

TEACHER'S GUIDE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: COMPREHENSION AND WRITING



DIARY OF AN 8-BIT WARRIOR



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Reading With Pictures

Classroom Activity and Discussion Guide

The activities in this guide align with Next Generation English Language Arts Standards for grades 3–5.



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English Language Arts

GENRE STUDY

Have students research the elements of the following genres and types of texts, and then write about how the *Diary of an 8-Bit Warrior* series fits or deviates from each type.

- Fantasy
- Action/Adventure
- Hero's Journey
- Coming of Age
- Bonus: Epistolary (a fictional work written as a series of documents, such as letters or a diary)

CREATIVE WRITING PROMPTS

The world of Minecraftia and the *Diary of an 8-Bit Warrior* characters hold unlimited possibilities for creative writing. Here are some sample prompts to get students started.

- New humans are constantly showing up in Runt's village. Pretend you find yourself in Minecraftia. How did you get there? What is in your inventory? How will you interact with the villagers? How will you build your house? How will you fight mobs? Write in a first-person diary format like Runt does.
- Humans in Minecraftia miss pizza the most. If you were trapped in Minecraftia, what would you miss and why?
- What potion would you like to try and why?
- Which ability would you want and why? How do you get abilities in real life? What abilities do you have? What abilities would you like to work toward?
- Runt writes in first-person perspective, telling you how he experiences his life and how he feels. Choose a scene from the books and write from a different character's perspective.
- In volume 1, Runt writes a scene in which Steve fights a spider, but he only uses onomatopoeia (words which imitate sounds):
 - *Squeak?*
 - *Cheeeeeee-ihhhh!*
 - *WHUMP.*
 - *Edddddhhhhhhhhh-!!*
 - *THUD*
- Write a scene using only onomatopoeia and be sure that readers can tell what is going on.
- Write to compare and contrast Minecraftia and Earth. For example, in *Diary of an 8-Bit Warrior: Crafting Alliances*: "Mike once said the trees (on Earth) fall over after being chopped." How is this different from what happens when someone chops a tree in Minecraftia? What other major things are different or the same between the two worlds?

DESCRIPTIVE IMAGERY

As the series goes on, Runt uses more and more descriptive imagery in his writing. Read the examples below aloud to students. As they read the series, have them record examples of descriptive language. Then, ask them to try writing some descriptive passages of things they observe around them.

- “Just after the sun went down, we stood before a massive building made of oak and dark oak, spruce and cobblestone, and hardened white clay. Panes of glowstone glass held the silhouettes of many jovial patrons, while cheery medieval melodies drifted through the air.” (*Quest Mode*, p.126)
- “Woof: the smoke from the torches hits you first, followed by the smell of mutton sizzling on a furnace, then the sound of over two hundred voices, overpowering now that you’re inside. People everywhere, heads thrown back in laughter, with brightly colored hair and long ears, or with helmets and wizard’s caps, or with huge beards hanging over mouths filled with square yellow teeth.” (*Quest Mode*, p.128)
- “We stood at the edge of a wide cliff overlooking the plains below. You could see forever: perhaps a thousand blocks away, the emerald greens of the plains met the clay browns of the savanna. That’s called a boundary, where two biomes merge in a perfectly straight line. Far beyond that, the brown grass turned green again, although a different shade than the plains, Almost cyan. That biome was mountainous, with the grass turning to foothills rising gradually in steps, leading to vast gray peaks capped with snow. All this under a cloudless, sapphire sky—a blue so deep I felt lost within it whenever I looked straight up.” (*Quest Mode*, p.143)
- “We stood at the edge of a wide cliff overlooking the plains below. You could see forever: perhaps a thousand blocks away, the emerald greens of the plains met the clay browns of the savanna. That’s called a boundary, where two biomes merge in a perfectly straight line. Far beyond that, the brown grass turned green again, although a different shade than the plains, Almost cyan. That biome was mountainous, with the grass turning to foothills rising gradually in steps, leading to vast gray peaks capped with snow. All this under a cloudless, sapphire sky—a blue so deep I felt lost within it whenever I looked straight up.” (*Quest Mode*, p.143)
- “I sprinted . . . toward her, each second an eternity, and each millisecond accompanied by a beat of my heart, the swing of a weapon, the right-to-left movement of green bars, a shout, or the ring of sharpened emerald through hard, withered flesh.” (*Quest Mode*, p. 224)

The following student pages will lead students to understand and practice English Language Arts skills :

- Character Study, page 4, helps students track characters’ development through the series and record changes in character traits.
- Narrative Writing Cards, page 5, helps students start a creative narrative writing piece.
- Metaphors and Similes, page 9, and Idioms, page 10, give students examples of these figures of speech from the series, and ask them to find more examples throughout the series.



CHARACTER STUDY

Keep this chart handy as you read the books, and fill it in as you read to trace the arcs of your favorite characters. Character traits are part of a character’s personality, like courage or selfishness. Usually a character’s traits change as they experience important events in a story. Text evidence is what you read in the story that tells you about the character’s traits.

You can repeat a character on more than one line if they change more than once.

Character	Initial Character Traits	Text Evidence	Important Event That Changes the Character	New Character Traits	Text Evidence

Narrative Writing Cards

Need a little help getting started on a story? Cut apart and shuffle each set of Narrative Starter Cards. Draw one Character card, one Setting card, and one Action card. Record your story elements on the Story Map and add ideas for the problem the characters face and their solution to the problem. Then write ideas for the beginning, middle, and end of your narrative. Using all of this information, write your narrative! Be sure to read it to yourself a few times and make some improvements. Ask a friend to read your narrative and offer suggestions. A good story can always be better!

CHARACTER CARDS



SETTING CARDS

Villagetown
school

Villagetown ice
cream stand

Runt's house

Ravensong
Forest

Tomb of the
Forgotten King

City of Owl's
Reach

MooMoo Alpha's
Survival Shop

Enchanted
Dragon Inn

Deep in
the mines

The
Nether

ACTION CARDS

Drink a potion

**Shoot an
enchanted arrow**

Fight a zombie

**Trade for
emeralds**

**Craft a
special item**

Make a friend

Lead a group

Battle a boss

**Train your team
in a new skill**

**Open a
treasure chest**

Name _____

Date _____

Action:

Main

Setting:

Problem:

Additional

Beginning:

Middle:

End:

Solution:

Metaphors and Similes

Runt likes to make up *metaphors*, especially metaphors about things only found in Minecraftia. A *metaphor* is a figure of speech that describes something by comparing it to something else. Metaphors aren't actually true, but they help explain an idea or make a comparison. Example: "He was a zombie" doesn't mean he was actually a zombie, but he was tired and moving slowly.

A *simile* is a type of metaphor. In a simile, you compare two things using the words "like" or "as." Example: "She moved as silently as a creeper." Below are some examples of metaphors and similes from the series. As you read, record more metaphors and similes here as you find them.

METAPHORS

"... even a mine cart on powered rails would have nothing on me" (*Crafting Alliances*, p. 45).

"Notch moved with the strength of an iron golem and the speed of a mine cart on powered rails" (*Crafting Alliances*, p. 104).

"... his words were flint and steel and my mind was a block of TNT—my mind was BLOWN" (*Crafting Alliances*, p. 110).

SIMILES

"Every student within 2,000 blocks would be on me like an army of chickens running to a mountain of seeds" (*Diary of an 8-Bit Warrior*, p. 177).

"... beaming like an enderman in a desert ... he was beaming like a creeper in a cat-free zone" (*Crafting Alliances*, p. 46).

"It was shaking like a zombie villager who'd just been given a golden apple" (*Crafting Alliances*, p. 156).

"My blood would have been boiling like a potion on a brewing stand" (*Crafting Alliances*, p. 57).

"... they were gone faster than a cake in Stump's skillful hands. The crowd chased after them like wolves after rabbits" (*Path of the Diamond*, p. 116).

"My mind was like a diamond, clear and sharp, unbreakable" (*Quest Mode*, p. 156).

BOTH

"Once Brio sees that marvelous invention, his eyes will become larger than enderpearls, and Team Runt will bounce back to the top like a slime under the effects of Leaping II, bouncing on a slime block" (*Path of the Diamond*, p. 179).

Idioms

Runt uses *idioms* in his writing. An idiom is an expression that can't be understood from the words used in it, such as "raining cats and dogs." Are cats and dogs actually falling from the sky? No! This idiom means that it is raining really hard.

Runt's idioms are usually based on sayings we use, but changed to fit in Minecraftia. Can you explain the idioms below and the expressions they are based on? Record more idioms as you find them in the series.

"... really, really, really sure with an endercreeper on top" (*Crafting Alliances*, p. 53).

This is based on the idiom: _____

It means: _____

"So everyone put your tryhard pants on" (*Crafting Alliances*, p.112).

This is based on the idiom: _____

It means: _____

"... the enderman in the room, or more appropriately, the iron golem in the room" (*Quest Mode*, p. 148).

This is based on the idiom: _____

It means: _____

Idiom: _____

This is based on the idiom: _____

It means: _____

Idiom: _____

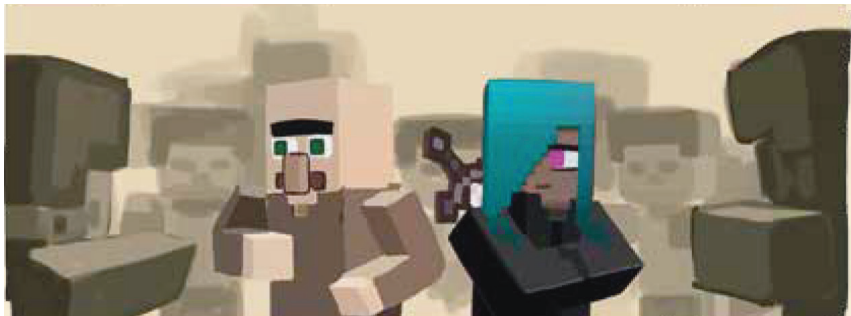
This is based on the idiom: _____

It means: _____

Idiom: _____

This is based on the idiom: _____

It means: _____



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY

GRADE 3

English Language Arts

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1]

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3]

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.]

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3]

With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4]

With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5]

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.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10]

GRADE 4

English Language Arts

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1]

Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3]

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.4.]

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3]

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4]

With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.5]

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.9]

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.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.10]

GRADE 5

English Language Arts

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1]

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4]

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3]

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4]

With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.5]

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. Range of Writing:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9]

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.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.10]

ALL GRADES: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

CASEL Core Competencies

<https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

Self-awareness

Self-management

Social awareness

Relationship skills