

Eighth Grade English Language Arts
2017-2018 School Year
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Message from the Teacher

Welcome class of 2021! I always find the beginning of the year to be a really exciting time. I love seeing the new faces in front of me and am always eager to start a new journey with a new group of students. I am really looking forward to working with you and your families during this school year.

One of my core beliefs as an English teacher is that every student has something of value to say and deserves the opportunity to be heard. It is my mission to give students the tools they need to express themselves and the platform for them to do so. Written expression is a crucial part of communication and critical thinking for everyone. For middle school students, developing strong writing skills prepares them for their academic and professional futures.

One of the most important tools a writer can have in their toolbox is a strong understanding of the writing process; therefore, in eighth grade English Language Arts this year, we will immerse ourselves in the entire process – from brainstorming to publishing – for all four major writing assignments this year. I truly believe that all students can be excellent writers if they use and commit to the writing process fully.

While the primary focus on my class will center on writing and the writing process, it is also my belief that good writers are better readers and good readers are better writers. The two processes are interdependent on each other, and each discipline can enhance the other. For this reason, students will be challenged to read, discuss, and analyze various types of literature with an emphasis on understanding key literary concepts that extend beyond comprehensions skills. They will be encouraged to think deeply and to make connections to the material that we read.

I anticipate a wonderful year as I get to know each of you. Here's to a great year!

Communication

Feel free to contact me with questions or concerns you might have. I can be reached at ahinkel@basdschools.org or by calling the Nitschmann office.

Parents do have access to their child's records and performance on the district Parent Portal. Teachers publish their assessment scores, and this is an excellent way to quickly obtain information on how your child is doing academically. You may sign up for the Parent Portal through the guidance office.

You also play an important role in your child's success this year. Encourage them to come to class prepared to work. Provide them with support at home and a place to study. Remind them what is acceptable behavior and what is not

acceptable. All of these things will help to maintain a good learning environment and help us all have a great year!

Course Description

The eighth grade Language Arts curriculum focuses on three main areas, literature, grammar, and composition. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of the writing process for honest, creative, and clearly expressed ideas, attitudes, and feelings. In addition, the teaching of literature is aimed for student responses in subjective, analytic, and evaluative ways. Finally, students concentrate on effective usage and recognition of grammatical elements.

Student Textbooks & Materials

Language of Literature
The Writer's Craft
Supplemental material provided by teacher
NightJohn by Gary Paulsen

Required Student Supplies

- * two purple composition notebooks
- * a purple pocket folder
- * writing utensils

Major Course Objectives

- * Students will be able to craft effective pieces of writing, specific to a purpose and audience, in narrative, informational, and persuasive formats with an understanding of focus, content, organization, style, and conventions
- * Students will utilize the writing process to brainstorm, draft, and revise their work to ensure the best quality of work before publishing.
- * Students will be able to conduct research, use the research to support their ideas, and cite their research appropriately.
- * Students will be able to analyze characters, plots, and major themes in a piece of literature to form opinions and reactions.
- * Students will evaluate and use common grammatical concepts in their writing.

Major Projects

Quarter 1: narrative account – historical fiction narrative

Quarter 2: compare and contrast essay based on an interview

Quarter 3: social issue argumentative essay

Quarter 4: research-based informational speech with MLA Works Cited Page

* Assignments are subject to change based on students' interests and needs and novel connections in Literacy class

Teacher Homework Policy

1. Homework is due on the specific date assigned; points will be deducted from the student's homework grade for late, incomplete, or missing work.
2. Students who develop a habit of not completing assignments miss the enrichment that it provides. If a student regularly misses homework, I will notify the parent, guidance counselor and/or administrators.
3. Students must always have their up to date planners in their possession and should write down their homework on a daily basis. Class time will be allotted for the completion of their planner.

Teacher Grading Policy

1. Homework
 - * All daily homework assignments are a minimum of 15 points each
 - * Collected homework varies according to the assignment
2. Projects and Tests- 100 points each
 - * Tests are announced at least one week prior to test
3. Quizzes- 15-50 points each
 - * Quizzes are announced at least two days prior to quiz
4. Weekly journal assignments - 10 each
5. Writing Assignments- 100 points each
 - * All writing assignments will have multiple due dates as the assignments are completed in smaller segments. Students will be notified at least one week in advance of final due date.
6. Classwork- 5-25 points per assignment (varies by length of assignment)
7. Warm ups can and will be graded (point value varies by assignment)
8. Class participation is always considered

* Total points earned will be used to determine quarter and final grades.

Additional Notes:

- * Major assignments which are turned in late will receive a deduction for each day it is incomplete.
- * Any late homework can only earn up to half credit
- * All tests and quizzes must be made up before or after school.
- * The student is responsible for obtaining and completing any missed assignments. Up to one six day cycle will be given to students to make up assignments missed during absences. In the case of extended absence, arrangements between student and teacher will be made.
- * Most assignments will be graded and posted to Parent Portal within 15 school days. Some major writing projects may take longer but will be graded in the most timely possible fashion.

Classroom Management Plan

Classroom Rules

1. Be here....be ready.
2. Be respectful.
3. Be responsible.
4. Be actively engaged in learning.
5. Be a leader.
6. Accept consequences.

B. Consequences

1. verbal/written warning/conference with student
2. call parents/ detention(s)
3. isolation
4. guidance/parent contact
6. Code of Conduct referral

Please Note: Immediate consequences of a persistent classroom problem include:

1. Verbal/nonverbal message-first warning
2. Isolation in classroom-second warning
3. Detention-third warning

Extra Help

After school tutoring with me is available for any student who is interested in obtaining help. I am usually available every day after school for help. Please check with me to make sure I am available as there are meetings for teachers throughout the month.