he or she want?): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Main character’s flaw** (examples: fear, pride, greed, envy, too trusting): \_\_\_\_\_

**Villain or Opposing Force** (antagonist): \_\_\_\_\_

**Villain’s problem** (What does he or she want?): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Villain’s flaw:** \_\_\_\_\_

How is the main character’s problem related to the story’s central idea or theme?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Setting** (time and place): \_\_\_\_\_

How does the setting contribute to the theme? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In a few sentences, explain what this novel or story is about. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## READING LITERATURE: KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS— Analyzing Dialogue

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3:** 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.

**Directions:** Read the selection. Answer the questions.

Martin put a finger to his lips. “Shh! I think he’s coming back.”

Angel nodded. The darkened dining hall was eerily quiet. A lingering aroma of macaroni and cheese blended with the sharp scent of pine disinfectant. A wave of nausea swept over Angel, but he took a deep breath and it passed. Around them, legs of chairs stacked upside down on table tops loomed like bizarre metal antennae.

Angel felt someone poke him in the back and, involuntarily, jumped. His pounding heart slowed a little when he heard Robin’s trembling voice. “What will Mr. Collins do when he finds out we aren’t in the dormitory?”

Angel shook his head.

Insistent, Robin tugged at the arm of his sweatshirt. “But Angel, what will he do?”

“Robin, think! What’s going to happen if he hears you?” Martin glared at the terrified third-grader.

Angel pulled his brother down with one hand, covering the boy’s mouth with the other. The trio crouched behind a counter and waited.

The school’s headmaster strode down the hallway. When his footsteps receded, Martin stood up cautiously and looked around. “We have to get out of here.”

1. How do the boys feel? \_\_\_\_\_ How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who is in charge? \_\_\_\_\_ How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who is the viewpoint character? \_\_\_\_\_ How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The word “said” does not appear in this passage. How does the writer let you know who is speaking? Give an example. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Which character do you like the best? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Challenge:** On another paper, analyze a page of dialogue from a novel or short story. Explain how each character’s dialogue reveals his personality or motivates action.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## READING LITERATURE: CRAFT AND STRUCTURE— Using Context to Understand Vocabulary

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

**Directions:** Read the verse. Answer the questions.

### An Old Lady From Breen

There was an old lady from Breen  
Who was astoundingly clean.  
She was quite meticulous  
In fact so ridiculous  
She scoured snowflakes and air in between.



1. What does *meticulous* mean? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What does *ridiculous* mean? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does *astoundingly* mean? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What does *scoured* mean? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the tone of this verse? (Examples: serious, angry, humorous, romantic)  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How does the writer's choice of vocabulary help to establish the tone of the verse?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the form of this verse? (Examples: couplet, limerick, sonnet, ballad, ode)  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is ridiculous about her actions in the last line? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Challenge:** Read “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus (available online.) On another paper, compare the poem’s form, tone, and vocabulary to their counterparts in the verse above. Explain the meaning of each of the following phrases: “brazen giant of Greek fame,” “storied pomp,” “tempest-tost,” and “mighty woman with a torch.” In the line that begins “Keep ancient lands...” who is being quoted?

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# READING LITERATURE: CRAFT AND STRUCTURE— Different Forms, Different Purposes

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5:** 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.

**Directions:** Read the selections. Write a short paragraph to answer each question.

### Selection 1

#### The Star Spangled Banner (Verse 1)

O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,  
 What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?  
 Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,  
 O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming!  
 And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
 Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there:  
 O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?



Frances Scott Key

### Selection 2

The actual Star-Spangled Banner was one of two flags commissioned by Major George Armistead when he assumed command of Fort McHenry in Baltimore. The famed hand-crafted banner was colossal. It measured 30' x 42'. Designed to fly from atop a 90 foot pole, the flag's enormous size enabled observers to spot it from far away. Following specifications established by the Second Flag Act of January 13, 1794, it had 15 stars and 15 stripes.

1. What is the purpose of each selection? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. How does the language of each selection contribute to its purpose? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. How does the form and style of each selection contribute to its purpose? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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## READING LITERATURE: CRAFT AND STRUCTURE— All the World Is a Stage

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6:** 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.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.7:** 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 choices made by the director or actors.

**Directions:** View a live or filmed version of *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. Then read the original play. Compare the two. Answer the following questions on another paper.

1. How did physical elements such as props, sets, and costumes enhance or change the experience?
2. How did special effects such as stage lighting and sound affect the experience?
3. How did the performances of the actors affect the experience?
4. Were any of the actors too old or too young for their parts? If so, how did this affect the meaning of the play?
5. What was left out of the live or film version, if anything? Did omissions change the meaning of the play? If so, in what ways? If the play was not cut, was it too long? What could have been cut without changing the meaning?
6. When the play opens, what does the audience know about Romeo and Juliet that the characters do not know?
7. When Juliet is standing on her balcony talking about Romeo, what does the audience know that she does not? How does that affect the impact of the scene?
8. Describe another scene from the play when the audience knows something the characters do not know. (This is called dramatic irony.)



### Challenge:

1. Using the first five questions above, compare any novel or short story to its film version.
2. In a television comedy or mystery episode, find an example of dramatic irony. What does the audience know that the characters do not? What does this add to the effect of the story?



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## READING LITERATURE: CRAFT AND STRUCTURE— Modern Fiction Based on Mythology: Teacher Resources

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.9:** 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.

### Possible Fiction Selections

- *The Mark of Athena*, *The Lightning Thief*, and *The Battle of the Labyrinth* by Rick Riordan (various mythological characters and elements such as Titan, Kronos, and the Labyrinth)
- *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (Theseus and the Minotaur)
- *Orphans of Chaos* by John C. Wright (various mythological characters)
- *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green (Sisyphus)
- *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley (Prometheus)
- *His Dark Materials* (series) by Philip Pullman (Biblical references and Milton's "Paradise Lost")
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll (Psyche)
- *Till We Have Faces* by C.S. Lewis (Cupid or Eros and Psyche)
- *Goddess of Yesterday: A Tale of Troy* by Caroline B. Cooney (Helen of Troy)
- *Starcrossed* by Josephine Angelini (Helen of Troy and the Furies)
- *Abandon* by Meg Cabot (Persephone)
- *The Maze Runner* by James Dasher (The Labyrinth)
- *The Labours of Hercules* (short story collection) by Agatha Christie (Hercules)



### Suggested Questions

1. Summarize the original myth or myths in a few sentences.
2. How is the novel similar to the myth?
3. How does the novel differ from the myth?
4. What is the theme of the myth?
5. Is the theme of the novel the same or different from the theme of the myth?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## READING LITERATURE: RANGE OF READING AND LEVEL OF TEXT COMPLEXITY

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.10:** By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of Grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

### Eighth-Grade Short Stories

Ray Bradbury, "A Sound of Thunder"  
Ray Bradbury, "The World the Children Made" (The Veldt)  
Anton Chekhov, "The Bet"  
Robert Cormier, "The Mustache"  
Richard Connell, "The Most Dangerous Game"  
Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Doctor Heidegger's Experiment"  
Franz Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"  
Daniel Keyes, "Flowers for Algernon"  
Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery"  
W.W. Jacobs, "The Monkey's Paw"  
Jack London, "To Build a Fire"  
H. H. Munro (Saki), "The Open Window"  
Walter Dean Myers, "Jeremiah's Song"  
Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher"  
Edgar Allan Poe, "The Telltale Heart"  
Edgar Allan Poe, "The Black Cat"  
Laurence Yep, "We Are All One"



### Eighth-Grade Novels

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*  
Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*  
Lois Lowry, *The Giver*  
S.E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*  
Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
Karen Hesse, *Out of the Dust*  
John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*

### Eighth-Grade Poems

Online Collections:

"Poetry 180: A Poem a Day for American High Schools"  
<http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/003.html>  
"The EServer Poetry Collection"  
<http://poetry.eserver.org/>

### Eighth-Grade Plays

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*  
Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*  
William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT: KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS—Facts and Inferences

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.1:** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2:** 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.

**Directions:** Read the selection. Answer the questions.

### Jedediah Smith

Jedediah Smith was a mountain man. Born in 1799 to a pioneer family, Smith spent his life roaming the formidable mountains and deserts of the Western wilderness. As a teen he was purportedly transfixed by the journals of Lewis and Clark.

When he was 22, Smith joined a trapping expedition led by General William Ashley to collect beaver pelts along the Missouri River. The next year he led a similar expedition into the Rocky Mountains. Later he traversed sweltering deserts to reach territories that later became the states of Arizona and California.

1. In what year did Smith join his first expedition? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What animals did General William Ashley hunt? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the purpose of Jedediah Smith's expedition into the Rocky Mountains?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How do you think customers used the product Smith brought back from his expeditions?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Is the author sure that Jedediah Smith was inspired by the journals of Lewis and Clark? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the central idea of this selection? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. List three facts that support the central idea.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

**Challenge:** The Lewis and Clark Expedition left the shore of the Mississippi River on May 14th, 1804. Read the entries from their journals for the first seven days on the Project Gutenberg site. Then answer the questions on another paper.

1. What hazards did the group face during the first few days?
2. What problems did Lewis and Clark have with other members of the expedition?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT: KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS—Connections and Distinctions

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.3:** Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

**Directions:** Read the selection. Then answer the questions.

### Frances Scott Key and the Star-Spangled Banner

On August 24, 1814 a physician named William Beanes was taken prisoner by the British. At the time, the United States and Great Britain were at war. In fact, the good doctor was seized when the English captured Washington, D.C., and burned the White House.

Francis Scott Key was a prominent lawyer. Though, because of religious beliefs, he opposed the war, Key loved his country. When the American government asked him to negotiate with the British for the doctor's release, he readily agreed. On September 5, he sailed out to the British flagship, *HMS Tonnant*, which was anchored in Baltimore Harbor. Colonel John Skinner, a prisoner exchange agent for the American government, accompanied him in the sloop.

Though the negotiations were successful and Dr. Beanes was released, the trio was not allowed to return to the city that night. The British bombarded Fort McHenry for 25 hours, but were unable to destroy it. In the morning, inspired by the sight of the flag waving over the beleaguered fort, Key scribbled down a poem. It began, "O say can you see..."

1. How did Frances Scott Key feel about the war? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did Frances Scott Key go to the *HMS Tonnant*? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How did he get from the shore to the ship? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who was Colonel John Skinner, and why did he accompany Key? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why were the British bombarding Fort McHenry? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why was the sight of the flag important to Key and the other Americans on the ship?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Would the British aboard the ship have felt the same way about the flag? Why or why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

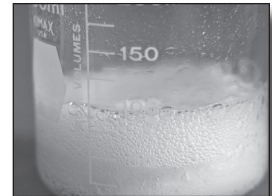
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT: CRAFT AND STRUCTURE— Building Vocabulary Through Context

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4:** 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.

**Directions:** Circle the best meaning for each underlined word.

1. The latest handheld devices incorporate microprocessors, which carry out complex functions rapidly and accurately.
  - a. screens
  - b. computers
  - c. batteries
  - d. cases
2. A neutral nation sent diplomats to mediate between opposing forces in the ongoing conflict.
  - a. rest
  - b. hurry
  - c. referee
  - d. stall
3. The year 2001 was the beginning of a new millennium.
  - a. thousand year period
  - b. hundred year period
  - c. billion year period
  - d. million year period
4. An acid such as vinegar can neutralize a base such as baking soda.
  - a. counteract
  - b. extend
  - c. strengthen
  - d. reinforce
5. The Spanish were confident that their mighty armada was invincible until a crushing defeat demonstrated its vulnerability.
  - a. beautiful
  - b. sizable
  - c. unbeatable
  - d. unavoidable
6. The average longevity of Americans has improved from about 60 years in 1930 to almost 80 in 2010.
  - a. height
  - b. weight
  - c. intelligence
  - d. lifespan
7. Scientists sometimes employ graduate students to monitor the progress of ongoing experiments.
  - a. monetize
  - b. check
  - c. annihilate
  - d. publicize
8. The extinction of a species is usually considered irreversible, although the populations of many threatened species have rebounded.
  - a. recovered
  - b. scrutinized
  - c. nosedived
  - d. plummeted
9. A poem by Emma Lazarus appears on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty.
  - a. torch
  - b. crown
  - c. base
  - d. gown
10. Ophthalmologists check peripheral vision as well as vision straight ahead.
  - a. fringe
  - b. color
  - c. detail
  - d. photogenic



**Challenge:** Create a personal dictionary. Record unfamiliar words you encounter in science, history, and government texts, along with sample sentences and short definitions. Try to add at least one entry per day.